Agenda

Meeting **Executive**

To: **Councillors Carl Les (Chairman), Mark Crane, Gareth Dadd, Richard Foster, Michael Harrison, Simon Myers, Heather Phillips, Janet Sanderson, Malcolm Taylor and Annabel Wilkinson.**

Date: **Tuesday, 16 September 2025**

Time: **11.00 am**

Venue: **Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Selby**

This meeting is being live broadcast and recorded and will be available to view via our website and uploaded to our Youtube channel.

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 August 2025 **(Pages 5 - 12)**

3. Declarations of Interest

4. Public Questions and Statements

Members of the public may ask questions or make statements at this meeting if they have given notice to Elizabeth Jackson, Principal Democratic Services Officer, and supplied the text by midday on Thursday 11 September, three working days before the day of the meeting. Each speaker should limit themselves to 3 minutes on any item. Members of the public who have given notice will be invited to speak:

- at this point in the meeting if their questions/statements relate to matters which are not otherwise on the Agenda (subject to an overall time limit of 30 minutes);
- when the relevant Agenda item is being considered if they wish to speak on a matter which is on the Agenda for this meeting.

If you are exercising your right to speak at this meeting, but do not wish to be recorded, please inform the Leader who will instruct anyone who may be taking a recording to cease while you speak.

5. Review of Maximum Hackney Carriage Fares Recommendations **(Pages 13 - 38)**

1) That no change be made to the current Hackney Carriage Table of Maximum Fares.

2) That, if the Executive approves to increase or decrease the maximum Hackney

Carriage fares, the required statutory notices are published followed by further consideration of any responses.

6. Regulatory Services Fixed Penalty Notice Policy (Pages 39 - 62)

Recommendations

1) The proposed Fixed Penalty Notice charge levels, as detailed in Appendix A, be approved.

2) The use of Penalty Notices under the Animals (Penalty Notices) Act 2022 and the Animals (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2023, for animal health and welfare offences, be approved.

3) The use of Penalty Notices under the Environment Act 2021, for smoke control offences, be approved.

4) The Penalty Notice Policy, detailed in Appendix B, be adopted.

5) The agreed Fixed Penalty Notice charges and Penalty Notice Policy to be implemented from 1st October 2025.

7. Report of the Crustacean Deaths Working Group (Pages 63 - 208)

Recommendation

That the Executive endorse the final report of the Crustacean Deaths Working Group.

8. Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 to 2030 (Pages 209 - 300)

Recommendation

Executive is asked to recommend approval of the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2025-2030 for adoption by Full Council.

9. Brierley Homes Independent Review and Funding Update (Pages 301 - 314)

Recommendations

1) For the Executive to note the conclusions and recommendations of the independent external review that has been carried out.

2) For Executive to approve additional loan facility headroom to Brierley Homes of £2m at the usual commercial rate of interest to be reviewed after 6 months to ensure Brierley Homes has appropriate cashflow over the short term. Approval of draw down on this additional loan facility to be delegated to the Corporate Director Resources in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader (Executive Member for Finance) and Chief Executive and is subject to evidence of need being demonstrated.

10. Recharging for Scheduled Parish Elections (Pages 315 - 340)

Recommendations

1) That the Council continue to recharge parish council for by-elections.

2) That the Council recharges parish councils at scheduled elections (May 2027 + 4 yearly) for the additional costs solely attributable to the parish election, as per

option 2 in Appendix A to form the basis of those recharges.

3) That the Council introduces the proposed recharges for uncontested parish elections from April 2026, as set out in appendix A.

11. Closure of Wentworth Street and Back of Micklegate Public Conveniences **(Pages 341 - 354)**

Recommendation

That the public conveniences at Wentworth Street, Malton and Back of Micklegate, Selby be permanently closed immediately.

12. Forward Plan **(Pages 355 - 378)**

13. Any Other Items

Any other items which the Leader agrees should be considered as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances

14. Date of Next Meeting - 21 October 2025

Members are reminded that in order to expedite business at the meeting and enable Officers to adapt their presentations to address areas causing difficulty, they are encouraged to contact Officers prior to the meeting with questions on technical issues in reports.

Members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting as observers for all those items taken in open session. You may be interested in subscribing to updates about this or any other North Yorkshire Council committee.

Recording is allowed at Council, committee and sub-committee meetings which are open to the public. Please give due regard to the Council's protocol on audio/visual recording and photography at public meetings. We ask that any recording is clearly visible to anyone at the meeting and that it is non-disruptive.

Anyone wishing to record is asked to contact the Democratic Services Officer (details below) prior to the start of the meeting.

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Barry Khan
Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Democratic Services
County Hall
Northallerton

Monday, 8 September 2025

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North Yorkshire Council

Executive

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 19 August 2025 commencing at 11.00 am.

Councillor Carl Les OBE in the Chair. Councillors Mark Crane, Gareth Dadd, Richard Foster, Michael Harrison, Simon Myers, Heather Phillips, Janet Sanderson, Malcolm Taylor and Annabel Wilkinson.

In attendance: Councillors Alyson Baker, Barbara Brodigan, Caroline Dickinson, Sam Gibbs, Andrew Lee, Karin Sedgwick, David Staveley, David Hugill, Chris Aldred, Peter Lacey, Cliff Lunn and Paul Haslam (remote).

Officers present: Richard Flinton, Karl Battersby, Stuart Carlton, Gary Fielding, Nic Harne, Richard Webb, Jennifer Norton, Daniel Harry, Elizabeth Jackson, Tony Law and Steve Brown (remote).

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

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725 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies from members of the Executive. An apology had been received from Councillor Andrew Williams.

726 Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 July 2025

Resolved

That the public Minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2025, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed by the Chair as a correct record.

727 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Michael Harrison declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Minute 729 as his employer was listed within the Treasury Management Quarter 1 report. As he had previously been granted a dispensation by the Standards Committee he remained in the meeting room and took part in the debate and vote on the item.

Councillor Gareth Dadd declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Minute 729 in relation to second homes. As he had previously been granted a dispensation by the Standards Committee he remained in the meeting room and took part in the debate and vote on the item.

728 Public Participation

There were no public questions or statements.

729 Q1 Performance Monitoring and Budget Report

Considered – A joint report of the Chief Executive and Corporate Director Resources bringing together key aspects of the Council's performance on a quarterly basis.

The Executive Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Heather Phillips, introduced the report which covered the period 1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025 and drew Members' attention to the following:

- This was a new Council Plan for 2025 to 2029 with a new format and five new Council ambitions, which were:
    - Thriving Places and Empowered Communities
    - Sustainable and Connected Places
    - Safe, Healthy and Living Well
    - Maximise the Potential
    - One Council.

- A new feature included monthly reporting on the Landlord Service, reflecting its ongoing development
- Key performance highlights for the quarter included:
    - Increase in museum and cultural hub visits, following resolution of issues at certain venues.
    - Strong performance in highways services.
    - Lowest level of referrals to children's social care in two years.
    - Growth in reablement packages, providing more support to individuals.
    - Improved timeliness of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- Areas of concern noted included homelessness, child protection plans, short-term bed-based placements and an increase in permanent school exclusions

The Leader welcomed Members of Scrutiny Board to the meeting, including Councillor Sam Gibbs who was attending his first meeting as Chair of the Housing and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In response to questions to Executive Members from Scrutiny Chairs and Member Champions the following was confirmed:

Thriving Places and Empowered Communities

- It was confirmed that improved cultural venues had contributed to increased town centre footfall, although a slight dip in visitor numbers during the quarter was attributed to warm weather.

- Homelessness challenges were reported to be consistent across the county, with a new strategy due in September. Actions underway included partnership working, data use, and investment in temporary and supported accommodation.

- The integration of the Young Person's Pathway had improved planning and support for care leavers through closer collaboration between children's and adult services.

- Planning performance had exceeded national targets despite staffing shortages. Future reports were expected to include enforcement metrics, with improvements already underway in previously underperforming areas.

- Average re-let times for council housing remained high due to refurbishment needs, but the number of voids was decreasing and the Executive Member reaffirmed the Council's commitment to not letting substandard properties.

Sustainable and Connected Places

- Issues were reported with the implementation of new waste collection rounds, particularly in the Harrogate area, though staff had adapted well to the four-day week and lessons had been learned to improve future rollouts. Additional operational changes had been introduced across the waste service, including the

end of task-and-finish, standardised start/finish times, depot-based working, and strengthened management practices, all aimed at delivering a consistent service countywide.

- A significant increase in fly-tipping incidents was noted, with no clear local cause identified. A new fixed penalty notice policy and enforcement strategy were being developed to address the issue more robustly.
- It was confirmed that national trends and seasonal factors, such as lighter evenings and dry weather, may have contributed to the rise in fly-tipping, and additional resources were being considered to support enforcement.
- Performance against the two-hour response target for dangerous highway defects had been affected by data entry issues, adverse weather, and fluctuating demand, though corrective measures and proactive inspections were in place.
- The target to repudiate 80% of highway claims was explained as a performance benchmark rather than a financial goal, with ongoing work to improve analysis of claim outcomes to understand why claims had been conceded to and reduce network defects.

Safe, Healthy and Living Well

- Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST) contacts had increased while referrals to children's social care had declined, suggesting increased public awareness was leading to a rise in reports of concerns.
- The assessment timeliness had worsened, however this was unusual and was being monitored.
- The number of child protection plans had continued to rise and remained above national and statistical neighbour averages; work was underway to ensure thresholds were applied appropriately and to reduce reliance on child protection interventions where possible. A variety of outcomes were reported for MAST contacts not resulting in referrals, including advice, signposting, and early help, with a significant proportion driven by increased police reporting.
- The Growing Up in North Yorkshire survey revealed that 12% of pupils reported being victims of violence and 8% had carried weapons; while concerning, the local incidence of knife crime remained low and the data was used to inform targeted school interventions.
- Increased hospital discharge rates since COVID had placed significant pressure on social care services, requiring careful balancing of support between discharged patients and those already in the community, with reablement playing a key role in maintaining independence. It was noted that current discharge volumes were now treated as the norm, despite the lack of corresponding funding, creating financial strain on services.
- Concerns were raised about high summer temperatures in care homes; the issue was acknowledged and had been referred to the quality team for monitoring and future reporting.

Maximise Potential

- The timeliness of Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessments had significantly improved, with June showing the best performance in four years and a notable reduction in the backlog, now exceeding 70% completion, which was well above the national average. The increase in in-house educational psychologists had enabled the Council to begin targeted preventative work with schools, particularly in areas previously affected by high exclusion rates.
- The rise in permanent exclusions among primary school children was noted as a concern, though numbers remained relatively low and spread across schools. Targeted support and preventative interventions were being developed to assist

schools in managing complex behaviours. Officers confirmed that exclusion patterns varied year to year, with no consistent clustering, and that schools with high exclusion rates were being challenged and supported to improve practices. The overall strong performance and proactive measures being taken in areas requiring improvement were noted.

Revenue Budget, Treasury Management and Capital Plan

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources, Gareth Dadd, introduced each section of the report, and reported an overspend of £5m at the end of Quarter 1. There was a forecasted overspend of £10.4m in Children and Young People's Service, which reflected national issues. Without action the Council would use £57m of reserves by March 2028. It was noted that North Yorkshire Highways had delivered some efficiencies and rebates, which was welcomed. Executive were also requested to agree a recommendation in relation to moving funding to support projects on the coast.

Resolved

That the Executive

(i) notes the forecast outturn position against the 2025/26 Revenue Budget, as summarised in paragraph 2.2.1.

(ii) notes the position on reserves in Section 2.5

(iii) notes the position on the Council's Treasury Management activities during the second quarter of 2025/26

(iv) refers this report to the Audit Committee for their consideration as part of the overall monitoring arrangements for Treasury Management

(v) approves the refreshed Capital Plan summarised at paragraph 4.2.3

(Unanimous)

(vi) approve virement of Capital Development Reserve funding from the Borough Wide Public Realm legacy scheme to (i) Whitby Old Town Hall (£177k) and (ii) Sprucing Up Scarborough (£150k) summarised at paragraph 4.4.2

(Unanimous)

730 Yorwaste Teckal Agreement

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director Environment seeking approval to enter into a new contract with Yorwaste Ltd. The contract term is for a maximum of 10 years with an initial five-year period, with options to extend up to a maximum of a further five years.

The Executive Member for Managing our Environment introduced the report and advised that the current contract with Yorwaste was coming to an end. The previous contract had been agreed when the former district and borough councils had been the waste collection authorities and NYCC was the waste disposal authority. Now that North Yorkshire Council was a unitary council responsible for both collection and disposal of waste it was considered that a new contract would better reflect the new powers and duties and enable the Council to respond to changes in national legislation.

Resolved (unanimously)

It is recommended that:

1) the Executive approve the award of a ten-year waste contract to Yorwaste Limited with an initial Term of 5 years with options to extend for a further five years, with effect from 18 September 2025; and

2) The Executive delegate negotiating and agreeing the terms of the new contract and any other actions required to facilitate the Council entering into the new contract with Yorwaste Limited to the Assistant Director Environment and Transport in consultation with the Corporate Director Resources, the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) and the Executive Member for Managing our Environment.

Reasons for recommendations

The recommendations allow for the Council to continue to benefit from the services provided by Yorwaste Limited but with a more modern, fit for purpose contract in place.

Alternative options considered

No other options are put forward for consideration. Before making the decision not to extend the existing contract, options to provide the services through third party contracts were considered and discounted due to the Council's ability to directly award the contract to provide waste Services to its own company (vertical exemption) under Schedule 2 of the Procurement Act 2023.

The contract duration has been considered. Given the likelihood of changes in legislation, ways of working and infrastructure, an initial term of five years with the ability to vary the service agreement and individual Schedules, plus further options to extend by up to a further five years, affords the council maximum flexibility.

(Councillor Gareth Dadd was not present in the meeting room for this item)

731 Parking Principles

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director Environment presenting the draft Strategic Parking Principles which would provide an overall framework for how the council would approach parking strategy and management throughout North Yorkshire.

The Executive Member for Highways and Transportation introduced the report advising that these principles would replace the range of policies inherited from the former district councils which were currently in place. Key themes of the principles included providing a value for money and customer focussed service reflecting local need and linking to other transport options and providing fairness across 170 car parks. The principles would support town centres, reduce congestion, improve air quality and make communities more accessible and attractive. The council was committed to working with residents, businesses and other stakeholders as the principles were implemented.

The Corporate Director Environment, Karl Battersby, advised that local variations would be dealt with through local action plans, although there were some elements which would be applied across the whole county. Conversations in relation to local action plans would commence in the autumn involving local Members and town and parish councils.

Councillor Chris Aldred spoke to welcome the report and requested further information on timelines, blue badge parking and disc parking schemes. The Head of Parking Services,

Steve Brown, provided further information in relation to multi-storey car parks in Harrogate in response to questions from Councillor Paul Haslam, and confirmed that in due course an app which would enable users to extend parking time in pay and display car parks would be re-introduced. The Executive Member agreed to provide further information to Councillors Aldred and Haslam.

Resolved

That the Executive agrees to adopt the Parking Principles document.

Reasons for recommendations

The reason for adoption is to enable the planning and authoring of countywide policy where applicable and to create the necessary conditions to begin the local area action planning as already described.

Alternative options considered

The alternative to retain the existing approaches and not adopt a new policy is not feasible.

732 Connect to Work (Get Britain Working Trailblazer) Grant Acceptance

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director Health and Adult Services in relation to grant funding of £3,175,800.00 from the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority to support the Government's Connect to Work Scheme, also known as the Get Britian Working Trailblazer programme. Approval was sought for the application for the funding, and for acceptance of the grant to be delegated to the Corporate Director Resources in consultation with the Executive Member for Health and Adult Services.

The Executive Member for Health and Adult Services introduced the report which described the Council's proposals to deliver support to economically inactive groups facing barriers to employment. The Corporate Director confirmed that the proposals built on pre-existing work carried out by the council helping people with mental health issues, learning and physical difficulties and advised that as Department of Work and Pensions terms and conditions still needed to be finalised delegated authority was sought to enter into the final agreement.

Resolved (unanimously)

1) The Executive agrees to the application of grant funding of three million one hundred and seventy-five thousand and eight hundred pounds (£3,175,800.00) to support the Government's Connect to Work Scheme (Get Britain Working Trailblazer programme) and in the event that the application is successful:

2) That the acceptance of the Grant be delegated to the Corporate Director - Resources in consultation with the Executive Member for Health and Adult Services.

3) To delegate authority to agree and enter into any associated agreements, including but not limited to the Grant Agreement with the YNYCA to access and deliver these funds, to the Corporate Director - Resources in consultation with the Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Democratic Services.

Reasons for recommendations

The Executive is asked to approve the acceptance of the grant funding subject to the Grant Agreement being acceptable to allow the proposed activities to proceed. These are intended to support people to find and maintain meaningful employment, providing better outcomes for people and supporting North Yorkshire's economy.

Alternative options considered

Not to bid for and accept the funding: this was rejected as the funding scheme provides external funding which provides the opportunity for the Council to deliver on multiple objectives, as above.

733 Brierley Homes Affordable Homes Funding Urgent Decision

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director Resources providing details of the urgent decision taken by the Executive Member for Finance and Resources to approve additional loan facility to Brierley Homes of £1.4m to enable the provision of affordable homes. The decision was urgent in order to allow cashflow headroom in advance of sales being made over the next few months to enable payments to be made to suppliers.

The Corporate Director Resources, Gary Fielding, reported that whilst Brierley Homes had originally been established to deliver market housing it was now delivering more affordable and social housing and as a consequence its loan facility was inadequate. The company paid the council interest above the Bank of England base rate, so delivered significant shareholder value to the council, whilst also delivering affordable housing in excess of policy requirements, so providing additional benefit. It was confirmed that the additional £1.4m loan was at base rate without interest, thus enabling the policy value of the affordable homes to be realised. The urgency had arisen due to a number of sales having fallen through in the preceding weeks, leading to a risk that suppliers wouldn't get paid. A further report would be brought to the next meeting of the Executive following a review of funding arrangements and cash flow management.

Resolved

That the Executive note the urgent decision taken by the Executive Member for Finance on 21 July 2025 and note that the decision was urgent in order to allow cashflow headroom and allow the company time for sales to be received over the next few months. Additional loan headroom was required to ensure Brierley Homes could make all payments due in the event of some delayed sales.

Reasons for Recommendation

To report the urgent decision taken on the 21 July 2025 to Executive in line with the Council's governance process.

Alternative options considered

There are no other options as this report is informing Executive of an urgent decision that has been taken.

734 Appointments to Committees

Considered – A report of the Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Democratic Services in relation to a change of substitute Member for the Shareholder Committee. The Shareholder Committee is a committee of the Executive and appointments to it are made

by and from the Executive. Following recent changes to Executive a vacancy had arisen for a substitute member of the Shareholder Committee.

Resolved

That the Executive appoints Councillor Annabel Wilkinson as a substitute for the Shareholder Committee in place of Councillor Greg White.

735 Forward Plan

Considered – The Forward Plan for the period 8 August 2025 to 31 August 2026 was presented.

Resolved

That the Forward Plan be noted.

736 Date of Next Meeting - 16 September 2025 - Civic Centre, Selby

The meeting concluded at 12.46 pm.

North Yorkshire Council

Executive

16 September 2025

Review of Maximum Hackney Carriage Fares

Report of the Corporate Director – Environment

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is for the Executive to consider three requests to vary the Council's Hackney Carriage Table of Maximum Fares.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 In accordance with section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Council may fix the maximum rates of fares to be paid in respect of the hire of Hackney Carriages within North Yorkshire by means of a table (hereafter referred to as a "table of fares"). The table of fares may comprise charges for time, distance and all other charges in connection with the hire of a hackney carriage vehicle.

2.2 A hackney carriage vehicle can be hailed by passengers on the roadside, it can stand on a rank to await the approach of passengers, and it can be pre-booked by telephone. In contrast, private hire vehicles are licensed to perform pre-booked work only, which must be obtained through a licensed private hire operator. The Council's table of fares applies only to hackney carriage vehicles. The Council has no power to set maximum fares in respect of private hire vehicles.

2.3 The current table of fares came into effect in 01 July 2024 following consultation and consideration by the Executive. The current table of fares is attached. It should be noted that drivers may agree to charge a lower amount than the maximum fares at their own discretion (Appendix A).

2.4 Any proposed variation to the table of fares must be advertised at the Council offices and by way of a notice in a local newspaper stating a period (not less than 14 days from the date of publication) within which interested parties may lodge objections. Where there are no outstanding objections, the proposed table of fares shall come into effect upon the expiration of the period specified in the notice. If objections are received, the Council shall set a further date (not later than two months from the first specified date), at which time the table of fares shall come into force with or without modifications as determined by the Council after consideration of the objections.

2.5 If Members propose a variation to the table of fares approval will be required for the publication of statutory notices, subject to further consideration in the event of any objections being lodged.

3.0 REQUESTS AND CONSULTATION RESPONSES

3.1 Three requests have been received from the hackney carriage trade to review the table current of fares:

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3.1.1 (1) From Take Me Group Ltd, on behalf of 48 named drivers – “Following the announcements from government for increases in the minimum wages and a lowering of the threshold for national insurance. We request a rise in the measured mile for tariff 1 of between five to ten percent and as tariffs two and three did not rise last year we request a rise of 10 percent for those tariffs measured miles”.

3.1.2 (2) From Richard Fieldman, Hackney Carriage driver – “Flag fall up from £4.00 to £4.20, as this was not increased last year, 5% on the running mile and waiting time, tariffs two and three, bringing up to the time and a half and double time of tariff one, which we lost last year”.

3.1.3 (3) From Kevin O’Boyle, Operator of Central Radio Cars – “From 06 April 2025 I am having to pay a higher minimum wage and higher national insurance contributions. Without a fare increase I have no way of offsetting these costs. I would have thought that the amount of time since the government announced these increases, that you would have planned things to coincide. Can you please advise when we may be looking at a fare increase to offset these extra expenses”.

3.2 Consultation:
The existing table of fares was compared against the maximum daytime, night-time and Christmas holiday rates set by neighbouring authorities. The comparison charts are attached (Appendix B).

3.3 A consultation commenced 16 June and ended on 28 July 2025. Consultations were sent directly to drivers, proprietors and operators, and by social media to other interested parties, directing consultees to the Councils consultation web page. A series of questions were asked along with free text boxes for additional comments. The comparison charts were included for reference.

3.4 Analysis of consultation
The full responses are attached (Appendix C). A total of 290 responses were received, and are summarised as follows:

- 203 Residents
- 72 Hackney / Private Hire drivers, operators or representatives of the trade (trade)
- 11 Visitors
- Businesses

3.5 Responses to the questions can be summarised as follows:

3.5.1 <u>The current maximum fare for a three-mile journey during the day is £9.99</u>
70% of the trade felt that fares were currently much too high, somewhat high or about right.
97% of residents, visitors or businesses felt that fares were currently much too high, somewhat high or about right.

3.5.2 <u>The current maximum fare for a three-mile journey during the night is £14.98.</u>
75% of the trade felt that fares were currently much too high, somewhat high or about right.
96% of residents, visitors or businesses felt that fares were currently much too high, somewhat high or about right.

3.5.3 <u>The current maximum fare for a three-mile journey during Christmas and New Year is £19.98</u>
75% of the trade felt that fares were currently much too high, somewhat high or about right.
92% of residents, visitors or businesses felt that fares were currently much too high, somewhat high or about right.

3.5.4 If the respondent supported an increase or decrease in maximum fares, they were asked by how much. The results are also contained in appendix C.

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3.6 Other factors for consideration – There are other factors that affect a drivers ability to make a fair income:

3.6.1 Change in average fuel costs since the last fare increase (source RAC). Majority of licensed vehicles are diesel or petrol fuelled with a proportion being hybrid

- Unleaded 1 July 2024 144.80p
- Unleaded 14 July 2025 134.64p
- Diesel 1 July 2024 149.92p
- Diesel 14 July 2025 134.64p

3.6.2 On average, fuel prices have decreased by 8.5% since the last review of maximum fares.

3.6.3 Cost of living (source Office for National Statistics). The latest annual cost of living rate shows an increase 4.1% over the last 12 months.

3.6.4 The cost of running a vehicle (source Office for National Statistics). The cost of running a petrol or diesel vehicle has changed from £3,461 to £3,357 over the last year, a decrease of 3%. This figure includes the change in fuel price.

3.7 The options available is that the Executive can decide to:

- Make no change to the maximum fares
- To increase the maximum fares for each tariff band by a specified amount
- To decrease the maximum fares for each tariff band by a specified amount
- To make any other change to the maximum fares

4.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

4.1 The Council is committed to protecting communities, safeguarding children and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the public.

4.2 A regular review of the table of fares supports economic growth and incentivises work in the hackney carriage industry, which delivers significant public protection benefits.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 The Council is not legally obligated to set the maximum rates of charges. However, the vast majority of licensing authorities do set maximum fares to provide certainty, consistency and, particularly in relation to occasional passengers, protection from unfair or unreasonable charges.

6.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

6.1 The Council's Integrated Passenger Transport Service (IPT) is responsible for arranging and managing school and social care transport for children and vulnerable adults across North Yorkshire. It is in the public interest to ensure that the table of fares does not adversely affect the Council's ability to secure transport via hackney carriage services. The table of fares was adjusted last year to reflect this. The adjustments have worked successfully over the last year so no changes to this element are proposed.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Costs relating to the statutory public notice, consultation and any subsequent meetings are recovered from licence fees charged by the council and paid by the hackney carriage trade.

OFFICIAL

7.2 Any increase in fares would have a financial impact on taxi-users throughout North Yorkshire, although drivers may agree to charge a lower amount than the maximum fares at their own discretion.

7.3 Any hackney carriage proprietors wishing to charge fares at the increased rates would incur a small, one-off cost for the meter calibration.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The legislative framework for setting maximum hackney carriage fares has been explored at paragraph 2 of this report.

8.2 Section 9D of the Local Government Act 2000 provides that any function of a local authority which is not specified in the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 is to be the responsibility of an executive of the authority under executive arrangements. The power to fix maximum hackney carriage fares under section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 is not specified in the regulations and is therefore the responsibility of North Yorkshire Council's Executive in this instance.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Disability is a protected characteristic within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not, the Council must endeavour to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and take steps to meet their needs.

9.2 A balance must be sought to allow hackney carriage drivers to make a reasonable living from their trade whilst also removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who have relevant protected characteristics.

9.3 The maximum table of fares applies equally to all licensed hackney carriage vehicles. Drivers of hackney carriage vehicles are not permitted to make any additional charges for carrying mobility aids or for providing reasonable assistance to disabled passengers.

9.4 An Equalities Impact Screening document is attached (Appendix D).

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Regular reviews of the hackney carriage table of fares ensure that drivers and proprietors can plan for future investment in new vehicles, which should mitigate the environmental impact of licensed vehicles in North Yorkshire. Climate change impacts are current being considered in the review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. An initial climate change impact assessment form is attached (Appendix E).

11.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 In its Best Practice Guidance published in November 2023, the Department for Transport recommends that "in reviewing fare rates, authorities should pay particular regard to the needs of the travelling public, with reference both to what it is reasonable to expect people to pay but also to the need to give taxi drivers the ability to earn a sufficient income and so incentivise them to provide a service when it is needed. There is likely to be a case for higher fare tariffs at times of higher demand to encourage more drivers to make themselves available or when the journeys are required at anti-social times".

12.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Hackney carriage drivers play a particularly important role in the night-time economy by transporting members of the public home safely late at night. On that basis, it is in the interests of the public to ensure that drivers are fairly rewarded for working during anti-social hours and encouraged to continue providing a vital public service.

13.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 The Council is expected to set and regularly review the maximum fares to be charged by hackney carriage drivers with a view to protecting the public and ensuring that licensees are fairly rewarded for their work.

13.2 The research carried out confirms that:

- Over 70% of the trade and over 92% of residents, visitors or businesses who responded to the consultation felt that current fares were just right or too high for all three tariffs.
- On average, fuel prices have decreased by 8.5% since the last review.
- The latest annual cost of living rate shows an increase 4.1% over the last 12 months.
- The cost of running a petrol or diesel vehicle has decreased by 3% in the last 12 months (includes the change in fuel price).

14.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

14.1 That no change be made to the current Hackney Carriage Table of Maximum Fares.

14.2 That, if the Executive approves to increase or decrease the maximum Hackney Carriage fares, the required statutory notices are published followed by further consideration of any responses.

APPENDICES:
Appendix A – Current table of fares
Appendix B – Fare comparison charts
Appendix C – Responses to consultation
Appendix D - Equalities Impact Screening document
Appendix E - Initial climate change impact assessment form

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:
Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice (Department for Transport)

Callum McKeon
Assistant Director for Regulation and Harbours
County Hall
Northallerton

Report Author: Gareth Bentley, Head of Licensing
Presenter of Report: Gareth Bentley, Head of Licensing

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NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

SECTION 65 - LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1976

TABLE OF MAXIMUM FARES FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGES

Tariff 1 (Between 7am and 10pm)	
Flag fall for the first 440 yards or part thereof	£4.00
Drop at 440 yards and every 158.56 yards or part thereof:	£0.20
Waiting time for each period of 35.59 seconds or part thereof:	£0.20
Tariff 2 (Between 10pm and 7am & Public holidays*)	
Flag fall for the first 440 yards or part thereof	£6.00
Drop at 440 yards and every 167.62 yards or part thereof:	£0.30
Waiting time for each period of 37.36 seconds or part thereof:	£0.30
***All public holidays other than those listed in tariff 3, tariff 2 applies throughout the 24-hour period.	
Tariff 3 (Christmas and New Year)**	
Flag fall for the first 440 yards or part thereof:	£8.00
Drop at 440 yards and every 167.62 or part thereof:	£0.40
Waiting time for each period of 37.36 seconds or part thereof:	£0.40
****From 6pm 24th December to 7am 27th December and 6pm 31st December to 7am 2nd January.	

Fouling charge	Maximum charge	£100.00
Extra charges	Extra charge per head which can be charged for ALL PASSENGERS when carrying 5 or more (only chargeable if agreed at the time of booking)	£2 per person
Call out or summoning charge	Maximum to be added to any journey where the vehicle has been called out or summoned from another location (only chargeable if agreed at the time of booking). .	£1.50 per mile
North Yorkshire Council contract surcharge	Maximum surcharge for each hiring under the terms of a contract with North Yorkshire Council.	£50
	Maximum surcharge for the provision of each passenger assistant where applicable under the terms of a contract with North Yorkshire Council.	£50

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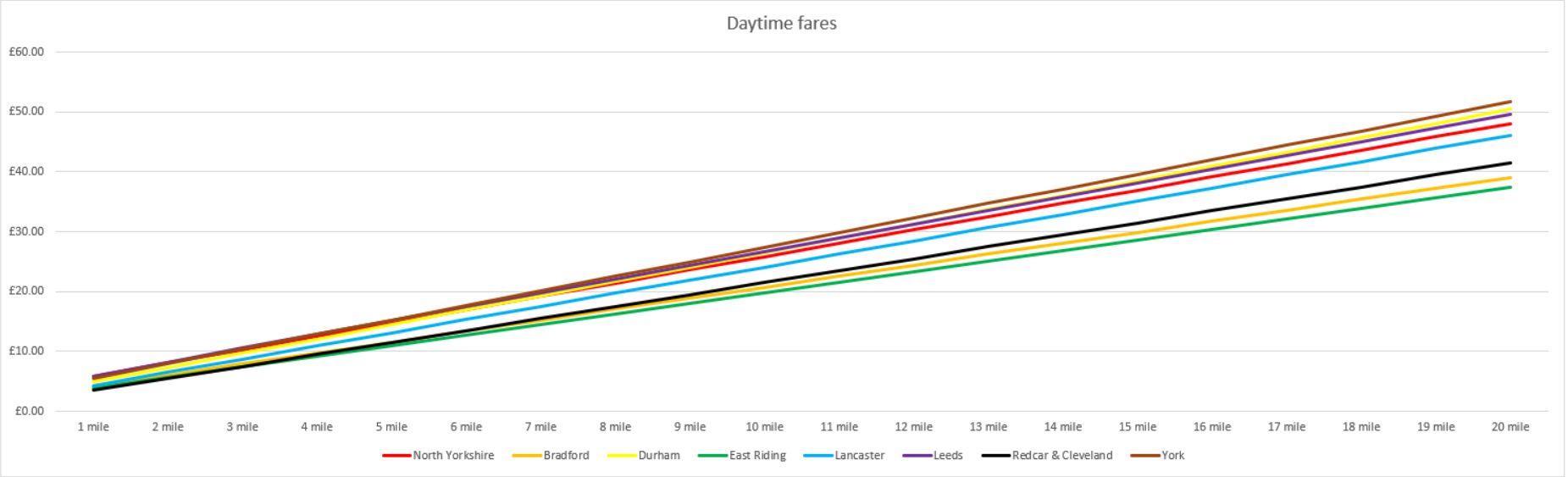
Appendix B

Fare comparison charts May 2025

	1 mile	2 mile	3 mile	4 mile	5 mile	6 mile	7 mile	8 mile	9 mile	10 mile	11 mile	12 mile	13 mile	14 mile	15 mile	16 mile	17 mile	18 mile	19 mile	20 mile
North Yorkshire	£5.86	£8.08	£10.30	£12.52	£14.74	£16.96	£19.18	£21.40	£23.62	£25.84	£28.06	£30.28	£32.50	£34.72	£36.94	£39.16	£41.38	£43.60	£45.82	£48.04
Bradford	£4.23	£6.07	£7.90	£9.73	£11.57	£13.40	£15.23	£17.07	£18.90	£20.73	£22.57	£24.40	£26.23	£28.07	£29.90	£31.73	£33.57	£35.40	£37.23	£39.07
Durham	£4.90	£7.30	£9.70	£12.10	£14.50	£16.90	£19.30	£21.70	£24.10	£26.50	£28.90	£31.30	£33.70	£36.10	£38.50	£40.90	£43.30	£45.70	£48.10	£50.50
East Riding	£3.98	£5.74	£7.50	£9.26	£11.02	£12.78	£14.54	£16.30	£18.06	£19.82	£21.58	£23.34	£25.10	£26.86	£28.62	£30.38	£32.14	£33.90	£35.66	£37.42
Lancaster	£4.30	£6.50	£8.70	£10.90	£13.10	£15.30	£17.50	£19.70	£21.90	£24.10	£26.30	£28.50	£30.70	£32.90	£35.10	£37.30	£39.50	£41.70	£43.90	£46.10
Leeds	£5.91	£8.21	£10.52	£12.82	£15.12	£17.42	£19.72	£22.02	£24.32	£26.62	£28.92	£31.22	£33.52	£35.82	£38.12	£40.42	£42.72	£45.03	£47.33	£49.63
Redcar & Cleveland	£3.50	£5.50	£7.50	£9.50	£11.50	£13.50	£15.50	£17.50	£19.50	£21.50	£23.50	£25.50	£27.50	£29.50	£31.50	£33.50	£35.50	£37.50	£39.50	£41.50
York	£5.53	£7.96	£10.39	£12.83	£15.26	£17.69	£20.12	£22.55	£24.98	£27.41	£29.84	£32.27	£34.70	£37.14	£39.57	£42.00	£44.43	£46.86	£49.29	£51.72



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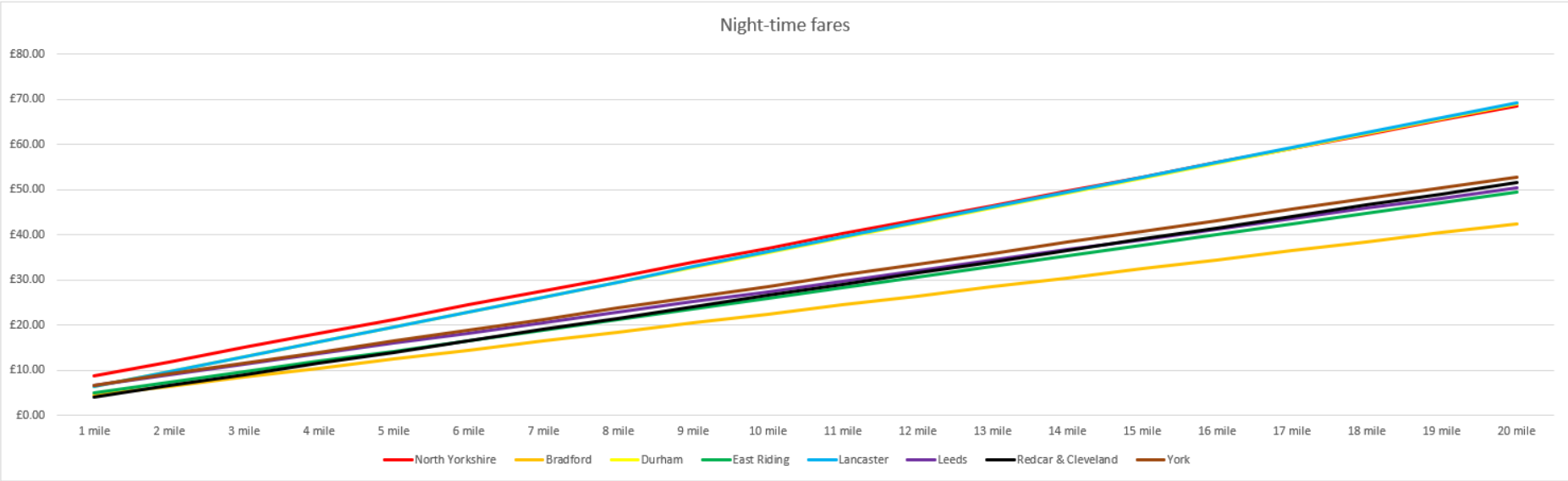
Appendix B

	1 mile	2 mile	3 mile	4 mile	5 mile	6 mile	7 mile	8 mile	9 mile	10 mile	11 mile	12 mile	13 mile	14 mile	15 mile	16 mile	17 mile	18 mile	19 mile	20 mile
North Yorkshire	£8.66	£11.81	£14.96	£18.11	£21.26	£24.41	£27.56	£30.71	£33.86	£37.01	£40.16	£43.31	£46.46	£49.61	£52.76	£55.91	£59.06	£62.21	£65.36	£68.51
Bradford	£4.40	£6.40	£8.40	£10.40	£12.40	£14.40	£16.40	£18.40	£20.40	£22.40	£24.40	£26.40	£28.40	£30.40	£32.40	£34.40	£36.40	£38.40	£40.40	£42.40
Durham	£6.30	£9.60	£12.90	£16.20	£19.50	£22.80	£26.10	£29.40	£32.70	£36.00	£39.30	£42.60	£45.90	£49.20	£52.50	£55.80	£59.10	£62.40	£65.70	£69.00
East Riding	£4.86	£7.21	£9.56	£11.90	£14.25	£16.60	£18.94	£21.29	£23.64	£25.98	£28.33	£30.68	£33.02	£35.37	£37.72	£40.06	£42.41	£44.76	£47.10	£49.45
Lancaster	£6.45	£9.75	£13.05	£16.35	£19.65	£22.95	£26.25	£29.55	£32.85	£36.15	£39.45	£42.75	£46.05	£49.35	£52.65	£55.95	£59.25	£62.55	£65.85	£69.15
Leeds	£6.71	£9.01	£11.31	£13.61	£15.91	£18.21	£20.51	£22.81	£25.11	£27.41	£29.72	£32.02	£34.32	£36.62	£38.92	£41.22	£43.52	£45.82	£48.12	£50.42
Redcar & Cleveland	£4.00	£6.50	£9.00	£11.50	£14.00	£16.50	£19.00	£21.50	£24.00	£26.50	£29.00	£31.50	£34.00	£36.50	£39.00	£41.50	£44.00	£46.50	£49.00	£51.50
York	£6.66	£9.09	£11.52	£13.95	£16.38	£18.81	£21.25	£23.68	£26.11	£28.54	£30.97	£33.40	£35.83	£38.26	£40.69	£43.12	£45.55	£47.99	£50.42	£52.85



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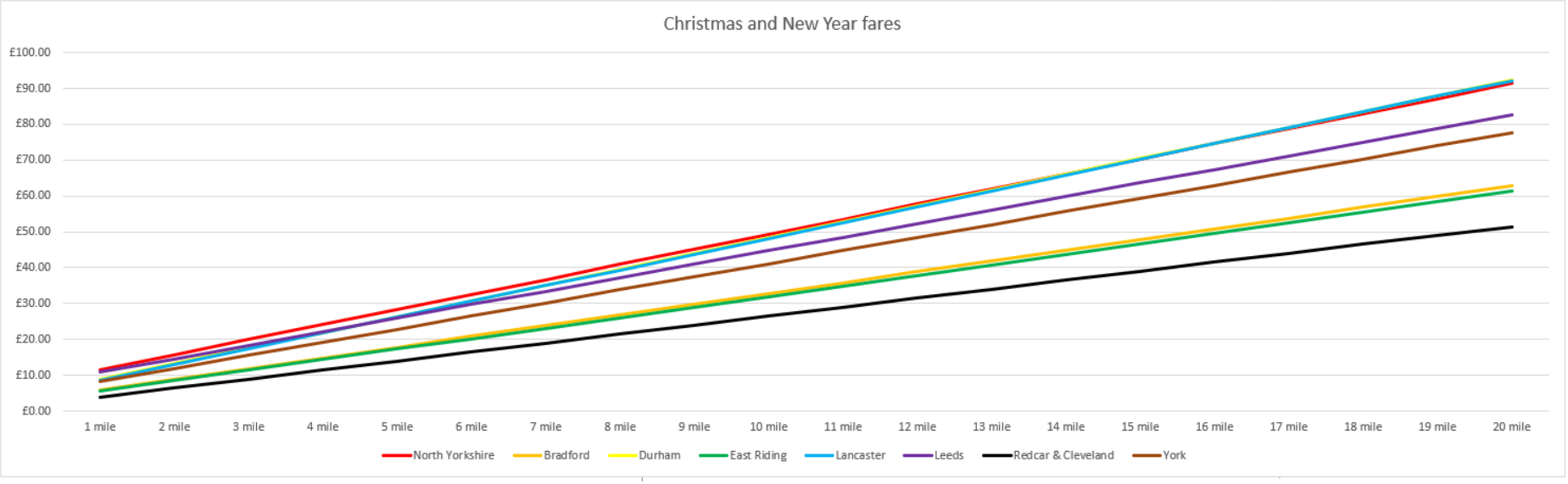
	1 mile	2 mile	3 mile	4 mile	5 mile	6 mile	7 mile	8 mile	9 mile	10 mile	11 mile	12 mile	13 mile	14 mile	15 mile	16 mile	17 mile	18 mile	19 mile	20 mile
North Yorkshire	£11.55	£15.75	£19.95	£24.15	£28.35	£32.55	£36.75	£40.95	£45.15	£49.35	£53.55	£57.75	£61.95	£66.15	£70.35	£74.55	£78.75	£82.95	£87.15	£91.35
Bradford	£5.85	£8.85	£11.85	£14.85	£17.85	£20.85	£23.85	£26.85	£29.85	£32.85	£35.85	£38.85	£41.85	£44.85	£47.85	£50.85	£53.85	£56.85	£59.85	£62.85
Durham	£8.80	£13.20	£17.60	£22.00	£26.40	£30.80	£35.20	£39.60	£44.00	£48.40	£52.80	£57.20	£61.60	£66.00	£70.40	£74.80	£79.20	£83.60	£88.00	£92.40
East Riding	£5.55	£8.48	£11.42	£14.35	£17.28	£20.22	£23.15	£26.08	£29.02	£31.95	£34.88	£37.82	£40.75	£43.68	£46.62	£49.55	£52.48	£55.42	£58.35	£61.28
Lancaster	£8.60	£13.00	£17.40	£21.80	£26.20	£30.60	£35.00	£39.40	£43.80	£48.20	£52.60	£57.00	£61.40	£65.80	£70.20	£74.60	£79.00	£83.40	£87.80	£92.20
Leeds	£10.83	£14.60	£18.37	£22.14	£25.91	£29.68	£33.45	£37.23	£41.00	£44.77	£48.54	£52.31	£56.08	£59.85	£63.63	£67.40	£71.17	£74.94	£78.71	£82.48
Redcar & Cleveland	£4.00	£6.50	£9.00	£11.50	£14.00	£16.50	£19.00	£21.50	£24.00	£26.50	£29.00	£31.50	£34.00	£36.50	£39.00	£41.50	£44.00	£46.50	£49.00	£51.50
York	£8.30	£11.95	£15.59	£19.24	£22.88	£26.53	£30.18	£33.82	£37.47	£41.12	£44.76	£48.41	£52.06	£55.70	£59.35	£63.00	£66.64	£70.29	£73.93	£77.58



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Analysis

Daytime

North Yorkshire's fares are the second highest among the comparator authorities for journeys up to 2 miles.
North Yorkshire's fares are the third highest among the comparator authorities for journeys between 3 and 6 miles.
North Yorkshire's fares are the fourth highest for journeys in excess of 6 miles.

