

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

19 FEBRUARY 2020

### STATEMENT OF THE OPEN TO BUSINESS PORTFOLIO HOLDER COUNTY COUNCILLOR ANDREW LEE (INCLUDING GROWTH, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING, WASTE MANAGEMENT, TRADING STANDARDS AND BUSINESS RELATIONS)

#### **Trading Standards**

Food, Farming and Health

Operation Wagtail - a large scale operation against illegal tobacco in Scarborough has uncovered 29,000 cigarettes and 29.25kg of tobacco worth more than £27,500. Illicit products were discovered during the raids that were coordinated by North Yorkshire County Council Trading Standards, supported by its Public Health team, Scarborough District Council and North Yorkshire Police. The intelligence-led operation sought to tackle illicit tobacco supply across the Scarborough region using specialist tobacco detection dogs from Wagtail UK. Detection dogs can find tobacco and cigarettes in the most unlikely places and in addition to having their stock confiscated offenders could face unlimited fines and up to ten years in prison if found in possession.

On this occasion the dogs were able to identify cigarettes and tobacco concealed in cardboard boxes, kitchen shelving units and concealed drawers which would not have otherwise been discovered during the raids. Trading Standards will continue to investigate the origin of the seized cigarettes and tobacco whilst working with the community to raise awareness of the issues regarding illicit tobacco. These activities will involve pro-active visits to retailers, the use of social media and the production of a warning letter in both Polish and Kurdish Sorani languages to raise awareness in those communities, about the dangers and consequences of illicit tobacco supply in North Yorkshire.

#### **Planning Services**

Following Examination Hearing Sessions into our Minerals and Waste Joint Plan both last year and the year before, our appointed Inspector conducted a consultation in light of the Government's response (published in May) to a judgment handed down in the High Court in March to which the County Council responded. Work now continues on the production of an updated Schedule of Main Modifications and public consultation on that Schedule will follow shortly after.

#### **Economic Development**

The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) review has concluded with York, North Yorkshire and East Riding becoming York and North Yorkshire.

This includes North Yorkshire County Council, all seven District Councils and City of York Council. Leeds City Region will revert to the five West Yorkshire authorities of Leeds, Bradford, Kirklees, Calderdale and Wakefield.

We will continue to collaborate closely ensuring we benefit from our close economic links.

## **Waste Management**

### Frade

I am excited to be able to announce that in January we launched a project at two household waste recycling centres to increase the amount of household items that are reused. We are working in partnership with our waste contractor, Yorwaste and a local reuse charity called Frade to separate items such as tables, chairs, pictures, toys, non-electrical equipment and lots of other unwanted home and garden items that people deliver to the household waste recycling centres. Frade collect the items from Catterick Bridge and Northallerton Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) and take them to sell in their new shop on the High Street in Northallerton. Frade's core values of reducing poverty, reducing waste and increasing employability mean that they sell goods at affordable prices in their high street shop, offering further discounts for people on universal credit. The charity will also collect bulky items for free from homes in the local area to sell in their 'home starter' kits which include essential furniture items to kit out a new home.

Frade also recruits volunteers of all ages with the aim of tackling social isolation, helping people to learn new skills and increasing their chances of employment by providing experience through work placements. This is a six month pilot project in the first instance but I am very hopeful that it will continue and we can increase the number of sites that separate materials for reuse by Frade or other charities in the future.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR ANDREW LEE