

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

17 DECEMBER 2008

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

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Waste minimisation

Members may recall in my last statement that I emphasised my commitment to reducing the amount of waste that is produced by our residents. It is therefore pleasing to note that the amount of waste we produce in North Yorkshire continues to reduce. One example of our innovative work in this area is the community engagement programme running across the County. This project will run until March 2009 and will focus on home composting and food waste reduction. It involves training community leaders so that they have the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence to encourage their communities to minimise waste.

I was pleased to launch the first element of the project “what not to waste!” on 6th November. One household from each District is taking part in the 6 week challenge. The families were set the first of their three challenges on the night, to compost as much food and garden waste as possible, and were able to find out about the different equipment they can use to do this. The volunteers were able to try out the different food waste digestion units by taking them on a ‘speed date’ to see if they would suit their lifestyle.

All of the families have a dedicated support officer to help them throughout the challenge period and I am pleased to report that the families are all taking the challenge very seriously.

The second of the challenges involves reducing food waste by taking simple steps such as better portion control, and the third challenge is to reuse food so that waste is avoided.

The amount of waste each family produces was measured before the challenge started, and will be measured again at the end of the six weeks to see how much less waste is thrown away. We will then use this project as an exemplar for other families across North Yorkshire so that we can try to make a real difference to the amount of waste they throw away. Roadshows will also take the Love Food, Hate Waste message out to many more people to encourage them to take simple steps at home.

I am very pleased that the County Council is leading on it for the waste partnership and I look forward to providing an update on the challenges in future statements.

Household Waste Recycling Centre Policy Implementation

New guidance on our policies for accepting waste at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) was introduced in April 2008. The main changes are:-

- limits on the amount of soil and rubble that can be delivered free of charge
- restrictions in the times that large vehicles and large trailers can use the sites
- a requirement for the owners of commercial-like vehicles to register with us first.

We have carefully monitored the impact of the new guidance and I am pleased to inform Members that it has been a success. Consultation with more than 2,200 people has found that the majority of users believe the guidance has made the sites less congested. Most people also feel that the time restriction for large vehicles and trailers should continue, as should the limit on the amount of soil and rubble that can be disposed of.

I am also pleased to inform Members that we have already seen around a 20% reduction in the total amount of waste delivered to our HWRCs in the first six months of making these changes. This is mainly attributed to reduced amounts of soil and rubble being delivered to the sites and a reduction in the amount of commercial waste that is deposited illegally at the sites.

New Household Waste Recycling Centre, West Harrogate

It is with the greatest pleasure that I can announce that we have been successful in identifying a site for the new HWRC for west Harrogate. The site is suitable for development as both an HWRC and highways depot. Terms of acquisition have been agreed and solicitors have been instructed. I anticipate a planning application being submitted in the New Year.

Recyclables Market

Members will have seen recent reports in the media about the falling prices for some recyclable materials. The changes are the consequence of the global economic climate and reducing global demand for building and packaging materials. Some commodities have lost all of their value whilst others are not losing any. Nationally, much work has been done in recent weeks to ensure that plans are made to work through the problems. The Government's Waste and Resources Action Programme will continue to provide up to date information on market values and capacity. The Environment Agency has also agreed to a more relaxed position to the consenting of materials storage as a last resort.

The contractors that manage North Yorkshire County Council's HWRCs are beginning to raise issues with lost income and difficulties in finding outlets for materials. Officers are working closely with them to try to ensure that no recycling services are withdrawn and that the excellent progress in recycling and composting seen in recent years continues. Our District Council colleagues are also experiencing similar issues and we are working with them to develop contingency plans.

INTEGRATED PASSENGER TRANSPORT

Scarborough Park and Ride

The new park and ride sites for Scarborough were scheduled to open at the end of November. Unfortunately, construction has been severely hampered by adverse weather conditions in the summer and autumn and the sites were not completed in time to be brought into service by the end of the year. This scheme represents a major investment by the Council and while the delay in introducing the service is disappointing, it is essential that we do everything possible to ensure that it is successful. In order to best ensure that, it is vital that everything is properly in place and tested before the services are introduced. Progress will be monitored carefully and we will ensure that we introduce the new services at the appropriate time, this is likely to be in the February half term.

Skipton Bus Station

Work is progressing well at Skipton bus station and it is anticipated to be open before Christmas. The bus station will be providing key features to the residents in and around Skipton, these are:-

- Eight bus stands, including provision for community transport vehicles and National Express coaches
- Each bus stand to provide easy access to buses from raised bus boarder kerbs
- Safe pedestrian routes throughout the site
- Covered waiting facilities with seating
- New toilet facilities
- Improved CCTV
- Dedicated rank area for 13 taxis
- Cycle stands
- Motor cycle parking
- Car parking including designated disabled bays

Selby Area Review

You will be aware that the Council renews contracts for transport services every four years following a pre-determined programme. New contracts are scheduled to be introduced in Selby in April 2009 and the result of the tenders for home to school transport services has produced a saving of over £300k. This has been achieved by planning a new network of services which reflects the changes in pupil numbers over the last four years. Early in the New Year work will start on the next transport area reviews in Scarborough and Hambleton.

Craven Hubs (Community Transport in Craven)

I made you aware of the Craven Hubs project earlier this year. The Council has invested in new minibuses which are being used by community transport providers in Craven to provide home to school transport and a mixture of demand responsive services at other times. You maybe aware that in the last few weeks one of the providers, Craven Voluntary Transport, decided to stop providing community transport services. I am delighted to be able to confirm that the other operators have been able to fill the void and services continue to be provided.

TRADING STANDARDS AND REGULATORY SERVICES

Alcohol Respect Campaign

Trading Standards & Regulatory Services' Alcohol Respect Campaign (ARC), which aims to reduce alcohol related crime and disorder by young teenagers in Bedale, is nearing completion. The first step, in the new initiative, was to improve recognition amongst the community that local alcohol retailers are partners in the front line of enforcement and deserve support to refuse sales. That goal has been achieved and young looking residents have accepted the need to carry some form of proof of age when shopping for alcohol in the town. This public acceptance has negated any conflict in the shops, between staff and young customers, thereby making the 'Challenge 21' approach fully workable.

The second step, to tackle proxy sales, whereby adults purchase on behalf of youngsters, has been tackled by way of information, in the form of a County Council leaflet, being distributed to homes in the town and given out by the off licences to purchasers of alcohol. The leaflet advises adults of both the health consequences for young drinkers and the possibility of a criminal conviction for those adults caught supplying alcohol to minors. This information campaign has been backed up by neighbourhood Police and Trading Standards officers monitoring alcohol supplies being handed to youngsters in the town. One young adult has received a police caution and another adult has been identified on shop CCTV buying alcohol which was then passed to a group of minors outside.

Step three has been a series of lectures, given to young people at Bedale High School as part of Citizenship classes, by Trading Standards Officers, highlighting the consequences of underage drinking. Final evaluation of the Campaign will take place before Christmas. Safer Ryedale have approached the Service with a view to a similar ARC in Malton, Norton & Pickering. Neighbourhood Police teams in Whitby, Ripon, Thirsk, Selby and Richmondshire have expressed an interest in pursuing a campaign in those areas also.

CLARE WOOD