Night-time

North Yorkshire's fares are the highest among the comparator authorities (and significantly higher than most) for journeys up to 15 miles.
North Yorkshire's fares are the second highest (almost the same as Lancaster) for journeys in excess of 15 miles.

Christmas and new year

North Yorkshire's fares are the highest among the comparator authorities (and significantly higher than most) for journeys up to 15 miles.
North Yorkshire's fares are the third highest (almost the same as Lancaster and Durham) for journeys in excess of 15 miles.

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Maximum hackney carriage fares consultation

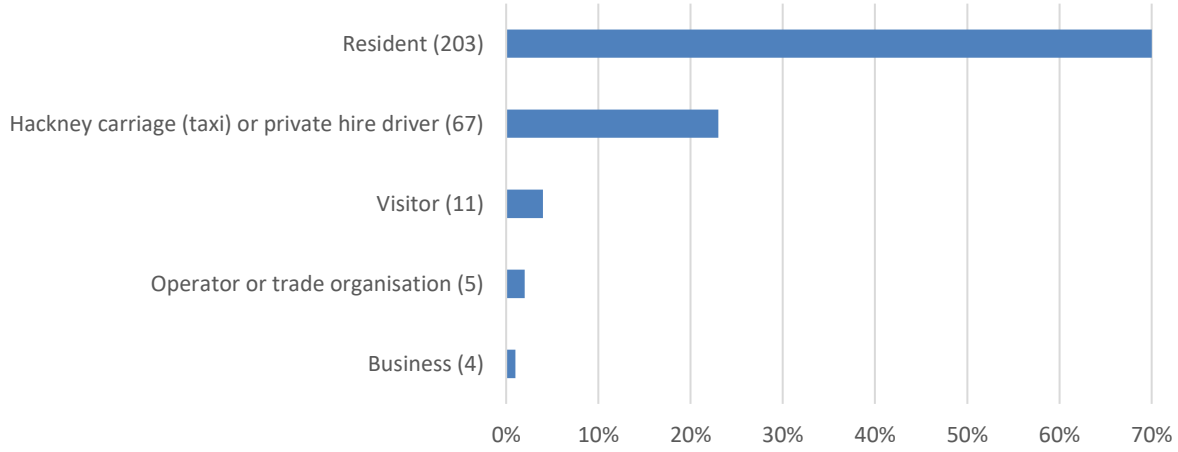
We set the maximum rates of fares for hackney carriages across the county. Our aim is to strike a balance between setting a fare that is acceptable to the customer and trade.

Fares are reviewed regularly to ensure drivers are fairly rewarded for their work, and to also ensure that members of the public are not deterred from using taxis in their area.

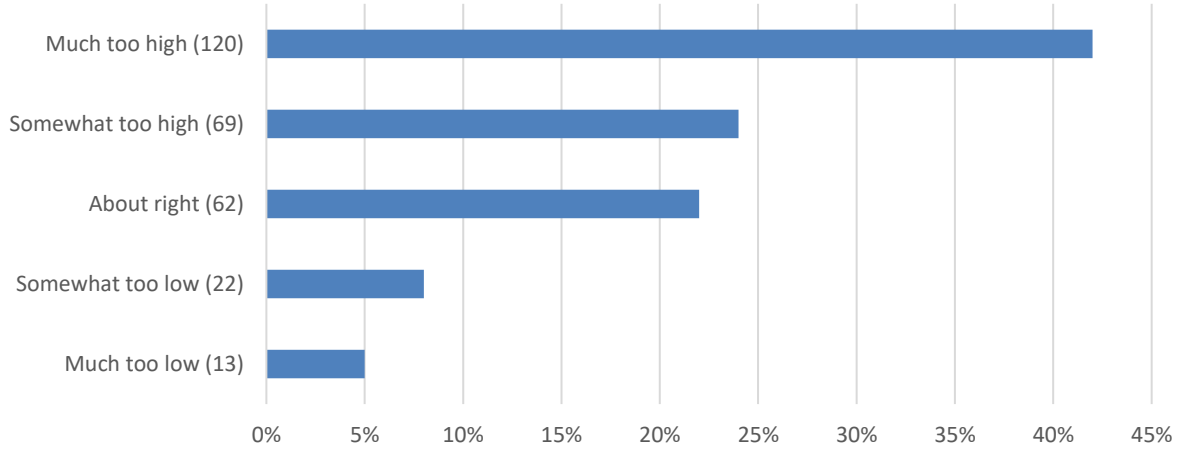
We have compared the current table of fares with the maximum rates set by neighbouring authorities. The comparison charts can be viewed on our taxi fares page.
The fares are also the maximum a driver can charge, and they can charge a lower fare should they wish to do so.

The consultation took place for six weeks between June and July, and 292 people responded. It was promoted in the media, on social media and to the trade.

Q1. Which of the following best describes your main interest in taxi licensing?



Q2. The current maximum fare for a three-mile journey during the day is £9.99. Do you think this is…



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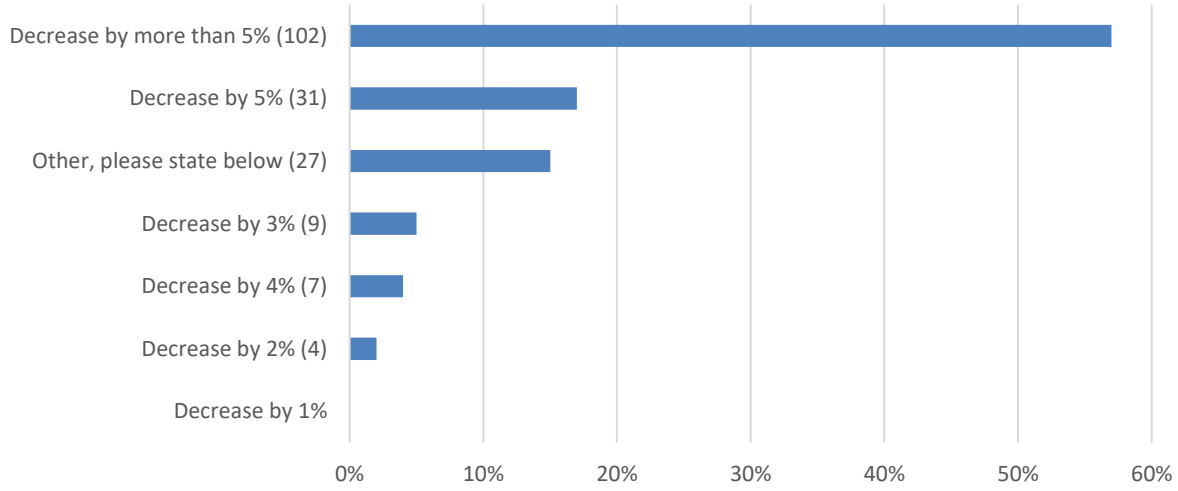
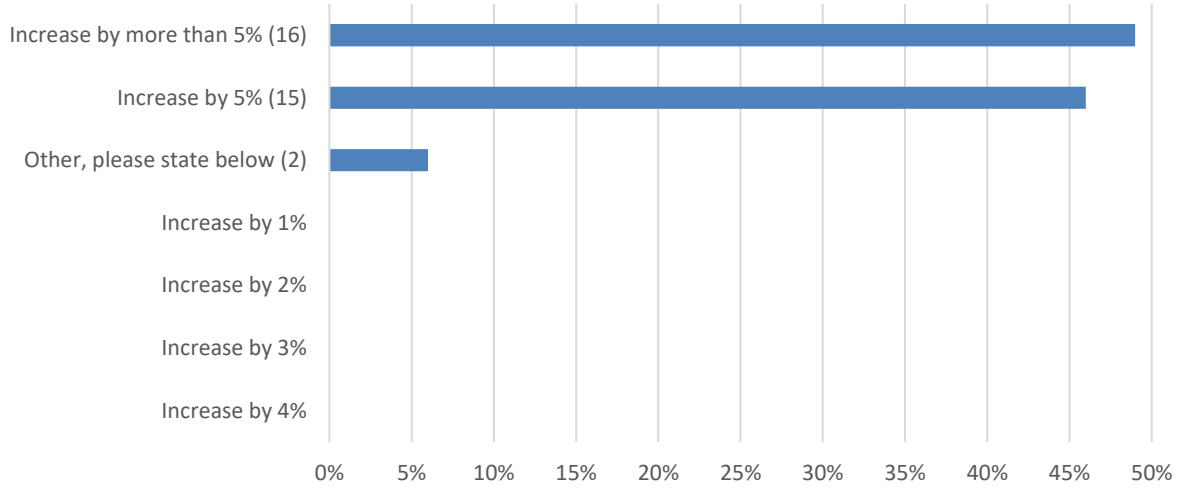
Q3. If you have answered 'Much too high' or 'Somewhat too high', how much do you think the fare should change by?



Q3a. Other, please state below…

Feedback suggests that current taxi fares for a 3-mile journey are too high, with most people recommending a price between £5 and £7. Many propose fare reductions ranging from 20% to 50%, arguing that lower prices would make taxis more accessible, especially in rural areas, and could increase demand. Comparisons are also made to Uber, which is regularly 40–50% cheaper.

Q4. If you have answered 'Much too low' or 'Somewhat too low', how much do you think the fare should change by?



Q4a. Other, please state below…

Just two comments; one suggesting £12 and the other stating "Doesn't matter".

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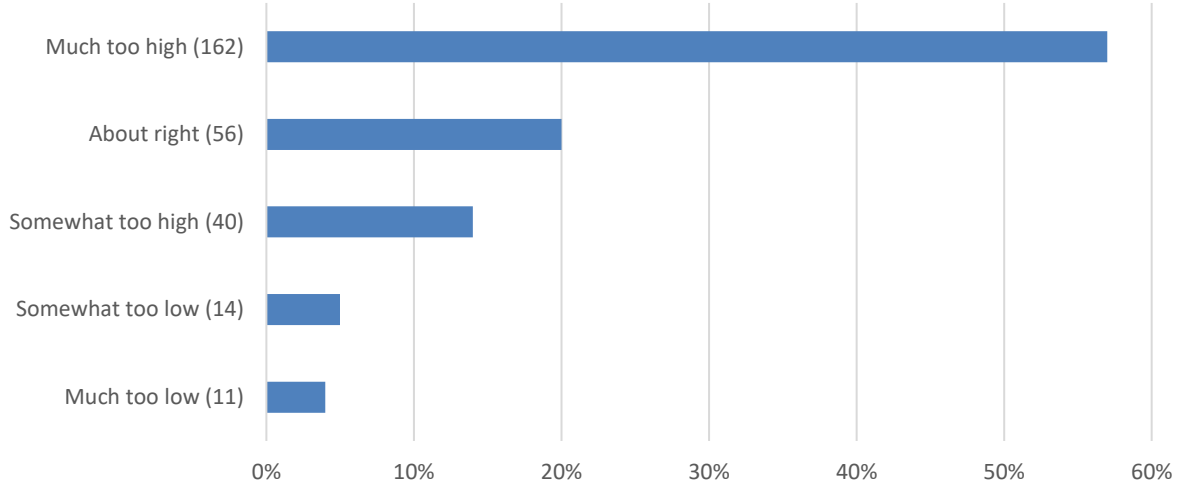
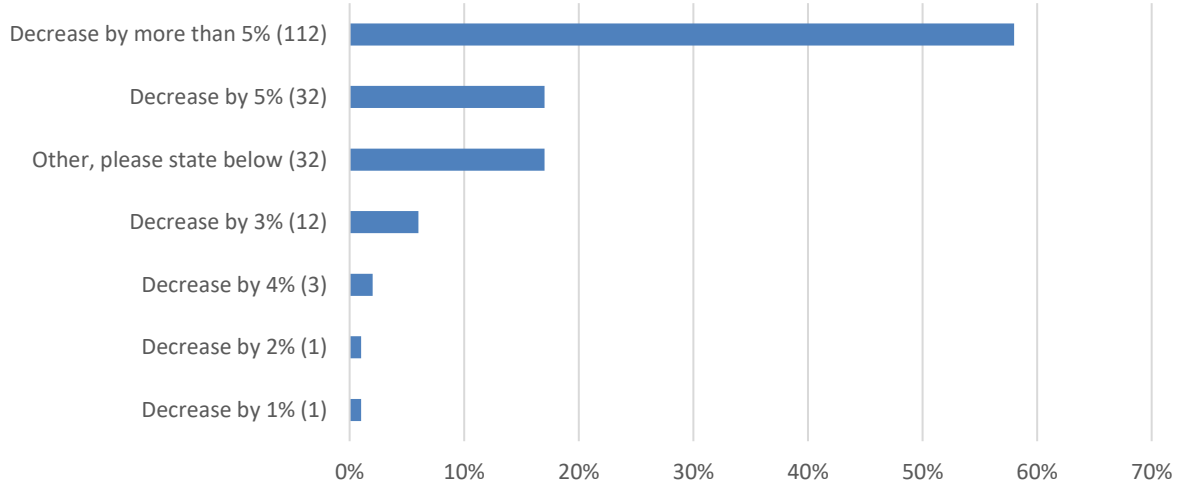
Q5. If you wish to do so, please share any comments you have based on your previous answer:

- Several respondents emphasised the need for lower, more reasonable fares and that fares are too expensive
- Frequent calls for fare reductions, often specifying percentage decreases, common suggestions included fares between £5 and £7.50
- Uber was cited as a cheaper and more accessible alternative
- Concerns about high fares affecting accessibility in rural areas
- Suggestions that lower fares could increase taxi usage
- References to minimum wage and fair compensation for drivers as cost of running a taxi has increased significantly over the years, as has the cost of living

Q6. The current maximum fare for a three-mile journey during the night is £14.98. Do you think this is…



Q7. If you have answered 'Much too high' or 'Somewhat too high', how much do you think the fare should change by?



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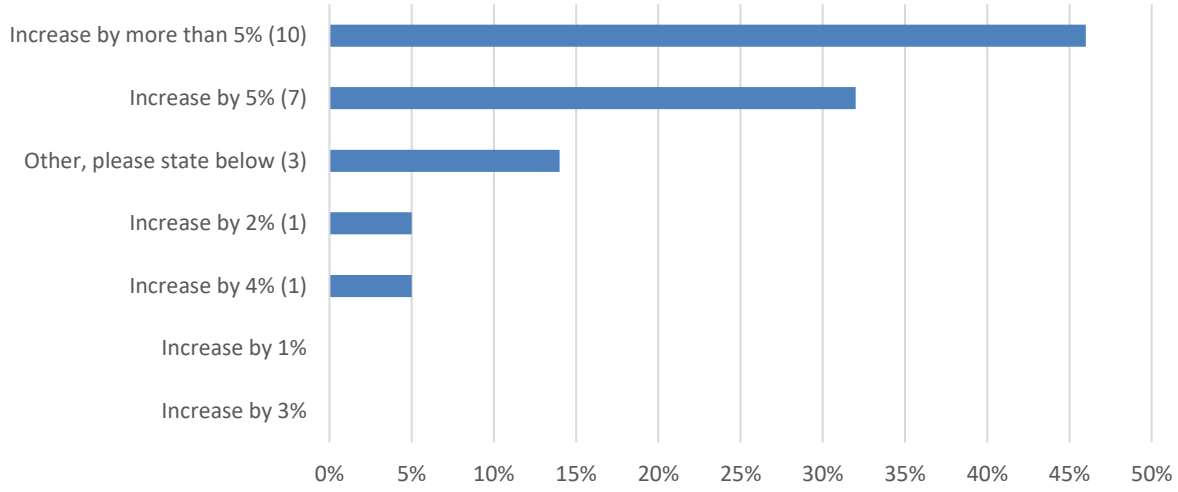
Q7a. Other, please state below…

Feedback suggests a desire for significant reductions in taxi fares, with many proposing decreases ranging from 10% to 65%. Suggested maximum fares for short journeys commonly fall between £6 and £8, especially before midnight. Again, comparisons to Uber, which is said to be around 40% cheaper. Concerns were raised about affordability for evening outings and public safety, particularly for young women. One suggestion to scrap time-and-a-half rates after midnight and instead increase the flagfall.

Q8. If you have answered 'Much too low' or 'Somewhat too low', how much do you think the fare should change by?



Q8a. Other, please state below…

Just three comments; Suggestion there are no customers, it should be £17, and it should be equivalent to time and a half of the day rate, just like the general public would get for working unsociable hours.

Q9. If you wish to do so, please share any comments you have based on your previous answer:

- Several respondents felt nighttime fares were excessively high, with suggested reductions ranged from 10% to 65%
- Frequent proposals for maximum fares between £6 and £10 for a 3-mile journey
- Uber was cited as 40% cheaper and more transparent, with several respondents preferring Uber due to affordability and ease of use
- Concerns about young women traveling at night and suggestions to scrap time-and-a-half charges and adjust flagfall rates to improve safety and affordability
- High fares seen as a barrier for rural residents, disabled individuals, and those with limited public transport, and discouraging social outings and increased isolation
- Calls for more consistent pricing and regulation of private hire services

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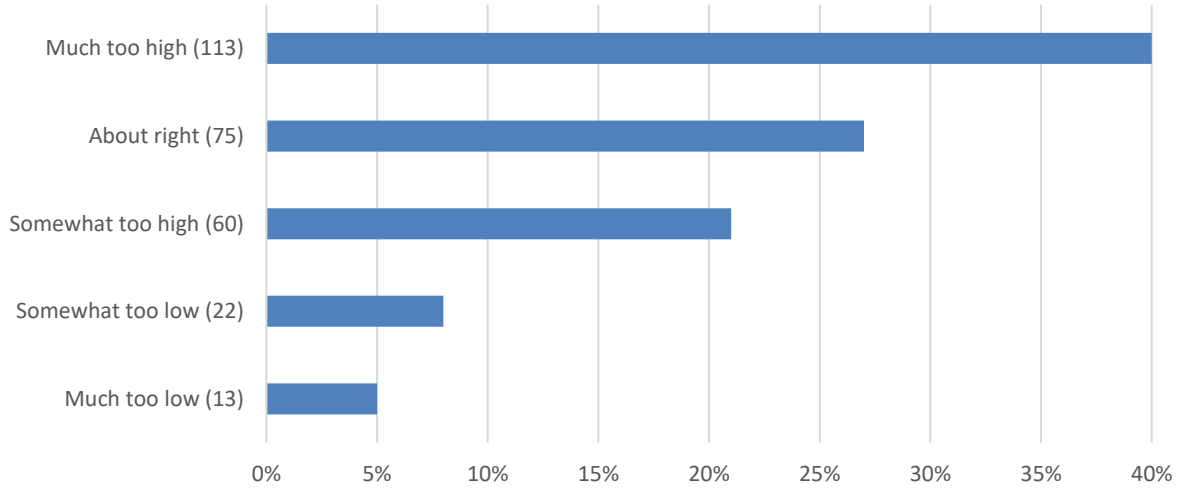
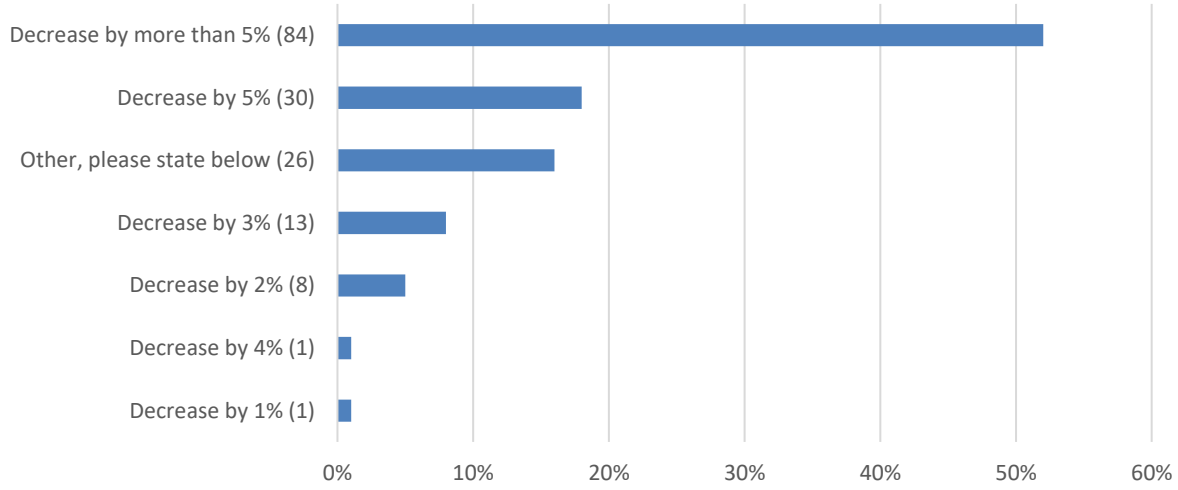
Q10. The current maximum fare for a three-mile journey during Christmas and New Year is £19.98. Do you think this is…



Q11. If you have answered 'Much too high' or 'Somewhat too high', how much do you think the fare should change by?



Q11a. Other, please state below…

Many respondents expressed a strong desire for significant reductions in taxi fares, with repeated calls for decreases of between 20% and 50%. Several comments proposed a maximum fare of £10 or £12, arguing that current rates – sometimes exceeding £6.50 per mile – are excessive and unjustified.

There was also criticism of Tariff 3, with some suggesting it should be scrapped entirely. A recurring sentiment was that in a 24-hour economy, charging higher rates during holidays or late hours is unfair, especially when working those times is a personal choice.

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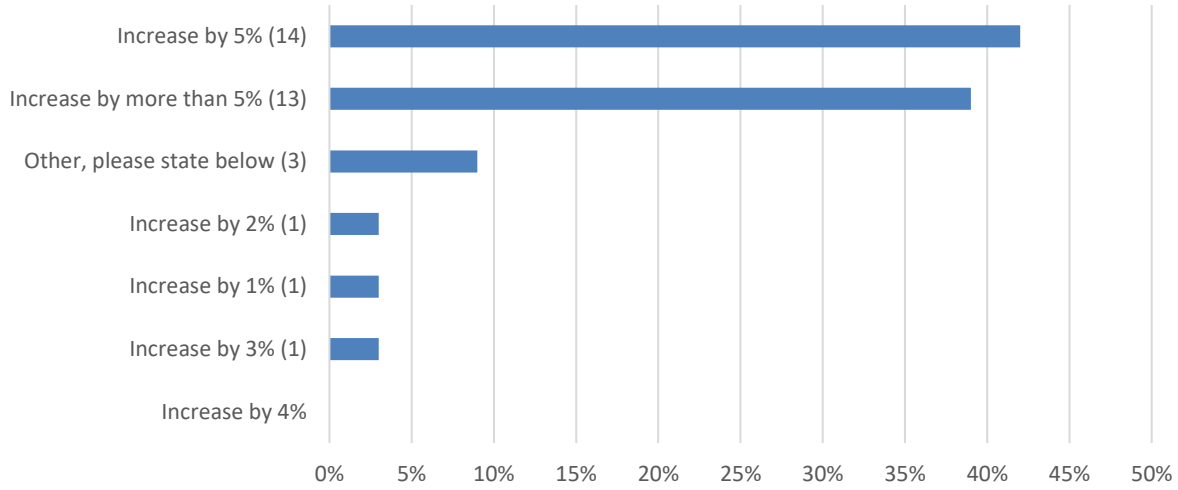
Q12. If you have answered 'Much too low' or 'Somewhat too low', how much do you think the fare should change by?



Q12a. Other, please state below…

Again, just three comments; Suggestion it doesn't matter, and the trade must charge normal. As well as a suggestion of 24, and this should also be double the daytime tariff, just like members of the public get from their daytime occupations.

Q13. If you wish to do so, please share any comments you have based on your previous answer:

- Many respondents acknowledge the unsociable hours and believe drivers should be fairly compensated for working over the festive period
- Others argue that working during holidays is a choice, and fares should not be inflated as a result
- Some suggest a modest premium is acceptable, while others call the current rates "daylight robbery" or "scandalous"
- A significant number of comments describe fares as too high, with some calling for reductions of up to 50%
- Several respondents mention that £19.98 for 3 miles is excessive and discourages travel, especially for low-income or rural residents
- There are calls to abolish Tariff 3 and instead use a simplified or capped system
- Drivers and supporters highlight the rising cost of living, lack of customers and competition from Uber
- Some stress that without fare increases the trade becomes unsustainable, especially for independent drivers
- High fares are seen as a barrier to safe travel, possibly encouraging drink driving
- There are concerns about accessibility, especially for the elderly or disabled passengers

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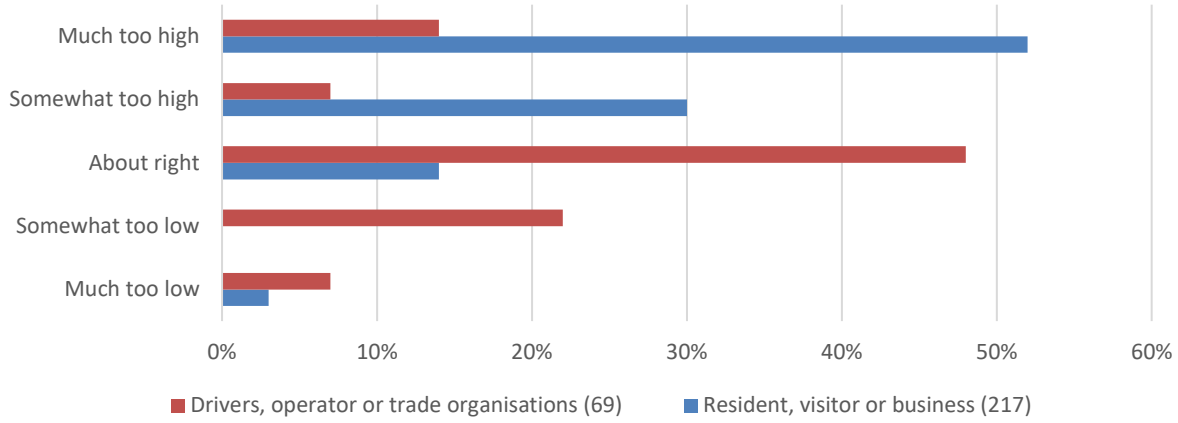
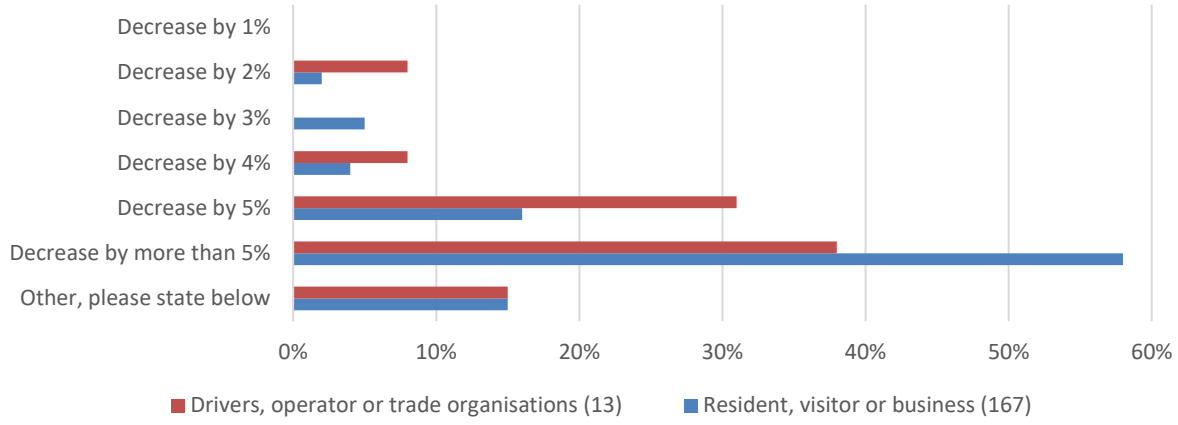
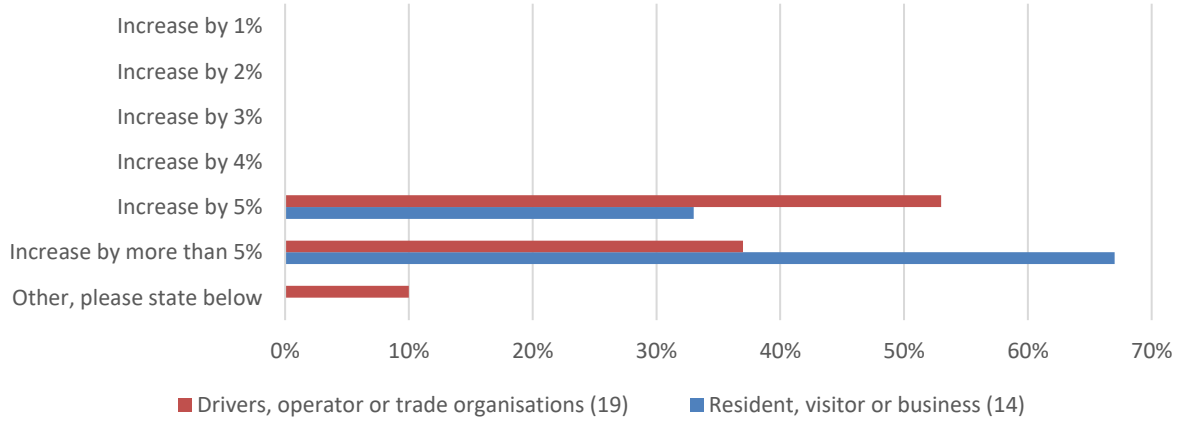
Q2. The current maximum fare for a three-mile journey during the day is £9.99. Do you think this is…



Q3. If you have answered 'Much too high' or 'Somewhat too high', how much do you think the fare should change by?



Q4. If you have answered 'Much too low' or 'Somewhat too low', how much do you think the fare should change by?



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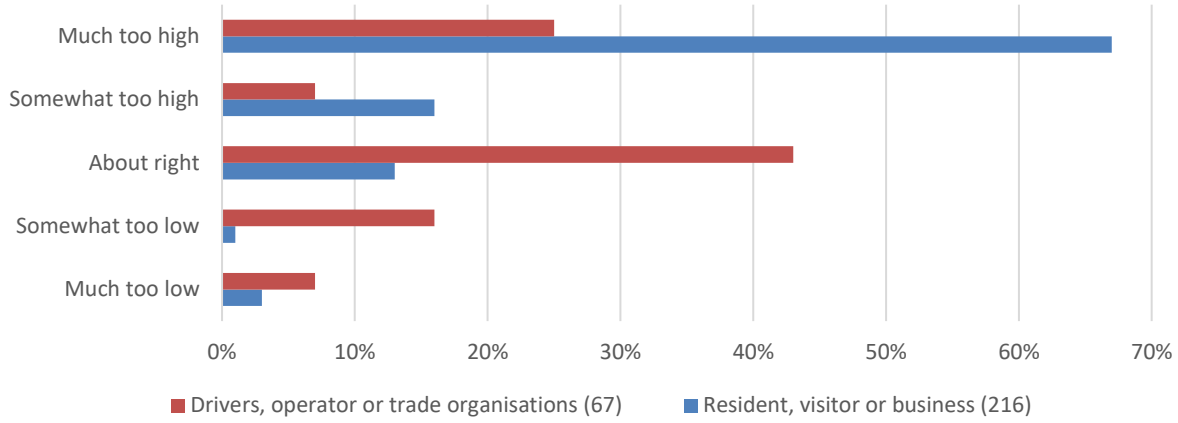
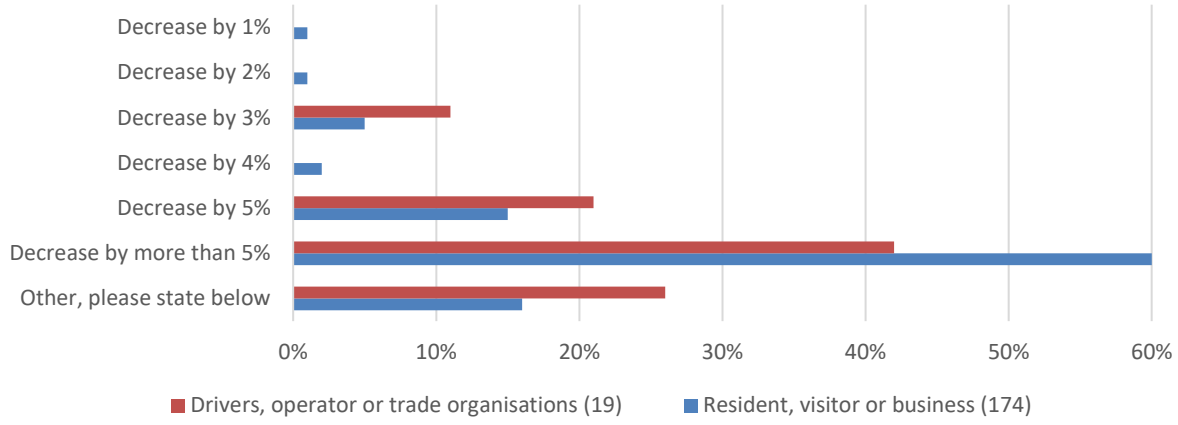
Q6. The current maximum fare for a three-mile journey during the night is £14.98. Do you think this is…



Q7. If you have answered 'Much too high' or 'Somewhat too high', how much do you think the fare should change by?



Q8. If you have answered 'Much too low' or 'Somewhat too low', how much do you think the fare should change by?

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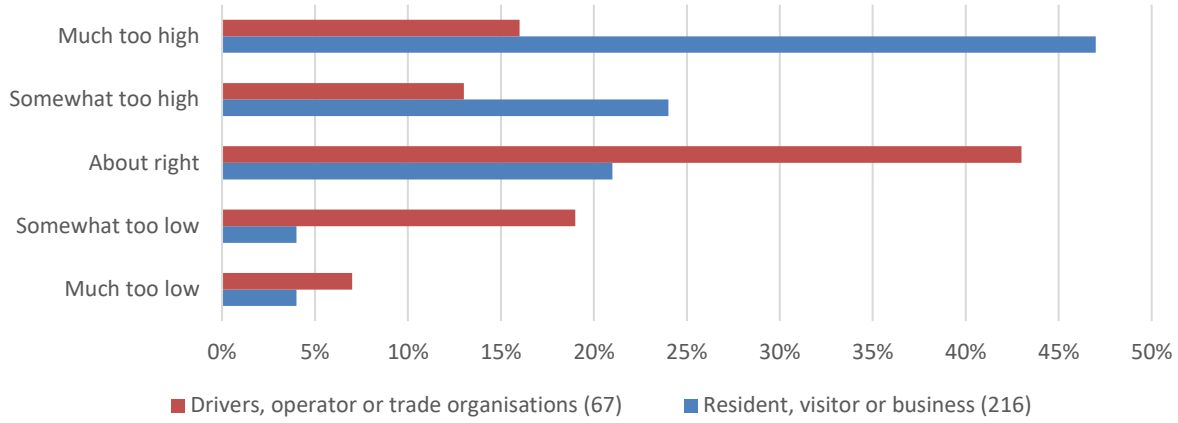
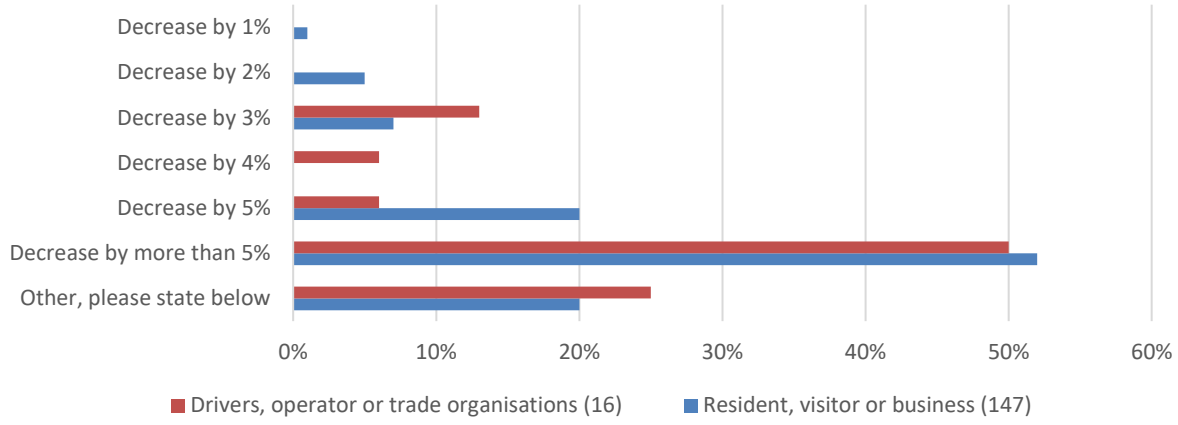
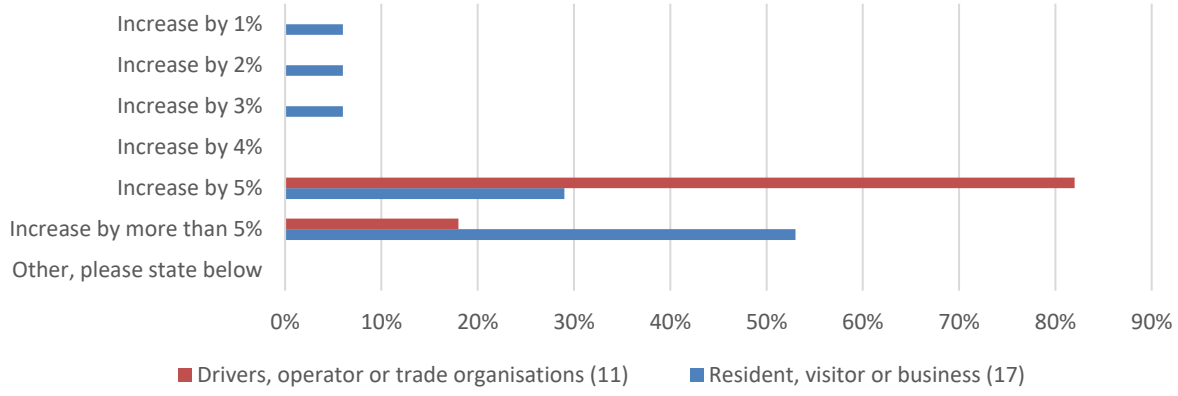
Q10. The current maximum fare for a three-mile journey during Christmas and New Year is £19.98. Do you think this is…



Q11. If you have answered 'Much too high' or 'Somewhat too high', how much do you think the fare should change by?



Q12. If you have answered 'Much too low' or 'Somewhat too low', how much do you think the fare should change by?



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Initial equality impact assessment screening form
This form records an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to a proposal, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.

Directorate	Environment
Service area	Licensing
Proposal being screened	Review of maximum Hackney Carriage fares
Officer(s) carrying out screening	Gareth Bentley
What are you proposing to do?	The purpose of this report is to consider a request to increase the maximum Hackney Carriage fares.
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	To strike a balance between drivers income and affordability of journeys for customers.
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details.	No.

Impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYC's additional agreed characteristics
As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions:

- To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics?
- Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important?
- Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to?

If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be an adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate. You are advised to speak to your directorate representative for advice if you are in any doubt.

