

# **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**20 FEBRUARY 2008**

## **STATEMENT OF THE BUSINESS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER COUNTY COUNCILLOR CLARE WOOD**

### **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

#### **Choose to Re-use**

Reuse is a cost effective and sustainable part of the waste strategy for North Yorkshire. As part of our drive to increase the amount of waste diverted from landfill, we have been working to strengthen our partnerships with charity and community groups in the area.

In January we launched a Choose 2 Reuse campaign to try to increase the number of reusable items donated to charity shops. The launch involved 8 events at locations around the County where 'green Santa' and his helpers received donations and gave out pledge cards and information leaflets. Every time a member of the public donates an item to a participating charity shop, they receive a pledge card. Three pledge cards can be exchanged for a reusable cotton carrier bag. The launch attracted excellent press coverage, with television and radio coverage and over 20 articles appearing in local and regional press. Over 90 charity shops are partners in the scheme, and we will continue to publicise and monitor the scheme with our partners. The next phases are to train volunteers as reuse champions and run a campaign this summer to promote buying pre-owned goods.

The amount of waste recycled or reused by community groups has remained high, with 1,200 tonnes being either recycled or reused in the first 6 months of the year. We have provided financial support to these community groups through the payment of recycling and reuse credits totalling £45k in the same period to encourage this diversion of waste from landfill.

#### **Household Waste Recycling Centres**

When new management contracts for the household waste recycling centres started in 2005, the operating contractors, Environmental Waste Controls and Yorwaste, gave commitments that they would recycle or compost 60% of household waste delivered to the sites. I am very pleased to report to members that we have now reached that target, and are talking to both contractors about a new, more challenging target for the remainder of their contracts. We must congratulate site users for welcoming the recycling challenge so enthusiastically. The County Council with our contractors have been active in providing and operating facilities to make it possible to achieve such excellent performance.

Investment in the network is still ongoing, with work recently started to extend Malton and Selby HWRCs, and work programmed for late spring to replace the bridge on the access to Burniston HWRC. Officers are also developing a programme of investment for the next 3 years, and are in the process of bidding for capital to fund this programme.

Work continues to secure a new site to serve West Harrogate. A number of new potential sites have been identified and discussions with landowners are underway. I will keep the County updated on progress on this important issue as negotiations with landowners progress.

### **Love Food, Hate Waste**

In the run up to Easter we will be holding roadshows throughout the county to launch the campaign "Love Food, Hate Waste." This is a national campaign promoted by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) which aims to raise awareness that, on average one third of the food we buy is thrown away. This has enormous implications not only on the amount of waste we produce, but, amongst a long list of things, on the number of lorry journeys delivering food to supermarkets. The roadshows will be held at supermarkets and county and district council staff will be on hand to advise residents how to reduce food waste, and how this benefits their pocket and the environment.

### **Service Level Agreement**

The partnership between the County Council and the district and borough councils within North Yorkshire passed a significant milestone on 14 January 2008 when the Association of North Yorkshire Councils approved a service level agreement (SLA) for adoption by each of the councils. The SLA advances the partnership by defining accountabilities and setting out a performance framework to deliver future waste strategy targets. Significantly, it provides a mechanism for the County Council to share its avoided costs of waste disposal with district councils who improve recycling and composting performance.

### **PFI**

I am please to report that the Waste PFI Project is continuing to progress satisfactory and on the project timetable. The first stage of the Competitive Dialogue process has been completed and four major companies are now progressing to the Invitation to Submit Detailed Solutions (ISDS) stage. A preferred bidder (contractor) will be declared in December 2008. It is pleasing to report that the Council received an excellent range and number of bids from most of the major waste technology companies.

## **INTEGRATED PASSENGER TRANSPORT**

### **Area Transport Reviews**

Work is almost complete in reviewing home to school transport services and local bus services in Craven and Ryedale. I am pleased to report that despite the cost pressures created by fuel increases it will be possible to retain all existing services more or less on a like for like basis. Members have been sent a summary of the new contracts which will be introduced at the end of April 2008.

The next area to be reviewed will be Selby and the views of Members along with District and Parish Councils will be sought before tenders are invited.