Protected characteristic	**Potential for adverse impact**		**Don't know/No info available**
	Yes	**No**	
Age		√	
Disability		√	
Sex		√	
Race		√	
Sexual orientation		√	
Gender reassignment		√	
Religion or belief		√	
Pregnancy or maternity		√	
Marriage or civil partnership		√	
People in rural areas		√	
People on a low income		√	
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		√	
Are from the Armed Forces Community		√	

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Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (for example, disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.	No. Two reviews are underway considering this, with a particular focus on wheelchair accessible vehicles. These are currently under consideration. This report is only to review the maximum fares which protects customers from excessive charges. On 21 February 2023, the Executive of North Yorkshire County Council resolved to waive the fees relating to wheelchair accessible vehicles until such time as an Inclusive Service Plan is completed, and any subsequent changes to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy are implemented. This approach was intended to encourage the provision and retention of licensed wheelchair accessible vehicles in North Yorkshire. The costs associated with applications in respect of wheelchair accessible vehicles have been subsidised by the Council's general fund (not by other licence holders) since 1st April 2023. The formulation of a new Inclusive Service Plan is underway with a view to identifying potential methods of improving service provision for wheelchair users. Its recommendations will be considered alongside the full review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. The proposed review of licence fees recommends a continuation of existing arrangements, including in relation to wheelchair accessible vehicles to make the necessary provision while the policy review progresses.			
Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (for example, partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.	No.			
Decision (Please tick one option)	EIA not relevant or proportionate:	✓	Continue to full EIA:	
Reason for decision				
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)	Callum McKeon			
Date	02/09/2025			

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Initial Climate Change Impact Assessment (Form created August 2021)

The intention of this document is to help the council to gain an initial understanding of the impact of a project or decision on the environment. This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. Dependent on this initial assessment you may need to go on to complete a full Climate Change Impact Assessment. The final document will be published as part of the decision-making process.

If you have any additional queries, which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Title of proposal	**Review of maximum Hackney Carriage fares**
Brief description of proposal	**The purpose of this report is to consider a request to increase the maximum Hackney Carriage fares.**
Directorate	**Environment**
Service area	**Licensing**
Lead officer	**Gareth Bentley**
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	**None**

The chart below contains the main environmental factors to consider in your initial assessment – choose the appropriate option from the drop-down list for each one.

Remember to think about the following;

- Travel
- Construction
- Data storage
- Use of buildings
- Change of land use
- Opportunities for recycling and reuse

Environmental factor to consider	For the council	For the county	Overall
Greenhouse gas emissions	No effect on emissions	No Effect on emissions	No effect on emissions
Waste	No effect on waste	No effect on waste	No effect on waste
Water use	No effect on water usage	No effect on water usage	No effect on water usage
Pollution (air, land, water, noise, light)	No effect on pollution	No effect on pollution	No effect on pollution
Resilience to adverse weather/climate events (flooding, drought etc)	No effect on resilience	No effect on resilience	No effect on resilience
Ecological effects (biodiversity, loss of habitat etc)	No effect on ecology	No effect on ecology	No effect on ecology
Heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape

If any of these factors are likely to result in a negative or positive environmental impact then a full climate change impact assessment will be required. It is important that we capture information about both positive and negative impacts to aid the council in calculating its carbon footprint and environmental impact.

Decision (Please tick one option)	Full CCIA not relevant or proportionate:	√	Continue to full CCIA:	
Reason for decision	This report only considers requests to increase the maximum Hackney Carriage fare. Please refer to the ongoing review of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy which considers the Councils climate change duties.			
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)	Callum McKeon			
Date	02/09/2025			

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North Yorkshire Council

Executive

16 September 2025

Regulatory Services Fixed Penalty Notice Policy

Report of the Corporate Director – Environment

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek approval to harmonise all existing Fixed Penalty Notice charges within the remit of Regulatory Services.

1.2 Inform the Executive Committee of the introduction of Penalty Notices for various animal health and welfare offences and smoke control area offences and seek approval for their use.

1.3 Seek approval to adopt a Penalty Notice Policy.

1.4 For the new agreed Fixed Penalty Charges and Penalty Notice Policy to be implemented from 1 October 2025.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 Prior to the formation of North Yorkshire Council, Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) charges for certain offences were set by legacy district and borough councils. These charges now require harmonisation across the North Yorkshire Council area.

2.2 The Animals (Penalty Notices) Act 2022 has introduced the ability for inspectors to issue Penalty Notices on individuals and businesses who contravene animal welfare law. Although formal adoption is not required, the report seeks approval for use of these within the North Yorkshire Council area.

2.3 The Environment Act 2021 has introduced the ability for local authorities to issue financial penalties for offences relating to smoke emissions from chimneys located in smoke control areas. The report seeks approval for use of these within the North Yorkshire Council area.

2.4 As part of FPN charge harmonisation, it is proposed to adopt a Penalty Notice Policy, which sets out how the Council will enforce the use of Penalty Notices for relevant offences.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 North Yorkshire Council, as a unitary authority, is responsible for the enforcement of various offences for which a FPN can be served, as an alternative to prosecution through the Courts.

3.2 Penalty Notices provide an enforcement option but do not preclude the Council from immediately pursuing a prosecution for relevant offences when it considers that it is appropriate to do so, in accord with the Councils Enforcement Policy.

3.3 Primary legislation (and their associated regulations) allows Local Authorities to set their own penalty charges for specified offences, within set maximum and minimum parameters. They also allow Local Authorities to offer reduced charges for early payment of FPNs. Some FPN charges are set by statute.

3.4 Prior to vesting day, the legacy district and borough councils set the levels of their respective FPN charges. To be fair and equitable to residents across the North Yorkshire Council area, a common approach to FPN charges is required.

3.5 It is also proposed to adopt a Penalty Notice Policy, which sets out the Council's approach to issuing FPN's and Penalty Notices, including the approach for non-payment and specific issues such as dealing with vulnerable adults and children.

4.0 FIXED PENALTY NOTICES CHARGES – ENVIRONMENTAL OFFENCES

4.1 The Council must use its enforcement powers in a manner which is proportionate to risk, expedient and efficient as well as consistent and fair. FPN's can be used by Local Authorities as an alternative to prosecution. Payment of the penalty by the recipient discharges their liability to conviction for the offence for which the FPN was issued. A fixed penalty is not a fine. It does not constitute an admission of guilt but removes the possibility of the creation of a record of criminal conviction.

4.2 FPN's can provide enforcement agencies with an effective and visible way of responding to 'low-level' offences. Officers will look to apply the most appropriate and proportionate penalty considering the circumstances of the case. The Council is not under an obligation to issue an FPN and will consider proceeding straight to Court for more serious offences, such as large-scale fly-tipping or illegal dumping of hazardous waste. In such circumstances, Officers will also consider seizing vehicles used in fly-tipping activities and will work with the Communications Team around publicising successful prosecutions.

4.3 Penalty charges must be set at a level where the perpetrator learns from their actions, is appropriately punished, but ultimately accepts responsibility and pays for the charge, thereby discharging their responsibility to attend Court. It would be counterproductive for all charges to be at levels which persons are unable to afford, and which encourages persons to take their case to Court.

4.4 Fixed penalty charge levels are irrelevant to any fine likely to be imposed by a Court, as at the point of sentencing the Court must consider the Sentencing Council Guidelines. They must consider all mitigating circumstances including an individual's financial status. In some case fines can be considerably lower than the original FPN.

4.5 Some local authorities have taken the approach of setting tiered bands for the level of penalty charge for fly-tipping, with a focus on the amount of waste fly tipped. This is the proposed approach for North Yorkshire, as it enables a proportionate response to offences.

4.6 It is also proposed to set a reduced charge for early payment. The Council costs are the same if the perpetrator pays early or at the end of the payment period. However, it has been demonstrated that an early payment discount encourages prompt payment.

4.7 The proposed introduction date for adoption of the new penalty charges is 01 October 2025. The Council's current and proposed charging structure is detailed in Appendix A. The draft Fixed Penalty Notice Policy is attached at Appendix B.

5.0 PENALTY NOTICES CHARGES – ANIMAL HEALTH & WELFARE OFFENCES

5.1 The Animals (Penalty Notices) Act 2022 introduced Penalty Notices which can be issued to individuals and businesses who contravene animal health and welfare law. These can be issued by local authorities and other competent authorities, in addition to existing enforcement options. The provisions came into effect on 01 January 2024.

5.2 The new regime is aimed at providing a middle ground for regulators, providing options for less serious breaches of animal welfare law, such as technical or administrative offences or where animal health or welfare has not been seriously compromised. Serious breaches of animal welfare rules would still be prosecuted.

5.3 The amount of the penalty is decided on by the inspector issuing the notice and they must have reference to the guidance issued by Defra. The maximum penalty charge is £5,000.

5.4 Penalties under this guidance are determined in a similar way to how a Court would determine any fine on prosecution, but without reference to the person's means (which is an essential element of sentence in the Criminal Courts). The guidance sets out how the inspector should consider those factors and refers to matters such as harm and culpability, mitigating and aggravating factors.

5.5 A copy of the Defra guidance is available on the Defra website.

6.0 FIXED PENALTY NOTICES CHARGES – SMOKE CONTROL AREAS

6.1 Controls on the burning of solid fuels and the emission of smoke were originally introduced by the Clean Air Act 1956. Under this Act, local authorities were allowed to introduce "smoke control areas" in towns and cities in which only smokeless fuels could be burned. This Act has since been replaced by the Clean Air Act 1993 under which new smoke control orders are made and enforced.

6.2 The Environment Act 2021 has amended the Clean Air Act 1993 and introduced the ability for local authorities to issue financial penalties for offences relating to smoke emissions within an area designated as smoke control area. The report seeks approval for use of these within the North Yorkshire Council area.

6.3 Smoke control areas cover urban areas in Skipton and South Craven, Harrogate, Tockwith and Selby, including Sherburn-in-Elmet and South Milford. There are currently no smoke control areas within Hambleton, Richmondshire, Ryedale and Scarborough localities.

6.4 A penalty of £175 for the first offence (statutory minimum), increasing to £300 (statutory maximum) for subsequent offences is proposed. The draft Penalty Notice Policy includes information on the use of these penalties.

7.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

7.1 The use of Penalty Notices and adoption of a Penalty Notice Policy helps deliver the ambitions of the current Council Plan, in particular those related to Sustainable and Connected Places. Specific priorities include ensuring our air, streets, beaches and open spaces are kept clean and attractive by tackling and reducing environmental crime.

8.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 Alternative options have been considered in relation to harmonising the level of FPN charges, taking into account the variances across the Council area:

Option 1 (Recommended):	Align each FPN to the current highest locality, with a moderate increase for some offences.	This appears to be a reasonable and proportionate option at this time. Any reduction in FPN rates in a particular locality may be reported without an explanation of the overall picture for North Yorkshire. This could potentially give the wrong message in those areas.
Option 2	Align each FPN to the current lowest locality.	This would prevent existing lower charges being subject to a sudden large increase. This would mostly affect littering and householder duty of care. However, the result in some areas would be a reduction, as highlighted in Option 1 above.
Option 3	Set all FPN's at the maximum permitted level.	This may give a message that the Council are 'serious' about these offences but is not a recommended approach at this time. If the charges are set too high, the risk is an increase in non-payment rates, particularly in less affluent areas. It is proposed to keep FPN charges at a moderate level while the new Environmental Enforcement Team are established and have a better standard of data on all aspects of enforcement.

9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Penalty Notice regime must not be seen as an additional source of income for the authority and enforcement decisions must not be taken based on the potential to raise income. The use of the receipts of FPNs is set out in legislation and must generally be used for purposes relating to the offence for which the notice is issued. For example, the use of funds from fly-tipping penalty notices is set out in the Environmental Protection Act 1990 as:

- Enforcement against fly-tipping and breaches of household waste duty of care
- Collection and disposal of fly-tipped waste
- The restoration of land affected by fly-tipping

9.2 With regards to animal welfare penalty notices, any proceeds after covering the Council's costs, must be forwarded to the Government's Consolidated Fund.

9.3 Non-payment of some penalty notices does not give rise to the possibility of prosecution, but instead must be pursued as a civil debt against the authority (for example, littering from a vehicle).

9.4 Income arising from the new policy will be closely monitored to inform future budget planning.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Council can set its own FPN charge levels within a specified range, as set out in the relevant legislation (detailed in Appendix A). Statutory limits for certain offences were increased by the Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalty Notices) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2023.

10.2 The Council is now permitted to issue Penalty Notices under the Animals (Penalty Notices) Act 2022 and the Animals (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2023.

10.3 In determining whether it is appropriate to issue a Penalty Notice for animal health and welfare offences, the Authority must have regard to the individual circumstances of the case and the Statutory Guidance issued by the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs, as well as the Authority's Enforcement Policy.

10.4 Although not a statutory requirement, it is proposed to adopt a Penalty Notice Policy to ensure consistency of approach in the use of Penalty Notices and transparency in decision making. This will provide members of the public and businesses with an indication as to how the Council will approach decisions to issue Penalty Notices as an alternative to prosecution.

10.5 Although there is no statutory duty to consult with the public in relation to the issue or the level of monetary charge of fixed penalty notices, a short public consultation exercise was undertaken on the proposed Penalty Notice Policy. The draft document was posted on the Council's website from 28 May 2025 and comments were invited over a 6-week period.

10.6 Two comments were received from members of the public during the consultation period, summarised in Appendix C. No changes to the draft consultation document are proposed.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 An equalities impact assessment screening has been completed and concludes that there is no adverse impact upon protected characteristics. See Appendix D.

12.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Consideration has been given to the potential for any adverse climate change impacts arising from the recommendations. A Climate Change Impact assessment is included at Appendix E.

12.2 A reduction in environmental crime would deliver an increase in the quality of the local environment, a reduction in associated environmental pollution and contamination and associated improvements in public perception of the local environment.

13.0 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

13.1 Setting the FPN levels at the highest allowable amount may send a message to strongly encourage potential offenders not to offend. However, this may also result in a much higher proportion of FPNs not being paid, resulting in potentially higher costs for prosecutions or civil debt recovery.

13.2 Setting the FPN level too low may be seen by some that the Council is not providing enough of a deterrent to those who choose to commit relevant offences.

14.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

14.1 The level of fixed penalty charges for relevant offences should be harmonised across the North Yorkshire Council area and reflect the severity of the offences. Fixed penalties provide enforcement agencies with an immediate, cost effective, and visible way of responding to low-level environmental crimes, and the Government encourages their use by local authorities.

15.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 i) The proposed Fixed Penalty Notice charge levels, as detailed in Appendix A, be approved.

ii) The use of Penalty Notices under the Animals (Penalty Notices) Act 2022 and the Animals (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2023, for animal health and welfare offences, be approved.

iii) The use of Penalty Notices under the Environment Act 2021, for smoke control offences, be approved.

iv) The Penalty Notice Policy, detailed in Appendix B, be adopted.

v) The agreed Fixed Penalty Notice charges and Penalty Notice Policy to be implemented from 1st October 2025.

APPENDICES:
Appendix A – Schedule of Penalty Notice Charges
Appendix B – Penalty Notice Policy
Appendix C – Public Consultation Comments
Appendix D – Equalities impact assessment screening form
Appendix E – Climate change impact assessment screening form

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: Relevant legislation, Regulators Code

Karl Battersby
Corporate Director – Environment
County Hall
Northallerton
6 August 2025

Report Author – Tracy McLuckie, Waste Enforcement Officer
Presenter of Report – Dean Richardson, Head of Regulatory Services

Appendix 1 - Penalty Notice Schedule

Offence	FPN Provision	Statutory Maximum	Proposed	Craven	Hambleton	Harrogate	Richmondshire	Ryedale	Scarborough	Selby	Notes:
Offence relating to animal health and welfare Applicable to: - s.2(2) European Communities Act 1972 - Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 - s.19 Zoo Licensing Act 1981 - Animal Health Act 1981 - Animal Welfare Act 2006 inc. Regulations 12 & 13 - Wild Animals in Circuses Act 2019.	Animals (Penalty Notices) Act 2022.	Whichever is the lower of £5,000, or the maximum fine the offender could be liable to pay if convicted for the same offence EP - Statutory 50%	Determined by inspector, in line with the Act and statutory guidance.								New provision introduced by the Animals (Penalty Notice) Act 2022. Penalty to be determined on a case by case basis and in line with statutory guidance.
Graffiti Criminal Damage Act 1971, s.1(1)	Anti-social behaviour Act 2003, s.43	£500	£150 *EP - £105	£84.80	£106	£150.00 *EP - £90	£80 *EP - £64	£150 *EP - £100	£80	£65	Statutory maximum increased in July 2023 under Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2023
Breach of a Community Protection Notice (within the remit of Regulatory Services) Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, s.48	Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, s.52	£100	£100 *EP - £70	£100	£100	£100 *EP - £60	£100 *EP - £60	£100 *EP - £75			
Breach of Public Space Protection Order (within the remit of Regulatory Services) Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, s.67	Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, s.68	£100	£100 *EP - £70		£100		£100 *EP - £60	£79.50 *EP - £53	£100		
Smoke control area offence Clean Air Act 1993, Part III	Clean Air Act 1993, Schedule 1A	£300 (Statutory minimum £175)	First Offence - £175 Repeat Offences - £300								New civil penalty introduced by the Environment Act 2021. Proposed to set to minimum for first offence and maximum for repeat offences.
Exposing vehicles for sale on a road Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005, s.3	Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005 s.6	£100	£100 *EP - £70					£100 *EP - £75			
Repairing vehicle on road Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005, s.4	Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005 s.6	£100	£100 *EP - £70					£100 *EP - £75			
Failure to produce authority to transport controlled waste (waste transfer notes) Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989 s.5	Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989 s.5B	£300	£300 *EP - £210	£300	£300	£300 *EP - £180	£300	£300 *EP - £180	£300	£300	
Dog fouling Dog (Fouling of Land) Act 1996, s.3	Dog (Fouling of Land) Act 1996, s4	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50			£50	
Prohibition on unauthorised or harmful deposit of waste (e.g. fly tipping) Environmental Protection Act 1990, s.33(1)(a)	Environmental Protection Act 1990, s.33ZA	£1,000	Level 1 - £400 *EP - £280 Level 2 - £1,000 *EP - N/A	£400 *EP - £240	£400 *EP - £240	£400 *EP - £240	£400 *EP - £240	£400 *EP - £240	£400 *EP - £240	£400 *EP - £240	Statutory maximum increased in July 2023 under Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2023 from £400, to £1,000. All districts were set at the previous maximum. It is proposed to impliment a tiered charging structure, to enable a proportionate penalty to be imposed. This tiered approach has been adopted by other Local Authorities. Commercial / businesses
Failure to show waste documents Environmental Protection Act 1990, s.34(1) & s.34(6)	Environmental Protection Act 1990, s.34A	£300 *EP - £180 (Statutory)	£300 *EP - £180	£300 * EP - £180	£300 * EP - £180	£300 * EP - £180	£300 * EP - £180	£300 * EP - £180	£300 * EP - £180	£300 * EP - £180	
Householder duty of care Environmental Protection Act 1990, s.34(2A)	Environmental Protection Act 1990, s.34ZA	£600 (Increased 2023)	£300 *EP - £180	265 *EP - £150	£400 *EP - £200	£265 *EP - £159	£318	£400 EP - £240		£400 *EP - £300	
Offences in relation to domestic waste receptacles Environmental Protection Act, s. 46	Environmental Protection Act, s. 46A		£100 *EP - £70	£80	£100 *EP - £80	£100 *EP - £60	£100 *EP - £60	£63.60	£100	£100.00 *EP - £60	

Offences in relation to commercial waste receptacles Environmental Protection Act 1990, s.47	Environmental Protection Act 1990, s.47ZA	£110	£110 *EP - £77	£110	£106 *EP - £84.80	£110 *EP - £65	£106 *EP - £63.60	£106 *EP - £79.50	£100	£106.00 *EP - £63.60
Littering / Littering from a vehicle Environmental Protection Act 1990, s.87 & s.88	Environmental Protection Act 1990, s.88(1) Littering From Vehicles Outside London (Keepers: Civil Penalties) Regulations 2018	£500	£150 *EP - £105	£150 *EP - £100	£150 *EP - £80	£150 *EP - £90	£85 *EP - £64	£79.50 *EP - £53 From a vehicle: £150 *EP - £100	£85	£79.50 *EP - £53
No signage displayed in smoke free workplace/vehicle / Failure to display required no smoking signs Health Act 2006, s6(5)	Health Act 2006, s9	£200 *EP - £150 (Statutory)	£200 *EP - £150	£200	£200 *EP - £150		£200 *EP - £150			
Smoking in workplace, vehicle, substantially enclosed area / Smoking in a smoke free place Health Act 2006, s.7(2)	Health Act 2006, s9	£50 *EP - £30 (Statutory)	£50 *EP - £30	50 *EP - £30	£50 *EP - £30		£50 *EP - £30			
Abandoning a Vehicle Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978, s2	Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978, s2A	£200 *EP - £120 (Statutory)	£200 *EP - £120	200 *EP - £120	£200 *EP - £120	£200 *EP - £120	£200 *EP - £120	£200	£200	£200

Statutory maximum increased in July 2023 under Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2023 from £150 to £500.
It is proposed to raise the fee to the highest locality level. This will allow for both awareness raising and for the new enforcement service to develop an understanding of the scale of littering offences.

Early Repayment (unless prescribed) is 30% reduction.

DRAFT

Regulatory Services

Penalty Notice Policy

2025

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7. Non-Payment of Fixed Penalties 6
8. Disputes and Appeals 7

Appendix 1 - Penalty Notice Schedule 8

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out how North Yorkshire Council will enforce the use of Penalty Notices for relevant offences, within the North Yorkshire County. It also sets out the penalty amounts for each notice issued by duly Authorised Officers of the Council. In this policy, the term 'Penalty Notice' includes:

- Fixed Penalty Notice
- Penalty Charge Notices
- Penalty Notices
- Civil Penalties
- Final notice of decisions to impose a financial penalty or any other Notice (however it may be described under the relevant legislation for the time being in force or that may come into force in the future), for the purposes of allowing the Council to impose financial penalties.

1.2 This policy covers enforcement action for those offences that could be broadly described as relating to environmental crime, certain anti-social behaviour associated with environmental crime and animal health and welfare offences.

1.3 This policy does not include penalty notices issued by the Council's Trading Standards Service or those outside the remit of the Council's Regulatory Services, including Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued by Parking Services.

1.4 In developing this policy, and through the appropriate use of Penalty Notices, the Council will have regard to the Regulators Code and seek to follow the enforcement principles described in the Council's Enforcement Policy.

1.5 A Penalty Notice is a means to give a person, who is alleged to have committed a relevant offence, the opportunity to pay a fixed amount as a direct alternative to prosecution, and thereby discharge their liability to conviction.

1.6 Should an alleged offender receive a Penalty Notice, they may choose not to accept or pay it, but they may then face prosecution for the original offence. This means that they would have to defend the case in court where there is a risk of being liable for potentially higher financial penalty, plus costs if applicable, on conviction.

1.7 There is no obligation on the Council to offer someone the option of paying a Penalty Notice. Authorised Officers will look to apply the most appropriate and proportionate penalty, having regard to policy and considering the circumstances of the case.

2. General Principles

2.1 Where legislation permits the use of Penalty Notices, the Council will consider the use of them as a direct alternative to prosecution. Examples of where they may be appropriate are:

- To deal quickly and simply with less serious offences
- To divert less serious cases away from the court process
- To deter repeat offences

2.2 Before a Penalty Notice is administered, the Authorised Officer will ensure there is sufficient evidence of the offender's guilt to provide a realistic prospect of conviction. Any subsequent decision to prosecute will be in accordance with the published Code for Crown Prosecutors.

2.3 The current charges are as set out in the schedule to this policy and in setting charges (where these are not fixed in legislation) the Council will have regard to national or other relevant guidance or codes.

2.4 The Penalty Notice charge schedule may be substituted from time to time to reflect amended and updated relevant legislation, particularly in relation to the charge levels. Should there be a need to include new offences, then the default levels as set by relevant legislation will apply, until the charges are considered as above and amendments made to the schedule where appropriate.

2.5 Should a Penalty Notice remain unpaid, the case will be considered for prosecution and proceedings may be issued in the Magistrates' court. Where an offence carries a civil penalty, then the appropriate legislative procedure will be followed.

2.6 Normally the Council will issue a Penalty Notice to first time offenders, for those offences as set out in the schedule. In cases where the offender has a history of committing the same or a similar offence, and the payment of a previous Penalty Notice or the imposition of a financial penalty by a Court has not deterred them from re-offending, then a prosecution will be considered.

2.7 In cases where the offence is deemed to be so serious that the issue of a Penalty Notice would not be considered proportionate, then a prosecution will be considered for a first-time offence. Issues that will be considered relevant when making this decision include, but are not limited to:

- Where there is evidence of widespread and systemic offending.
- Non-cooperation or obstruction of an investigation (any such allegation may also lead to an additional offence of obstruction where the legislation allows).
- Intimidation of witnesses.

3. Issue of Fixed Penalty Notices

3.1 Penalty Notices can be issued in person and by post and should include the following:

- The type of offence and details of the offence.
- When and where the offence took place.
- The amount of the Penalty Notice and details of any early payment discount.
- How and where the Penalty Notice can be paid.
- When the Penalty Notice can be paid in order to discharge any liability for prosecution / or any other appropriate enforcement action.
- How to make representations to the local authority (where appropriate)

3.2 Records, in relation to any Penalty Notices issued, will be kept in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (with regard to the retention, storage, sharing or disclosure of any personal data). This will include:

- Decisions taken at each stage from the issue of a Penalty Notice to payment and/or prosecution.
- The evidence on which the Penalty Notice is based, should the Council decide to prosecute.

4. Specific Offences

4.1 Unauthorised Deposit of Waste - Fly-Tipping

4.2 A tiered approach has been adopted for fly-tipping Penalty Notice charges. This enables a proportionate response to the offence, taking into consideration the circumstances of each case. The levels are as follows:

Level 1	£400	Waste in excess of 1 refuse bag, up to a maximum of 4 refuse bags. One or two bulky items (e.g. white goods)
Level 2	£1,000	Waste in excess of 4 refuse bags Three or more bulky items

4.3 Penalty Notices for the unauthorised deposit of waste provide an enforcement option, but do not preclude the Council from immediately pursuing a prosecution when it considers that it is appropriate to do so, in accordance with the Council's Enforcement Policy. Consideration will also be given to the seizure of vehicles used in fly-tipping activities.

4.3 Animal Health & Welfare

4.4 In determining whether it is appropriate to issue a Penalty Notice for animal health and welfare offences and the amount to be specified in the Notice, the Authorised Officer will consider the factors set out in s4(2) of the Animals (Penalty Notices) Act 2022, namely:

a. the seriousness of the conduct to which the proposed notice relates (the "relevant conduct");
b. the duration of the relevant conduct;
c. any evidence of intention behind the relevant conduct;
d. any evidence of previous acts or omissions by the person similar to the relevant conduct;
e. any action taken by the person to eliminate or reduce any risk of harm resulting from the relevant conduct;
f. any action taken by the person to remedy or mitigate any harm resulting from the relevant conduct;
g. whether the person reported the relevant conduct to the enforcement authority or constable;
h. the conduct of the person after the relevant conduct is drawn to their attention by the enforcement authority or constable.

4.5 The Authorised Officer will also consider the statutory guidance on the use of penalty notices for animal health and welfare offences, issued by the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs, which sets out how to consider the above factors. The guidance also details what information will be included within a Penalty Notice.

4.6 Smoke Control Areas

4.7 Where a local authority is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that on a particular occasion smoke has been emitted from a relevant chimney within a smoke control area declared by an authority, a civil penalty can be issued by the local authority. A civil penalty will be issued to the person liable, who can be the occupier of the building in which the chimney is located.

4.8 For a first offence the statutory minimum financial penalty will be issued, unless it is clear to the Council that no demonstrable attempt has been made to manage smoke emissions, being mindful of council communications before the issue of a penalty notice. In the latter case a maximum penalty will be issued. A maximum penalty will be issued for any repeat offences.

4.9 Where it has been determined that a financial penalty may be appropriate to impose, the Council will follow the statutory guidance on smoke control area enforcement by local authorities, issued by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs.

5. Vulnerable Adults

5.1 If a duly Authorised Officer is of the view that an alleged offender is vulnerable and/or the issue of a Penalty Notice is not in the public interest to proceed, then on-the-spot education may be considered. This may include asking the person to rectify their actions or explaining the consequences of any offence.
Should a duly Authorised Officer have any concerns regarding vulnerability and or public interest, then this should be raised with their line manager before taking any further action.

6. Children and Young People

6.1 Under 10-year-olds
In the case of children below the age of criminal responsibility of 10 years old, the Council will not take any formal enforcement action. A duly Authorised Officer may, where it is considered appropriate, contact the child's parents or guardians, either directly, or through any supporting service the family may have.

6.2 Between 10 and 15 years old
In most cases a Penalty Notice will not be issued. An informal verbal warning would normally be issued for a first offence. This may also include on-the-spot education including an explanation that what they have done is wrong and that it should not be repeated.

Where it is considered appropriate the duly Authorised Officer may report the event to the child's parents or legal guardian, having obtained their details either directly or through any supporting service the family may have.

If it is subsequently decided that a Penalty Notice is suitable, it may be issued to the alleged offender in person, with a parent or legal guardian present. If the Penalty Notice must be issued by post, the alleged offender's parent or legal guardian will be notified at the same time.

6.3 Between 16 and 17 years old
Where it is identified that the offender is 16 or 17 years old, if it is considered appropriate, FPN's may be issued to this age group using the same procedure as for adults.

7. Non-Payment of Fixed Penalties

7.1 When a Penalty Notice is not paid in full within the required time period specified on the notice, then a prosecution for the offence will normally proceed.

7.2 Where an early payment discount is available, this will be specified on the Penalty Notice together with a shorter payment period. The discounted amount will not be accepted for any payments not received within the shorter payment period and in such cases the full amount will be expected to be paid.

7.3 Where the offence carries a civil penalty, then the appropriate legislative procedure will be followed in the event of non-payment.

8. Disputes and Appeals

8.1 Subject to policy, a person contesting a Penalty Notice will be advised that there is no obligation to pay a fixed penalty issued by the Council, but if they fail to pay the penalty, the matter may be pursued through the Courts, where they will be able to argue their case against the action of the Authorised Officer.

8.2 In exceptional cases it may be appropriate to withdraw a Penalty Notice or not proceed to summons on non-payment. Such circumstances may arise where:

a. Information that was not available at the time the Penalty Notice was issued, becomes available, and it is determined that the offence to which the notice relates was not committed; or
b. Where evidence is provided to demonstrate that the notice ought not to have been issued to the person named.

Appendix 1 - Penalty Notice Schedule

See Report Appendix A. Subject to approval.

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Public Consultation – Comments Received

Comment Summary	Appraisal	Changes to draft policy proposed
The proposed penalty of £50 for dog fouling is inadequate. The penalty should be at least £100, with no discount for early payment.	The statutory maximum penalty under the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 is £50.	None
It would be helpful if a fixed penalty notice was issued to “feeders" of Seabirds in towns e.g. Whitby and Scarborough. Having been a resident here now for 13 years, observing the problems of over breeding, fouling and gull attacks, this has increased exponentially in that time. Much of this could be partially alleviated with an active policy of imposing penalties on visitors and domestic householders alike who persist in the un-natural feeding of scavenging sea birds.	North Yorkshire Council is currently working towards adopting a Seagull Strategy in early 2026.	None

OFFICIAL

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Initial equality impact assessment screening form **This form records an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to a proposal, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.**	
Directorate	Environment
Service area	Regulatory Services
Proposal being screened	Penalty Notice Charges and Policy
Officer(s) carrying out screening	Tracy McLuckie
What are you proposing to do?	• Seek approval to harmonise all existing Penalty Notice charges within the remit of Regulatory Services. • Adopt the use of Penalty Charges for specified animal welfare and smoke control offences. • Adopt a Penalty Notice Policy.
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	Prior to the formation of North Yorkshire Council, Penalty Notice charges were set by legacy district and borough councils and have remained at different levels across the County. These charges now require harmonisation across the County, to ensure a fair and consistent approach. Although not a statutory requirement, it is proposed to adopt a Penalty Notice Policy in order ensure consistency of approach in relation to the use of Penalty Notices and transparency in decision making. This will provide members of the public and businesses with an indication as to how the Council will approach decisions to issue Penalty Notices as an alternative to prosecution.
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details.	No

Impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYC's additional agreed characteristics

As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions:

- To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics?
- Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important?
- Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to?

If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be an adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate. You are advised to speak to your directorate representative for advice if you are in any doubt.

Protected characteristic	**Potential for adverse impact**		**Don't know/No info available**
	Yes	**No**	
Age		No	
Disability		No	
Sex		No	

Race		No		
Sexual orientation		No		
Gender reassignment		No		
Religion or belief		No		
Pregnancy or maternity		No		
Marriage or civil partnership		No		
People in rural areas		No		
People on a low income		No		
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		No		
Are from the Armed Forces Community		No		
Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (for example, disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.	No			
Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (for example, partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.	No			
Decision (Please tick one option)	EIA not relevant or proportionate:	✓	Continue to full EIA:	X
Reason for decision	No detrimental impact on equalities.			
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)	*Callum McKeon* *AD Regulation & Harbours*			
Date	1st July 2025			

Initial Climate Change Impact Assessment

The intention of this document is to help the council to gain an initial understanding of the impact of a project or decision on the environment. This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. Dependent on this initial assessment you may need to go on to complete a full Climate Change Impact Assessment. The final document will be published as part of the decision-making process.

If you have any additional queries, which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Title of proposal	Penalty Notice Charges and Policy
Brief description of proposal	• Seek approval to harmonise all existing Penalty Notice charges within the remit of Regulatory Services. • Adopt the use of Penalty Charges for specified animal welfare and smoke control offences. • Adopt a Penalty Notice Policy.
Directorate	Environment
Service area	Regulatory Services
Lead officer	Tracy McLuckie
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	NA

The chart below contains the main environmental factors to consider in your initial assessment – choose the appropriate option from the drop-down list for each one.

Remember to think about the following;

- Travel
- Construction
- Data storage
- Use of buildings
- Change of land use
- Opportunities for recycling and reuse

Environmental factor to consider	For the council	For the county	Overall
Greenhouse gas emissions	No effect on emissions	No Effect on emissions	No effect on emissions
Waste	No effect on waste	No effect on waste	No effect on waste
Water use	No effect on water usage	No effect on water usage	No effect on water usage
Pollution (air, land, water, noise, light)	No effect on pollution	Decreases pollution	Decreases pollution
Resilience to adverse weather/climate events (flooding, drought etc)	No effect on resilience	No effect on resilience	No effect on resilience
Ecological effects (biodiversity, loss of habitat etc)	No effect on ecology	No effect on ecology	No effect on ecology
Heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape	Increases protection of heritage and landscape	Increases protection of heritage and landscape

If any of these factors are likely to result in a negative or positive environmental impact then a full climate change impact assessment will be required. It is important that we capture information about both positive and negative impacts to aid the council in calculating its carbon footprint and environmental impact.

Decision (Please tick one option)	Full CCIA not relevant or proportionate:	☐	Continue to full CCIA:	X
Reason for decision	The use of Penalty Charges may result in a reduction in environmental crime. A reduction in environmental crime would deliver an increase in the quality of the local environment, a reduction in associated environmental pollution and contamination and associated improvements in public perception of the local environment. However, the availability of data relevant to North Yorkshire is limited and a full CCIA would be disproportionate and of limited value.			
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)	Callum McKeon			
Date	01 July 2025			

North Yorkshire Council

Executive

16 September 2025

Report of the Crustacean Deaths Working Group

Report of the Corporate Director - Environment

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek Executive endorsement for the cross-council investigation undertaken by the Crustacean Deaths Working Group (CDWG) into the mass mortality event along the Northeast coast of England in late 2021.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 At Full Council on 17 May 2023, North Yorkshire Council agreed a motion expressing concern at the crustacean die-off events along the North Yorkshire and Cleveland coast in late 2021. The motion asked the Council to work with and support other local authorities in dealing with the unprecedented incident, support the Leader's request to attend and engage with the Dead Crustaceans Collaborative Working Group managed by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council and to continue to use existing regional tourism bodies to promote the North Yorkshire and Cleveland coast.

2.2 In view of similar motions being agreed at the time by neighbouring authorities, a Collaborative Working Group was formed to further explore the reasons for, and response to, the mortality event.

3.0 CRUSTACEAN DEATHS WORKING GROUP

3.1 The Crustacean Deaths Working Group was chaired by Redcar and Cleveland Councillor Philip Thomson and comprised of elected member representation from Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton Borough Councils. The delegates on the Working Group from North Yorkshire Council were Councillors Derek Bastiman, David Chance and Carl Les OBE. The working group was supported by link officers from each of the councils represented, with Hugh Clear Hill acting as the representative from North Yorkshire Council.

3.2 The Working Group met on a regular basis and took evidence from a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives from the fishing community, some government agencies, academics and environmental groups. The final report outlines evidence gathered from stakeholders, government agencies and academic researchers. Some of the recommendations include suggested improvements to environmental monitoring, support for the fishing industry, and enhanced collaboration among stakeholders.

3.3 The final report provides an overview of the evidence collected and sets out the resulting findings and recommendations. The report emphasises the need for a more robust and transparent governance structure for managing the marine environment. The final conclusions also stress the importance of continued vigilance and proactive measures, to protect the marine environment and support local communities.

3.3.1 The nine report recommendations from the Working Group for future action are set out at pages 137 to 141 of the final report, set out at Appendix A. The recommendations are that:

1. *Further research does require to be undertaken in the fields of marine and river ecology and of its management. Defra and Cefas have initiated further research and it is imperative that relevant work be expedited to establish a greater understanding of the coastal environment, the pressures that bear upon it and the management structures that are best fitted to monitor and manage.*

   Reports should be peer reviewed and placed in the public domain in a timely manner.

   All research that is being undertaken by Government agencies, scientific institutions, companies and sponsored individuals should be acknowledged and accessible for reference. The complexity of relationships needs to be simplified so that any future events of a similar nature can be more readily addressed.

2. *The Working Group commends the efforts of the lobster hatchery approach to improve stocks. The work being conducted at hatcheries in Whitby and Bridlington is to be commended and encouraged. Further hatcheries require to be evaluated to ensure that the restocking of lobsters is maintained to support a sustainable future for the inshore fishing industry. Similar efforts to restore the population of crabs should also be explored.*

3. *Evidence received from academics, NEIFCA and the fishing community suggests that there are broad ecological implications from the incident. The Working Group to write formally to government agencies requesting that that the general ocean environment in the region be monitored to assess recovery. It is also recommended that scientific sampling work that is being undertaken in inland waterways in Yorkshire be extended to the River Tees water way catchment area.*

4. *The Working Group to request monitoring of progress made towards the Defra commissioned investigations. In particular, the key line of enquiry relating to preparedness for future incidents.*

5. *Given that the MMO advises 'relevant restrictions may be attached in the form of conditions to marine licenses granted by the MMO following consultation with bodies including the EA.', it is requested that the MMO be required to review current standards to ensure robustness, especially in areas affected by legacy contaminants. Levels of testing related to dredging licensing were advised as being in line with international standards and agreements. The frequency of testing and the periods during which they might be conducted did not appear to be stringent enough in environments where historic contamination had been identified. The deposition sites for dredged materials vary for maintenance and capital dredging. Both permitted distances should be reevaluated where historic levels of pollution have been highlighted and where current bed core sampling suggests potential pollutants, either in singular form or potential interactive form.*

   Strong consideration should be given to ensuring land deposition be prioritised for capital dredging.

6. *The current governance arrangements are incredibly complex. The Working Group recommends that efforts are made to improve collaboration, and a process instigated to ensure that local authorities can productively engage with appropriate stakeholders.*

The current areas of responsibility for the maritime coastal area surrounding the British mainland do need to be reviewed. The number of organisations would appear to be too great. The interaction between such organisations does not appear to be effective.

The perceived lack of synergy experienced during the Group's explorations was not conducive to confidence building or ease of communication and understanding.

A restructuring of the overall maritime management to reduce organisation numbers, better clarify remits, welcome public scrutiny and operate in a robust and timely manner is a requirement in need of prompt action.

7. *The Working Group noted that there were occasionally errors in process administration and some confusion in relation to dredging activity. The Group recommends that attention be given to ensuring robust administrative processes are in place and ready independent audit*

8. *Sampling is only required on a 4-yearly basis, and consideration should be given to increasing the rate in the Tees, especially in view of the industrial legacy of the area. Risk assessments did not take into account the local sites of special scientific interest, which should not be omitted in future assessments.*

   Waterways are dynamic environments that require further understanding, and there is a need to continue to explore water quality. Further engagement needs to be made with all companies responsible for water management.

9. *The Working Group will not be continuing under its existing remit.*

   Although no firm findings have been revealed to confirm the reasons for the Crustacean Die Off the deliberations of the Working Group have identified a real requirement for local authorities to be better advised of maritime matters where land boundaries border coastal or river environments.

   Elected members would benefit from greater awareness of maritime legislation, organisational structure, and effective lines of communication and respective authorities should facilitate.

   There is a perceived need to continue to engage with government agencies. This could be achieved through existing frameworks, but these do need to be robust.

   The reinstatement of the Annual Coastal Forum should be considered, with a appropriate remit.

   A review of how local authorities are involved with and relate to relevant maritime organisations, either through Elected Member or Officer representation.

   Communications with members of the public require improvement. All government agencies and all relevant local authorities should be conscious of that responsibility and seek to be better informed and communicative on matters maritime and environmental.

3.4 A Public Inquiry was formally requested by the Working Group in July 2024, but Defra advised that this process was unlikely to provide substantial new insights given the length of time since the initial incident.

3.5 Following consideration by the Executive and subject to formal endorsement by all of the local authorities involved, the final report will be sent to relevant stakeholders and government agencies, with a request for them to consider how the report recommendations might be implemented.

3.6 Informal discussions have taken place regarding the future of the working group, as to whether it could be reconstituted with a revised terms of reference, or bodies such as the North Yorkshire and Cleveland Coastal Forum could be reformed, to help continue the work already undertaken to investigate and monitor the crustacean die-off situation.

4.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

4.1 The Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee (TEEE O&S) reviewed the final report of the Crustacean Deaths Working Group at its meeting on 11 July 2025.

4.2 In discussing the final report, committee members acknowledged the severe economic impact of the mass die-off on the fishing industry, particularly in the Northeast, where many small-scale fishermen suffered financial losses and have received no government support. It was also noted in contributions that whilst lobster populations are reportedly recovering, crab stocks remain low. In response to this, the final report recommends support for hatcheries and further research into restocking methods to help to support the ongoing recovery.

4.3 Committee members were supportive of the final report and the work that the Crustacean Deaths Working Group had undertaken, along with the proposed next steps, set out above in section 3.5. However, there was frustration at the lack of accountability in the report, as well as the lack of transparency shown from the relevant regulatory bodies. They were also disappointed at the absence of financial compensation for affected communities, drawing comparisons to government support provided during other crises such as Covid-19 and the foot-and-mouth outbreak.

4.4 Following the discussion, the Committee resolved to make the following recommendations to the Executive in considering the final report for endorsement:

- To reiterate the call for financial support for impacted fishermen.
- To fully support the CDWG recommendation for enhanced and more frequent environmental testing.
- To fully support the CDWG recommendation for simplification and clarification of the regulatory oversight.
- That the TEEE O&S committee be able to reconsider the issue upon publication of the pending peer-reviewed university research.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The final report outlines some of the financial impacts of the mass die-off event, particularly in relation to the fishing community, and the report recommendations suggest measures to support the recovery of the local fishing industry.

5.2 There are no direct financial implications specifically for North Yorkshire Council arising from the report. However, future decisions associated with the recommendations of the report or allocating resources may have future financial implications for North Yorkshire Council.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Regulatory bodies and government agencies were engaged with as part of the review process and the final report includes recommendations to enhance collaboration between all stakeholders and increase monitoring beyond the current minimum legal requirements. Neither the working group nor the constituent councils have the power to implement all recommendations themselves, however elected members have worked collaboratively across local authority boundaries in community leadership roles with a view to influencing both local and national stakeholders and policy makers.

7.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 An equality impact assessment was undertaken as part of the Working Group and no negative impacts have been identified on individual human rights, groups or individuals with protected characteristics or other factors.

8.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The working group was established in response to the mass crustacean die-off that took place in late 2021 and concerns about the impact on the local environment and economy. The final report makes suggestions for improving environmental monitoring and supporting the recovery of marine ecosystem.

9.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 It is felt important to seek formal endorsement of the final report at each of the five local authorities represented as part of the Working Group, so that it can be forwarded to relevant stakeholders and government agencies, with a request to consider how the proposed report recommendations might be implemented.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION

10.1 That the Executive endorse the final report of the Crustacean Deaths Working Group.

APPENDICES:
Appendix A: Crustacean Deaths Working Group – Final report (following the investigation into the mass crustacean die-off)

BACKGROUND PAPERS:
Minutes of the meeting of NYCC Full Council on 17 May 2023 – Item 29. Notices of Motion

Karl Battersby
Corporate Director - Environment
County Hall
Northallerton

Covering report authors – Shaun Berry, Head of Sustainability & Environment and Will Baines, Senior Scrutiny Officer, Democratic Services

Crustacean Deaths Working Group

Report following the investigation into the mass crustacean die-off

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Foreword

The mass mortality event involving sea life along the Northeast coast of England in late 2021 was a significant and distressing incident that has had a profound impact on local communities, the fishing industry, and the marine ecosystem.
This report, compiled by the Crustacean Deaths Working Group, represents a comprehensive investigation into the causes, effects, and responses to this event.

The Working Group, comprising representatives from 5 Northeast councils, has worked diligently to gather evidence, analyse data, and consult with experts from government departments, academia and environmental charities to understand the multifaceted nature of the incident.
Our aim has been to provide clarity on the potential causes, assess the impact on the local environment and economy, and recommend actions to improve management of any future occurrences and support recovery efforts.

Throughout this investigation, we have encountered numerous challenges, including understanding the complexity of the marine environment and its governance arrangements, the limitations of existing data, and engaging productively with official stakeholders.
Despite these obstacles, the collaborative efforts of all involved have yielded valuable insights and highlighted the importance of continued vigilance and proactive measures.

This report outlines the findings of our investigation, including the role of potential contaminants, the possible impact of dredging activities, and the responses from government agencies and academic researchers.
It also includes recommendations for improving environmental monitoring, supporting the fishing industry, and enhancing collaboration among stakeholders.

Further to this, the Working Group took evidence relating to the impact of pollution of fresh waterways and marine life other than crustaceans, which it will forward to relevant bodies for further investigation.

We hope that this report serves as a catalyst for positive change, fostering greater awareness and action to protect our marine environment and support the communities that depend on it.
We extend our gratitude to all those who contributed to this review, including the fishing community, academic researchers, government agencies, and local councils.

Together, we can ensure that the lessons learned from this event lead to a more resilient and sustainable future for our coastal regions.

Cllr Philip Thomson,
Chair – Crustacean Deaths Working Group
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council

Cllr Rachel Creevy
Vice-Chair – Crustacean Deaths Working Group
Hartlepool Borough Council

Acknowledgements

The Working Group would like to thank the following for their contribution to the review:

- Mr Stan Rennie, North East Fishing Collective
- Mr Paul Widdowfield, North East Fishing Collective
- Dr Gary Caldwell, Senior Lecturer in Applied Marine Biology, School of Natural & Environmental Sciences, Newcastle University
- Mr David McCandless, Chief Officer, NEIFCA
- Dr Ralf Bublitz, Environmental & Scientific Manager, NEIFCA
- Dr Simon Gibbon, Honorary Professor Department of Materials, University of Manchester
- Professor David Roberts, Department of Geography, University of Durham
- Mr Jerry Hopkinson, Executive Chairman, PD Ports
- Mr Paul Brooks, Harbour Master, PD Ports
- Mr D McCreadie, Former Lecturer in Marine Biology and Oceanography
- Professor Alistair Boxall, Department of Environment & Geography, University of York
- Professor Mike Elliot, Emeritus Professor of Estuarine & Coastal Sciences,
- University of Hull
- Ms Anna Turley MP for Redcar
- Mr Andy McDonald, MP for Middlesbrough & Thornaby East
- Mr Jonathan Brash, MP for Hartlepool
- Mr Chris McDonald, MP for Stockton North
- Ms Lola McEvoy, MP for Darlington
- Mr Luke Myer, MP for Middlesbrough South & East Cleveland
  (See **Appendices 1 & 2)**

Working Group Membership

Membership of the Crustacean Deaths Working Group (to May 2023) was as follows:

Councillor Philip Thomson, Chair	(Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council)
Councillor Rachel Creevy, Vice-Chair	(Hartlepool Borough Council)
Councillor Barlow	(Stockton Borough Council)
Councillor Branson	(Middlesbrough Borough Council)
Councillor Cawley	(Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council)
Councillor Cook	(Hartlepool Borough Council)
Councillor Cowie	(Hartlepool Borough Council)
Councillor Hellaoui	(Middlesbrough Borough Council)
Councillor Holyoake	(Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council)
Councillor Kay	(Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council)
Councillor Saunders	(Middlesbrough Borough Council)
Councillor Young	(Hartlepool Borough Council)

Membership of the Crustacean Deaths Working Group (From July 2023) was as follows:

Councillor Philip Thomson, Chair	(Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council)
Councillor Rachel Creevy, Vice-Chair	(Hartlepool Borough Council)
Councillor Bastiman	(North Yorkshire Council)
Councilor Branson	(Middlesbrough Borough Council)
Councillor Cawley	(Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council)
Councillor Chance	(North Yorkshire Council)
Councillor Earl	(Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council)
Councillor Eglington	(Stockton Borough Council)
Councillor Feeney	(Hartlepool Borough Council)
Councillor Gavigan	(Middlesbrough Borough Council)
Councillor Les	(North Yorkshire Council)
Councillor McCue	(Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council)

The following Link Officers were also involved in the review process:

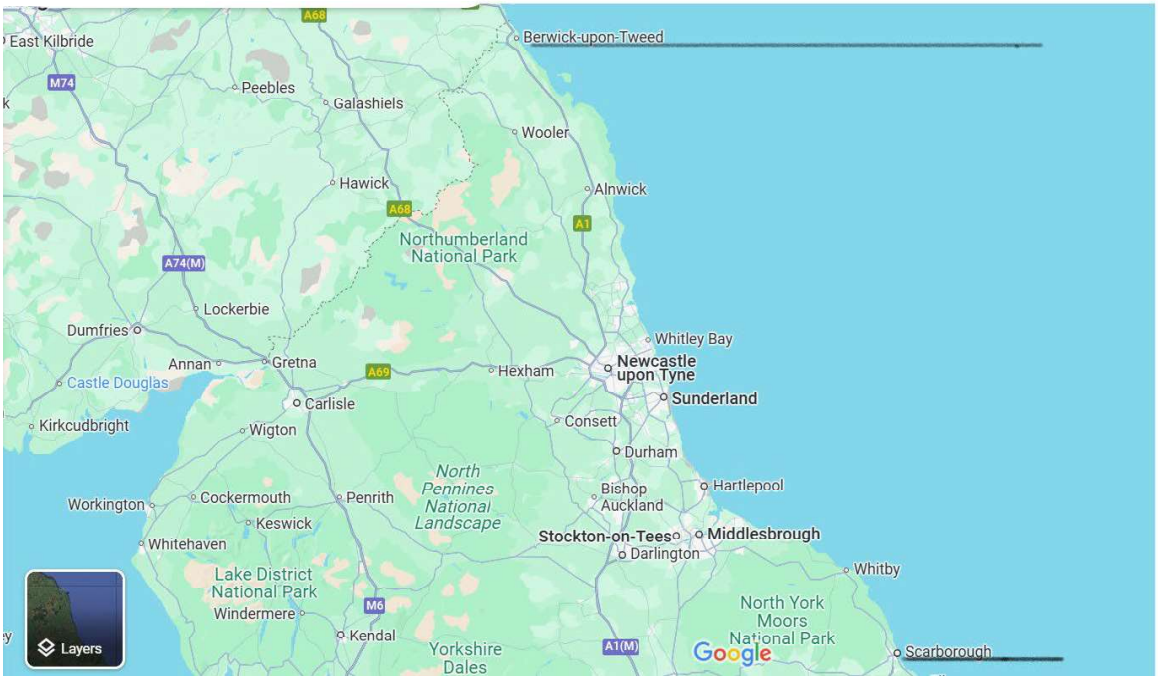
B Carr	(Middlesbrough Council)
H Clear Hill	(North Yorkshire Council)
S Connolly	(Redar & Cleveland Borough Council)
E Grunert	(Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council)
C Leng	(Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council)
R Saunders-Thompson	(Stockton Borough Council)
J Stevens	(Hartlepool Council)

Background

Introduction

1.1 In early October 2021, a large number of dead and dying crustaceans washed-up in various locations along the coastline of Northeast England, extending from Spittal Beach in the north to Scarbrough in the South (see **Figure 1**). Further die-off events and 'wash-ups' have been reported by fishers and members of the public into 2022 and 2023, and an updated log of the events is managed and held by the North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (NEIFCA)

Figure 1



1.2 Wash-ups, observed primarily in 2021, but also sporadically since the initial incident, have primarily involved crustaceans, which have been reported to have displayed unusual twitching and lethargic behaviours, although other species have been involved, including a large number of octopuses on one occasion[1].

National Response

1.3 A multi-agency investigation involving the Environment Agency (EA), the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas), North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (NEIFCA), the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) was initiated following

[1] Independent Expert Assessment of Unusual Crustacean Mortality in the North-east of England in 2021 and 2022 (Defra Commissioned) – January 2023, p.6

the event, and an initial Stakeholder Briefing published on 26 November 2021[2].

1.4 The results of the investigation were published by Defra Group[3] in May 2022. A number of potential causes had been considered, including chemical contamination, licensed dredging activities and those relating to offshore wind farms and aquatic animal disease. It was concluded that the presence of harmful algal blooms (HAB) in the area at the time of the event was significant, but no single causative factor was identified.

1.5 In January 2022, a Marine Pollution Consultant was commissioned by the Whitby Commercial Fishing Association (WCFA) to review relevant environmental data made available by Defra agencies in response to a number of Freedom on Information requests. The data reviewed included chemical analyses of sea water, crab flesh and sediment.

1.6 The WCFA report, published on 31 January 2022, concluded that the HAB hypothesis was not supported by significant empirical evidence, and that high concentrations of the chemical pyridine found in the flesh of crustaceans from the die-off zone was the most likely cause of the mortality event.

1.7 Research undertaken by Newcastle University, commissioned by the North East Fishing Collective (NEFC), investigated the impact of the chemical pyridine on crustaceans. Preliminary findings indicated that the same behaviours were seen within the laboratory as had been reported by fishermen and members of the public who had come across dying crustaceans. Findings from the research were shared with the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Select Committee and were submitted for peer review and publication via academic channels.

1.8 As a result of significant campaigning, EFRA Select Committee held a hearing in October 2022, which was attended by expert witnesses. Amongst a number of conclusions, it was recommended that the Government Chief Scientific Advisor should appoint an expert independent scientific panel to review the evidence for the theories outlined above[4].

1.9 The resulting Crustacean Mortality Expert Panel (CMEP), which was established in December 2022 with experts from a number of academic and scientific organisations, was tasked with assessing the data to ascertain possible causes for the event. The following four causative factors were considered, along with the combination effects of multiple stressors:

a. Disease pathology

[2] Stakeholder Briefing, Crab and lobster deaths along the North East coast - 26 November 2021
[3] Joint agency investigation into Teesside and Yorkshire Coast Crab and Lobster mortalities (Defra) – May 2022
[4] EFRA – Sealife Mortality off the North East Coast (EFRA Select Committee) - Nov 2022

b. Harmful algal bloom
c. Chemical toxicity
d. Dredging

1.10 The panel was unable to identify a single, clear cause for the mortality event, although it was suggested that a novel pathogen was the most likely cause given the geographical spread and sustained time period, the unusual behaviours of affected crabs and the fact that mortality was apparent in only a few species[5].

1.11 The possibility that toxins, and specifically pyridine, were involved in the event was ruled out by CMEP owing to the lack of sufficient toxic material identified in the samples assessed, the wide geographical spread and long duration of the event. This pyridine hypothesis was further challenged in a Royal Society of Chemistry article entitled '*Why there is no evidence that Pyridine killed the English crabs*.'[6]

1.12 The EFRA Committee responded to the report with a request that Cefas undertake further studies in regard to the novel pathogen theory and asked that Government agencies continue to monitor the area and remain on stand-by to respond swiftly in the event of a recurrence of the die-offs. It was also suggested that steps to support the rebuilding of the local potting and fishing communities would help Defra to repair relations.[7]

1.13 On 7 February 2023, the Secretary of State responded to the EFRA Committee to advise that no further analysis would be undertaken by Government, and no further financial support for fishing communities was planned.[8]

1.14 On 3 November 2023, Cefas published a non-peer reviewed paper[9] detailing the development of a quantitative method for determination of pyridine in crustacean tissues, which was used to re-analyse stored samples taken at the time of the die-offs. The report concludes that it is 'unlikely that pyridine, as a single entity, was the cause of the crab and lobster mortalities during autumn 2021.'

1.15 On 5 August 2024, a report was published in Environmental Sciences: Advances, that challenged the hypothesis that pyridine was responsible for the mortality event. It further detailed how mistrust in government agency data, partisan politics and overconfidence in media research which had not been subject to peer review and appropriate scientific scrutiny, played a role[10].

[5] Ibid
[6] A. T. Ford, M.Fitzsimons and C. Halsall*, Environ. Sci.: Adv.*, 2024, DOI: 10.1039/D4VA00006D.
[7] EFRA Correspondence - Report of the independent Crustacean Mortality Expert Panel
[8] Defra Correspondence - Report of the independent Crustacean Mortality Expert Panel
[9] Cefas - Development, validation, and application of a fully quantitative method for the determination of pyridine in crustacean tissues (and application of the same method in sediments) 25.09.23
[10] Why there is no evidence that pyridine killed the English crabs - Environmental Science: Advances (RSC Publishing)

Local Response

1.16 Due to the significant economic and environmental impact of the event, several Northeast Councils, being dissatisfied with the response of Government and the fact that the investigation was concluded before a cause was definitively identified, agreed motions calling for further action. The motions are outlined below.

1.17 **Middlesbrough Borough Council – Council Motion, 6 July 2022**

Toxic chemicals in the River Tees

In recent weeks, there has been a growing concern over the effects of toxic chemicals in the Tees Estuary, which have had a significant impact on crab and lobster numbers.

There has been some dispute between DEFRA and independent experts in respect of this.

In view of the uncertainty over the cause and the potential impact on the marine environment, we ask the council to agree to:

1. Write a letter to the TVCA within 28 days to request that they seek to clarify the existing and conflicting scientific research through the commissioning of a new independent report.
2. Write to the other Councils of the TVCA within 28 days to urge them to work together on addressing these environmental issues through, for example, sending a joint letter to the TVCA expressing our concerns and asking for next steps.
3. To recommend that the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel gives consideration to adding this environmental issue to the scrutiny topics in the work programme.

1.18 **Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, Council Motion, 14 July 2022**

MOVED by Councillor Carl Quartermain and duly seconded by Councillor Philip Thomson:-

“Redcar & Cleveland Council believes that much more needs to be done to investigate the reasons for the mass death of sea creatures found on our coast in the latter part of 2021 and more recently.

Redcar & Cleveland Council also believes much more support should be given to our local fishing industry which has been adversely affected by the consequent radical reduction in fishing stock.

Since October last year dead crustaceans have been found on our beaches along with, the possibly associated, deaths of seal pups and porpoises.

The report of the Government Joint agency investigation into Teesside and Yorkshire Coast Crab and Lobster mortalities was published in May 2022 and concluded that as healthy crabs and lobsters were now being found the investigation was closed.

Redcar & Cleveland Council believes:

a) The decision to close the investigation was premature and demands that the Government re-open it as a matter of urgency to consider why the crustacean deaths continue.

b) A pertinent local investigation also be instituted as a matter of urgency, making every reasonable effort to understand and address this devastating incident.

c) That the Government proposal to support to the local fishing industry via the existing Seafood Fund is inadequate and calls on them to provide proper compensation for the lost income and livelihoods caused by this crisis."

d) to provide proper compensation for the lost income and livelihoods caused by this crisis.

e) That the possibility of creating a coastal hatchery to replenish crustacean stocks should be investigated."

1.19 **Hartlepool Borough Council – Council Motion, 14 July 2022**

Our fishing industry has been decimated since the Autumn of 2021 where thousands of deceased and dying crustaceans were washed up on the beaches in our region. Our fishermen and women have been unable to justify the costs of fuel to put to sea, and several of Hartlepool's fishing fleet have been advertised for sale.

It is unlikely that the area will recover from this environmental disaster in the short term.

We believe that the reports by Defra were flawed, given the independently commissioned report concluded so differently from the official reports.

The timing of this, with works beginning on piling around the Teesworks site, demolition works on site, and with dredging in and around the River Tees is really concerning and residents, fishermen and politicians and people from Whitby to Hartlepool, are worried and need reassurance as to what really happened, and action to resolve it.

Council therefore resolves to:

- Request the appropriate bodies (which should include EA, Cefas, NEIFCA, MMO, FSA and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), Teesworks and the TVCA), attend an appropriate public meeting, with councillors and interested members of the public present, to explain the discrepancies, and explain what action or recommendations can, or have been taken to support the future of our fishing industry.

- Refer to Economic Growth and Regeneration Committee to explore how to regenerate this vital and traditional industry in our town.

- Write to the Minister of State for the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, to seek an independent investigation into this environmental and economic disaster"

Signed: Councillors Harrison, Brash, Allen, Boddy, Clayton, Creevy, Feeney, Hall, Hargreaves, Howson, Morley and Prince.

1.20 **Stockton Borough Council – Executive Scrutiny Committee, 15 November 2022**

Scrutiny of Crustacean Deaths

Officers presented an update on the proposed joint working arrangement with Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council in relation to their motion concerning crustacean deaths off the Northeast Coast. Redcar & Cleveland's Adults, Wellbeing and Heath Scrutiny and Improvement Committee had proposed an informal joint arrangement, whereby political and officer representatives from each Council would meet to provide an opportunity to share collective insight and evidence and pool resources in terms of taking the issue forward. The progress of the joint arrangement could then be fed back into each Councils own formal governance arrangements. It was proposed that the Chair of the Place Select Committee would be the most appropriate Member to represent Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council in any joint arrangement.
Members voted in favour of the recommendation outlined in the report.
AGREED that –
1. The report be noted
2. That the Chair of the Place Select Committee (with substitute permitted) be appointed to the informal joint scrutiny arrangement looking into crustacean deaths off the Northeast Coast.

1.21 **North Yorkshire Council – Council Motion 17 May 2023**

This Council notes with concern:

1. The unexplained die-offs and wash-ups of crabs, lobsters, prawns, clams, scallops, mussels and some species of fish along the North Yorkshire and Cleveland coast since October 2021 and the long time that it could take to rebuild marine life and crustacean stocks.
2. The significant reduction in the catches of edible crabs and other crustaceans, as reported by the Northeast fishing communities and the impact that this has had on local people and businesses and on the wider local economy.
3. The circulation of unsubstantiated claims about dredging to the detriment of the local community.
4. The latest Independent Expert Assessment of Unusual Crustacean Mortality in the North-east of England in 2021 and 2022, which was compiled by a panel of independent experts convened by Defra's Chief Scientific Adviser and dated 17 January 2023, being inconclusive as to the cause of the die-offs.

Therefore, this Council calls on the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to:

1. Support the local economy and the local community at this difficult time, help in securing financial compensations for the fishing industry as a result of the loss in earnings incurred, and assist in arranging the necessary investment needed to rebuild marine life and crustacean stocks in the affected areas.
2. Create and fund a dedicated task force of local and national stakeholders and experts to continually monitor and investigate the situation and its impact on the local economy and the local community, and to recommend and oversee the implementation of remedial action. Such a task force would include representatives from North Yorkshire Council and other local and combined authorities.
3. Reconvene the panel of independent experts immediately after new evidence emerges.
4. Use existing national tourism bodies to promote the North Yorkshire and Cleveland coast.
5. Convene a Public Inquiry with powers to compel testimony and the release of all forms of evidence in order to address public concern about this issue.

Furthermore, North Yorkshire Council will:

1. Work with and support other local and combined authorities in dealing with this unprecedented incident.
2. Support North Yorkshire Council Leader's request to attend and engage with the Dead Crustaceans Collaborative Working Group that is managed by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council.
3. Continue to use existing regional tourism bodies to promote the North Yorkshire and Cleveland coast

Proposer – Cllr George Jabbour

Seconder – Cllr Paul Haslam

1.22 On 22 July 2022, the Chair of the Adults & Communities Scrutiny & Improvement Committee at Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council invited Defra to attend a meeting to explain the situation. Defra declined to attend but provided a written response – see **Appendix 3**.

1.23 The Leader of the Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council wrote to the Secretary of State in September 2022 to express dissatisfaction with Government's response to the event, and a reply was received in October 2022 to advise that, although the initial investigation was closed, the scientific community was undertaking ongoing analysis of data. See **Appendix 4.**

1.24 In mid-October 2022, Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council was invited to submit evidence to the hearing of the EFRA Committee into the event. The Committee Chair (Scarborough and Whitby MP, Sir Robert Goodwill), advised that:

> "We need to establish what is causing these disturbing events. There have been conflicting theories about the reason for the deaths of the crabs and lobsters. The Government has attributed the cause to a marine 'algal bloom', while others have argued that the phenomenon is caused by pollution linked to dredging. The session will look at the different explanations for the cause of the deaths, what can be done to prevent a recurrence and its impact on local communities. They have implications for coastal communities in North Yorkshire and Teesside – not least, of course, those engaged in or dependent on the fishing industry. But there could also be wider environmental and economic implications with lessons to be learned."

1.25 Evidence submitted by the Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council to the EFRA Select Committee hearing is attached at **Appendix 5**.

1.26 On 24 January 2023, the Chair of Hartlepool Borough Council wrote to the Secretary of State and the Chair of the EFRA Committee supporting the outcomes of the Select Committee investigation and requesting that the recommendations are supported. A response was received from the Minister for Food, Farming and Fisheries on 16 March 2023 outlining the Government's position. See **Appendices 6 & 7.**

Methodology

1.27 Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council contacted all Tees Valley Local Authorities to establish their desire to work together and their willingness to participate in a joint scrutiny arrangement. As a result, the Crustacean Deaths Collaborative Working Group was formed in November 2022, with representation from Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton Borough Councils. Representatives from North Yorkshire Council joined the Working Group in July 2023 in view of the impact the events have had along to the coast to Scarborough.

1.28 At an initial meeting in January 2023, Members undertook an initial scoping exercise to determine the following:

- The objectives of the review
- Key questions/evidence
- Identification of participants
- A timescale for the review
- Officer Support

1.29 A Terms of Reference for the review were agreed on the basis of this exercise and are attached at **Appendix 8.**

1.30 The following organisations / witnesses were invited to provide evidence to the Working Group over the course of the investigation:

- **Defra**
- **Environment Agency**
- **Marine Management Organisation** - provided a written response, see **Section 5**)
- **North-East Fishing Collective**
- **North Eastern Inshore Fisheries Conservation Association**
- **PD Ports**
- **Sir Robert Goodwill, Chair - EFRA Select Committee** (Declined to attend a meeting)
- **Dr Gary Caldwell, Newcastle University**
- **Dr Simon Gibbon, The University of Manchester**
- **Professor David Roberts, Durham University**
- **Tees Valley Mayor** (No response to invitation)
- **Health and Safety Director, Teesworks** (Declined to attend a meeting)
- **Sir Simon Clarke MP, Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland** (No response to invitation)
- **Jacob Young MP, Redcar** (Declined to attend a meeting)
- **Surfers Against Sewage** (attendance delayed beyond the timescale of the review)

Meeting Dates

1.31 Meetings of the Crustacean Deaths Working Group took place on the following dates:

6 January 2023 – to agree a Terms of Reference and take background information.
3 February 2023 – to consider the Joint agency investigation into Teesside and Yorkshire Coast Crab and Lobster mortalities and to take evidence from the North East Fishing Collective.
3 March 2023 – to take evidence from Dr Gary Caldwell.
31 March 2023 - to take evidence from NEIFCA representatives.
16 June 2023 – interim evidence review following local elections.

1 September 2023 – to take evidence from Dr Simon Gibbon and NEIFCA representatives.
13 October 2023 - to take evidence from PD Ports.
3 November 2023 – to take evidence from Dr G Caldwell and Professor D Roberts.
7 December 2023 - to take evidence from the North East Fishing Collective.
8 January 2024 – Visit to Whitby Lobster Hatchery
10 January 2024 – PD Ports River Tees Tour
12 January 2024 – to take evidence from Mr D McCreadie, Former Senior Lecturer in Marine Biology and Oceanography
January to June 2024 - Timescales for proceedings agreed to undertake a review after 6 months of the initial meeting date, in January 2024. This was extended to accommodate a break in the work due to local elections in May 2024, Tees Valley Mayoral elections and a General Election which took place in May and July 2024 respectively, with both events causing further delay to progress due to pre-election period restrictions on publicity. The Working Group initially agreed to publish findings and recommendations in March 2024, but agreed to continue the work for a further 6-month period to allow government agencies further opportunity to engage and in order that peer-review work on relevant reports is completed.
June to November 2024 -The Group agreed to complete its review in November 2024, following a number of meetings to receive evidence from community organisations and academic professionals.

Summary of main background documents

1.32 The following documents were made available to Members in order to inform the review:

- Joint Agency Investigation into Teesside and Yorkshire Coast Crab and Lobster Mortalities, Defra (05.22)
- Mass Mortality of marine species along N.E coast of England: Briefing Paper to Whitby Commercial Fishing Association (8 March 2022)
- EFRA Committee – Sealife Mortality off the North-East Coast (1.11.22)
- Defra Response to EFRA consideration of Sealife Mortality off the North-East Coast (15.11.22)
- Independent Expert Assessment of Unusual Crustacean Mortality in the North-East of England in 2021 and 2022 (17.01.23)
- North-eastern IFCA Tees and North Yorkshire Stock Monitoring Report (07.23)
- Dead crustaceans and marine life off the Northeast coast: cause, impact and support for our fisherfolk (produced by the office of Jill Mortimer, MP for Hartlepool).
- Development, validation and application of a fully quantitative method for the determination of pyridine in crustacean tissues (and application of the same methods in sediments), Cefas (25.09.23)
- Stakeholder Briefing: Crab and lobster deaths along the North East coast 26 November 2021

- Crab and lobster deaths along the North East coast – briefing document February 2022
- Crab and lobster deaths along the North East coast – briefing document March 2022
- Relevant Correspondence, including:
    - Sir Robert Goodwill Letter re EFRA findings (**Appendix 9**)
    - Secretary of State response to EFRA findings (**Appendix 10**)
    - Minister response regarding CMEP creation (**Appendix 11**)
    - Sir Robert Goodwill response regarding CMEP (**Appendix 12**)
    - Minister response regrading CMEP findings (**Appendix 13**)

North East Fishing Collective

Evidence heard at a meeting of the Working Group held on 3 February 2023.

The following information was relayed by Mr Stan Rennie and Mr Paul Widdowfield of the North East Fishing Collective, a co-operative of commercial fishing associations, angling societies and stakeholders from along the North-East coast.

2.1 Both representatives have had many years' experience of working in the commercial fishing industry, and long family histories of commercial fishing and employing local people to work in the industry.

2.2 During the final week of September 2021, the discovery of dead and 'twitching' crabs and lobsters was noted amongst the fishing community, alongside a massive reduction in catch, which continued into the first week of October. This was immediately followed by the wash-up of dead and dying, twitching crustaceans. Die-offs have been ongoing since this date.

2.3 The North East Fishing Collective was created in December 2021 in response to the sea life mortality event, with significant support received.

2.4 Both representatives advised that the event had impacted extremely negatively on the mental health and livelihoods of members of the fishing community, with it being described as 'a fight for survival for our ecosystem, community and tourism.'

2.5 In the opinion of the local fishing community, dredges are 'badly managed' with short falls in the process for awarding a dredging licence.

2.6 The fishing community had experienced a lack of response from the Environment Agency and £30,000 had been raised in order to commission an investigation into the event by an independent marine biologist. The report concluded that dredging had caused resuspension of polluted sediments into the marine environment, particularly pyridine, which was linked to the mass mortalities in the initial work undertaken by DEFRA and reported on by Tim Deere-Jones.

2.7 NEFC advised that, of recent sampling taken over a 3-mile radius, only 2 showed no evidence of pyridine. The Working Group was unable to validate this information.

2.8 Discussing the distances impacted by the event, Mr Rennie advised that die-offs had been experienced along the North-east coast from Seaham to Whitby and advised that he would not put anything caught in the die-off zone into the food chain.

2.9 Lobster catch was reported to be down by roughly 80%, even outside of the die-off zone, but the fishing community do not believe that the current marine environment is safe to re-stock.

2.10 The North-East Fishing Collective are keen to see comprehensive, deep sampling and testing of the Tees bed.

Evidence heard at a meeting of the Working Group held on 7 November 2023.

Stan Rennie and Paul Widdowfield provided an update on the work of the North East Fishing Collective (NEFC).

2.11 The River Tees was at the forefront of the Industrial Revolution, and is highly polluted with a vast chemical industry around its banks. It has left a legacy of pollution and byproducts from industry, including pyridine, coal tar products, weedkiller, herbicides and pesticides to name a few.

2.12 Discussions with previous employees suggest that most byproducts were disposed of in the river. Potentially 5,000 tonnes of untreated chemical waste a day were dumped in the river over 3 decades between the 1950's and 1970's [11], with many industries running a pipeline outlet to the river for disposal of byproducts. This is in addition to sewage release over the centuries.

2.13 Much of the toxic sediment that has built up is trapped in and under the sediments that make up the river bottom and banks. The NEFC believe that 'locked in' materials/pollutants were dredged from the riverbed and banks and released into the river, air, SSI wetlands and dumped at sea. This material should not have been dredged in such volume and disposed of at sea, as has been the case over the previous few years.

2.14 The NEFC have never suggested that the die off was caused by only one chemical, but by a toxic cocktail in the sediment. It is envisaged that the final core results will evidence this in upcoming research results. Scientific investigations have shown that pyridine alone, found in high levels of the tissue of dead shellfish by government agencies, is deadly in very minute amounts to shellfish (via the receptors in their legs). There are potentially many more deadly substances in the sediment.

2.15 Furthermore, the recently established testing procedure for pyridine shows that the amounts present in old tissue is still potentially high enough to cause the die offs.

[11] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/7103228.poisonous-river-literally-rose-dead/

North East Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (NEIFCA) Stock /Landings Report, September 2022

2.16 The latest report was more welcomed by the NEFC, as it did not contain super crabber landings into Hartlepool, which were caught from outside the die-off zone and bolstered landings data, giving a false impression that overall, catches weren't as badly reduced as they were for the local fleet.

2.17 NEIFCA have admitted that there is insufficient data available to give a true picture of the stock available in or around the die-off zone, either before, or after the mass mortality event. Further to this there is no comparative information to give a geographical break in terms of the 3/6 mile demarcation areas.

2.18 As a Conservation Agency, NEIFCA should have led from the front to investigate cause of the die-offs, but were at the rear, led by inadequate government agency investigations. None of the agencies involved in the investigations appear to have either the will or funding to find the true cause of the die-off episodes, and fishers were told to find their own evidence. The Northeast Fishers, public and marine environment deserve better from the government.

2.19 NEIFCA have advised that plans were now in place for a fast response in the event of future wash-ups of dead sea life. The experience of NEFC and members of the public suggests that Cefas does not respond in a timely manner, as promised. There are instances where the public have cleared dead and dying sea life from the beaches, before Cefas have arrived. Members of the public have been asked for samples of the sea life by Cefas officers.

PD Ports Evidence

2.20 In their presentation to the Working Group, PD Ports advised that the legislative protocol on testing periods cannot be altered, and to do so would be frowned upon by the dredge licence provider and British Ports. It was, however, mentioned that the statutory 3-yearly sample test date was brought forward by a year to 2022, immediately following the Orca dredge. NEFC have asked that the following be noted:

- Was the 3-yearly sampling regime brought forward to 2022 in order to ensure that toxic material had not had time to make its way up the river following the Orca dredge?
- Was the 3-yearly sampling regime brought forward to a date prior to the Freeport dredge, in knowledge that the dredge might contaminate the area with toxic sediment?
- Was the Freeport dredge area known to be part of the recognised and mapped industrial 'fall-out' areas. Was it part of the dock reportedly containing toxic sediment and filled in?

- Why was there no mention of the Landslip into the Channel, as stated at the EFRA Committee?

- PD Ports advised that dredged material contains mostly sand washed in with the tides. Evidence collected by NEFC shows new surface contamination, including black stinking sediment.

2.21 NEFC expressed deep concerns that samples taken for testing prior to capital dredges are not taken by an independent company, and that sampling and testing generally is not being done according to protocol. Samples for the recent Freeport capital dredge, according to eyewitnesses, were taken by the company contracted to perform the construction work and only taken at distances of 100m. The samples taken were 'surface scrapings' and not taken to the depth of the intended dredge.

2.22 In the opinion of the North East Fishing Collective, the sampling regime is insufficient in terms or frequency and should be undertaken with every dredge rather than triennially.

Fishing Community - Catch Updates (written evidence provided by NEFC on 07.12.23)

After the Migratory summer fishery, we're back to the low local stocks. We still are seeing die off's- Paul and I recorded very small green crabs- summer stock, no doubt seeded from the Farnes, dying in Victoria Dock about 3 weeks ago, reported it to NEIFCA and EA, with footage- all on their backs- twitching, dying or dead.

Just like the footage we have at 1 year earlier of lobsters in the Dock dying the same way. We get sparks of life- they seem to wash up dead and dying before they grow very big.

There has been no evidence of v-notched lobsters and no berried hens, which suggests that the residential stock has gone.

S Rennie & P Widdowfield

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1. *There has been a poor start to the winter prawn fishery, catches through October were low, but there was some Squid and Fish to make up for some of it but the grounds were still saturated with juvenile Haddocks.*

Storm Babet and other recent bad weather seems to have put paid to the Haddocks and now the prawns are out with some good catches across the fleet just the usual battle against bad weather to get days in. One thing is still prevalent there is nothing inside of 6nm, this could be down to the amount of rain coming down the river as the sea looks brackish out to about 5nm and there's been plenty of trees and crap out there.

A fisher has had a couple of goes in the Mudhole for nothing which given how long it's been left alone/little fished is not a good sign. The sample of Prawns we are catching out over are very good in size with very little small amongst it although the other boats might be seeing different to me as I fish a 100mm net not a 70/80mm net.

It may be the case that the larger prawns we fish for in the inshore grounds have relocated out over like we saw after the first die off, either way you'll not see anyone fishing inside the Dumps/back of the Slag and the Mudhole is still just a waste of time. A lot more fuel, higher costs, risks fishing away from what was out traditional grounds

2. *In the Die Off zone, we're having to haul and fish a lot more gear than we have ever worked, with the catch return about 70% overall where they should be. Starting to see a few signs of very small brown crabs probably from outside the area, so hopefully in a couple of years, things might start to get back to somewhere that they should be, as long as there isn't any more poison let out of the river.*

3. *160 Pots/4 fleets/40 a fleet in Longscar for a 2 day soak, 5 lobsters. No crabs just starfish. Waste of time. Further Off, 1 or 2 crab a fleet and the same in lobsters again a waste of time. Having to work a lot of gear to get a lot less than the minimum wage.*

Hartlepool Fishers

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1. *I fished May to present with 120 pots. Brown crabs were non-existent inside 2 mile and just a few outside 2 mile. No velvets anywhere. Lobster catch was okay surprisingly.*
Close in, some pots were completely smothered in brittlestars (I have videos/pics to prove it), starfish completely covered the scar tops, replacing the kelp which is also non existent. Some signs of very small velvets and brown crab (20-30mm) Sep-Oct.
These findings can be taken as from R&TFA as a whole (15 vessels working this year).

2. *I fish from Redcar were life is returning?, there are large numbers of small Velvet crabs and a smaller amount of small edible crabs there are large amounts of shrimp on the pots. still not many sellable edible crabs but lots of juvenile Lobsters and a decent amount of sized lobsters. there is still a lot of starfish and sea urchins on the ground.*

Redcar Fishers

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1. *James Cole, chair Whitby commercial fishing assc , vice chair anglo-scottish fpo . This year has seen a drop in crab landings by 50 percent on last years figures that's at port level and fpo recorded level , lobster catches in the*

Whitby to Hartlepool area are down 25 percent on last year . Velvet populations inshore are very slow to recover after the mass die-off, brown crab on the inshore grounds from Whitby to Hartlepool have been poor with the only showing of crab 6miles out from Whitby, an abundance of starfish and small whelks on the grounds (which are scavengers),we have lost 6 members of our assc this year that have been forced to sell up a trend that our industry cannot afford . Yours sincerely James

2. *Regarding the current state of crab and lobster stocks after the dredging incidents and the long lasting die off zones.*
The last 3 months I have started to see a new growth of small velvet crab the size of a 10p piece at the most Southern end of the gear Robin Hoods Bay, but as you get further north than that there are less and less of them, lots of little whelks.
4 mile off that South end more bigger velvets. There is definitely a wave of poison that killed everything in its path. It will recover but how long it would take to get back to normal- God only knows.

Whitby Fishers

In Summary

2.23 Fishers believe that their vast knowledge and experience of the marine environment was ignored by government agencies, who lacked serious commitment to a proper investigation and have little knowledge of the local envrionment. The EFRA Committee findings and Government Panel Investigation reports were meaningless, with a lack of consultation with the fishing community and disregard for all available evidence.

2.24 The NEFC believe that they, along with the independently commissioned scientists, have been a target of unprofessional attacks and attempts to discredit them. Photographic evidence provided by the NEFC was also used errantly to prove the algal bloom theory.

2.25 A legal challenge to the government in relation to the algae theory was taken off course a matter of days before the deadline to reply to the NEFC Legal Team by the expert investigation panel, which agreed that a novel pathogen was potentially the cause.

2.26 NEFC believe that, if a novel pathogen had been considered a serious possibility, the government and agencies would have been forced to close the Northeast Sea Lanes, Ports and Shipping.

2.27 The industry maintains that compensation has never been an issue, merely a desire to see the health of the marine ecosystem return. Lots of boats have been lost to the local ports due to the die-offs, and owners, skippers and crew have lost investments, lifeplans, jobs, their futures and their way to provide for their families.

2.28 NEFC believes that the government should recognise the struggles of the fishing communities and look at compensation across the board, with

equal payments irrespective of turnover. Crew compensation and boat decommissioning should be offered to NEFC Members who have and are still being affected, which include the small number of NEFC members prawning close to the Die Off Zone, and the full potting fleet who have no choice but to fish in the die-off zone. This would allow fishers who are struggling, to get out without finding a buyer, or losing investments.

2.29 The NEFC Group, along with the fishing industry, public, coastal communities, beach users, tourists, environmental protection campaigners and Councillors will continue to campaign to force changes to dredging licencing, dumping of toxic material at sea, testing and testing frequencies, and environmental legislation and to hold government agencies to account in the future.

Additional Evidence - 4b Query

2.30 On 8 September 2024, Mr Rennie contacted the Working Group to advise that the following request for information had been received from the MMO:

Reported Change in Stock

We would like your knowledge and expertise to try to understand the reported change in nephrops stocks in 4b.

- *Are you noticing any change or decline in nephrops stocks in 4b?*
- *What factors do you think are contributing to the change in nephrops stocks in 4b?*
- *What can the MMO do to assist you (in regard to a change in nephrops stock)?*

If you can be as specific as possible and send through any photos or videos, this would be really useful!

(Sent to regional fisheries groups by MMO, via email, on 04.09.24)

2.31 Mr Rennie provided the following response in a personal capacity:

Just My view, if it counts for anything:-

The decline in nephrops populations and catches in the local Hartlepool traditional waters in 4b,

Is 100% locally, caused dredging toxic sediment removed from the Tees, from the September 25th, 2021 die off episode, onwards, starting die offs of shellfish within 2 hours of the ORCA dredge beginning.

Joining the other shellfish and lots of marine life forms ecocide, from this dumping at sea onwards.

The local grounds are decimated.

If you view the historical towing tracks of shields boats as well as Hartlepool trawlers, they used to come southwards, fishing from the Tyne, meeting Hartlepool boats fishing local grounds and northwards.

Since the die off date, they only appear to fish north, and the Hartlepool boats mainly have to go north out of the die off zone, or further offshore. The dumps and local grounds lost.

Since 25/9/21 Orca dredge being dumped at sea, on the 3 mile dumps, then *ignoring the concerns of the industry NEFC members of the Freeport dredge being dumped on the 6 mile dumps*

The Hartlepool shellfish fleet, over half gone to the wall and sold up, and the prawn fleet similar, with another 3 boats up for sale now.

Some Fishers increasing effort to try and survive, while watching colleagues lose their fight, and sell up.

The local grounds also now holding very little fish, no feed to hold any there.