### **Concessionary fares**

Members will be aware that from April 2008 a national concessionary fares scheme will be introduced. This means that anyone over the age of 60 and some people with a disability will be able to travel free on most bus services throughout England. This means that some of North Yorkshire's millions of tourists will be able to make less use of their cars and more use of our bus services – which is good for both the economy and the environment. All current concessionary pass holders will be issued with a new pass and a leaflet which explains how the new scheme works. We have made sure that the leaflet, which will be delivered in North Yorkshire, tells people about the range of public transport information which the County Council provides.

## **TRADING STANDARDS AND REGULATORY SERVICES**

### **New Disease Outbreaks**

#### **Avian Influenza**

On the 10th January 2008, Defra confirmed highly pathogenic H5N1 Avian Influenza in wild mute swans, near Chesil Beach, Dorset. The wild birds were found to be infected with Avian Influenza following routine surveillance testing of the wild bird population. A 3km Control Area and a 10km Monitoring Area has been established around the area where the birds were found. A total of ten wild mute swans infected with H5N1 Avian Influenza have been found in the control area since the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2008, the latest being confirmed on the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

At the time of writing the introduction of disease control measures, following confirmation of Avian Influenza on the 10th January 2008 do not affect North Yorkshire farmers. Trading Standards and Regulatory Services are providing advice to the public as to what to do in the event of finding a dead wild bird, via the North Yorkshire County Council website and via the Animal Health and Welfare Helpline.

## **Working with North Yorkshire Businesses**

### **Healthy Products Initiative**

Thirty-two North Yorkshire food businesses are working in partnership with Trading Standards and Regulatory Services and are committed to keeping their food products “free from hydrogenated fats”.

Hydrogenated fats, sometimes described as “trans fats” are found in food containing vegetable oils, which have been chemically altered to make them easier to use. However, these “trans fats” raise the type of cholesterol in the blood that increases the risk of coronary heart disease and they have no known nutritional benefits. There is some evidence that the effects of these trans fats are worse than saturated fats. So far 26 businesses have signed up to the commitment and consumers can therefore shop with the confidence that food products they buy from these businesses are free from trans fats. Another 6 businesses are working with Trading Standards to either remove the hydrogenated fats or are checking their foods to ensure they are free before joining the scheme.

### **Supporting Communities**

Trading Standards and Regulatory Services and the Highway and Transportation Service are working in partnership to support those local communities suffering environmental nuisance, or having safety fears, caused by the passage of heavy commercial vehicles through quiet neighbourhoods.

When the County Council have created environmental weight restrictions on minor roads, certain communities have found that drivers have ignored the ban. In those instances Trading Standards officers have carried out enforcement activities to ensure compliance. In order to give local communities an ability to look after their own area, the Service has helped to set up mechanisms for residents to report any heavy vehicles they see and believe are using the routes as a short cut.

Local residents have been taught how to distinguish those commercial vehicles which are subject to the restrictions and trading standards officers follow up this intelligence with the offending haulage firms, to either seek future compliance or take more robust action, such as prosecution, should there be further infringements.

Transport managers have been very receptive to this approach and are willing to provide their drivers with a warning that enforcement checks are being carried out.

### **Money Launderers Given Custodial Sentence**

A joint investigation by the County Council Trading Standards officers and the North East Regional Asset Recovery Team at Leeds has resulted in two defendants, a Mr Wilfred Roy Aspinwall and a Mr Paul Watson, being

sentenced to 12 months and 3 years imprisonment respectively. Mr Watson's wife Jackie was also ordered to do 240 hours community service. All three, from the Liverpool area, pleaded guilty to money laundering and conspiracy to defraud offences.

The three had been investigated following a North Yorkshire resident, an elderly single female from Ingleton, receiving a cold call in March 2004 from a salesman selling security devices. The salesman conned the elderly lady into paying over £4,000 for two items, a dehumidifier and an air purifier, worth only £120, claiming her alarm system needed them so it would operate properly. Tracing of the cheque paid by the elderly lady to the salesman led to the account run by Mr Aspinwall and discovery of the money laundering ring.

**County Councillor Clare Wood**  
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