The dumping of Toxic Tees sediment appeared to cause the change in the make up of the marine ecosystem, with scavengers taking over, and normal marine creature make up lost.

The affect on reproduction of the few local surviving shellfish, with melted eggs, unseen before the die off dredge sediment was dumped at sea 24/7, and lack of buried shellfish, with no recovery in numbers to this date.

Even the Hartlepool charter boats have had to sell up, with @only 3 remaining, the fishing the worst in living memory.

It doesn't take an expert to identify the relationship between the biggest uk explosions since ww2, taking part in the Tees, the Freeport piling, the dismantling of the steelworks, orca working 24/7 near Dabholme beck outfall and the steelworks settling ponds outlet, and toxic dredging sediment being dumped at sea, to the detriment of the marine environment and the cause of die off, lost grounds and stock and industry decimation.

Die off in over 40/50 miles of coastline and @12 miles offshore from the Teesmouth and the local toxic dumping grounds tidal spread.

The MMO can only help by committing to protecting the environment with better investigations, dredge licence legislation, thorough regular sediment testing and dumping at sea is supposed to be a LAST resort, when they grant licences, it's always the 1st resort.

MMO now have the audacity to ask for industry knowledge and expertise, why they think the stock has declined, yet ignored Industry pleas that dumping River Tees toxic dredge sediment at sea, was killing the marine environment, and decimating the industry, and the orca dredge in September 21 was the catalyst, following the huge explosions and work, leaching toxins into the river.

No real MMO commitment has been made, to prove the die off of stocks, and only changing theories have been put forward by the then government and its agencies, of the die off cause, and theories don't protect the marine stocks!

The MMO hiding behind the theories, and accepting inadequate dredge licence applications without questioning out of date stock assessments and lack of evidence etc that they contain, etc

On the die off episode, that has affected hundreds of square miles of ground, The MMO would not take industry concerns on dumping toxic Tees sediment at sea serious, would not believe the Northeast Fishing Collective industry members knowledge or expertise of working in the waters that are now decimated grounds, so I wonder, is this just another MMO tick exercise, where we will be ignored, before the MMO pass more toxic dredging sediment from the Tees licence applications for removal of toxic Tees sediment, and use the easy option of dumping it at sea, cheapness over environmental protection and Industry survival?

MMO can assist, in the NEFC scientific investigations, that are currently being carried out by commissioned and voluntary scientists and members, into the toxicity of the Tees sediment that is being dumped at sea, nonstop, and its affect on the marine environment and industry, work with them, rather than hide behind unproven ridiculous die off theories, help us to stop the easy option of dumping toxic sediment at sea, and find the way to clean up the marine environment to allow nethrop and all other stocks recovery!

Yours Concerned,

Stan

North East Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (NEIFCA)

Evidence heard at a meeting of the Working Group held on 31 March 2023.

Mr David McCandless and Dr Ralf Bublitz of the North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (NEIFCA) attended a meeting of the Working Group to provide an oral presentation.

3.1 IFCAs were established in England in 2011 and have responsibility for sustainable management of inshore fisheries and the marine environment (0- 6 nautical miles). The NEIFCA, which runs from Northeast Lincolnshire to Tyneside, has taken a supportive role over the previous 2 years, often liaising between the statutory authorities (MMO, EA, Cefas) and the fishing communities.

3.2 Funding for the organisation is provided by Defra and the coastal authorities.

3.3 It is the responsibility of the ICFA to assess landing data, although this has been problematic, as there are data gaps and misreporting both locally and nationally. The lack of consistent data has made it hard to assess the full, long-term, impact of the die-offs. Further to this, the methodology for data collection changed during 2019 and was not restored until 2022, which hindered data analysis.

3.4 A detailed log of wash-up events has been maintained, and a well galvanised system has been created to continue this. NEIFCA have also coordinated and chaired research group meetings, met with stakeholders weekly and provided daily feedback to Defra. The event has been a catalyst for better communication between various stakeholders.

3.5 A recent sample collection (via Nephrops trawler) pointed to a low supply. Of samples collected, the flesh is being analysed and more data is required for a fuller picture.

3.6 The 2022 Stock Monitoring Report showed no changes in the population structure, and no twitching or lethargic behaviour in the catch. There were, however, no collections in the peak season as potting trips had to stop from July – December 2022, owing to vessel engine failure. Overall, the findings at the time showed that catch rates were down for Redcar, Hartlepool and Staithes.

3.7 The aims of the second report were to assess only vessels under 10m, to improve the quality of the data, although the following problems were encountered when attempting data analysis:

- Lack of spatial resolution means that it is hard to pinpoint exactly where fishing took place.
- Effort data was not considered reliable enough and was therefore not used.
- Data collected at Scarborough did not differentiate between crab and lobster weights.

3.8 Dr Bublitz advised that it is difficult to do an accurate assessment with the current data, and better spatial resolution and effort data is needed. Using MMO iFish2 data set, and looking at trends, there has been a steep decline in lobster and crab landings since 2021. At a local level the following was noted:

- Staithes – lobster numbers on a downward trend since 2018. Crab landing data was inflated by the inclusion of catch from Redcar.
- Whitby – lobster numbers were on the increase, but crab numbers were slightly down, although there were no significant changes.
- Scarborough – crab and lobster landings both down, although there had been problems with landing declarations.

3.9 In summary, the Group were advised that, overall, edible crab landings are down, and significantly so in Redcar. Numbers have declined generally around the UK, although the reasons for this are unclear. Lobster landings are also in decline.

3.10 NEIFCA representatives reiterated the challenges of accessing data and advised that national fishery statistics are generally poor. The following work will continue locally and nationally:

- A wash up log will continue, as recordings of this type have never been maintained. A national fisheries intelligence database is now used to maintain internal logs. Previously, wash ups (which had occurred with climatic events along the coast of East Yorkshire) had not been recorded. Detailed logs should allow the frequency to be monitored. Where an incident occurs, a scientific team will respond immediately to collect samples.
- Development of better relationships amongst stakeholders is a priority.
- The lack of monitoring of marine health around the UK needs addressing. Dr Bublitz informed the Group that shellfish has never been considered in terms of health, only ever in terms of numbers. This event has focussed minds of the fishing communities on the health and condition of different species.
- Habitat monitoring, potting and video surveys will begin, with the aim of identifying changes to the habitat.
- A local online catch system will go live, as the national system does not provide sufficiently robust data.

Evidence heard at a meeting of the Working Group held on 1 September 2023

Mr David McCandless and Dr Ralf Bublitz of the North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority attended a meeting of the Working Group to provide a presentation relating to the updated Shellfish Landings Report. The aim of this second report[12] was to present an impartial assessment of landings data for the full year of 2022 and to describe any trends and changes in landings for each port in comparison to previous years.

3.11 Assessment of landing data had continued since publication of the initial report in September 2022, using the MMO iFish2 data set (a collation of landings data from vessels of various lengths).

3.12 Various approaches for analysing catch and effort data to better understand fishing activity and behaviour within inshore waters had been explored. However, due to data deficiencies, it was not possible to use a list of sentinel vessels for each port to narrow down the vessels fishing inshore only. Instead, the approach taken used <10m vessels as a proxy for vessels fishing inshore.

3.13 Across all assessed ports (Bridlington, Scarborough, Whitby, Staithes, Redcar and Hartlepool) there have been clear reductions in landings by <10m vessels for edible crabs in 2022 with declines considerably higher for ports North of Bridlington. Lobster landings have been at their highest for 2022 in Bridlington and Whitby for <10m vessels. For Scarborough lobster landings are broadly in line with 2021 landings. However, landings for lobsters by <10m vessels into Staithes, Redcar and Hartlepool in 2022 are considerably reduced compared to previous years. See **figures 2 and 3.**

Figure 2 – Landing trends (edible crabs)

Table 1: Differences in edible crab landings for under 10m vessel in 2022 for various ports within the NEIFCA district, all ports in the NIFCA and EIFCA district and total UK landings for under 10m vessels compared to 2021 and the average landings between 2016 and 2019. Data for NEIFCA ports derived from iFish2 and includes landings from all ICES rectangles. Data for NIFCA, EIFCA and UK nationally were sourced from the MMO's UK and foreign vessels landings by UK port dataset derived from the iFish database (MMO, 2023).

Port/Region	Landings average 2016 - 2019 (tonnes)	Landings 2021 (tonnes)	Landings 2022 (tonnes)	2022 compared to average 2016 - 2019	2022 compared to 2021
Hartlepool u10	14.64	14.47	8.03	-45.11%▼	-44.49%▼
Redcar u10	8.74	5.01	0.30	-96.62%▼	-94.10%▼
Staithes u10	14.11	14.23	11.74	-16.78%▼	-17.49%▼
Whitby u10	197.39	169.22	104.86	-46.88%▼	-38.03%▼
Scarborough u10	345.90	197.13	182.70	-47.18%▼	-7.32%▼
Bridlington all*	2342.41	2114.27	1946.43	-16.90%▼	-7.94%▼
Bridlington u10	197.02	210.39	179.44	-8.92%▼	-14.71%▼
NEIFCA District u10	1329.82	1079.25	651.26	-51.03%▼	-39.66%▼
NIFCA District u10	996.38	791.47	744.75	-25.25%▼	-5.90%▼
EIFCA District u10	751.90	687.02	384.10	-48.92%▼	-44.09%▼
UK u10	9769.90	6339.28	5297.66	-45.78%▼	-16.43%▼

* under and over 10m vessels

[12] North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, Tees and North Yorkshire Shellfish Landings Report, July 2023. Dr R Bublitz, Samira Anand MSc.

Figure 3 – Landing trends (lobsters)

[Table 2: Differences in lobster landings for under 10m vessel in 2022 for various ports within the NEIFCA district, all ports in the NIFCA and EIFCA district and total UK landings for under 10m vessels compared to 2021 and the average landings between 2016 and 2019. Data for NEIFCA ports derived from iFish2 and includes landings from all ICES rectangles. Data for NIFCA, EIFCA and UK nationally were sourced from the MMO's UK and foreign vessels landings by UK port dataset derived from the iFish database (MMO, 2023).

Port/Region	Landings average 2016 - 2019 (tonnes)	Landings 2021 (tonnes)	Landings 2022 (tonnes)	2022 compared to average 2016 - 2019	2022 compared to 2021
Hartlepool u10	17.71	16.48	12.77	-27.92% ▼	-22.55% ▼
Redcar u10	27.09	20.12	8.41	-68.95% ▼	-58.21% ▼
Staithes u10	12.79	8.57	4.65	-63.60% ▼	-45.68% ▼
Whitby u10	58.51	75.35	79.96	36.67% ▲	6.12% ▲
Scarborough u10	116.89	98.00	98.89	-15.40% ▼	0.90% ▲
Bridlington all*	368.51	441.54	479.53	44.78% ▲	3.80% ▲
Bridlington u10	94.06	131.19	136.18	30.13% ▲	8.60% ▲
NEIFCA District u10	486.37	523.73	514.66	5.82% ▲	-1.73% ▼
NIFCA District u10	362.54	298.92	304.56	-42.81% ▼	5.53% ▲
EIFCA District u10	74.98	56.39	51.72	-31.03% ▼	-8.28% ▼
UK u10	2167.94	2019.53	1966.76	-9.28% ▼	-2.61% ▼

* under and over 10m vessels

3.14 There is a low degree of confidence in the effort data provided by the MMO as verification of pots hauled is very limited with high levels of misreporting. Therefore, only numbers of recorded landing events and vessels actively landing for each port were used for comparison of trends in fishing activity to previous years. For Staithes, Redcar and Hartlepool recorded landing events in 2022 are down by up to 74%. The number of under 10m vessels landing shellfish in the regional ports has been reduced in 2022 compared to previous years except for Bridlington with more under 10m vessels fishing in 2022. See **figures 4 and 5.**

3.15 In June 2022 the NEIFCA has re-established their own in-house catch return system to collate landings and effort data at a higher spatial resolution and higher level of confidence. However, the uptake of the additional landings reporting within the industry has been slow and submissions of catch returns were low at the beginning.

Figure 4 – Differences in recorded landing events for under 10m vessels

Table 3: Differences in recorded landing events (Crab and lobster) for under 10m vessel in 2022 for regional ports within the NEIFCA district and UK, compared to 2021 and the average between 2016 and 2019. Data derived from iFish2 and includes landings from all ICES rectangles.

Port/Region	Average recorded landing events 2016-2019	Recorded landing events 2021	Recorded landing events 2022	2022 compared to average 2016 - 2019	2022 compared to 2021
Hartlepool	509.75	435	316	-38.01% ▼	-27.36% ▼
Redcar	741	498	188	-74.63% ▼	-62.25% ▼
Staithes	470.25	432	279	-40.67% ▼	-35.42% ▼
Whitby	2534.5	2417	2608	2.90% ▲	7.90% ▲
Scarborough	5202	4071	3292	-36.72% ▼	-19.14% ▼
Bridlington	1349.75	1338	1229	-8.95% ▼	-8.15% ▼
Uk under 10m	57661	50110	45092	-21.80% ▼	-10.01% ▼

Figure 5 - Differences in number of under 10m vessels reporting landings of shellfish

Table 4: Differences in number of under 10m vessels (crab and lobster) reporting landings of shellfish in 2022 to regional ports within the NEIFCA district and UK, compared to 2021 and the average between 2016 and 2019. Data derived from iFish2 and includes landings from all ICES rectangles.

Port/Region	Average number of vessels landing 2016 - 2019	Number of vessels landing in 2021	Number of vessels landing in 2022	2022 compared to average 2016 - 2019	2022 compared to 2021
Hartlepool	14.5	13	10	-31.03% ▼	-23.08% ▼
Redcar	25.5	33	21	-17.65% ▼	-36.36% ▼
Staithes	7.5	12	6	-20.00% ▼	-50.00% ▼
Whitby	26	27	25	-3.85% ▼	-7.41% ▼
Scarborough	34	27	25	-26.47% ▼	-7.41% ▼
Bridlington	24.25	24	26	7.22% ▲	8.33% ▲
UK under 10m	2007.25	1879	1795	-10.57% ▼	-4.47% ▼

3.16 At this stage it is not possible to evaluate the state of the stock due to the lack of reliable effort data. Assessing landings does not give any reliable information about stock status, however they can be used to identify general trends.

3.17 The comparison of national and regional trends in shellfish landings highlights the localised disproportionate decline of shellfish landings in the affected area. These instances where trends by port fall outside of trends at a national level suggests that the shellfish stocks within this geographical area are subjected to additional localised impacts.

3.18 The reduction in vessel landing events and number of vessels actively landing in this area in 2022 indicates a possible reduction in catch rates in affected areas (Hartlepool, Redcar and Staithes). Further assessments would be required to determine the level of impacts on the stocks (of the mortality event) in the affected area.

3.19 There are many other potential contributing factors (climate change, sea temperature, changes in weather patterns) which need to be considered and could have either contributed to the overall decline or weakened the crab and lobster population enough for such an event to cause a mortality at this scale.

3.20 Further factors that have the potential to impact or weaken crab stocks are diseases such as the Amoebic Crab Disease (ACD) recently discovered in the English Channel, or potentially new and undiscovered pathogens. However, to date the ACD has not been confirmed in any edible crab populations North of the English Channel or any other new pathogens.

3.21 The decline in inshore edible crab stocks especially North of Bridlington coincides with a significant increase of “vivier” vessels in Hartlepool over the past 4-5 years landing catches from further offshore grounds. Edible crabs migrate between inshore and offshore grounds and therefore an increased fishing pressure on offshore stocks by these “vivier” vessels has the potential to reduce inshore stocks. Any mass mortality event such as

the one in 2021 would have the potential to reduce the already affected local stocks even further.

Organisational Structures

3.22 To demonstrate the complexity of the governance 'landscape associated with fisheries management, information attached at **Appendix 14** was provided for consideration by the Working Group.

FINDINGS

- Data collection has been poor, and although this is recognised by NEIFCA, and changes have been made, it has the potential to cause significant additional work for the fishers who have been impacted by this.
- Data recording appears to be separate for DEFRA and IFCAs and should be brought together with appropriate data sharing agreements
- The governance landscape associated with fisheries management is excessively complex, which impacts on issues relating to transparency and accountability (see **Appendix 14**)

Mr Jerry Hopkinson, Executive Chairman and Mr Paul Brooks, Harbour Master, PD Ports

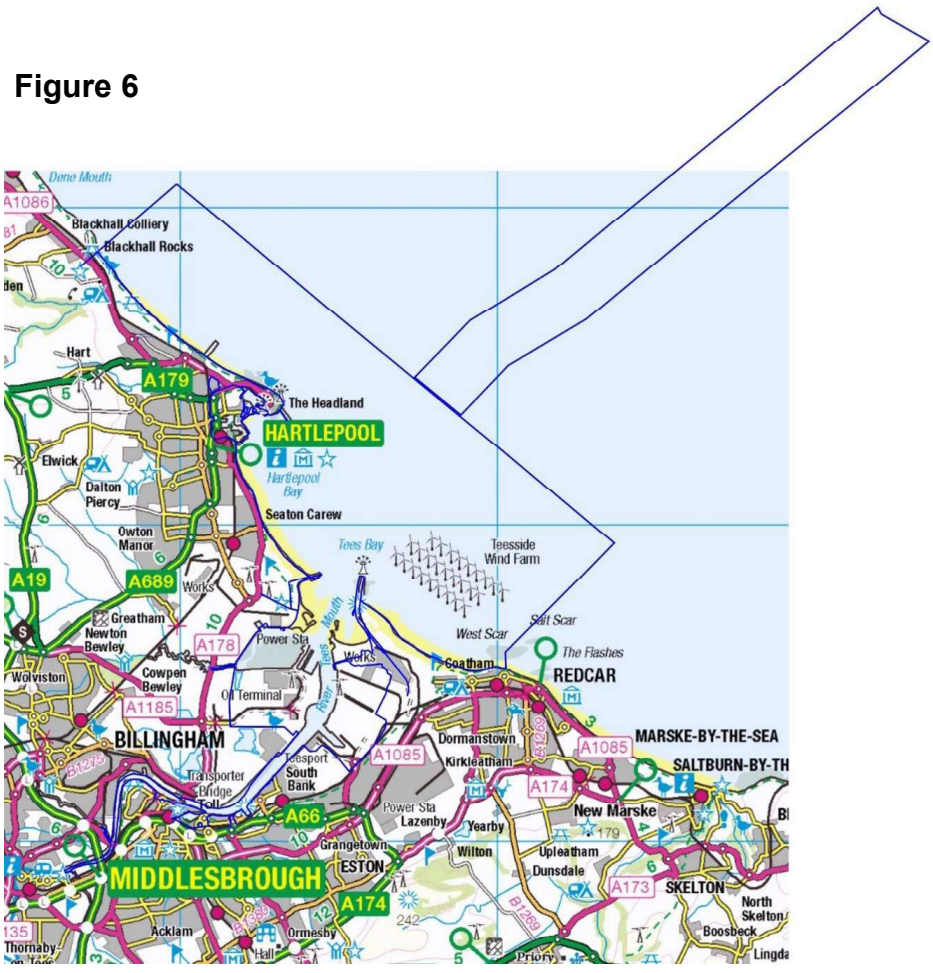
Evidence heard at a meeting of the Working Group on 13 October 2023

Mr Hopkinson and Mr Brooks provided an oral presentation on the dredging process and the role of PD Ports.

4.1 Statutory Harbour Authorities (SHAs) have oversight of marine operations in waters within their jurisdiction and have an obligation to conserve and facilitate the safe use of a harbour. Powers and duties are conferred or imposed on an SHA by statute. Under a combination of general public legislation and local acts of parliament, each port has its own set of legislation tailored to its specific needs.

4.2 With regards to the River Tees, the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Act 1966 (the "1966 Act") established the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority ("THPA") as the SHA for the Ports of Tees and Hartlepool, and the subsequent privatisation of the undertaking of the THPA resulted in the powers and duties conferred or imposed by the 1966 Act being transferred to Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Limited, which changed its name to PD Teesport Limited in 2003. The Statutory Harbour Authority Jurisdiction is outlined at **Figure 6**.

Figure 6



4.3 Around 1500 people are employed by the PD Ports, which contributes 15% of GVA in the Tees Valley and is the largest private sector employer. PD Ports are not the only port operator on the River Tees but is the only Statutory Harbour Authority.

4.4 Part III (Duties and Powers of Authority) of the Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Act 1966 confers the duty of 'conservancy, maintenance and improvement of the harbour', on the SHA, which includes the power to dredge and to grant licences for dredging [13]. The Harbour Master retains separate legal duties in relation to matters of marine conservancy.

4.5 PD Teesport operate 2 survey vessels equipped with modern state of the art multibeam survey equipment. The channels and berths are regularly surveyed to ensure the safety of navigation and to monitor the requirement for maintenance dredging.

4.6 Dredging typically falls into two categories, as follows:

- **Capital Dredging –** dredging to a depth not previously dredged, or to a depth not dredged within the last 10 years. Capital dredging is generally undertaken to create or deepen navigational channels, berths or to remove material deemed unsuitable for the foundation of a construction project.
- **Maintenance Dredging** – is undertaken to keep channels, berths and other areas at their designated depths. It involves removing recently accumulated sediments such as mud, sand and gravel. To be classed as maintenance dredging the activity must take place where:
  - The level of the seabed to be achieved by the dredging proposed is not lower than it has been at any time during the past 10 years;

  and
  - There is evidence that dredging has previously been undertaken to that level (or lower) during that period.

4.7 The method of dredging has not changed in decades, and PD Ports can dredge with its own vessels or contract in as required. Most ports carry out dredging, and contract dredging campaigns are common.

4.8 A licence issued by the MMO is required to dispose of dredged material at sea, and a 10-year licence was issued to PD Ports in 2015. Only naturally accreting material is deposited at sea and sampling is undertaken to a plan approved by the MMO. PD Ports are guided by internationally agreed levels of contaminant before disposal and adhere to the Maintenance Dredge Disposal Licence, which includes the following conditions:

- The licence holder must report any oil, fuel or chemical spill within the marine environment to the MMO Marine Pollution Response Team

[13] Tees and Hartlepools Port Authority Act 1966, Part 3 Section 16 and 23 ukla_19660025_en.pdf (legislation.gov.uk)

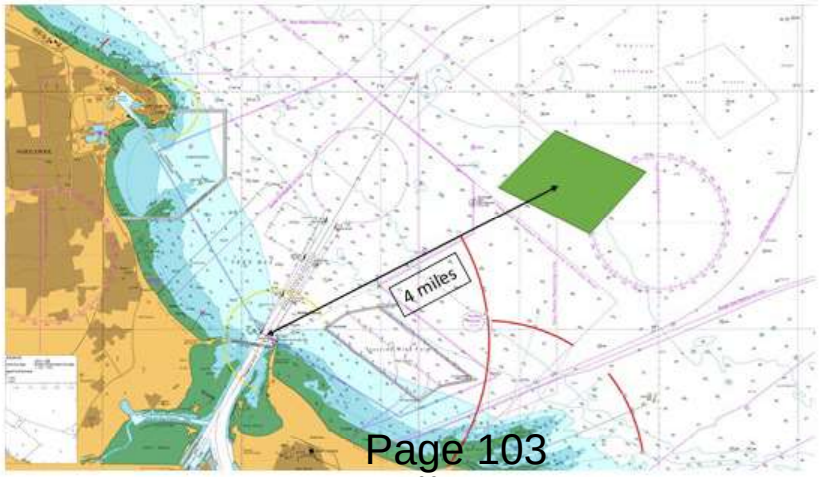
within 12 hours to ensure that any spills are appropriately recorded and managed to minimise impact to sensitive receptors and the marine environment.

- Any man-made material must be separated from the dredged material and disposed of to land to exclude the disposal at sea of man-made material such as shopping trolleys, masonry, paint cans etc.
- A regime of future sediment sampling is undertaken by PD Teesport, of at least three yearly intervals, which must be agreed in advance with the MMO. Samples must be collected, analysed and the report of their notification signed off prior to dredging in the fourth and subsequently the seventh and tenth year of this licence. This is to ensure that only suitable material is disposed of at sea.
- During the course of disposal, material must be distributed evenly over the disposal site Tees Bay 1, TY160 to ensure an even spread of material is achieved over the area of the disposal site in order to avoid shoaling and minimise risk to navigational safety.
- No more than 2,889,700 tonnes wet weight is disposed of at Tees Bay A (TY160) per annum to ensure that acceptable volumes of material can be accommodated within the capacity of the disposal site.
- The licence holder must inform the MMO of the location and quantities of material disposed of each month under this Licence by 31 January each year for the months August to January inclusive, and by 31 July each year for the months February to July inclusive to ensure that accurate data is collected for the reporting of disposal at sea to meet UK OSPAR requirements.

4.9 Cefas routinely monitor the condition and impact of spoil grounds, potentially on a yearly basis.

4.10 PD Teesport has carried out maintenance dredging of the River Tees over many decades, using similar methods, to conserve and facilitate the safe use of the harbour. Maintenance dredging is in strict accordance with the Marine Management Organisation Marine Licence, as verified by the compliance audit in October 2021 and May 2022. Sampling was carried out in accordance with the terms of the licence on 13 October 2021. The maintenance dredge disposal site is shown at **Figure 7.**

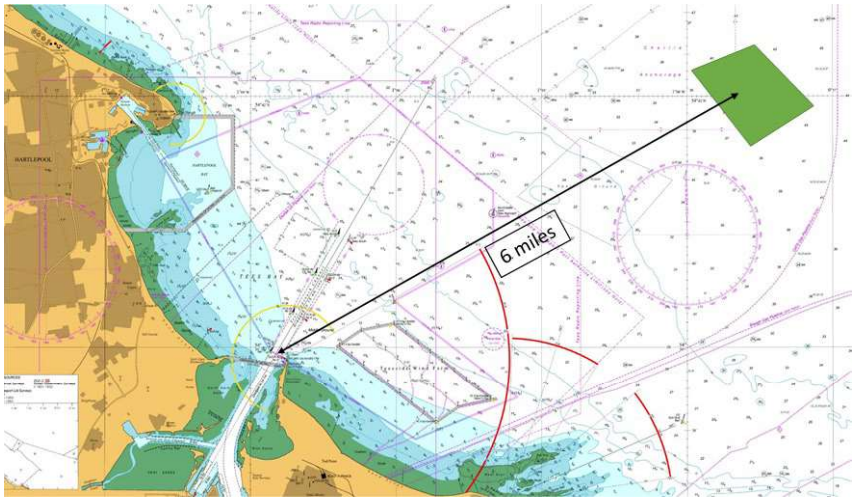
Figure 7
Maintenance Dredge Disposal Site



4.11 Capital dredging in the form of berth deepening was undertaken at the port of Middlesbrough facility (then known as North Sea Supply Base) during late 2013/ early 2014. Deepening of the berth at No1 Quay at Tees Dock was undertaken between 2014 and 2017 (inclusive). Deepening of Able Seaton Port's berths, holding basin and approach channel was undertaken between 2017 and 2020 (inclusive).

4.12 No capital dredging took place on the River Tees between December 2020 and September 2022. Capital dredging for the South Bank project was conducted from September 2022 to April 2023. The capital dredge disposal site is shown at **Figure 8**.

Figure 8
Capital Dredging Disposal Site



UKD ORCA

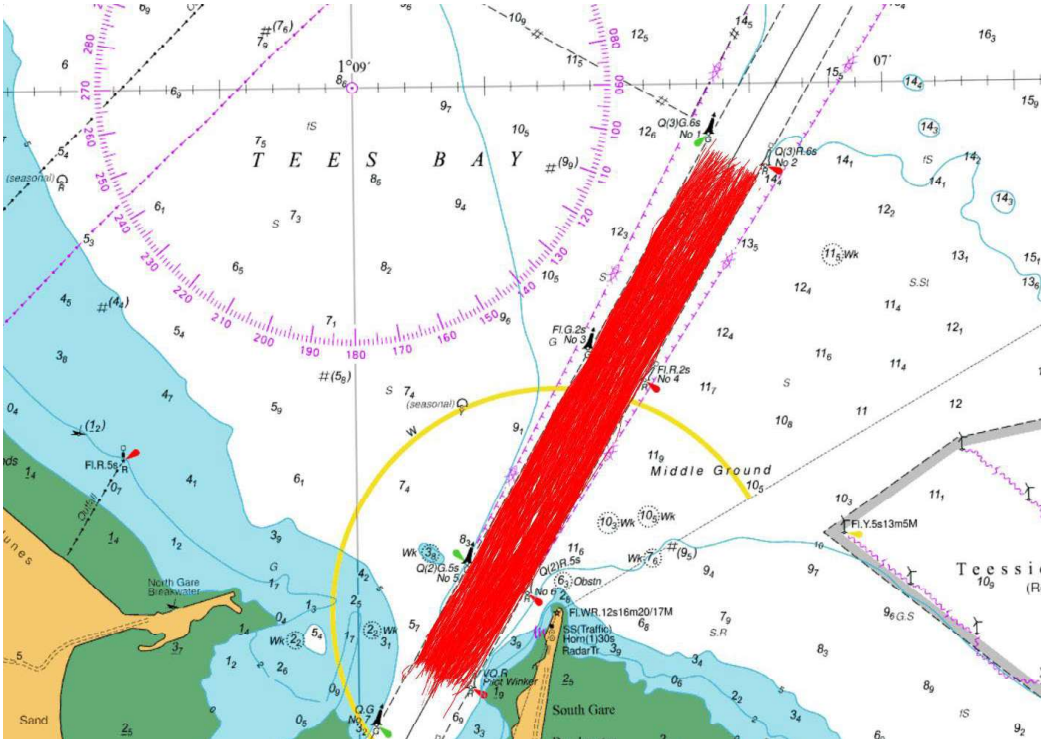
4.13 A backlog of material accumulated in the Tees entrance as a result of the 2018 'Beast from the East' storms and resulting loss of dredging capability. The UKD Orca was contracted to carry out maintenance dredging from 25 September 2021 to 4 October 2021 to clear the backlog. The target dredge depth was 14.6 metres, and the consented dredge depth was 15.4 metres. UKD Orca dredged 148,930 wet tonnes, which represent 5% of the consented annual disposal total of 2,889,700 tonnes.

4.14 The length and beam of the UKD Orca is comparable to the vessels normally used. Whilst the hopper capacity is greater, the Orca is unable to carry more weight of material. Methodology used was the same as PD Ports' existing dredgers. **See figures 9 and 10**.

Figure 9
Comparative Vessel Data

Vessel	Length	Beam	Gross tonnage	Hopper Capacity
UKD Orca	78.0m	15.85	3087	2373m^3
Heortnesse	78.36m	16.18	2162	1500m^3
Cleveland County	70.54m	11.99m	1265	1458m^3

Figure 10
UKD Orca Dredging Route



River Tees Tour

The Working group was invited to attend a tour of the River Tees by PD Ports on 10 January 2024. This was facilitated in order to further familiarise Members with the sites referred to as part of the investigation, and to provide context for the evidence given by witnesses.

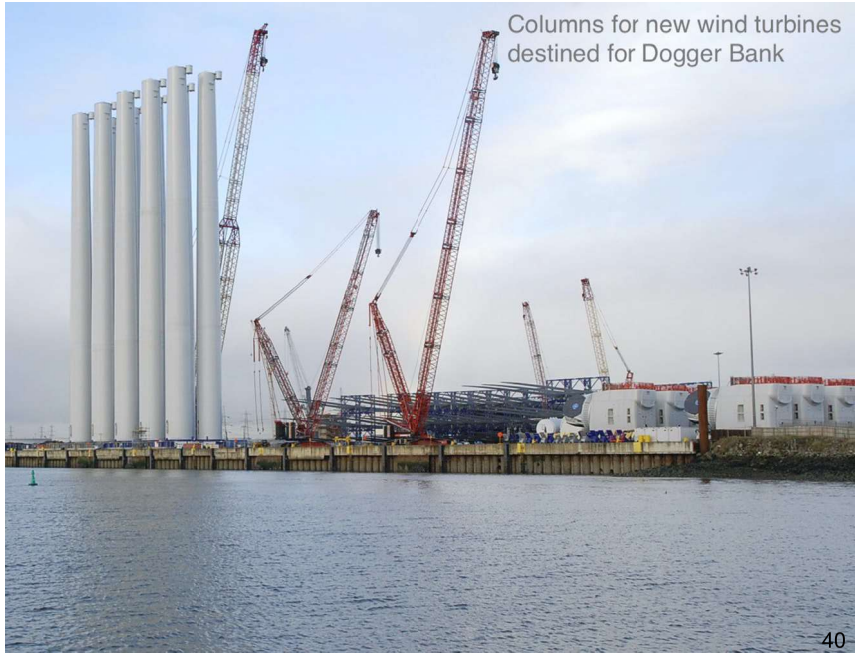
4.15 At 9.30 am, the Working Group met the Chairman, Harbourmaster, Deputy Harbourmaster and Operations Manager of PD Ports.

4.16 The Group members were taken by coach from the Middlesbrough head office to the port where they embarked on the harbourmaster's vessel for a journey down river, almost to the estuary mouth. Photographic documentation shows the main buildings, including the recently developed wind turbine construction and biomass energy plants. Discussions with officials were largely confined to the sites on view and the operation of the port in respect of shipping and cargoes, as outlined below:

- The quay is forecast to handle 3.2 million tonnes of goods which is up from 0 in 2014.
- Rail transportation handles 1300-1500 tonnes per day.
- 5000-6000 box containers were handled every week pre-pandemic, but this has dropped to 3000. War in Ukraine is an issue although there is no obvious change due to EU exit.
- Corn, soya, and other types of animal feed are among the key goods stored.
- Tesco's largest UK distribution centre is on site. The main building is fully automated.
- Asda also has a facility. Cummins store engine parts before onward distribution.
- Significant capital investment has been made. This includes a fully electric 130 tonne pedestal crane and rolling out installation across the site of solar panels.
- Future plans include further quay development although this will not be for another 3 or 4 years.
- Green Lithium is about to begin production on site, building the UK's first lithium refinery.
- Workforce retention has been a problem
- The average age of employees is reducing.

Former site of Dorman Long tower

Hartlepool nuclear
power station


Columns for new wind turbines
destined for Dogger Bank

Swalinge, dredger from the Wash

A post-tour discussion covered the following issues:

Maritime Environment

4.17 The formal relationship with authorities is managed within the Conservancy Department of PD Ports liaising with the Harbour Master's office on permissions and consents. They survey river depth and impediments, maintain infrastructure (Gares and navigational aids), and carry out dredging.

4.18 There is a good but not cosy relationship between PD Ports and government agencies. There is logical scrutiny and challenge with the business being held to account and tasked accordingly.

4.19 Interest in the ecological environment is contained within statutory obligations such as The Environment Act and dredging regulations. Environment Social Governance compliance is key to the moral compass of the business and to attract investment. There is no value to be gained at the expense of the environment.

Sampling

4.20 More intrusive sampling was discussed with MMO within a few weeks of the die off, but MMO had no reason to believe pollutants from dredged spoil caused the die off. There have not been any formal conversations between PD Ports and the MMO about the die off since.

4.21 Sampling was not brought forward. It was noted that sampling has to be carried out at specific times during a license period. It is for Cefas and MMO to consider the studies that have been undertaken and then guide the testing and set the criteria.

4.22 Borehole and core samples were tested by DEFRA agencies prior to the South Bank dredge, and they were used to determine actions. A proportion of dredged material was directed to be disposed of on land not at sea.

4.23 The footage of an open bucket being used is slightly misleading as it was not used on the relevant area but to loosen piles elsewhere. Likewise, drone footage was for an area that had been tested as suitable for disposal at sea and the discolouration was from sediment pulled from bedrock.

4.24 Teeswork and Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) are responsible for ensuring their contractors work in accordance with the licence they have been granted. MMO ran audits and although there isn't constant oversight some additional testing was undertaken from the periphery of Teesworks.

4.25 PD Ports believe that there is a lack of academic rigour behind the conclusions reached by Caldwell et al. They acknowledged that there is a theory that toxic industrial waste lies beneath the maintenance level, but they do not necessarily subscribe to this theory.

Beast from the East

4.26 Regarding the events of 24 February to 1 Mar 2018, coastal damage was caused by the blizzards, gales and sleet resulting from the Beast from the East cold front meeting the warm front Storm Emma. PD Ports attributed the extensive 10-day Orca dredging of September / October 2021, to repair of the aforementioned damage.

4.27 PD Ports had planned to use existing dredgers to clear the backlog although in-house dredgers were unavailable owing to maintenance and break-down. Orca was commissioned in 2021 to seek dredging solutions with the forthcoming winter and associated storms in mind.

4.28 The Orca is the same size as the two in-house dredgers and was underloaded during the 10 days of dredging. The Orca has about 40% more gross tonnage than the Heortnesse, and around 150% more than the Cleveland County. It also has about 50% more hopper capacity than each of the other two. PD Ports confirmed that, whilst the hopper capacity is greater, the Orca is unable to carry more weight of material.

4.29 The Orca's work started on 25th September, lasted 10 days, and involved the removal of dredged material in 52 trips out to a sea location 7 km from the coast. The mortality event occurred on the day following the termination of the Orca's work. A Port official advised that PD Ports initially considered that the Orca was the cause, but later concluded that the event was inexplicable, and that the die-off was a coincidence.

Tower Demolition and Landslip

4.30 There is a considerable separation of distance between the demolition site and the area dredged by Orca. The landslip referred to at the select committee hearing was not related to the demolition as the slip was situated at Seaton Snook, well away from the demolition site.

FINDINGS

- The Port Authority has concluded that the mortality event was a coincidence and has minimised the role of the Orca's dredging task. PD Ports officials advise that the Orca dredger is the same size as the port's two home dredgers, and that it was 'under-loaded, although evidence received by the Working Group suggest that its capacity and tonnage are both about 50% larger.
- PD Ports officials advised that they didn't "subscribe to the theory that there was toxic material below the maintenance dredging level", despite previous comments advising that "capital dredging carried a risk of environmental damage".
- Evidence provided by PD Ports demonstrated that the Orca dredging took place at the maintenance level, but previous testimony suggested that the Orca was "capital" dredging "15m down into 150 years of industrial waste".
- During evidence taken on 12 January 2024, there was some confusion relating to the annual permitted tonnage figure for dredging. This misconception had been aired at previous meetings during discussion about the percentage of annual dredging performed by the Orca during its 10 days of work in September/October 2021. This is an important annual figure which should be clear, unambiguous and widely known.
- During evidence taken on 12 January 2024, it was stated that there was "no evidence of sampling before, during or after the Orca's capital dredging" although previous PD Ports testimony was that the Orca's dredging was at the maintenance level.
- The reason for the Orca's major dredging task is disputed. PD Ports state that it was in response to serious damage to the estuary coastline caused by major storms, particularly the Beast from the East, even though this was three years earlier. In response to an informal question during the port visit of 10 January 2024, PD Ports officials advised that the delay was owing to the unavailability of the two home dredgers. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the reason was otherwise - the Orca's commission began on 25 September 2021, 6 days after the demolition of the Dorman Long tower on the banks of the Tees involving the "biggest explosion in Europe since the Second World War" which caused a major underwater landslip.
- It is not reasonable to challenge the academic rigour of Caldwell et al, who have followed a scientific process having done research, created a hypothesis, written a paper and even made that paper publicly available. This is the definition of academic rigour.
- The Orca dredge image reported within the presentation (see **Figure 10**) from PD Ports, shows the Orca was only visiting the #2 channel marker, not the actual disposal site (see **Figure 7**). There is other evidence available online which shows the actual tracking of the Orca to the disposal site at Tees Bay.

5.1 On 31 January 2023, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) was invited to a meeting of the Working Group to discuss the mortality event with Members. The following response was received on 24 February 2023:

"My (*sic*) thanks for the letter of invite to the proposed Tees Valley Authorities Crustacean Deaths Collaborative Working Group.

Having considered the group aims and terms of reference we do not consider it appropriate at this stage for the MMO, considering its regulatory and licensing remit with regard to development activity within the Tees, to form part of the group's membership. However, we would be happy to respond to any requests for information and/or questions coming from the group and would request such matters are forwarded to info@marinemanagement.org.uk."

5.2 The Working Group subsequently submitted a list of written questions to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) on 27 July 2023. Responses to questions 1 – 10 were provided on 30 August 2023. Responses to questions 11 – 19 were provided on 19 October 2023 following a request for the information under Environmental Information Regulations.

1. **Given the MMO's remit is to protect and enhance the marine environment, and support and enable sustainable marine activities and development, what actions have been taken in respect of the crustacean die-off on the NE Coast in October 2021 and in subsequent incidents since then?**

   In May 2022, Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) published a report that concluded 'dredging has been ruled out as a likely cause [of the mass mortality event]' (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1082129/Joint_agency_investigation_into_Teesside_and_Yorkshire_Coast_Crab_and_Lobster_mortalities.pdf).

   Moreover, a subsequent independent review commissioned by Defra has concluded that capital dredging is exceptionally unlikely (less than 1% probability), and maintenance dredging is very unlikely (less than 10% probability), to have caused the unusual crustacean mortality seen in the Northeast (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1131769/Independent_Expert_Assessment_of_Unusual_Crustacean_Mortality_in_the_north-east_of_England_in_2021_and_2022.pdf).

   Any reported issues since the original incident have been investigated by MMO (check with PMO for info) and other agencies.

2. **What report(s) relating to this were prepared by the MMO and can we have copies, please?**

   Both reports are available online and detailed above

3. **What conclusions were reached by the MMO on the algal bloom theory?**

This conclusion was reached by the initial Defra findings and MMO supported the outcomes of that report.

4. **The reason given for the exclusion of dredging as a cause is that sediment is examined for contaminants prior to a licence being granted for the dredging to be taken out to sea and deposited. This is vital, of course, but the letter says that testing is done at least once every three years. Is this sufficient testing?**

   When assessing the suitability of dredged material for sea disposal, the Marine Management Organisation meets its international obligations including but not limited to the OSPAR – Oslo/Paris Convention (for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic). Sediment sampling in England follows OSPAR guidance and uses a risk-based approach. In industrialised locations including the Tees, sediment is tested on a more frequent basis (at least every three years) than sediment from locations that have received lower contaminants inputs.

   Sediment sampling must be in accordance with MMO sampling plan, and it is standard that a contractor or applicant undertake the sampling; an accredited lab must undertake the analysis to inform licence applications.

5. **With respect to the Tees area, what are the chemicals tested for in material designated for dredging?**

   The UK is signed up to the London Protocol and OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, both of which address preventing marine pollution from disposal at sea.

   MMO licences disposing of dredged materials at sea and uses guidelines produced by OSPAR to regulate this activity. A marine licence to dispose of dredged materials to sea requires the sediments to be characterised to allow the potential adverse environmental effects of disposing of the material to be considered.

   The OSPAR guidelines recommend a tiered approach to assess the sediments, if sufficient information is not already available from existing sources. The assessments required will depend upon the specific details of the proposed activities, although characterisation of a standard set of physical and chemical determinands within the sediments is often necessary.

   Further details can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/marine-licensing-sediment-analysis-and-sample-plans

6. **Who completes testing and evaluation of the results and where are the results published?**

   Testing of samples are undertaken by validated laboratories, details of these are detailed in the link above. Evaluation of the sampling is undertaken by the MMO with advice from our scientific advisors Cefas

7. **Is there a record of what has been dredged and geotagged that would allow a quick and easy check to see if anything had been disturbed?**

   Dredge quantities are recorded by the undertakers. Geotagging is not a requirement of licences.

8. **Can a protocol of issuing licences be explained and the process for monitoring compliance?**

Details available of the website

9. **Were dredging activities curtailed or reassessed by the MMO following the October 2021 crisis?**

   There was no evidence support curtailing licenced activities in and around the Tees . To date, there has been no causal link established between the dredging in the Tees and the mass crustacean mortality event and subsequent investigations including by independent scientists have also concluded that it is unlikely that a release of any toxic chemical due to dredging could have caused the deaths

10. **What restrictions apply to activity in or near SSSI, Ramsar and SPA sites?**

    No defined restrictions apply near Marine Protected Areas (MPA), if there is potential for activities to have an effect on an MPA a Habitat Regulation Assessment is undertaken and an Appropriate Assessment is produced to identify and mitigate any aspects that may effect the integrity of the site.

11. **What framework needs to be in place for more comprehensive analysis of what is in the water?**

    The MMO ensures its licensing activity is compliant with international conventions and directives. The Water Framework Directive is transposed into national law by the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 that require the MMO to undertake an assessment of applications for the purpose of managing and protecting water resources. The MMO also consults the Environment Agency (EA) in the EAs role as competent authority for water quality. Relevant restrictions may be attached in the form of conditions to marine licences granted by the MMO following consultation with bodies including the EA.

12. **Can you advise which other relevant agencies or organisations does the MMO work with in attempting to deliver its objects?**

    The MMO has wider powers to consult and commonly consults with its primary advisers including the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), Environment Agency (EA) (on WFD issues), Natural England (NE), Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), Ministry of Defence (MoD), Historic England (HE).

13. **How is this managed?**

    The MMO has an on-line IT system – Marine Consents and Management System that is used to manage consultations.

14. **Are there reports of collaborative meetings held and where are these meetings recorded for public examination?**

    Relevant records are uploaded to the MMO Public Register.

15. **Given the determination of the MMO to lead change and new methods of operation with other organisations, what proposals are there to work more closely with local authorities which border the coastline, and which have high levels of industrial activity and fishing communities within their areas of responsibility?**

    The MMO is a signatory to the Coastal Concordat. The Concordat seeks to streamline consenting at the coast. Some Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are also concordat

signatories and both Defra and MMO has encouraged LPAs to sign up to the Coastal Concordat.

16. **What proposals are their being discussed to work more closely with local authorities in the Tees Valley and North Yorkshire area?**

    Please see 15 above.

17. **What work is the MMO engaged in, either independently or in conjunction with other agencies, to ensure the sustainability of the shellfish industry on the Northeast coast and where is the evidence of this work?**

    The MMO was established to champion sustainable development in our marine area. A range of support (grants) has been provided to the English seafood sector through the Fisheries and Seafood Scheme (FaSS) and the £100 million UK Seafood Fund. Local fishers have been advised how to apply to MMO for relevant grants.

18. **In its declared role to develop a sustainable marine development strategy for inshore waters what discussions are being held with the EA, Defra, Cefas and other organisations to determine improved standards of testing and monitoring of water content and quality?**

    The EA has responsibility for routine testing and monitoring of water quality. See 11 above.

19. **What actions has the MMO, either independently or in conjunction with other agencies, taken to identify need and to support any merited compensation?**

    Compensation is a matter for Defra not MMO. Also see 17 above as certain grants are administered by MMO.

Able UK MMO Application Summer 2024

6.1 Plans by Able UK to undertake a capital dredge of the River Tees came to light in August 2024 when news that they were talking to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council about seeking planning consent for works was reported in the Gazette.[14]

6.2 It subsequently became apparent that they had submitted an application to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), under reference: MLA/2024/00166[15]

6.3 The application was for a licence to undertake capital and maintenance dredging along the North side of the River Tees, with dredged material disposed of at Tees Bay A and Tees Bay C dump sites.

The proposal is as follows (sourced from application documentation).

Project background

Able UK Limited are seeking to expand the current capacity of their operations at Middlesbrough Port, in order to futureproof the site for future commercial needs, such as the increased approach depths required by vessels. Further detail can be found within the attached Marine Planning Statement (D/I/D/149058/501). This marine licence application will include capital dredging works to achieve the previously licensed dredge depth across the expanded berth, -7.0mCD, and a deeper approach channel being dredged to a depth of -6.5mCD, as shown on Drawing No. AMP006-00015 E. This is the capacity required to allow for the berthing, loading and unloading of vessels which seek to continue to use Middlesbrough Port, but which require maintained and expanded channels. The capital dredge to extend the berth and deepen the channel will require 44,400m3 of material to be removed, with subsequent maintenance of circa 1,000m3 per annum. The maintenance dredge of the existing berth will involve an initial dredge of 24,600m3, followed by subsequent maintenance of circa 2,000m3 per annum. The length of licence proposed is 10 years, with routine sampling to be undertaken every 3 years.

Programme of works

Works to undertake dredging at Middlesbrough Port will take place on an as-needed basis, dictated by tenants. There is no set proposed works timing, however it is considered that if undertaken together, the initial capital and maintenance dredge of the existing berth and proposed extensions will take place over a period of approximately 20 days. For the initial dredge this is considered likely to be 20 consecutive days, but subsequent maintenance is likely to be upto 20 days per annum, as required to maintain the licenced depth. Start and end dates are therefore proposed to be the dates of the licence i.e. 30/06/2024-30/06/2034. Disposal operations will be undertaken intermittently between dredging operations as the TSHDs are filled, and as such, all disposal activities will take place over a similar time period per dredge campaign

[14] Teesside Live (2024). *Able UK seeks opinion from council for new quay proposal as 'a facility for a range of projects'*. [online] Gazette Live. Available at: https://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/teesside-news/able-uk-seeks-opinion-council-29724208 [Accessed 18 Sep. 2024].

[15] https://marinelicensing.marinemanagement.org.uk/mmofox5/fox/live/MMO_PUBLIC_REGISTER/
(Click on view Public Register and then input the Licence reference number MLA/2024/00166 in the search box and click on "Marine Licence applications and requests")

6.4 Objections to the application were provided by the North East Fishing Collective (NEFC) and by NEIFCA, as follows:

NORTH EAST FISHING COLLECTIVE

20.8.24

Dear Sir/Madam,

This letter is being submitted on behalf of the North East Fishing Collective (NEFC) and its members in response to the capital dredging application (MLA/2024/00166). The NEFC and its members formally object to this application based on significant concerns regarding the potential environmental and fishing industry impacts it may cause.

As you will be aware, there have been significant and ongoing sea-life mortality events along the Northeast coastline (as recent as May 2024) as a result of the previous three major dredging works. The NEFC, the industry and members of the public have witnessed catastrophic scenes of dead and dying marine life which has coincided with the dredging and disturbance of extremely high levels of harmful pollutants into the marine environment. These events have caused devastation to the fishing industry, resulting in the striking decline of fishing vessels along the Northeast coastline, including over half of the Hartlepool fishing fleet alone since the initial capital dredging in September 2021. Despite pleas from the NEFC to engage fully and purposefully with government agencies on dredging and desperately needed legislation changes to prevent dumping at sea, no committed or meaningful discussions or actions have taken place. Those who have barely managed to stay in the industry continue to receive zero support or have yet to see any efforts to restore the marine environment to acceptable levels.

Despite several investigations into the causes of these sea-life mortalities, you may be aware that the exact cause was not established, with an outcome of 'as likely as not,' that a new pathogen new to UK waters caused the unusual mortalities, which is why the NEFC has been undertaking its own investigations into the cause as the panel also concluded that there were 'no significant pathogens identified in the north-east.'

The NEFC have continuously highlighted the need for more robust and transparent testing regimes by government agencies. It is historically documented that the River Tees is highly polluted due to its industrial heritage, and government testing itself (most recently in 2022) shows that a high range of specific pollutants, including arsenic and polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) are at consistently high levels. The proposed dredging activities raise serious concerns about the disturbance and release of these harmful chemicals into an already decimated and extremely fragile marine environment that has yet to begin to regenerate to any sustainable level since the first (and ongoing) wash-ups began. The application does not adequately address the serious and highly-likely risks associated with disturbing these sediments and, disturbingly, appears to minimise the severity of the environmental marine impact.

The application states, 'There is no set proposed works timing, however it is considered that if undertaken together, the initial capital and maintenance dredge of the existing berth and proposed extensions will take place over a period of approximately 20 days. For the initial dredge this is

NORTH EAST FISHING COLLECTIVE

considered likely to be 20 consecutive days, but subsequent maintenance is likely to be up to 20 days per annum, as required to maintain the licenced depth.'

The initial wash-ups occurred after the UKD Orca made approximately 52 trips to the drop zone (Tees Inner or Tees A area) 7km off the coast, disposing of approximately 123,396m³ of material (66% of an annual quota of maintenance dredging) in the space of a 10-day period. The results of this initial event have been nothing short of catastrophic, which have not only brought serious hardships onto those in the industry, but which have negatively impacted and changed the marine environment beyond belief. The application itself ensures that this toxic sediment will be continually disturbed annually, which only solidifies to the NEFC that the devastation and impact will continue to burden and already overwhelmed marine ecosystem for at least another decade, potentially ensuring that it does not recover and remains overburdened with contaminants. The application is not supported by scientific modelling to support the claim that dredging works can be completed within '20 consecutive days,' which is completely unacceptable when it is evident that similar events have resulted in mass mortalities along the Northeast coastline alongside sediment blooms from disturbed toxic materials.

The application suggests that sediment sampling every 3 years is sufficient – a deeply flawed and inadequate assertion. Given the known contamination levels, it is clear that sampling at 3-yearly intervals is insufficient to ensure environmental safety and compliance with the OSPAR Convention's Precautionary Principle: preventative measures should be taken where there is reasonable cause for concern that human activities may harm the marine environment, particularly when dealing with hazardous substances. The application therefore fails to address this critical guideline by proposing that sampling be conducted every 3 years. Furthermore, by suggesting that contaminated sediments be disposed of at sea rather than being safely decontaminated on land, it is a blatant disregard for the precautionary principle that such sediments should, and can, be safely decontaminated on land. As you should be aware, license applications also state that dumping at sea should be a last resort, and then only if environmentally safe to do so.

We would like to draw your attention to the Tees disposal sites of other dredged materials over decades: the disposal sites do not get any shallower as the heavily and dangerously contaminated sediment is spread by the tides to the North and South over hundreds of square miles. All dumping at these disposal sites is infact dumping over hundreds of square miles of the North Sea – something which the application (and all others which use these methods) fail to acknowledge and address.

The NEFC strongly believes that there have been no lessons taken from previous events along the Northeast coastline by government agencies to ensure that these events do not continue to cement the destruction of our coastline and marine environment. This is reiterated by the disregard for such events in the current planning application, which ignores the severe ecological consequences which have resulted from similar works in close proximity. The cumulative impact of such events, and any current and future applications must be considered as an area of immediate priority, as required by the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations.

The NEFC and its members strongly oppose this dredging proposal. We urge the authorities to reject this application until a thorough, adequate science-based assessment is conducted. Such assessment should, without question, fully comply with all marine environmental protection policies. We urge

transparency from any such applications as the one we oppose to provide public information regarding which steps have been taken to ensure that alternative methods of disposal have been considered before reaching the last resort. Additionally, any future consideration of this project and its maintenance should include more frequent, wider and comprehensive sediment sampling with a firm commitment to decontaminate dredged materials on land as a first, and only, resort in order to protect and allow adequate restoration of our marine environment along the Northeast coastline.

Thank you for considering our representation. We trust that our concerns will be given the adequate and essential weight they deserve in this serious environmental matter.

Stan Rennie

On behalf of the NEFC.

NEIFCA response:

"Given the sensitivity of dredging in the River Tees since the Crustacean die offs in 2021 and lack of clearer understanding of potential impacts, we feel a precautionary approach would be more appropriate. In our opinion, capital dredge material, especially in areas where levels of trace metals and DDT are between Cefas' Action Level 1 and 2, should not be disposed at sea. Recent reviews of Cefas' Action Levels concluded that currently there are no processes in place to ensure consistency and transparency for samples between Action Level 1 and 2. Action Level 2 has been found to be the least effective approach in Europe to filter out potentially toxic samples. We also disagree with the frequency of sampling and feel that every 3 years is not enough. Sampling should be undertaken annually or at least bi-annually. At this stage we cannot consent to this proposal."

The Cefas Action Levels referred to in NEIFCA's response are described as[16]

Sediment analysis

The MMO must ensure that sediment sample analysis data submitted to support a marine licence application is consistent and comparable between separate applications, as well as Cefas action levels. Cefas action levels are currently used by the MMO to decide how suitable it is to dispose of dredged sediments at sea.

[16] GOV.UK. (n.d.). *Marine Licensing: sediment analysis and sample plans*. [online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/marine-licensing-sediment-analysis-and-sample-plans.

6.5 The document also includes a table showing the thresholds for Action Level 1 and 2:

Contaminant or compound	**Action Level 1 (mg/kg dry weight (ppm))**	**Action Level 2 (mg/kg dry weight (ppm))**
Arsenic	20	100
Mercury	0.3	3
Cadmium	0.4	5
Chromium	40	400
Copper	40	400
Nickel	20	200
Lead	50	500
Zinc	130	800
Organotins (TBT, DBT, MBT)	0.1	1
PCBs – sum of ICES 7	0.01	None
PCBs – sum of 25 congeners	0.02	0.2
PAHs	0.1	None
DDT	*0.001	
Dieldrin	*0.005	

In comparison to the data provided with the MMO application from Able UK you can see the concerns raised by NEIFCA re heavy metals in particular:[17]

Determinand analysis outputs:

Laboratory sample number	Dredge Area	Sample ID(s)	Total solids (%)	Metals as mg/kg dry weight							
				Arsenic (As)	Cadmium (Cd)	Chromium (Cr)	Copper (Cu)	Mercury (Hg)	Nickel (Ni)	Lead (Pb)	Zinc (Zn)
MAR02072.001		MSA 0.00	43.8	18.3	0.77	71.8	63.4	0.71	30.6	167	253
MAR02072.002		MSB 0.00	62.3	20.7	1.02	87.7	86.1	0.92	32.5	208	307
MAR02072.003		MSC 0.00	48.1	16.8	0.77	63.9	63.8	0.64	30.8	150	229
MAR02072.004		CSA 0.00	41.9	7.2	0.31	38.8	19	0.08	34.9	28.8	96.8
MAR02072.005		CSA 1.00	43.7	22.8	1.65	136	137	1.7	34.6	285	486
MAR02072.006		CSA 2.00	68.4	6.6	0.29	14.8	6.3	0.05	16.3	12.2	50.3
MAR02072.007		CSB 0.00	68.1	5.9	0.28	14.6	5.8	0.05	15.5	12.3	51.8
MAR02072.008		CSB 1.00	42.6	21.3	1.4	112	136	1.21	37.3	277	424
MAR02072.009		CSB 2.00	41.3	7.8	0.34	40.8	36.3	0.14	35.5	54.3	118
MAR02072.010		CSC 0.00	76.6	26.5	2.17	189	174	2.2	36.9	343	626
MAR02072.011		CSC 1.00	69.4	9.1	0.46	49.1	27.3	0.24	33.8	49	128
MAR02072.012		CSD 0.00	70.3	11	0.46	40.9	33.3	0.14	40	37.8	124
MAR02072.013		CSD 1.00	52.9	25.8	1.54	118	141	1.44	36.3	341	516

6.6 A 2016 MMO review of the Cefas Action levels indicates that samples that fall between Action Level 1 (the safest agreed level for disposal at sea) and Action level 2 (considered unacceptable for uncontrolled disposal at sea without special handing and containment) need further consideration[18]

… it was concluded that the existing guidance and action levels are not fit for purpose within the context of this report, i.e. in terms of the ability to avoid disposal of toxic sediments at sea and refusal of non-toxic sediment disposal. However, it is acknowledged that the overall fitness for purpose of tools such as action levels are also importantly defined by legislative requirements and policy objectives which may include consideration of costs and proportionate regulation as well as environmental risk. A further, more detailed, review of action levels

[17] MLA_2024_00166-MMO_Results_Template - MAR02072_1-6 (available via the marine licensing link in above reference no.14)
[18] MMO (2015). High Level Review of Current UK Action Level Guidance. A report produced for the Marine Management Organisation, pp 73. MMO Project No: 1053. ISBN: 978-1-909452-35-0. Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a818afae5274a2e87dbe2f7/High_level_review_of_current_UK_action_level_guidance_report__1053_.pdf

and guidance is required to establish whether they are fit for purpose given current policy objectives and legislative requirements.

FINDINGS

27 January 2025 – the MMO application has not been resolved and is on hold.

Comments by other stakeholders are publicly accessible and alongside the objection of NEIFCA, of particular note are the comments from the MMO local office which emphasise the concern of local fishers and states “That this well-documented die-off and the media stories surrounding it are not considered or even mentioned in the application, considering the time and work that went into the case over months by the North Shields office, is somewhat jarring.”

The Comments from NEIFCA are not recorded on the MMO public register.

Disappointment that

The Cefas response, although overall does agree that the levels of a variety of contaminants can be disposed of at sea, does include the following admonishment in Additional Information:

> Section 6.14 of the Marine Planning Statement (document referenced in paragraph 9) states “*As such, it is considered that given the very small scale of dredging proposed within this application in comparison to the volume of dredging presently undertaken on the Tees, largely by PD Teesport themselves, there will be no meaningful change to the water quality either at source or at the disposal site as a result of this dredging.*”. I disagree with the claim that “*there will be no meaningful change*” at both the source and disposal site. With respect to the source site, the current proposed dredge area has not been dredged at minimum since 2016 (8 years) and therefore dredging of the sediment will likely disturb and distribute sediment contaminants into the water column. This disturbance will also be more prevalent through the use of a Trailing Suction Hopper Dredger (TSHD) over a method such as Grab dredging with an enclosed clamshell grab (please see my answer to Question 12). Whilst on this occasion I agree that disposal of the material at sea would not be unacceptable. The level of assessment presented by the applicant is insufficient to conclude with certainty that there will be no such meaningful change in water quality. *There remain key evidence gaps as to the ongoing effects of dredging material with levels of organic contaminants seen in the Tees on marine life. (our italics)*

Dr Gary Caldwell, Newcastle University

Evidence heard at a meeting of the Working Group held on 3 March 2023

The following evidence was relayed orally by Dr G Caldwell, Senior Lecturer in Applied Marine Biology at Newcastle University.

7.1 Dr Gary Caldwell attended the meeting to speak as an expert in marine biology, with specialisms relating to marine ecotoxicology in northern climates. Dr Caldwell had been commissioned by the Northeast Fishing Collective to undertake independent research relating to the possible effect of pyridine on crustacea, owing to the fact that pyridine had been identified as present in the flesh of deceased crabs and lobster recovered from the initial wash-up.

7.2 At the outset of the project, there was no data in existence relating to the toxicity of pyridine in large crustaceans. A team at Newcastle University undertook ‘vanilla’ experiments that involved exposing crustaceans sourced from outside of the impacted zone to a chain of pyridine concentrations. The results involved a violent and convulsive response in the crustaceans, which was described as ‘shocking’

7.3 Following the initial extreme response, which lasted roughly 2 – 5 minutes, crustaceans settled onto their backs with legs facing upwards and movement slowing down over a 30 – 40-minute period. Death was marked by the falling forward of mouth parts.

7.4 At a pyridine concentration of 15mg and above, all exposed crabs were dead within 6 hours, and at lower concentrations, a change in behaviour was noted, with crabs observed to be more placid and pliable. This fundamental loss of aggression, it was posited, might lead to a loss of ability to defend against predators.

7.5 Results of experiments conducted in the lab correlated to observations by the fishing community. Initial spasming would have taken place in the water and crustaceans on the periphery would have displayed a change of behaviour likely to result in inability to defend or feed themselves. Experiments are ongoing to explore this hypothesis further.

7.6 A working hypothesis has been developed which shows that pyridine, even in vanishingly low concentrations, alters the brain chemistry of crustaceans inducing a form of Alzheimer’s disease. Certain crustaceans are probably vulnerable to pyridine toxicity owing to the position of nervous receptors and their hypersensitivity to purines, which are molecularly similar to pyridine.

7.7 Further to die-off of crabs and lobsters, evidence collected at survey sites suggested that barnacle numbers had also been severely reduced in recent years. Pyridine exposure during migration from Scotland was suggested as an explanation for this.

7.8 The long-term impact of the die-off, which involved the removal of an entire section of the food chain, was already being felt and would continue to impact the local and national ecosystem into the future. The current seascape was described as a ‘desert environment’ from Hartlepool to Scarborough.

7.9 Defra has refused to sample sediment for traces of pyridine, citing lack of suitable equipment as the reason. Government agencies have also refused to award the relevant permits in order that the team could undertake sediment sampling on behalf of the investigation. There has been no communication with the team from Newcastle University from any of the Defra agencies.

7.10 Dr Caldwell, referring to differing theories relating to potential causative factors, discussed the timeline of die-offs, which immediately followed an intensive round of dredging that was reportedly clearing a large slippage of sediment. Deeper dredging, he suggested, had potentially dislodged stable sediment.

7.11 Three major sources of pyridine had been identified in the area close to the impacted zone, and whistleblowing reports had identified major flaws in management of industrial waste, which had resulted in large amounts of pyridine entering the river. The production of a map of pyridine on the Tees was a suggested strategy for managing future dredging work.

7.12 Capital dredges could possibly be linked to loss of prawn stocks and a massive loss of seaweed populations had been noted, although with no data to verify this, satellite data was being used to discover the extent of the loss of kelp beds. This loss of seaweed beds might impact on carbon capture, diversity of habitats and coastal erosion, so the issue is much further reaching than just the death of crustaceans.

7.13 In terms of a life cycle, pyridine is a water-soluble compound that is lost to the environment quickly. It is attacked by oxygen and has a half-life of 8 days in water. A proportion sticks to sediment grains, and without exposure to oxygen may remain present in an environment with a PH below 7 for many years. In terms of dispersion, it is estimated that the models used by team at Newcastle University were conservative, and it is likely that sediment moved further south than Whitby.

7.14 Further to this, the independent report recently produced by CMEP, which claimed that pyridine levels found in the impacted area were too low to cause mortality in crustaceans had, in the opinion of Dr Caldwell, made an error in interpreting data. A response was being drafted to draw attention to this.

7.15 Dr Caldwell further advised that, in his opinion, England are behind the curve when dealing with environmental pollution in terms of what is tested for and associated risk assessments. Pyridine, for example, is not in the current list of chemical determinands produced by the Government.

7.16 There had been a slow degradation of the crustacean population in Portsmouth and loss of populations had occurred in Kent in line with incidents of dredging. It was hoped that the experience of Teesside would encourage other ports to consider their industrial fingerprint and risk assess appropriately as a result.

7.17 Dr Caldwell welcomed the development of the Teesworks site, but questioned the pace of work, and ability to apply environmental regulations in light of the current timeline.

7.18 In terms of future work of the team at Newcastle University, Dr Caldwell advised that there would be a further 6 months of wrapping up current investigations followed by monitoring of recovery, which may take many years.

Evidence heard at a meeting of the Working Group on 3 November 2023

Dr Caldwell provided a presentation outlining an elemental analysis of River Tees sediment core, with a focus on metals. Dr Caldwell advised that the data presented was interim, although the broader messages would be unlikely to change.

7.19 Levels of 19 elements were determined, including metals which bio-accumulate and are known to cause environmental toxicity. The following metals were included in the study: aluminium, arsenic, barium, calcium, cadmium, chromium, copper, iron, lead, magnesium, manganese, nickel, phosphorus, potassium, silicon, sodium, strontium, tin & zinc.

7.20 Cores were sliced and elemental levels determined at various sediment depths – 0-2 cm, 8-10 cm, 18-20 cm, 28-30 cm and 38-40 cm. There were fewer deeper samples due to limitations in core penetration.

7.21 The core samples allowed the mapping of the prevalence of elements across the Tees estuary, with common trends in distribution identified. There were changes in concentration by location, with consistent hotspots identified from the areas of the channel affected by the Athena cutter suction dredger.

7.22 Levels of all analysed elements were elevated, with some (aluminium and iron) remarkably high. Elemental levels changed with sediment depth, typically increasing with depth, and for some, e.g., aluminium, there was a reduction in levels in the deeper sediments likely unaffected by the Athena.

7.23 Hydrocarbon contamination had not been discussed, but a full composition would be available at a future date.

7.24 A project using AI to predict the outcome of exposure to cocktails of chemicals is in early stages, and the focus of ongoing work.

7.25 Statutory requirements for testing are inadequate in relation to the River Tees, which should be looked at with more nuance and tested more regularly. Further to this, the re-development work has brought forward a new threat, and any event that returns older sediments to the channel remains a risk, particularly to the fragile areas of recovery.

7.26 The Northeast lacks data and a systematic way of monitoring the health of its coastline, and the current response-driven method is not effective.

FINDINGS

- Observational work in in laboratory conditions shows that exposing crustaceans to different concentrations of pyridine, elicits behaviours and effects on the crustaceans similar to that observed by fishers and members of the public during the mass crustacean die off.

- Pyridine is a water-soluble compound that sticks to sediment grains and may remain present in an environment with a pH below 7 for many years.

- It is clear from Dr Caldwell's research that the impact on Crustaceans of pyridine causes similar symptoms as those observed by fishers and members of the public.

- Dr Caldwell's evidence also called into question the whether the required level of testing for potential contaminants was sufficient within the UK, and within the Tees, a river that is known to have been heavily polluted in the past, in particular.

Dr S Gibbon, Citizen Environmental Group / The University of Manchester

Evidence heard at a meeting of the Working Group on 1 September 2023 and provided in writing.

River Tees – Maintenance Dredging

8.1 The River Tees is a major port for the UK and so by Act of Parliament the Statutory Harbour Authority (SHA) has a legal obligation to keep the river channels clear to allow navigation. The SHA is now PD Ports, the company that owns and operates Teesport. The Act gives the SHA permission to carry out maintenance dredging but does not give the SHA permission to dispose of the dredged material at sea. PD Ports has to apply for marine licences from the Marine Management Organisation to dispose of the dredged material at sea.

8.2 Maintenance dredging covers dredging which must not result in an increase in the depth of the river when compared to its lowest depth at any time in the last 10 years. This means that the material which is removed by maintenance dredging is either material that has washed into the River Tees from the sea or suspended material carried down the river from upstream which has deposited on the riverbed. Any dredging which increases the depth of the river is classified as capital dredging and once again is permitted only by marine licences issued by the Marine Management Organisation.

8.3 PD Ports only carries out maintenance dredging using either its own dredgers (Heortnese / Cleveland River retired 2021 / Emerald Duchess due 2024) or occasionally using contracted vessels (i.e. UKD Orca). The dredgers used are trailing hopper suction dredgers, as such they do not cut into the riverbed and will only remove relatively loose material. PD Ports also use an adapted tug (Tees Guardian) fitted with an underwater bulldozer blade to level out the riverbed after dredging.

8.4 PD Ports is required to apply for licences which define what can be disposed of at sea and any requirements for mid-term sampling of materials. PD Ports obtained a three year dredging licence (MLA/2012/00141) in 2012, which was extended to the end of 2015 due to delays in processing of the information for the subsequent licence. The subsequent and latest marine licence (MLA/2015/00088/6) for disposal at sea was issued in 2015 for 10 years, and defines what can be disposed of at sea and requirements for mid-term sampling of materials.

8.5 The dredging industry portrays maintenance dredging as a clean operation, taking material washed into the river from the sea back out to sea. Capital dredging, on the other hand, involves dredging of historic and potentially contaminated sediments to be dumped at sea. In reality maintenance dredging is only clean if the material it removes has not been contaminated, so any ongoing pollution or one-off incidents will result in contaminated material being disposed of at sea.

8.6 The River Tees has historically been a highly polluted river owing to a 140 year history of heavy industry along its banks, which used the river as a disposal route for unwanted materials (waste/toxic chemicals). It is accepted that the sediments laid down in previous decades were widely contaminated with toxic chemicals and as such capital dredging which digs into these sediments requires extensive sampling to be undertaken to determine whether the material is suitable for disposal at sea.

8.7 Maintenance dredging as described above, in an unpolluted river, could be a chemically clean operation. In order to obtain a licence for disposal at sea samples have to be taken to in order to determine whether the material is compliant with the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Northeast Atlantic (OSPAR Convention).

8.8 The OSPAR Convention defines the process that countries have to undertake to ensure that only compliant materials are disposed of at sea. In the UK Cefas have determined a set of Action Levels[19] for the ranges of chemicals which are specified in the convention, and which are used to assess whether material should be disposed of at sea. Most chemicals have 2 action levels, with materials above Level 2 being prohibited from disposal at sea. Below Action Level 2, but above Action Level 1, disposal at sea should only be undertaken if considered safe.

8.9 The River Tees could be expected to be highly contaminated with a range of hydrocarbons due to the long use of the riverbanks for the production of coke and its byproduct coal tar, chemical works and oil processing. Some of the most toxic hydrocarbons are polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) which are specifically regulated under OSPAR. However, there is only an Action Level 1 for PAHs (0.1mg/kg), and no Action Level 2.

8.10 OSPAR regulations do not specify the amount of sediment that can be disposed of at sea, with levels at the discretion of individual countries' regulators. In the UK the regulator is the Marine Management Organisation MMO), who issue the licence for disposal, and use the Government Cefas laboratory to obtain the necessary scientific guidance.

8.11 Cefas note that levels of PAHs are above those normally acceptable but make no mention of the amount of material being disposed of. However, written evidence shows that 250,000 wet tonnes was agreed as an annual safe disposal amount, and this was produced prior to application for variation 6 of MLA/2015/00088, which corrected the annual disposal from 250,000 wet tonnes to 2,500,000 wet tonnes, a factor of 10 increase.

8.12 Whilst having no effect on physical operations (this was always the amount to be disposed of), it meant that a new MMO officer stated the incorrect total annual dredge as 10% of the real figure when justifying allowing disposal at sea and fishers to assume that the Orca had dumped over 50% of the annual dredge volume when in fact it was only over 5%.

[19] Cefas - Action Levels - North East File Collection (northeastfc.uk)

8.13 The PD Ports licence remained incorrect until 2022 as PD Ports had completed the application form incorrectly, stating that over the whole 10-year period of the licence, they would dump only the annual amount, not the correct annual amount x 10. This coloured others understanding of the Orca dredge.

8.14 The exact concentrations in the sediment or the total amounts being disposed of at sea are only part of the picture. Damage is done to humans, animals, plants and any other living things, by the amount of material they are exposed to at any one time or cumulatively over a period of time, depending on the specific way in which a chemical is toxic. The exposure amount will be increased by higher levels of chemicals in the sediment, by larger amounts of sediment being disposed of at sea but also by the rate of disposal of the sediment.

8.15 The faster the rate of disposal the higher the concentration of chemical will be and so the more poisonous the sediment will be to the aquatic environment. Faster rate of disposal will also mean the concentration of a chemical will remain above the concentration at which it is toxic for longer. Very high concentrations may also slow down the rate of breakdown of the chemical, as the concentration of oxygen for oxidation is reduced by previous breakdowns and any microbial breakdown is swamped or even poisoned due to the high concentration.

UKD Orca

8.16 The UKD Orca was contracted to dredge the channel in Tees Bay from 25th September 2021 to 4th October 2021, which corresponded exactly with the first die off of marine life. This led to the assumption that the UKD Orca must have been responsible for the marine die off.

8.17 This assumption was reinforced by errors made by PD Ports in the original Application Form for MLA/2015/00088 where the total dredge for the River Tees was stated as only 1,507,770 wet tonnes for sand and 930,065 wet tonnes of slit to be removed over the ten year period between 1st January 2016 to 31st December 2025. These were in fact the amounts that PD Ports expected to dredge every year. Similar errors were made for the Hartlepool dredge amount, i.e. 322,800 wet tonnes of sand and 128,480 wet tonnes of silt over ten years and not each year. These errors had not been corrected, so that when it was known that the UKD Orca had disposed of almost 150,000 wet tonnes at sea, this appeared to be 60% of the annual allowance of the incorrectly stated 245,000 wet tonnes, as per MLA/2015/00088 before variation 6 (June 2022).

8.18 The Application Form for variation 6[20] merely states "The licence currently has an admin error on the quantities, so they do not align with the correct volume on the licence conditions." The previous licence MLA/2012/00141 did give annual breakdown of amounts to be dredged, so to someone in the know this is just an administrative error in MLA/2015/00088, but this was not the case for consultees

[20] MLA_2015_00088_6-VARIATION-6-FORM.pdf (northeastfc.uk)

who explicitly stated their opinions were based on the incorrect annual amounts i.e. Cefas recommendations based on 2020[21] sampling and 2021 sampling[22].

8.19 It is now known that the UKD Orca removed 148,930 wet tonnes, 5% of the annual total amount allowed to be disposed of at the inshore Tees Bay A, 2,889,700 wet tonnes, which is normally 80% from the Tees channel and 20% from the Hartlepool channel. The UKD Orca was dredging 24 hours a day for 10 days, whereas, according to the maintenance dredging method statement[23], PD Teesport's own dredgers normally only dredge 8-10 hours a day for 6 day week. So, in 10 days (2.8% of a year) UKD Orca had removed more material that the normal operation would in 18 days.

8.20 Key Points:

- PD Teesports disposal at sea licence(MLA/2015/00088) issued in 2015, was incorrectly issued for one tenth of material actually dumped at sea and only corrected with variation 6 in 2022.
- Opinions of the safety of disposal at sea states the incorrect quantities of material.
- The dredged material disposed of at sea is many 100s of times above notification level for polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons
- UKD Orca disposed of 5% of annual dredge in 10 days rather than 18 days, almost double rate of disposal at sea.
- UKD Orca dredge occurred at the same time as the marine die-off occurred in late September and early October 2021.
- Why was sampling carried out one year early immediately after UKD Orca dredge, i.e. many samples were below level where river is usually dredged.
- Sampling in October 2021 showed PAHs had in general increased compared to November 2020 (of 176 measurements 152 increased by up to 22times), but no similar increase seen in metal concentration (of 64 measurements only 34 had increased by at most 4 times and some had decreased to 10%).
- This suggests that an event with a large release of hydrocarbons happened prior to 13th October 2021.

Creation of South Bank Quay

8.21 Teesworks is reclaimed land and a historical site of steelworks and coke ovens, metal recovery and landfill, much of it Made Ground around 3-5 m deep, now below the recently installed / being installed capping layers. Large amounts of various contaminants, many of which are highly toxic to marine life (as noted in site COMAH status which remained until end of 2023), were present in

[21] 20210329 MLA2015000885 L2015004275 Tees and Hart Maintenance Disposal - Variation Advice Minute FINAL.pdf (northeastfc.uk)
[22] 20211217 MLA2015000885 L2015004276 Tees and Hartlepool Maintenance Disposal Mid-licence Advice Minute FINAL.pdf (northeastfc.uk)
[23] PD Teesport - Maintenance Dredging Method Statement(2).pdf (northeastfc.uk)

complex remaining structures above ground, and still remain below ground and should be considered as part of remedial work. Contaminants present include heavy metals, PAH, phenols, chromium, TPH/EPH, PCBs, VOCs, dioxins, furans, pyridine and novel contaminants from industrial legacy.

8.22 If developed properly the site could not only provide long term employment once the most appropriate industries are attracted, but also with imagination as promised in the original 2017 South Tees Regeneration Masterplan[24] provide fantastic opportunities for heritage and nature. In fact in predevelopment consultations, the local population stress the importance of nature and heritage not just jobs (2019 South Tees Regeneration Masterplan[25]). Other UK brownfield regeneration schemes (The Avenue Coke Works, Chesterfield[26]) have achieved all three and international examples such as Bilbao have regenerated whole regions (Transformation Bilbao[27]). In Bilbao's case, the regeneration enable progress from a cyclical economy to one that has been stable for three decades so far (The Bilbao Effect[28]).

8.23 Teesworks approach does not compare well to best in class nationally and certainly not internationally. For example, the approach to dredging for the Teesworks South Bank Quay development is a very visible demonstration of the lack of ambition being shown by Teesworks, through what appears to be substandard operations, where speed and low cost seem to trump any heritage/environmental considerations. South Bank Quay will create much needed jobs in a sector that really supports the UK's need to move to Net Zero, but the jobs could have been equally created with a protective/precautionary approach to the environment and respect for local heritage. Instead, a short-sighted approach where short terms profits both financial and political appear to have been prioritised over real sustainable long term benefits.

8.24 In order to create the new South Bank Quay, Teesworks and its sister organisations (STDC/STDL) carried out capital dredging, which involved the removal of up to 16m depth of material from the original riverbank and river bed.

8.25 The construction of the South Bank Quay is covered by a number of planning applications and 2 marine license applications. One of the marine licence applications, South Bank Quay Phase 1 MLA/2020/00506 plus variations 1 and 2, includes thousands of pages related to the South Bank site including much information related to its industrial history. The site has been used for over 100 years for a wide variety of industrial uses, the major ones being related to iron/steel making, in fact the area was classified at the most dangerous hazard level (COMAH) due to the by-products of coke making that remained on the site at the time of the application. The major by-product (coal tar) is a dangerous mixture of chemicals distilled from coal whilst being transformed into coke. The

[24] 171019South-Tees-Master-Plan-19-Nov-17.pdf (northeastfc.uk)
[25] 1911South-Tees-Master-Plan-Nov-19.2.pdf (northeastfc.uk)
[26] The Avenue Landscaping and Remediation Project – one of the UK's most significant brownfield projects - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
[27] bilbaoturismo.net/BilbaoTurismo/en/history/transformation-bilbao-
[28] The Bilbao effect: how Frank Gehry's Guggenheim started a global craze | Frank Gehry | The Guardian

COMAH status was due to the 1000's of tonnes of mainly coal tar related material still on the site. What is unknown is how many thousands of tonnes of material have leaked into the site over the 100 plus years of coke oven operation.

8.26 The licence application also contains the chemical analysis for the suite of chemicals that is specified by OSPAR (Oslo and Paris Convention) as having to be tested if material is to be disposed of at sea. Samples that had been taken of the riverbed and the river bank all had high level of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which was not surprising bearing in mind the site history of coke production. There is no explicit requirement in OSPAR regulations for a developer to test for other coal tar / coke related chemicals and they were not looked for.

8.27 Chemical analysis showed that about a third of the riverbed designated for dredging for the berth at the South Bank Quay was so contaminated that it was classified as an exclusion zone. The material that was dredged from this exclusion zone was therefore excluded from being disposed of at sea and instead had to be brought to land for appropriate disposal or cleaning. The top 8m was excavated to land, as this 'human made' waste (as defined by the London Convention) could also not be disposed of at sea.

8.28 The MMO had to make a subjective judgement on whether the cumulative effects of dredging would cause sufficient damage to warrant blocking of disposal at sea. The MMO takes advice from Cefas, who stated that while levels of contamination were high enough that disposal at sea should not be allowed, due to previous activities in the vicinity of the Tees, disposal at sea should not be precluded (18th June 2021 - Cefas Follow up Advice MLA/2020/00506&00507[29]). So, in the case of the sea around the River Tees due to its history of pollution, adding more contamination is acceptable. In other words, in other marine areas without an industrial past, it could be assumed that the disposal would not have been acceptable, and the environment would be protected.

8.29 We know, from both from the record of historical industrial activity and waste disposal into the Tees and from the limited sampling carried out before the dredging occurred, that the material disposed of at sea will have been contaminated to some extent. The disposal at sea is allowed because it does not breach current internationally agreed limits and because there is an assumption that development takes precedence over potential environmental damage.

8.30 Further to this, although a marine licence specifies the way in which the dredging must be carried out and how the dredged material is to be disposed of at sea, it is up to the contractor to comply with the specifications. Disposal sites are only checked by the MMO for contamination level once every three years.

8.31 The MMO originally asked the developers to monitor the amount of sediment being released locally into the river at the dredge sites to ensure it did not disrupt the marine ecosystem. This would have involved extra expense and potential

[29] 20210615 MLA202000506 MLA202000507 Tees South Bank Phases 1 and 2 - EIA SEAL Advice Followup+SJB.docx (northeastfc.uk)

disruption to the Teesworks dredging operations, so the developer proposed an alternative - that dredging would not take place during July and August as this is when the salmon mainly migrate along the River Tees Estuary. All flora as well as fauna in marine ecosystem can be damaged by exposure to the dredged sediment but only salmon is fully protected in law.

South Bank Capital Dredging - 11th October 2022

8.32 As outlined in section 6.25, Chemical analysis showed that about a third of the riverbed designated for dredging for the berth at the South Bank Quay was so contaminated that it was classified as an exclusion zone. Developers were therefore required to use a closed bucket dredge, on the basis that "An enclosed grab results in virtually no release of sediment as the material is dredged[30]"

8.33 A Marine Licence Application return document MLA/2020/00506 Condition 5.2.11 - P03[31] evidenced that this was not the case, and that so much contamination was spread from the excluded dredge site that there was a requirement to carry out localised remedial dredging to remove the contaminated sediment around the excluded area. Planning documents show that locally released sediment will have been deposited over most of the River Tees estuary. However, Teesworks only remediated close to the exclusion zone meaning that excluded contaminated sediment will also have been dumped at sea either through the cutter suction dredger Athena's capital dredging of the rest of the berthing pocket adjacent to the exclusion zone or by PD Ports maintenance dredging of the main channel adjacent to the exclusion zone.

8.34 Further dredging activity undertaken between 5 February and 14 April 2023 contributed to the disturbance and spread of contaminated sediment along the bed of the river. The following conclusions may be drawn from video evidence captured between 30 March and 14 April 2023:

- The resuspension of riverbed sediment is clear, with material of all sizes changing the rivers colour around the Athena and presumably mainly fine sediment being allowed over the weir on the barge as the suction dredged sediment settles in the barge effectively dewatering the sediment in the barge. The more water that is allowed to leave the dredged material in the barge, the larger the loads of dredged material that can be removed per trip to the disposal site, but the greater the amount of dredged material which is released back into the river.
- The video starts with images of the large bunded mound which is believed to be the material dredged from the exclusion zone. This material is so contaminated that it cannot be disposed at sea, it has been piled near to the river to dewater with the required bund to capture any water, potentially to be treated before disposal (as specified in the marine licence).

[30] MLA_2020_00506-PC1084-RHD-ZZ-XX-RP-Z-1115_South Bank Quay supplementary report-16.pdf (northeastfc.uk)
[31] MLA_2020_00506-PC1084-RHD-SB-EN-ME-EV-1145-Condition 5.2.11 Note P03.pdf (northeastfc.uk)

- The two excavator dredgers are working towards the western end of the quay, with the Athena operating towards the eastern end of the quay.
- The material dredged by the Athena is allowed to be dumped at sea, so you can see the hopper barge connected by the floating pipe. The water around the hopper barge shows the material which is being released from the barge as the dredged material is allowed to drain into the Tees. The more water that can be removed from the material piped from the Athena, the fewer times the hopper barge has to be taken out to the disposal sites.
- Finally, the Athena cutter suction dredger can be seen in operation and unlike the animation the amount of sediment which is not caught by the suction can be seen by the change in water colour around the cutter head, travelling to the stern of the boat.

Redevelopment and Remediation Work

8.35 The approach to remediation of the South Bank Site, as outlined in the STDC Enabling Earthworks and Remediation Strategy Report [32] was described as being potentially inappropriate for DNAPLs (Dense non-aqueous phase liquids), which require specialist equipment for removal or remediation. Further to this, consideration has not been given to risks to local receptors, such as SSSI, RAMSAR site and River Tees as they are removed from the Conceptual Site Model (CSM). There was also no reference to potential risks from the creation of additional pathways to sensitive receptors as a result of piling, explosives or dredging activity, or of the possibility of tidal flats groundwater acting as source and pathway, owing to hydraulic continuity with river and sea. A revised CSM showing risks to river and marine receptors is shown at **figure 11**.

8.36 In terms of risk assessment, the following was identified:

- There are multiple known and unknown pathways to contaminate river and sea and there was a failure in assessing significant risks to the water environment, which is highly dynamic.
- There appears to have been no consideration for DNAPLS, and the granting of a planning application without remediation of DNAPLS in affected areas is not in line with EU guidance. Correspondence from the Environment Agency, dated August 2019, advises that 'decontamination operations should be completed prior to any demolition or longer-term restoration of the site.
- The CSM contained no reference to the impact of development on offsite receptors, such as SSSI, Ramsar and the River Tees.
- No consideration was given to the creation of additional pathways caused by explosions, or migration of contaminants through Tidal Flat Deposits.

8.37 In terms of regulatory issues, the following was identified:

[32] South Bank Priority Area, Enabling Earthworks and Remediation Strategy, STDC, ARCADIS, May 2021 R-2021-0465-FFM-10035117-AUK-XX-XX-RP-ZZ-0271-02-South Bank Priority Strategy.pdf (northeastfc.uk)

- The precautionary principle was not applied given the recent die-offs. The assumption should be that any work on the site is likely to cause environmental damage or at least reduce the resilience of the local environment to damage.
- The incident relating to Borehole 34 was not properly addressed.
- There was no independent testing of dredged material or the dredged site, as would be expected with a landfill scenario.
- The Independent Panel review of the October 2021 die-off was used as a rationale to approve future dredging – see **Variation MLV2**

FINDINGS

- Concerns are raised here as to the administration of the MMO applications with such a fundamental error of the amount of material to be dredged and disposed of at sea being wrong. This was only corrected on 17 June 2022.

- This means that the original license was issued erroneously given that the figures given were 1/10th of the actual required.

- Who polices / audits how much material is dredged and disposed of at sea? If there was any policing, it should have been picked up that this was significantly over the amount stated on the license for the years from 2015-2022

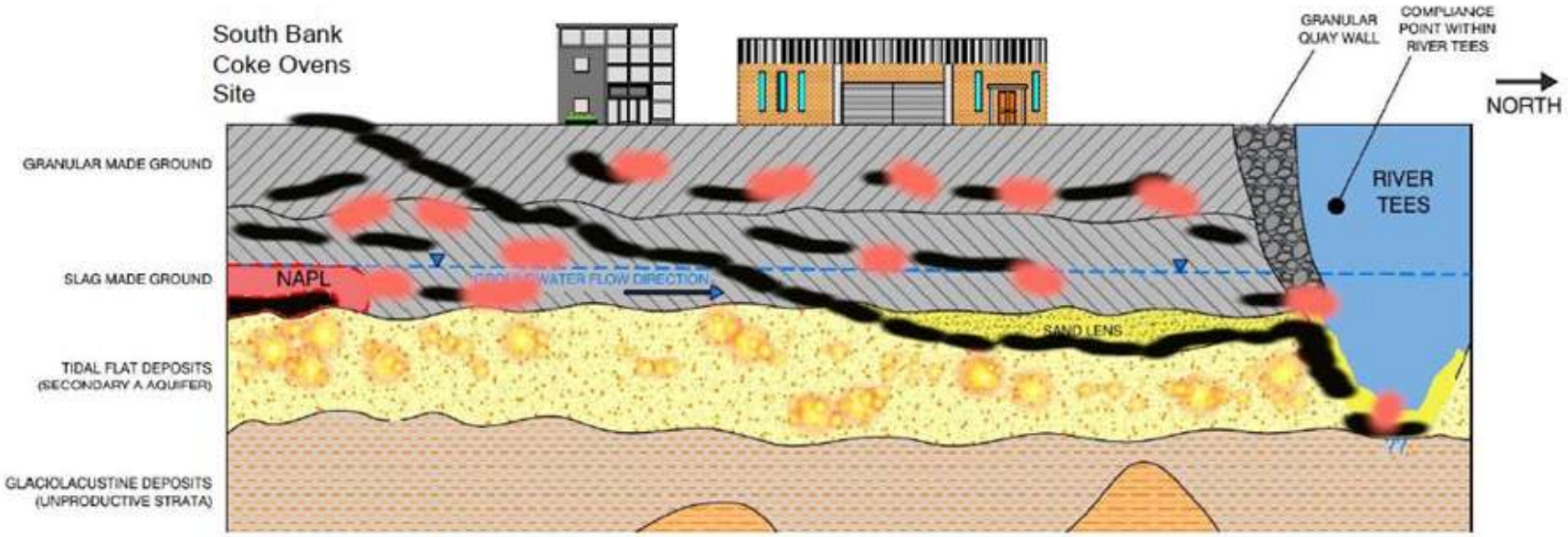
- Sampling carried out after the Orca dredge which was a year earlier than expected given the standard testing regime. Why was this decision made when PD Ports told us that they would not test over and above what was the minimum necessary

- Sampling around 13 October 2021 shows a large increase in the levels of PAH in comparison with levels of heavy metals in comparison with November 2020. This could indicate that an event occurred shortly beforehand which released a high number of Hydrocarbons

- Concern as to the impact of a number of demolitions on reclaimed and contaminated land, including the Dorman Long tower, potentially releasing contaminants into the river, and in particular PAH.

Figure 11

Revised Conceptual Model showing risks to river/marine receptors *(EA DNAPL + Arcadis South Bank)*



South Bank, Teesworks, Redcar - Detailed Quantitative Risk Assessment - South Tees Development Corporation - Document Ref: 10035117-AUK-XX-XX-RP-ZZ-0331-02-SB_DQRA - Revision: 02 - SEPTEMBER 2021 - Arcadis
https://www.northeastlc.uk/Teesworks/Planning/R-2022-0096-CD/R-2022-0096-CD-10035117-AUK-XX-XX-RP-ZZ-0331-02-SB_DQRA.pdf
Environment Agency 2003 – R&D Pulbication 133 – An illustrated handbook of DNAPL transport and fate in the subsurface

Professor D Roberts, Department of Geography, University of Durham

Evidence heard at a meeting of the Working Group on 3 November 2023

Professor Roberts provided an oral presentation on his work relating to sediment core samples taken from the Tees riverbed in April 2023 between the South Bank site and the mouth of the Tees. Professor Roberts advised that he was working as part of the community effort as a sedimentologist with expertise in how sediment is deposited in coastal environments. Professor Robert's interest in the area had developed over decades, particularly in relation to coastal evolution and waste produced as a result of coal mining activity. He has extensive experience of collecting sediment cores from offshore, coastal and estuarine areas.

9.1 Following several mortality events, scientists have been examining dredging activity to assess how dredged sediment may have found its way to the sea / estuary floor, and to assess what the sediment may contain with respect to pollutants. Cores have been retrieved as part of a collaborative process between the scientific and fishing communities and are currently in the process of being analysed for content. Within 6 – 12 months comprehensive results relating to the characteristics of the sediment should be available.

9.2 Some basic considerations in relation to the work were described as follows:

- In an estuary sediment is moved through fluvial and tidal action.
- Sediment is deposited as bedload by currents and via suspension settling.
- Suspension settling is very important where there is fine sediment in the wate column.
- Dredging activity leads to the formation of sediment plumes which release both coarse and fine sediments (plumites) via rainout onto the seafloor.
- Plumites accumulate layer by layer providing a record of the sediment that has been released.

Law of Superposition

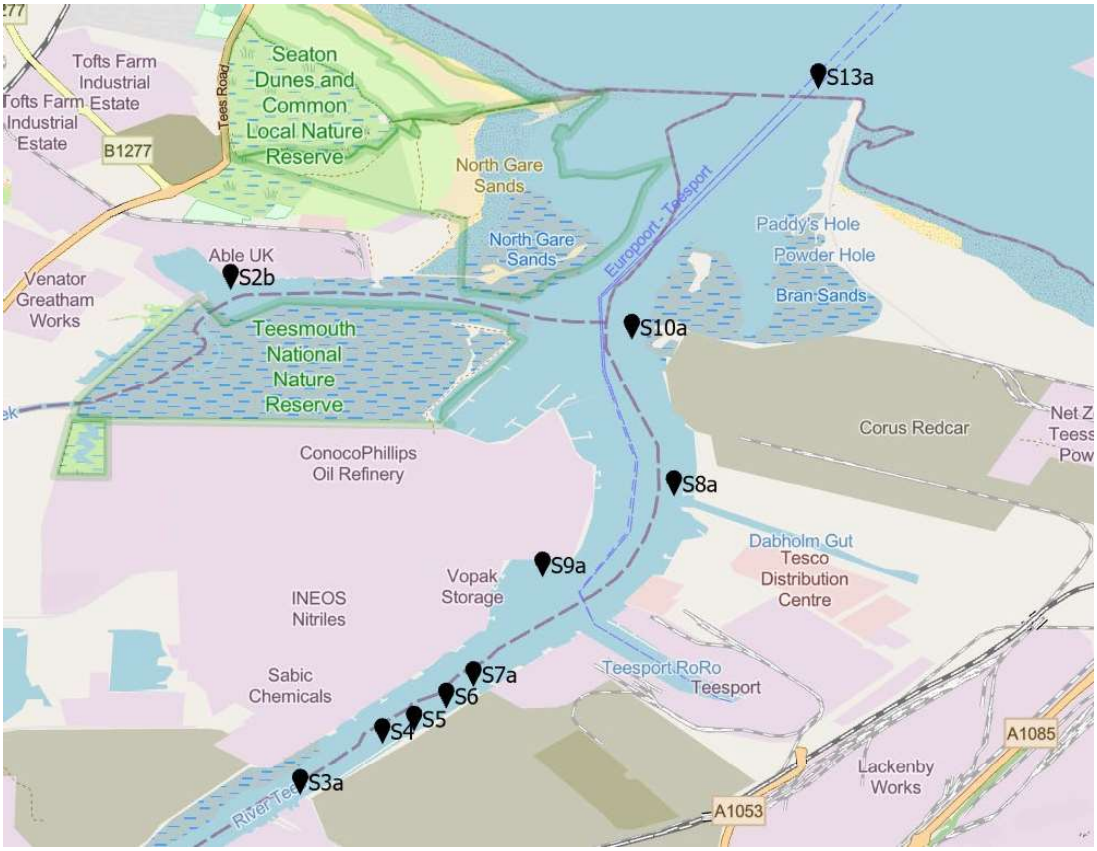
- Younger sediments lie above older sediments.
- So, the most recent sediment layers sit on the top of the sediment pile.
- Sediments tell us about depositional processes and pollutant signals.
- Timescale:
    - The Tees cores undoubtedly capture sediment accumulating on the riverbed in the days, weeks, months prior to April 11 2023. The 'dredge' signal has distinctive: colour, grain size, physical properties, structure and lacks fauna. The cores also contain older 'pre-dredge' sediments which have distinctive: colour, grain size, physical properties, structure and faunal communities.

9.3 The location of Tees core samples is found at **figure 12.** Sediment cores taken as part of this investigation were retrieved in situ, on a single day on 11th April 2023.

Cores taken were not a standard length due to variable sediment density and water content. Data was derived from the following processes:

- MSCL scans to ascertain the physical properties of the core (e.g., grain size).
- CT scans, which allowed researchers to look inside the core to define sediment structure (e.g., normal grading associated with rainout).
- XRF scans which provided elemental analysis.

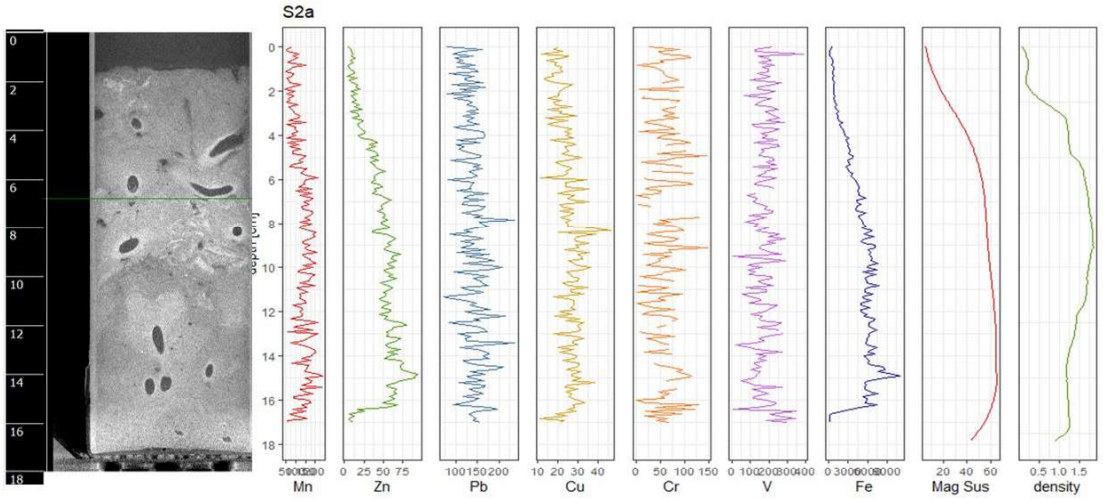
Figure 12 – Tees Cores Locations



9.4 Findings from core sample analysis are as follows:

S2a (pre-dredge sediment)

- Dark brown; muddy sand; massive; macrofauna (worms, molluscs, gastropods); bioturbated.
- High density.
- High magnetic susceptibility.
- Elemental signal: Zn/Fe/Al ↑; Pb/Cu/Cr/V↕



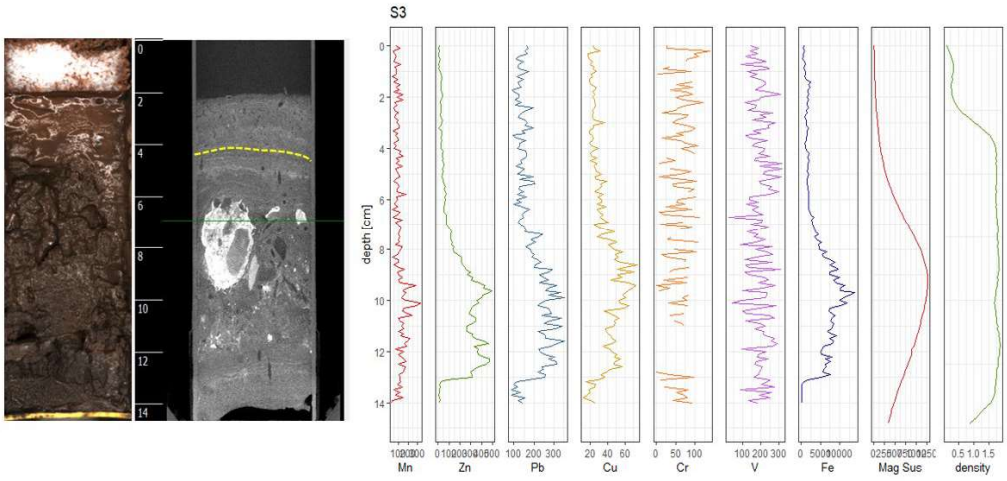
S3 (pre-dredge overlain by thin dredge)

Pre-dredge

- Dark brown, muddy sand, macrofauna (worms, molluscs, gastropods)

Dredge

- A thin cap of red, muddy sand on top, lacking fauna, not bioturbated, laminated.
- Drop in Mag Sus and density.
- Drop in elemental signal (Zn, Cu, Pb, Fe)



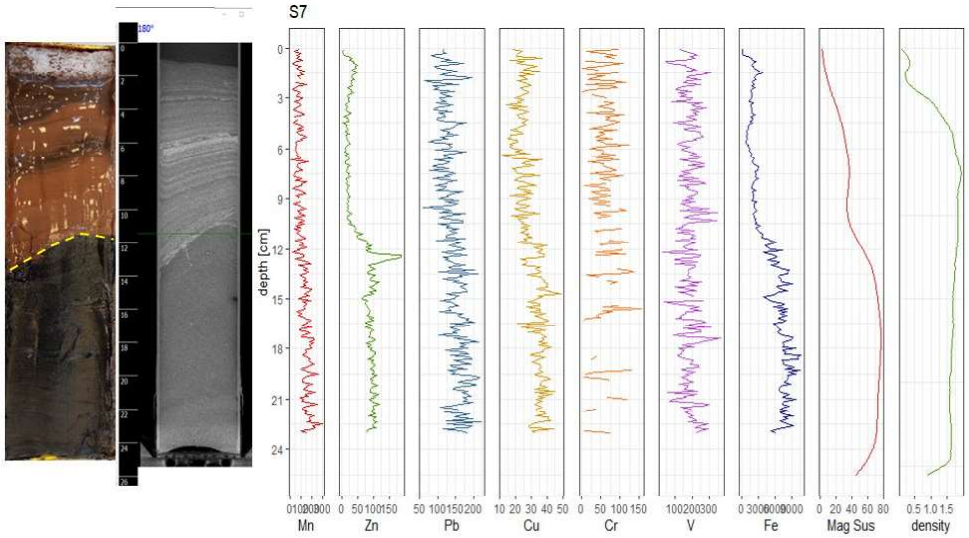
S7 (pre-dredge overlain by thin dredge)

Pre-dredge

- Dark brown, muddy sand, no macrofauna

Dredge

- 10cm cap of red, mud, lacking fauna; laminated
- Drop in Mag Sus and density.
- Drop in elemental signa (Zn, Cu, Pb, Fe, Al)



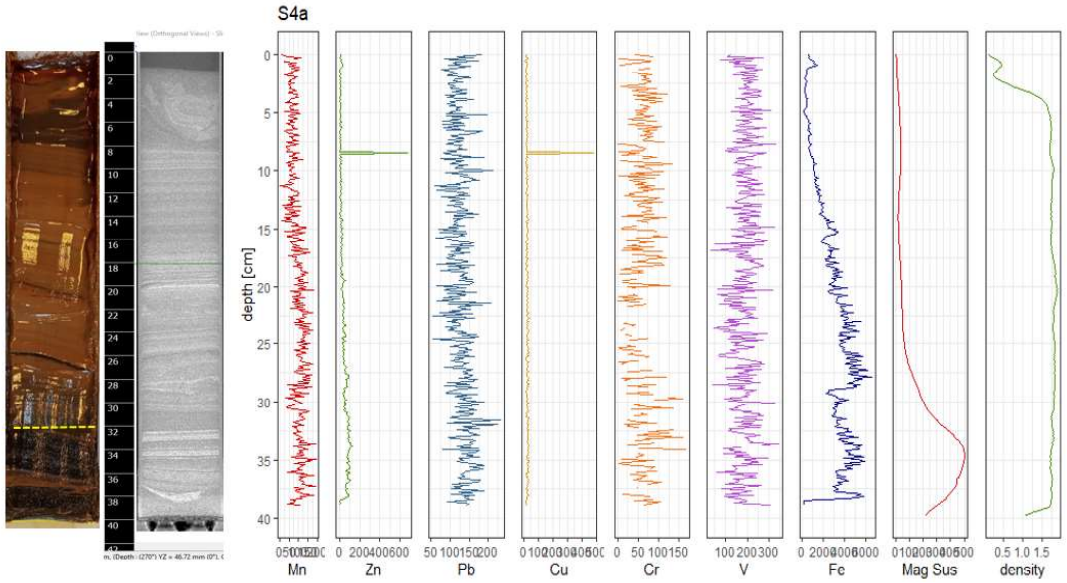
S4 (pre dredge overlain by thin dredge)

Pre-dredge

- Dark brown, muddy sand, no macro fauna

Dredge

- 32cm cap of red, mud, lacking fauna; laminated
- Drop in Mag Sus and density
- Drop in elemental signal (Fe), spikes in Cu/Zn



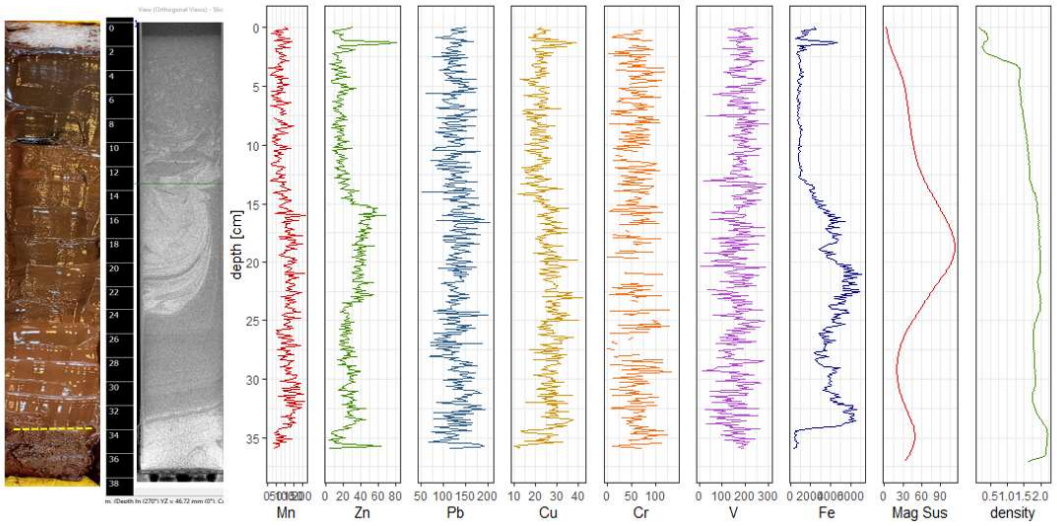
S5a (pre dredge overlain by thin dredge)

Pre-dredge

- Dark brown, muddy sand, no macrofauna

Dredge

- 34cm cap of red, mud, lacking fauna; laminated, deformed
- Drop in Mag Sus and density
- Change in elemental signal.



9.5 Key sedimentary properties:

- Pre-dredge signal shows dark brown, muddy sands with extensive evidence of macro fauna (worms, gastropods, molluscs) and related bioturbation. Sediment is high in density and magnetic susceptibility and distinctive elemental signal.

- The dredge signal is composed of fine-grained (silt/clay) sediment, which is laminated, red-brown in colour and devoid of life, low in density and magnetic susceptibility, and a different elemental signal to the pre-dredge material. The red colour of the dredge signal suggests a distinctive local source.

9.6 Professor Roberts advised that, in his opinion, core samples 3 – 7 contained material dredged and released as a result of adaptation and alteration of the South Bank site, possibly resulting from work undertaken by the Athena dredger. The plumes associated with the Athena have a distinctive red colour similar to the sediments cored on the riverbed. Although it is difficult to date plumes, the law of superposition dictates that the uppermost deposits are most recent and likely deposited in the days/months prior to 11th April 2023. There has been no comprehensive survey of the riverbed, but common sense would dictate that the red dredged sediment released via plume activity is now likely to be ubiquitous along the riverbed and across many parts of the estuary.

9.7 'Pre-dredged' older sediment (e.g., core samples S2b) showed evidence of marine life. In contrast, the red 'dredge' sediments are devoid of life, most probably due to

high levels of toxicity, sedimentation or turbidity making the riverbed inhospitable to life.

Centre for Environment, Fisheries & Aquaculture Science (Cefas) "Development, validation, and application of a fully quantitative method for the determination of pyridine in crustacean tissues (and application of the same method in sediments)."

The report, and associated feedback, was discussed at a meeting of the Working Group on 7 December 2023.

10.1 The report referred to above outlines the following points (taken from the Executive Summary):

- Pyridine was implicated as a cause in the mass mortalities events (MMEs) that occurred during the autumn 2021 in the NE coast of England involving mainly crabs and lobsters. This was inferred from high pyridine levels reported in some crabs from the affected area, following analysis by the Environment Agency (EA).
- The analytical screening method used by the EA (although accredited for water samples), was neither quantitative nor validated for biota (or for sediment) samples but was used within this incident to identify lines for potential follow up.
- Due to continuing external concerns over pyridine, Defra commissioned (this work) at Cefas to develop and validate a robust quantitative method for pyridine in these environmental matrices.
- This method was used to re-analyse stored samples collected during the MMEs.
- Cefas analysts developed and validated a method, using a head space injection gas chromatography coupled to a mass spectrometer, HS-GC-MS technique. The limit of detection (LOD) and the limit of quantification (LOQ) of the method was 0.006mg/kg and 0.02mg/kg wet weight (ww) for the shellfish matrix and 0.002mg/kg and 0.008mg/kg ww for the sediment matrix, respectively.
- The analytical method developed in this study, demonstrated fit-for-purpose performance criteria for biota matrices, including a recovery range of 89-101% and an associated within batch coefficient of variation (relative standard deviation) of 2-3% across three concentration levels (5, 25 and 500mg/kg).
- Reanalysis of crustacean samples that had originally returned high indicative pyridine levels with the EA method (3-429mg/kg) demonstrated very low concentrations of the chemical (<0.22-0.077mg/kg, over 3 orders of magnitude lower). Analysis of additional crab samples, unrelated to the events, also demonstrated the presence of pyridine at very low levels (<0.02-0.139mg/kg).
- A single mussel sample returned a value of 2.36mg/kg.
- Pyridine levels in sediments collected in November 2021 all returned values between the LOD and LOQ. Three sediment samples collected in January 2022 returned values above the LOQ (0.014, 0.008, 0.009mg/kg ww), although below 2x LOQ.
- Both sediment and biota samples returned levels of pyridine within an expected range based on the low environmental persistence, and high biodegradation rate of the chemical.

- It is therefore considered very unlikely that pyridine, as a single chemical entity, was the cause of the crab and lobster mortalities during autumn 2021.

10.2 Dr Gary Caldwell provided the following response to the report:

"Context: The Cefas report details a validated method to precisely measure the quantity of pyridine (a highly volatile organic solvent) in crustacean tissues and marine sediments. The research was commissioned in response to concerns about the quantities of pyridine measured by the Environment Agency (EA) as part of their pollution incident response following the autumn 2021 mass crustacean die-offs. The method used by the EA was validated for water but not for tissue samples. The publication of a validated method is to be welcomed, and I expect a second validated method developed by the University of York will be published in the coming months. Having validated methods is important in ensuring confidence in the pyridine values reported. Cefas applied their validated method to samples of frozen carcasses collected at the time of the original die-offs. While I have no issue with the method itself, care must be taken with respect to the absolute quantities of pyridine measured in the tissues as they had been stored frozen at -20oC rather than -80oC (which is the accepted temperature for the long-term storage of unstable samples). Pyridine, being volatile, will continue to have been lost to atmosphere at -20oC, albeit slowly. Further, at -20oC microbes present in/on the carcasses could still have been metabolically active and may have further degraded the present pyridine.
The storage issue aside, there are important nuances that an informed reader would have picked up from the report, but which have been overlooked by public figures and by the media. Firstly, drawing conclusions based on tissue pyridine content is of limited value, and I would argue that it is potentially flawed for, as the report states:
"…the water-soluble nature of pyridine suggests very low bioaccumulation potential."
Bioaccumulation is the process whereby the quantity of a chemical is increased within the tissues of an organism, often to dangerous levels. Whether a chemical bioaccumulates or not is primarily dictated by the properties of the chemical, and pyridine is widely accepted not to bioaccumulate. However, this is a moot point as pyridine does not need to enter the body of a crab/lobster to exact its toxicity. The receptors that are sensitive to pyridine are found on the outside of the crab/lobster (on the exoskeleton). The implication of this is clear, for pyridine to be toxic it needs only to be present in the water and/or sediment - there is no need to bioaccumulate. Therefore, one would not necessarily expect high levels of pyridine to be found in the tissues.
With respect to the surface sediment testing, these samples were collected several weeks after the main die-off event and were also stored sub-optimally at -20oC. Pyridine has a half-life of approximately 8 days (a logarithmic decay). Due to the timing of the sampling, the bulk of pyridine will have been lost and/or degraded. Even so, it's important to state that some of the pyridine levels that Cefas detected in sediment (particularly around Hartlepool) do fall within the toxic range against crabs. If one was to back calculate the quantities measured in the sediment according to the 8-day half-life, this

would lead to the inevitable conclusion that the pyridine levels in the sediment at the time of the die-offs would have been even more deeply into the toxic range.
The final point that I want to highlight is directly related to one of the key conclusions of the report, and indeed was the message briefed by No. 10 to local MPs and the media.
"It is therefore considered very unlikely that pyridine, as a single chemical entity, was the cause of the crab and lobster mortalities during autumn 2021."
To the casual observer this may seem like a definitive dismissal of a pollution link, but for those of us that have been immersed in these events and have had to deal (both in private and in public) with the unequivocal and at times unnecessarily forceful denials of the DEFRA agencies of any pollution involvement, the report's conclusion is a notable change in position. Considering the "…*as a single chemical entity*…", a multichemical pollution event is the most likely source of the die-offs. Pyridine is but one component of coal tar, and another coal tar component that we are very worried about is naphthalene. The report's authors will have been all too aware that I will have read the report - to those of us versed in the science, that conclusion speaks volumes. This is the first admission that pyridine could, as part of a multichemical mix, have been responsible for the die-offs.

10.2 Dr Simon Gibbon advised that Cefas should have tested old samples again with both tests, or ideally, tested new samples with both tests. Otherwise, differences caused by the age of the samples can't be ruled out.

10.3 NEFC queried the validity of the findings in the absence of a peer review process.

FINDINGS

- The development of a validated method for determination and quantification of pyridine in tissue samples is welcome but the report published by Cefas had not been peer reviewed prior to publication.
- Peer review is very important in ensuring the quality and validity of research findings prior to publication of any findings.
- Storage of the tissues used in the Cefas study at -20oC was not optimal. Storage at -80oC is recommended for unstable products such as pyridine.
- It is considered unlikely that pyridine "as a single chemical entity" was the cause of the mass die off.

Whitby Lobster Hatchery

Evidence gathered by Members of the Group at a visit held on 8 January 2024

11.1 Whitby Lobster Hatchery is a charitable organisation that was created in 2021. Set up with grants from the MMO and local businesses, the organisation has recently opened a visitor centre with the ambition of becoming a self-sustaining educational, conservation and research centre.

11.2 The fishing industry along the Yorkshire coast is the largest in England with Whitby ranking at the 3rd largest port for lobster landings. Along all of the ports on the Yorkshire coast, lobster fishing has replaced the white fish industry as the main target species and lobster now make up the majority of income for Yorkshire fishing communities. Yorkshire lobsters are some of the best in the world, highly desired by seafood markets across Europe. It is therefore vital that these species are healthy, abundant and sustainable.

11.3 The aim of the Hatchery is to protect Whitby's fishing heritage by conserving the local lobster populations. This will be achieved with the release of 100,000 juvenile lobsters into the sea.

11.4 Lobsters produce up to 20,000 eggs per cycle, which are released into the water as larvae. Statistically, only 1% of these larvae survive. Wild caught egg-bearing lobsters are brought into the hatchery, where the eggs are developed safely and the juveniles protected over the most vulnerable period of their life cycle before being released back into the wild. The intervention is predicted to increase larval survival rate to 30-50%.

11.5 It is envisaged that the released juvenile lobsters will fortify the existing lobster population year on year. Juvenile lobsters take 5-7 years to grow to market size and during this time they will reach sexual maturity and begin to release eggs of their own. The Yorkshire Lobster Hatchery maintain that this conservation method, alongside effective management, will protect lobster fishing in the area by strengthening local lobster stocks and securing jobs for the fishing fleet.

11.6 The hatchery was assembled before the mortalities began, although the target for release numbers hasn't altered, being already ambitious. The Manager, however, advised that the organisation were spurred on by the die-off event and the realisation of the fragility of the marine environment. Since the mortalities, support from the fishing community for the programme has increased from 80% to 100%.

11.7 As lobsters regularly moult by creating a new shell and eating the old one, a DNA database of released lobsters has been created to identify and track individual lobsters and assess the success of the release programme. The industry remains unclear on the patterns of movement of lobsters, and there is uncertainty about where juvenile lobsters - less than an inch long – live and feed in their natural marine environment.

Hatchery Process

11.8 Egg-bearing lobsters, or berried hens, are placed in tanks after being brought in by fishing vessels with dispensation to take them from the sea. After the eggs hatch, the hens are released back to the sea, and the eggs are piped to the Development Room.

11.9 The eggs develop to larvae, then juveniles, where they take the familiar lobster shape and continue growing. Artemia (brine shrimp) are bred in a separate room and used to feed the larvae and juveniles until they are about 3 months old, when they are released into the wild by divers, who try to find an environment on the sea bed which looks safe for them.

Tanks holding berried hens

Larvae in the Development Room

Juvenile Lobster. The second image is a close up of the tray shown in the first image

FINDINGS

- It is apparent that the work of Lobster Hatcheries is valuable in our area and should be invaluable to the recovery from this significant event.

- It could be possible for the work to be expanded to include crabs but obviously would require additional funding to enable this.

Mr David McCreadie
Former Senior Lecturer, Marine Biology and Oceanography

Evidence heard at a meeting of the Working Group held on 12 January 2024

The following evidence was relayed orally by Mr McCreadie in his capacity as a former academic and fisheries trader.

12.1 Mr McCreadie's shellfish business failed due to River Mersey sludge dumping in 1997, which led to a loss of marine life and livelihoods in the Menai Strait. A sample from the dump site was considered by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) to be a matter of national security.

12.2 Mr McCreadie experienced Persian Gulf pollution owing to dumped barrels of toxic waste that had corroded, which led to the death of plant and animal marine life.

12.3 Mr McCreadie witnessed the Orca dredging and assigns the wash up of dead crustaceans to this event. The wash-ups continued through January and February of 2022, paused and then recurred in April 2022 along with dead seaweed and marine scavengers such as starfish and whelks. There was a suggestion that whatever was dredged has travelled to the Netherlands and that seals have died further down the English coast owing to the anticlockwise gyre exhibited in the North Sea.

12.4 Agent Orange as well as other materials were illegally disposed of in the Tees during the last century. Given the industrial heritage and the lack of regular testing, the release of juvenile lobsters from the Whitby Hatchery and the proposed Northumbria Water sponsored oyster beds are not viable.

12.5 Mr McCreadie maintained that the dredging campaign undertaken by UKD Orca was deeper than it should have been, there should be a sonar record of the dredge. (information requested by email from UK Dredging on 15.01.24)

12.6 Mr McCreadie believes that there should be sediment testing before, during and after dredging campaigns, to be carried out by scientists independent of Defra.

FINDINGS

- Evidence from Mr McCreadie as a first-hand witness to the crustaceans die off as well as having had first-hand experience as a fisheries trader.

Holding Statement and Public Inquiry

14.1 The Working Group met in February 2024 to agree a set of final recommendations based on the evidence received to date. The Group concluded that it was not possible to produce a conclusive piece of work as given its inability to engage with the main government agencies involved in marine management.

14.2 The Working Group therefore produced a Holding Statement outlining the interim findings and recommendations. The Holding Statement (see below) was forwarded to the following organisations, with a request for a response:

- The Secretary of State for DEFRA / Working Group Chair's response (**Appendix 15**)
- Environment Agency (**Appendix 16**)
- Cefas (**Appendix 17**)
- MMO (**Appendix 18**)
- NEIFCA
- PD Ports (**Appendix 19**)

Crustacean Deaths Collaborative Working Group

Holding Statement

In October 2021, a sea life mortality event occurred along the Northeast coast of England that involved the wash-up of thousands of dead and dying crustaceans. Members of the public, the fishing community and environmental charities continue to report occurrences of mortality events to date, mostly involving crustacea, although wash-up of other species has been reported.

Councillors representing the Tees Valley authorities affected by the incident were concerned that initial Government investigations were closed prematurely and agreed to form a Collaborative Working Group to consider evidence from various sources, including written reports and presentations from expert witnesses and stakeholders. Representatives from North Yorkshire Council joined the Group in July 2023 in view of the impact of the event on communities further south of the Tees Valley.

The Terms of Reference for the work of the Group outlined the need to better understand the reasons for the event; the impact it had on local communities; the response of key partners and recommendations for future actions.

The Working Group initially agreed to publish findings and recommendations in March 2024, but agreed to continue the work for a further 6-month period to allow government agencies further opportunity to engage and in order that peer-review work on relevant reports is completed.

Recommendations detailed in the Holding Statement

On the basis of information considered by the Working group so far, the following findings and recommendations have been agreed:

- **A formal request for the Secretary of State to establish a public inquiry into the events will be made.**

- **In relation to testing regimes, there is a need to review current arrangements for monitoring of the maritime and waterways environment. In particular:**
  - **There is a need to review the frequency of testing, alongside the regime for management of sampling and reporting.**
  - **There is a need to test for a more comprehensive suite of chemicals and combinations of any variety of chemicals.**

Review of testing regimes should apply to the whole of the maritime and waterways environment.

- **To better manage potential future mortality events, there should be a robust published procedure, which clearly shows lines of responsibility and processes for storing and testing of samples.**
- **In view of the fact that is has been difficult for the Group to identify interested parties within the maritime environment, a register of pertinent organisations and their contact details should be created. It was also noted that there is a need for stakeholders to establish closer working relationships with each other.**
- **There is a need to improve the data regarding the health of the maritime and waterways ecosystem, stock levels and catch effort.**
- **Financial support for ventures that might aid the recovery of marine ecosystems is requested.**
- **The Working Group call for more appropriate and relevant compensation for the fishing communities impacted by the die-offs. Members believe that the schemes currently on offer – namely, the UK Seafood Scheme and the Fisheries and Seafood Scheme, are not fit for purpose.**

14.3 The Holding Statement contained a call for a Public Inquiry in addition to a number of recommendations based on evidence received over the course of the review, as outlined in the body of this report.

14.4 Stakeholder responses to the Holding Statement are attached at **Appendices 15 – 19**. The MMO and Cefas was not able to respond on the basis that they had provided joint feedback with DEFRA.

Final Conclusions

In reference to the aims of the review, the Working Group has made the following recommendations for future actions:

The reasons for the event

Having sought to engage with relevant authorities, agencies and directly interested groups and individuals it has become evident that a wide variety of views and opinions are held in respect of the Crustacean Die Off.
These are based on observations within the existing frameworks of data recording and a wide variety of research that has been conducted, some of which is ongoing.
The original algal bloom has been discounted, and the novel pathogen remains on the table as the only outcome of learned deliberation.
Although unable to add to a definitive conclusion, the Working Group has established that there are a significant variety of factors working independently but also collectively which do influence water quality, be it sea or river.
Although human activity appears to be regulated and the natural environment researched and understood there remains much to better manage and research.
Even with the existence of a plethora of related organisations and the interest shown by the general public, the scientific and fishing communities there have been no definitive conclusions reached.

Recommendations / Actions

1	Further research does require to be undertaken in the fields of marine and river ecology and of its management. Defra and Cefas have initiated further research and it is imperative that relevant work be expedited to establish a greater understanding of the coastal environment, the pressures that bear upon it and the management structures that are best fitted to monitor and manage. Reports should be peer reviewed and placed in the public domain in a timely manner. All research that is being undertaken by Government agencies, scientific institutions, companies and sponsored individuals should be acknowledged and accessible for reference. The complexity of relationships needs to be simplified so that any future events of a similar nature can be more readily addressed.

The impact it has had on local communities

Clearly the impact on fishing communities has been catastrophic in certain areas.
Most areas along the coast in both directions from the Tees Mouth have experienced a fall off in catch.
The marine environment has been adversely affected in certain areas.
The number of vessels involved in inshore fishing has significantly diminished.
Livelihoods of many have been permanently altered.
Stocks of lobster have fallen but have shown some signs of recovery
Stocks of crab have fallen but have shown little recovery.
In addition to impact on fishing communities the adverse environmental aspects have been felt across all communities from Seaham to Filey.
The health of coastal waters and river waterways is of fundamental importance to every community.
When the health of these waters is damaged and when no logical reasons are forthcoming the concerns of communities are to be recognised.

Recommendations / Actions

2.	The Working Group commends the efforts of the lobster hatchery approach to improve stocks. The work being conducted at hatcheries in Whitby and Bridlington is to be commended and encouraged. Further hatcheries require to be evaluated to ensure that the restocking of lobsters is maintained to support a sustainable future for the inshore fishing industry. Similar efforts to restore the population of crabs should also be explored.
3.	Evidence received from academics, NEIFCA and the fishing community suggests that there are broad ecological implications from the incident. The Working Group to write formally to government agencies requesting that that the general ocean environment in the region be monitored to assess recovery. It is also recommended that scientific sampling work that is being undertaken in inland waterways in Yorkshire be extended to the RiverTees water way catchment area.

The response of key partners

The first challenge that the Working Group encountered was to identify who were the relevant organisations.
The vast number of relevant and interconnected organisations were not immediately identifiable, and it only became apparent in the course of exploration how complex the maritime administration system is.

Not all organisations were responsive to enquiry.
As a Local Authority conducting an enquiry into matters of local and national significance it was both a surprise and a disappointment that the status of this and fellow Working Group authorities did not receive an entirely proactive response that might be expected of all public bodies.

Recommendations / Actions

4.	The Working Group to request monitoring of progress made towards the Defra commissioned investigations. In particular, the key line of enquiry relating to preparedness for future incidents.
5.	Given that the MMO advises 'relevant restrictions may be attached in the form of conditions to marine licenses granted by the MMO following consultation with bodies including the EA.', it is requested that the MMO be required to review current standards to ensure robustness, especially in areas affected by legacy contaminants. Levels of testing related to dredging licensing were advised as being in line with international standards and agreements. The frequency of testing and the periods during which they might be conducted did not appear to be stringent enough in environments where historic contamination had been identified. The deposition sites for dredged materials vary for maintenance and capital dredging. Both permitted distances should be reevaluated where historic levels of pollution have been highlighted and where current bed core sampling suggests potential pollutants, either in singular form or potential interactive form. Strong consideration should be given to ensuring land deposition be prioritised for capital dredging.
6.	The current governance arrangements are incredibly complex. The Working Group recommends that efforts are made to improve collaboration, and a process instigated to ensure that local authorities can productively engage with appropriate stakeholders. The current areas of responsibility for the maritime coastal area surrounding the British mainland do need to be reviewed. The number of organisations would appear to be too great. The interaction between such organisations does not appear to be effective. The perceived lack of synergy experienced during the Group's explorations was not conducive to confidence building or ease of communication and understanding. A restructuring of the overall maritime management to reduce organisation numbers, better clarify remits, welcome public scrutiny and operate in a robust and timely manner is a requirement in need of prompt action.

7.	The Working Group noted that there were occasionally errors in process administration and some confusion in relation to dredging activity. The Group recommends that attention be given to ensuring robust administrative processes are in place and ready independent audit

Recommendations for future actions

Chemical analysis provided by academic colleagues and documentary evidence relating to land remediation shows that there is significant pollution on the land sites around the River Tees.
In light of this information, the Working Group notes that:

Recommendations / Actions

8.	Sampling is only required on a 4-yearly basis, and consideration should be given to increasing the rate in the Tees, especially in view of the industrial legacy of the area. Risk assessments did not take into account the local sites of special scientific interest, which should not be omitted in future assessments. Waterways are dynamic environments that require further understanding, and there is a need to continue to explore water quality. Further engagement needs to be made with all companies responsible for water management.
9.	The Working Group will not be continuing under its existing remit. Although no firm findings have been revealed to confirm the reasons for the Crustacean Die Off the deliberations of the Working Group have identified a real requirement for local authorities to be better advised of maritime matters where land boundaries border coastal or river environments. Elected members would benefit from greater awareness of maritime legislation, organisational structure, and effective lines of communication and respective authorities should facilitate. There is a perceived need to continue to engage with government agencies. This could be achieved through existing frameworks, but these do need to be robust. The reinstatement of the Annual Coastal Forum should be considered, with a appropriate remit. A review of how local authorities are involved with and relate to

	relevant maritime organisations, either through Elected Member or Officer representation. Communications with members of the public require improvement. All government agencies and all relevant local authorities should be conscious of that responsibility and seek to be better informed and communicative on matters maritime and environmental.

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Anna Turley MP
The Palace Hub
The Esplanade
Redcar
TS10 3AE

Email: anna.turley.mp@parliament.uk
01642 929159

Daniel Zeichner MP
Minister of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Sent via email

Dear Daniel,

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of State.

I am writing to you regarding an issue that I know you are familiar with, and which has been on-going here on the North Yorkshire and Teesside coast for some years now - namely the mass die-off of crustaceans on our coastline which began in October 2021. I am attaching a copy of the letter which all the Labour Tees Valley MPs sent in July to the Secretary of State.

After much time had passed an investigation into the devastation was undertaken by DEFRA. However, confidence in that inquiry remains very low in this region due to the political backdrop of resistance from the Conservative Tees Valley Mayor and local MPs and the context of industrial work being undertaken at the Teesworks site at the time, led by the Conservative Tees Valley Mayor.

I am writing to ask that you and your officials please meet with representatives from the fishing community, scientists and the non-political local authority Task Force working together on this issue here on Teesside to hear the implications of the disaster and to discuss ways forward.

We would like to request that the Department:

- re-examine this issue and reopen scientific investigation working with scientists and academics in the region
- explore financial assistance for the fishermen whose livelihoods continue to be decimated by this incident
- look at a proactive programme of ecological restoration in the affected region

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Best wishes

[redacted]

Anna Turley
Member of Parliament for Redcar and Cleveland
Lord Commissioner of the Treasury (Government Whip)

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Steve Reed
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
1st Floor, Seacole Block
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Sent by email only

24 July 2024

RE: Tees Bay and North-East crustacean die-off

Dear Steve and Emma,

Following my brief chat with you both other day, I confirm that the issue of crustacean deaths in the Tees Bay and beyond, devastating marine life – principally, shrimps, crabs and lobsters- continues to be a be a major issue for us in the Tees Valley.

Whilst this is of enormous significance for us all in the Tees Valley, the principal constituencies impacted by this are Anna Turley's in Redcar and Jonathan Brash's in Hartlepool given the damage caused to their fishing communities. Those industries have been decimated.

It's a complex story and the issue of the dredging of the Tees is engaged both in terms of the maintenance dredging carried out by PD Ports the Ports and Harbour Authority and the operator of Teesport, and then in terms of the remediation and reclamation works carried out under the auspices of the South Tees Development Corporation Chaired by Lord Houchen the Tees Valley Mayor, to create the South Bank Quay.

Theories have been offered to explain the massive and sudden die offs but there is as yet no definitive answer. Initial theories settled on Algal Bloom in the North Sea which was dismissed. Many fishers and marine biologists settled on the chemical Pyridine being released into the Tees or being disturbed by dredging but the review carried out investigation carried out by your Department under the previous government settled on the most likely cause being an unknown pathogen. The likelihood of it being the cause was rated as being in order of 30%.

The major asks pivot around:

a) scientific investigations as to the cause be reinstated given that there is no active investigation ongoing,
b) there be a review of the assistance that might be given to the fishing communities and
c) consideration be given to a programme for active restoration of the marine ecology given that this disaster has laid waste to vast areas of the north sea and coast, from Seaham in the north to Whitby in the south.

We would be most grateful if you could meet with us at the earliest opportunity so that we can further appraise you and explore what actions could be taken.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Andy

Andy McDonald MP
Middlesbrough & Thornaby East

Writing on behalf of Tees Valley Labour MPs

Jonathan Brash MP
Hartlepool

Chris McDonald MP
Stockton North

Lola McEvoy MP
Darlington

Luke Myer MP
Middlesbrough South & East Cleveland

Anna Turley MP
Redcar

cc. Emma Hardy MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

T: 03459 335577

helpline@defra.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/defra

(By email)

Redcar and Cleveland Scrutiny Committee Board

Date: 18 July 2022

Dear Councillor Shelagh Holyoake

Crab Mortality incident in the North-East

Thank you for inviting Defra to appear before your Committee to give evidence on the 2021 mass wash up of dead crabs on the North-East coast. While a Defra representative won't be able to attend the Committee, I wanted to respond directly to your questions on the investigation.

Has the investigation concluded?

I can confirm that the investigation into the cause of the incident concluded in March 2022. The Environment Agency (EA) led the initial emergency response to the wash up with the support of partner agencies. Defra assumed responsibility for coordinating the ongoing investigation in December 2021 and multi-agency response involving the EA, Centre for Environment, Fisheries & Aquaculture Science (Cefas), Marine Management Organisation (MMO), the North-East Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (NEIFCA), the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA).

The EA, MMO, NEIFCA and Cefas investigated a range of potential causes including licensed dredging activity, chemical pollution, the presence of algal blooms and aquatic animal disease. No single, consistent causative factor was identified. However, a harmful algal bloom present in the area coincident with the event was identified as of significance.

A multi-agency report on the investigation was published in May. [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-agency-investigation-into-teesside-and-yorkshire-coast-crab-and-lobster-mortalities

Is any ongoing monitoring happening and if so what?

Defra and partner agencies have established a recovery team to monitor recovery of the affected area and assess new reports of dead crustaceans.

A key focus is on understanding the impact the event has had on shellfish stocks in the region. We are also undertaking further testing that will help us to better interpret the scientific findings of the incident in 2021, increase the suite of analytical tools that we have to respond should any such incidents occur in the future.

Government technical leads met industry commissioned researchers to share knowledge gained from the work completed so far and to discuss planned university and Defra commissioned research. We will continue to share our findings when available and to work collaboratively with other experts. I have included further details below on the research and monitoring being carried out.

Cefas testing

Given previous indicative detection of pyridine in some of the impacted crabs and also in non-impacted crabs, Cefas are developing and validating a chemical detection test to measure the amounts of pyridine in crab tissues. Once completed, this test will be used to assess the levels of pyridine in environmental crab tissues associated with the impacted and non-impacted areas, which were collected and stored during the event last year. This validated test will also enable us to precisely measure any pyridine in crabs post-mortem, to test the theory that pyridine can be a natural by-product associated with the decomposition process in crabs.

The detection of algal toxins (Diarrhetic Shellfish Toxins (DST)) in many of the impacted crabs was also considered a significant finding. Cefas is setting up an exposure study with live crabs. The animals will be exposed to Diarrhetic Shellfish Poison (DSP)-positive food and DST-producing algae. These exposure studies will be carried out to high standards of animal care and welfare in accordance with Cefas' Animal Welfare policy.

Once the studies are completed the information collected will be used to better understand the potentially harmful effects of toxins and/or harmful algae on crab health.

EA Sampling activities

The EA continues to monitor water in the Tees on a monthly basis as part of its national programmes. This includes chlorophyll and phytoplankton sampling as well as chemical sampling. Blue mussel samples for chemical analysis have also been collected as part of the annual mussel programme. As sample results become available, they will be published in the Water Quality Archive on data.gov.uk.

IFCA Monitoring

The North-Eastern IFCA continues to monitor the health of shellfish stocks throughout the affected area, following trends in catch and effort reporting, actively working survey pots, conducting observer trips onboard fishing vessels and on the quayside and supporting any additional biological sampling and testing work undertaken by other lead organisations. This monitoring programme is supported by active intelligence gathering and reporting from the ground, informed by daily engagement with fishermen, merchants and the general public, to identify any continuing and emerging issues. A working group has also been established with the fishing industry to facilitate communication and information sharing between regulators and key representatives. This group meets every four to eight weeks alongside operational meetings with key MMO leads and the wider response group.

Why was dredging ruled out as the cause?

As the report into the investigation makes clear, dredging has been ruled out as a likely cause of the wash up incident. Before a marine licence can be granted to allow dredged sediment to be disposed, samples of dredge material must be tested, and they must meet the highest international standards protecting marine life before they are permitted to be disposed of at sea. If samples analysed for contaminants do not meet the standards, the disposal at sea of that material will not be licensed.

Nothing in the testing of sediment prior to disposal or results from the wider EA environmental sampling, suggested that a chemical contaminant was the cause. The MMO manage an annual disposal site survey programme that provides field evaluation and ensures disposal operations conform with licence conditions at dredged material disposal sites around the coast of England. Fieldwork and testing of sediment at the Inner Tees disposal site took place in April 2021 and there was no evidence of significantly elevated contaminants in sediment at locations around and within the disposal site.

Sediment that is proposed to be dredged in the Tees Estuary is tested and sampled across the footprint of the area to be dredged at least every three years prior to disposal. Cefas completed an indicative 2D tracking model of the potential sediment plume from the Tees disposal site. The model indicates that the plume from material deposited at the Tees disposal site is relatively confined along the tidal excursion at the disposal site and does not have the same geographic extent consistent with the known mortalities.

The MMO uses the best available evidence to inform its decision making. There is no evidence to suggest that the disposal of dredged sediment was responsible for the crab and lobster mortality. Testing has been conducted in accordance with international (OSPAR – Oslo/Paris convention (for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic)) obligations.

Full details of marine licences and their conditions are available on the MMO public register. Check the public register of marine licence applications and decisions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
We recognise the impact this wash-up incident has had on the local community and remain committed to providing updates on both the research and monitoring currently underway.

Yours sincerely

Anne Freeman

Deputy Director
Domestic Fisheries and Reform
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Mobile: 07788 916798

Councillor Mary Lanigan
Leader of the Council

Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Redcar & Cleveland House
Kirkleatham Street
Redcar
TS10 1RT

To: Ranil Jayawardena, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Our Ref:

12th September 2022

Dear Sir,

Mass Crustacean Mortality Event

I am writing to express this Council's deep dissatisfaction regarding the conclusion of the investigation into the dead crustaceans that washed up onto our beaches last year.

In early October 2021, significant numbers of dead crabs and lobsters started being washed up on the beaches of Teesside, the mass mortality event continued until December 2021 with dead crustaceans found from County Durham down to North Yorkshire. The deaths had a significant impact on our local population, especially our coastal communities, many of which rely heavily on tourism and the fishing industry. The support so far from Defra to mitigate the impact on the livelihoods of those affected has been wholly inadequate.

The Environment Agency led on the emergency response, with Defra taking responsibility for leading the investigation into the cause of the event, which ended in March 2022. The investigation was unable to determine the cause of the event and concluded that no single, consistent, causative factor could be identified. The report hypothesised that a potentially harmful algal bloom present in the area leading up to the start of the mass mortality event may have been of significance. It is very concerning and unacceptable that, despite the significance of the event on the marine life in the area and the impact on our coastal communities, the investigation was concluded before any cause was identified.

The Borough Council at its meeting on the 14 July 2022, passed a motion agreeing the following:

1. The decision to close the investigation was premature and demands that the Government re-open it as a matter of urgency to consider why the crustacean deaths.

2. That the Government proposal to give support to the local fishing industry via the existing Seafood Fund is inadequate and calls on them to provide proper compensation for the lost income and livelihoods caused by this crisis.

I would be grateful if you would consider these two requests and provide a response as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully,

[redacted]

Appendix 5

Steve Newton
Governance Director & Monitoring Officer
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Redcar & Cleveland House
Kirkleatham Street
Redcar, TS10 1RT
Tel: 01642 444648
www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

The Environment Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee

Our Ref: Legal/SN

14 October 2022

By email to: efracom@parliament.uk

Dear Sir or Madam,

The Environment Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee - Hearing into the Deaths of Large Numbers of Crustaceans off the Yorkshire Coast Since October 2021.

I write on behalf of Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council ('the Council') and would ask that the following information is taken into consideration as part of the above hearing.

The matters forming the subject of this hearing have been the cause of very significant concern to both residents and Elected Members of the Council since the initial deaths took place. This concern ultimately led to a motion being considered and approved at a meeting of the Full Council as follows:

> *RESOLVED that on the successful motion of Councillor C Quartermain and duly seconded by Councillor Thomson that:*
>
> *"Redcar and Cleveland Council believes that much more needs to be done to investigate the reasons for the mass death of sea creatures found on our coast in the latter part of 2021 and more recently.*
>
> *Redcar and Cleveland Council also believes much more support should be given to our local fishing industry which has been adversely affected by the consequent radical reduction in fishing stock.*
>
> *Since October last year dead crustaceans have been found on our beaches along with, the possibly associated, deaths of seal pups and porpoises. The report of the Government Joint agency investigation into Teesside and Yorkshire Coast Crab and Lobster mortalities was published in May 2022 and concluded that as healthy crabs and lobsters were now being found the investigation was closed.*
>
> *Redcar and Cleveland Council believes:*
>
> 1. *The decision to close the investigation was premature and demands that the Government re-open it as a matter of urgency to consider why the crustacean deaths*

2. *The Tees Valley local authorities should work together in expressing concern to central government and commission a new independent report in the light of the inconclusive evidence. In addition, the ongoing situation should be monitored by a special Scrutiny Committee from each local authority.*

3. *That the Government proposal to give support to the local fishing industry via the existing Seafood Fund is inadequate and calls on them to provide proper compensation for the lost income and livelihoods caused by this crisis.*

4. *That the possibility of creating a coastal hatchery to replenish crustacean stocks should be investigated.*

In line with this motion, the Council has written to the Government making the requests identified under paragraphs 1 and 3 above but, regrettably, has yet to receive any sort of acknowledgment or reply. A copy of the Council's letter is attached for your attention.

It is understood by the Council that the hearing on 25th October 2022 will consider both the cause and impact of the deaths and that information from interested parties is welcomed on both aspects of these matters. Although the Council clearly cannot comment specifically on the cause of the deaths and has not had the opportunity to collate detailed information on their impact, it would make the following general comments, based on information received via residents and other sources in the course of its normal business.

1. The current conclusion that the deaths are the result of an algal bloom is somewhat less than definitive and has not been accepted by some of the scientific community and those involved in the fishing industry - the latter querying how something which is a relatively localised phenomena occurring at near surface level can impact on crustaceans which inhabit the sea at a much greater depth.

2. It seems unclear whether all potential sources of pollution and/or other causes of death have been conclusively explored. For example, earlier this year, the Council received information from an anonymous source who indicated that, some years ago, they had been employed by a chemical company to deal, in secret, with toxic chemicals at a specified location in the River Tees. The source was concerned that these chemicals could be a potential cause of crustacean deaths if disturbed and this information was forwarded to DEFRA. The Council clearly cannot say whether the source is credible or the information of any potential relevance but is not aware that any consideration or investigation of this issue has taken place.

3. The impact of the deaths has been significant, both in terms of local residents, visitors to the Council's beaches and, of course, the local fishing industry. In terms of the latter, the Council understands that catches of crabs have been decimated and that catches of lobsters have been halved along a large stretch of the coast.

4. Fishing boats now have to travel much further afield resulting in additional time and cost. It is known that some within the industry have given up, whilst others struggle

on, in what are already difficult times. It seems that efforts are underway to ensure that the lobster population is restocked but there is no such effort in terms of crabs.

5. The deaths have had a notable impact on those visiting the beaches in the Borough. Residents and visitors have been clearly distressed by huge numbers of dead crustaceans quite literally piled on the sand. There is a sense of frustration and upset about the apparent lack of ability for any relevant body to authoritatively explain the reason for this situation.

6. It is not known how these issues might have impacted negatively on tourism – something upon which the Council significantly relies - given the ongoing press coverage, negative connotations about potential pollution and perpetuation of false perceptions about the industrial nature of the area.

In summary, the Council feels that the impact of these deaths has been substantially underestimated and considers it unacceptable that investigations were closed when the conclusions reached seem, at best, to amount to what is essentially a working hypothesis.

As indicated in its motion, the Council strongly believes that the investigations should be re-opened and continue until a definitive (or at least more definitive) outcome has been reached and that, in the meantime, those working in the fishing industry who have been adversely affected by these issues should be appropriately supported by the Government.

Thank you for your consideration of this information.

Yours faithfully

Steve Newton
Governance Director and Monitoring Officer

Councillor Brian Cowie
CEREMONIAL MAYOR
Hartlepool Borough Council
Civic Centre
Hartlepool
TS24 8AY

Tel: 01429 523702/3704
www.hartlepool.gov.uk

Our Ref: BC/KM
Your Ref:

Contact Officer/Email: Memsec@hartlepool.gov.uk

HARTLEPOOL
BOROUGH COUNCIL

24 January 2023

The Rt Hon Dr Therese Coffey
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

Dear Secretary of State

Sea Life Mortality off the North East Coast

Following the investigation into the mass deaths of crustaceans off the North East Coast, and the impact this has had to local fishermen in Hartlepool, Hartlepool Borough Council would like to thank you for finding the time in consider the outcome of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee investigation into the cause of this tragic event in Tees Valley.

I am sure you agree with the recommendations of the Committee that there is clearly a need for further data and research on the causes of the mass die-off and that an expert independent scientific panel be appointed to review the evidence for both theories identified, i.e. *consequences of the breakdown of an algal bloom of the impact of chemical from maintenance dredging of shipping channels.*

It was also recommended the Marine Management Organisation urgently review the dredging activity in the Tees and routinely check for pyridine as part of the testing and approval process for any new capital dredging works, whilst complying with the current licence for routine dredging.

Hartlepool Borough Council not only support the recommendations of the EFRA Committee, we wish to request that as Secretary of State, you accept all the recommendations including the need for Government to reconsider its position on providing financial support to affected communities.

Yours faithfully

[redacted]

Councillor Brian Cowie
CHAIR OF COUNCIL

Appendix A

Councillor Brian Cowie
CEREMONIAL MAYOR
Hartlepool Borough Council
Civic Centre
Hartlepool
TS24 8AY

Tel: 01429 523702/3704
www.hartlepool.gov.uk

Our Ref: BC/KM
Your Ref:

Contact Officer/Email: Memsec@hartlepool.gov.uk

24 January 2023

Rt Hon Sir Robert Goodwill MP
Chair, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

Dear Sir Robert Goodwill

Sea Life Mortality off the North East Coast

Following the investigation into the mass deaths of crustaceans off the North East Coast, and the impact this has had to local fishermen in Hartlepool, Hartlepool Borough Council would like to thank you for finding the time to investigate the cause of this tragic event in Tees Valley and wider North East Coast.

Hartlepool Borough Council not only support the recommendations of the EFRA Committee, we have also written to the DEFRA Secretary of State requesting she accept all the recommendations including the need for Government to reconsider its position on providing financial support to affected communities.

Yours faithfully

[redacted]

Councillor Brian Cowie
CHAIR OF COUNCIL

Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

The Rt Hon Mark Spencer MP
Minister for Food, Farming and Fisheries

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London
SW1P 4DF

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Councillor Brian Cowie
Chair of Council
Hartlepool Borough Council
memsec@hartlepool.gov.uk

Your ref: BC/KM
Our ref: PO2023/01910/SC

16 March 2023

Dear Councillor Cowie,

Thank you for your letter of 24 January to the Secretary of State about the crustacean fatalities along the North-East coast. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

Following a request from the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs Select Committee, Defra's Chief Scientific Adviser, liaising with the Government Chief Scientific Adviser, established an independent scientific panel to assess the causes of the unusual crustacean mortality in the North East of England in 2021 and 2022. The Crustacean Mortality Expert Panel (CMEP) was convened in December 2022 and was asked to conduct and complete its work in a timely fashion; they published their findings on GOV.UK on 20 January 2023.

The Independent Expert Assessment of Unusual Crustacean Mortality in the North-East of England in 2021 and 2022 report summarises thorough and insightful analysis of diverse relevant data by a wide range of experts from academia and industry representing 11 leading marine institutions. A wide range of possible causes for the unusual crustacean mortality were considered including a potential disease or parasite, a harmful algal bloom, chemical toxicity including pyridine, and dredging which could have released a toxic chemical.

The CMEP concluded that pyridine or another toxic pollutant was very unlikely to have been the cause, as was any link to routine maintenance dredging. There was no capital dredging (involving movement of previously undisturbed material such as is required for construction projects that require deeper dredging) immediately prior to the first reports of the incident in autumn 2021 and capital dredging did not occur at South Bank Quay until September 2022, it was therefore considered exceptionally unlikely to be the cause of unusual crustacean mortality by the expert panel. Furthermore, although maintenance dredging (the routine clearance of recently moved sediment from existing channels) had occurred at the time of the crustacean mortality, the expert panel considered this was very unlikely to have caused the deaths as any associated release of pyridine would have been more than 1,000 times too small to reach toxic levels and could not explain the geographical spread nor the duration of the unusual crustacean mortality.

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) regulates the disposal of dredge materials to sea in England and follow international standards for assessment of contaminants in dredged material. Guidance from the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (the OSPAR Convention) and London Convention/London Protocol is used to inform decision making. In order to allow disposal activities, the suitability of dredged material for disposal at sea must be assessed in line with international guidelines and requires consideration of the physical and chemical characterisation of the dredged material to ensure protection of marine life and uses of the sea.

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Any marine licence application for disposal of dredged sediment to sea requires sampling and sediment analysis. This is carried out before the application is submitted as part of a pre-application process, and sediment analysis data must be included as part of the formal marine licence application. The MMO consults the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) on the suitability of material for disposal to sea as part of any application. A series of 'Action Levels' are used as guidelines to assess suitability for disposal to sea. Action Levels indicate when material would have restrictions placed on it to ensure suitable disposal, or for it not to be dredged at all. The consideration of whether the material is acceptable for disposal at sea is done through an evidence-based approach. The MMO must ensure that it is compliant with both domestic and international obligations and does not allow the disposal of toxic dredged material to sea.

Pyridine is not routinely measured in sediment and is not listed as a Chemical for Priority Action (contaminant of concern) by OSPAR (the international group that guides practise in this area). There is evidence that pyridine is readily mobilised from sediment, is highly water soluble and is not considered to readily bioaccumulate in marine life. Cefas scientists advise the MMO on which chemicals should be tested in dredged sediment, using a risk-based approach, and do not require the testing of pyridine.

The Government currently provides a range of support to the English seafood sector through the Fisheries and Seafood Scheme (FaSS) and the £100 million UK Seafood Fund (UKSF). The FaSS provides grants of up to £100,000 to help businesses diversify through setting up new processes and practices, purchasing new gear and equipment to target different species and training to build capability. Since opening in April 2021, the FaSS has provided £2.2 million to seafood businesses in the North-East and is open for applications now.

Given the circumstances of the incident, the findings of the independent expert panel, and guidance on managing public money, the Government will not be providing any compensation or specific support in addition to what is already provided through the FaSS and UKSF.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you need further information.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Mark Spencer MP

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Dead Crustaceans Collaborative Working Group – ~~Terms~~ of Reference

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of the Working Group is for the partner Councils to work collaboratively with regards to their response to the mass mortality crustacean event that occurred in late 2021.

2. Aims of the Working Group

2.1 The key aims of the working group are as follows:

- To consider evidence from various sources, including written reports and presentations from expert witnesses and stakeholders, to better understand:
  - The reasons for the event
  - The impact it has had on local communities
  - The response of key partners
  - Recommendations for future actions

- To consider and make recommendations to partner authorities and government agencies, including future meetings of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee or any other investigation into the issue.

2.2 The key activities and deliverables are likely to include, but are not limited to:

- Joint lobbying of government on the issue
- Sharing of expertise and knowledge
- Gathering and compiling evidence from stakeholders, eg, the fishing industry
- Submitting evidence to future meetings of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) or any other investigation into the issue.
- Jointly commissioning any agreed further research or evidence gathering, subject to agreement of constituent councils.

3. Working Group Administration Arrangements

3.1 The Chair and Vice Chair shall be agreed at the first meeting of the working group.

3.2 Lead Officer support will be provided by the Adult and Communities Directorate of Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council.

3.3 The organisation and facilitation of the working group meetings will be carried out by the Democratic Services Section of Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council. This will include providing secretariat support to the working group in terms of

meeting organisation, minute taking, and recording and monitoring issues through the working group issues logs.

3.4 Meetings to be held virtually and in person, at the discretion of the Chair and Vice-Chair and dependant on the focus and function of the meeting. The dates and times of meetings to be determined by the working group

3.5 Meetings to be held in public, with the group reserving the right to meet in private where a witness or the work demands.

3.6 The working group can invite partners from external organisations to share information and / or jointly commission further research

3.7 Minutes and associated reports to be produced by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council but reported back to individual authorities in a manner appropriate to their respective governance structures.

4. Timescales

4.1 A review of the progress of the investigation to be undertaken 6 months after the date of the initial meeting.

5. Membership

5.1 Each Council can nominate up to four Members to attend the working group plus one officer. Other officers or external parties can be invited to join, with the approval of the working group.

6. Conflict of Interest

6.1 Any member of the working group shall declare any conflict of interest which might arise at the start of the meeting and shall then withdraw and take no part in the relevant discussion and/or any decision relating to it.

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee
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From the Chair of the Committee

Thérèse Coffey
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Sealife Mortality off the North East Coast

1 November 2022

Dear Secretary of State

On Tuesday 25 October, the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee heard a powerful testimony about the mass deaths of crustaceans off the North East Coast, including its potential causes, and the profound and long lasting impact that it is having on fishing communities.

Two scientific theories regarding the possible cause were presented to the Committee: the consequences of the breakdown of an algal bloom or the impact of chemicals (pyridine toxicity) from maintenance dredging of shipping channels.

Following this session, the Committee would like to draw your attention to its interim conclusions on this topic.

- There is clearly a need for further data and research on the causes of the mass die-off. This must include urgent investigation of the potential sources of pyridine that Dr Gary Caldwell of Newcastle University identified in his oral evidence including more extensive sampling of the sediments in the bed of the Tees Estuary to create a map of potential sources of pyridine in proximity to maintenance dredging and the wider area.
- This research must be done in an open and collaborative way between Government Agencies and the wider scientific communities, including the independent verification of testing. We hope this would also include Dr Caldwell sharing his research data with all interested parties. A collaborative approach is essential to start the process of

rebuilding trust between Government Agencies and the local fishing communities which has been badly damaged.

- We also recommend that the Government Chief Scientific Adviser should urgently appoint an expert independent scientific panel ("the expert panel") to review the evidence for both theories. The expert panel should conduct its work as quickly as possible and report back its findings as soon as possible.
- The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) must urgently review the dredging activity in the Tees. Maintenance dredging, we were told, removes material recently deposited in the shipping channels. This will include sand that has washed in from the North Sea but it also includes silt washed down the river. Dr Caldwell suggested that this could have been contaminated with historic material that may have entered the channel. Further detailed surveys may quantify the extent to which this has happened and the future potential risks.
- There are already controls on both capital and maintenance dredging. We note that only routine maintenance dredging took place ahead of the crustacean mortality event in Autumn 2021, although some maintenance dredging took place at a quicker pace than usual. We recommend that the MMO explore, in line with the precautionary principle, what steps could be taken to reduce the risk associated with capital and maintenance dredging such as improved techniques to prevent dredged sediment escaping into the wider environment during excavation. This should include consideration of whether there should be changes to the depth and intensity of dredging, whether changes should be made to dredging techniques, and where and how dredged material is disposed of.
- The MMO must also ensure that all the current conditions on its licence are met and should include pyridine in the testing as part of any future licence approval process. We also believe that all dredged material should be tested for pyridine and any that is found to have dangerous levels of pyridine should not be disposed of at sea. This, and dredging techniques, should be reviewed in light of the expert panel's findings
- A complete moratorium on maintenance dredging would eventually close the port and its associated industries, causing further economic damage. We believe that maintenance dredging should be kept to the minimum level needed to keep the port operational until the expert panel's investigation is completed. We believe this, together with the consideration of the factors we mentioned earlier, are sensible,

proportionate steps that could be taken to help manage the risk while further investigations are undertaken.

- Until the cause of the mass die-off is known, we also believe that the MMO should routinely check for pyridine as part of the testing and approval process for any new capital dredging works. Any current capital dredging work and new licences issued after the conclusion of the expert panel's investigation must take account of the outcome of that investigation.
- The Government should reconsider its position on providing financial support to affected communities. The UK Seafood Fund is not an appropriate vehicle for responding to this incident. A dedicated, separate fund should be set up to support affected fishers and potters and the regeneration of crab and lobster stocks.

We would appreciate an urgent response to this letter in advance of your appearance before the Committee in November.

Yours sincerely

Rt Hon Sir Robert Goodwill MP
Chair, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

The Rt. Hon. Mark Spencer, M.P.
Minister of State

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Sir Robert Goodwill
Chair
Environment, Food and Rural
Affairs Committee
House of Commons
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15 November 2022

Dear Sir Robert,

Response to EFRA consideration of Sealife Mortality off the North East Coast
Thank you for the interim conclusions from the Environment, Food and Rural Affair Committee's hearing on October 25th, and for your letter to the Secretary of State. I am responding on her behalf to the points raised in your letter and to indicate the actions that Defra will be taking in response.

As you know, there was a multi-Defra agency response to the incident that started in October 2021 and concluded in February 2022. The associated report of the investigation was then published Joint agency investigation into Teesside and Yorkshire Coast Crab and Lobster mortalities - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

In your letter, you requested that the Government Chief Scientific Adviser should appoint an expert independent scientific panel ("the expert panel") to review the evidence for the two theories put forward as a cause of this mass-mortality.

The Secretary of State has asked Defra's Chief Scientific Adviser, who has not previously been involved in consideration of this issue, to liaise with the Government Chief Scientific Adviser to establish an independent group of external experts to assess the evidence and consider all explanations for sealife mortality, including the possible role of pyridine. She has asked that this work is completed in a timely fashion, and the findings of the panel will be published.

Your letter raised a number of other points to which I'd like to respond now to aid the committee's understanding and ahead of the exert panel's findings including:

i. The need for more research on pyridine levels in the Tees Estuary;
ii. That research and data should be open;
iii. That MMO should review dredging practises in the area; and
iv. That the Government should consider compensation to local communities.

i. Further research into Pyridine levels:
You recommend further data and research on the causes of the mass die-off including urgent investigation of the potential sources of pyridine that Dr Gary Caldwell of Newcastle

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University identified in his oral evidence. You say this should include more extensive sampling of the sediments in the bed of the Tees Estuary to create a map of potential sources of pyridine in proximity to maintenance dredging and the wider area.

Defra group organisations have been actively undertaking research since the incident and the investigation. Investment has been made to develop a programme of research to consider how to measure the amount of pyridine in tissue, the effects of algal blooms, and test laboratory findings in field conditions. As part of the Defra group investigation, the EA had carried out a review of the possible sources of pyridine Dr Caldwell identified in his evidence to the Committee. They concluded that they were not credible sources directly causing the impacts being seen.

Your proposal to map sources of pyridine would provide more granular information about the spatial extent of potential pyridine within Tees estuary sediments. There is a body of scientific literature that details known contaminants of concern such as polychlorinated biphenyls and polybrominated diphenyl ethers, in sediments, water and biota in and around the Tees. Comparatively, pyridine is not a known contaminant of concern for sediments and biota due to its known chemical and ecotoxicological properties. As such, the evidence base for sediments is weaker than for other contaminants. Pyridine is, however, a known contaminant of concern for water, due to its known chemical properties and is monitored accordingly. EA detected no evidence of pyridine from water samples during the monitoring following the incident (October to December 2021). Pyridine is rarely detected in water including in the Tees and before that, the highest level of pyridine detected over the past decade was 2.4 µg/l (surface sample collected at Redcar Jetty) in October 2012.

We will seek advice from the external expert panel to assess whether additional measurements of pyridine in the sediments and waters of the Tees region would be beneficial, recognizing that a comprehensive survey across the full region would involve significant costs which would require adequate justification and clarity about the usefulness of resulting data.

It should be noted that during panel 1 of your evidence hearing, one of the committee members questioned the representative from PD Ports as to the impact of dredging to “14.6 m” when pyridine was found by NEFC Group researchers in the top 0.2 m of sediment. There may be a misunderstanding about this detail. Reference to dredging to “14.6m” referred to the water depth and not the sediment depth. Maintenance dredging seeks to maintain a safely navigable water depth through the removal of accreted sediments up to the Chart Datum depth of 15.4m.

ii. <u>All research and data should be open</u>

Defra research and data is routinely published. All data relating to processing applications for disposal and/or dredging licences are published on the MMO Public Register and can be specifically identified for an expert panel. Defra group are currently working to publish all raw data and ancillary reports onto government websites. This takes time to ensure the government information and accessibility is legally compliant, however it should be available online in the next few weeks. We expect that all parties involved in this issue will also ensure results and data are made available for peer-review and publication.

iii. <u>Review of dredging practices</u>

On the basis of previous evidence, we have not previously concluded that more evidence is needed. The views of the Expert Panel will steer consideration of further action.

Capital and maintenance dredging are common activities around the coast of England and have taken place on the Tees for many decades. The decisions on dredging methodologies and disposal of dredge material are fundamental to the continued operation of ports and associated industries. Requirements of dredging techniques may be entirely dependent on

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local conditions, and an assessment is made pre-determination as a part of the licensing process as to the type of dredging allowed to take place and any mitigation required is included as licence conditions.

The MMO have conducted marine licence inspections on the dredging works in question and following this they remain satisfied that the works are being conducted in line with the relevant marine licence(s). Inspections on the licenced activities will continue on a periodic basis throughout the length of the licence.

iv. Compensation to local communities

Last, you suggest that the Government should reconsider its position on providing financial support to affected communities with a dedicated, fund to support affected fishers and potters and the regeneration of crab and lobster stocks. Defra analysts are continuing to assess the economic impacts of this incident including a comparison with landing data from previous years and with other parts of the country for the affected species.

The Secretary of State and I will be happy to speak with the Committee to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely,

The Rt. Hon. Mark Spencer MP

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Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

The Rt Hon Thérèse Coffey MP
Secretary of State Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

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Sir Robert Goodwill MP
Chair, Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs
Committee
By email only

11th January 2023

Dear Sir Robert,

Sea life mortality off the northeast coast

Thank you for your letter dated the 13th December 2022.

I can confirm that the independent Crustacean Mortality Expert Panel has already been stood up by my Chief Scientific Advisor, who consulted the Government's Chief Scientific Advisor, to assess the evidence from all parties involved with a view to determine the most likely cause of the crustacean mortality event in the Northeast of England. Terms of reference were agreed at the first panel meeting held in December.

Membership is comprised from from 11 different organisations, including many leading UK marine science universities. To ensure independence, institutes and individuals with past involvement in assessment of the crustacean mortality have not been included, nor is any member from a Defra agency. The identities of the panel members have not been made public yet to enable them to assess the scientific evidence without pressure or influence from interested parties. Names and affiliations of members will be released when the report of the panel is published.

Regarding ways of working, the panel will focus on the scientific evidence, including scientific data from key stakeholders, and rely on the diverse expertise of its members to consider all possible causes of crustacean deaths.

I expect to receive the report this month.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

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Enclosed

Annex A: Aims of the Expert Committee

Annex A:

Aims of the expert committee:

- To scientifically review all the available evidence of the unusual crustacean mortality event.
- To identify the most likely causes and implications for recurrence.
- The scientific review will include, but will not be limited to, consideration of the theories put forward as a cause of this mass-mortality:
    - the consequences of the breakdown of an algal bloom
    - the impact of chemicals (including pyridine toxicity)
    - the impact of maintenance dredging of shipping channels

The panel will focus on scientific issues and will not consider government processes during the investigation of the mortality event(s), food safety, nor the economic implications of the deaths.

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee
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Tel 020 7219 6194/5528 Email efracom@parliament.uk Website www.parliament.uk

From the Chair of the Committee

Rt Hon Dr Thérèse Coffey MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
By email

31 January 2023

Dear Secretary of State

Report of the independent Crustacean Mortality Expert Panel

Thank you for your letter of 20 January concerning the publication of the independent Crustacean Mortality Expert Panel's report.

You will recall that in our letter to you of 1 November 2022, the Committee called for an independent review to be conducted following its hearing on the matter on 25 October. We are therefore grateful to you for establishing the independent Panel, and we wish to note our thanks to the Panel for their expeditious and considered work on this matter.

As your letter highlighted, the independent Panel considered that a novel pathogen was the most likely reason for the crustacean mortality event that occurred from October 2021.

The Committee notes that the Minister for Food, Farming and Fisheries, Rt Hon Mark Spencer MP, told the House on 26 January:

> "I am considering carefully if further analysis by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) can ascertain conclusively the cause of this unusual mortality".

The Committee believes that further work should be undertaken to identify this novel pathogen, given the importance of determining its origin, its vectors of transmission, its transmissibility, its virulence and other factors related to it.

Indeed, as the independent Panel highlighted, a conclusive result from the broad diagnostic screening of samples would significantly affect the

level of confidence in the novel pathogen theory. We also noted the reported comments on this matter of the Minister for Biosecurity, Marine and Rural Affairs, Rt Hon Lord Benyon, that "undoubtedly we're going to need some additional research" which he made on 25 January at the Coastal Futures Conference.

Furthermore, the Committee notes that the independent Panel identified several viral and parasitic diseases that CEFAS may not have screened for during its investigation (see below). The independent Panel concluded:

> "It would therefore be useful for archived samples to be retrospectively screened for a broader range of potential pathogens".

We agree.

The Committee is of the opinion that CEFAS must undertake further analysis in regard to the novel pathogen theory given the importance of seeking as definitive an explanation as possible for this mass die-off event, and we recommend that you instruct CEFAS to conduct this study as a matter of urgency.

Key evidence in such a study will include histological analysis (i.e. via analysis of the structure of cells and tissue in affected crabs). CEFAS acknowledged that such analysis works best with fresh samples but, in this case, the independent Panel said that many samples were degraded so making some pathogens potentially been harder to discover.

The Committee would like to know how many crustaceans affected by the die off have been retained in cold storage for future sampling, when they were collected, and whether they are in a suitable condition for effective sampling.

The Committee also notes the independent Panel found that CEFAS's method for screening crabs for known listed diseases was limited to only one disease (White Spot Syndrome Virus). This was because this is the only listed native crustacean disease that they are "statutorily obliged to screen".

The independent Panel said that it would be useful to "collect appropriate samples in the future to be able to screen for all potential pathogens".

We agree.

The independent panel identified several evidence gaps. It noted that there was no "dissolved oxygen data" to establish if anoxia – which is a state of total oxygen deprivation within tissues or organs – due to an algal bloom was possible.

While the independent Panel's report considered the likelihood of pyridine (or another toxic pollutant) as having caused the mass die-off event to be "very unlikely", particularly via dredging, it did not completely discount a pollutant as the reason.

The report stated that if a source of a sufficient level were found, a natural or man-made stressor of the neural system, such as a toxin, would be a "likely" cause that explains the pathology seen in affected crustaceans. More responsive and/or more regular sampling and testing could help discount or confirm such factors.

As the Chair of the North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, Dr Stephen Axford, told us in his written evidence, it does not appear that appropriate sampling of the prevailing conditions took place with sufficient urgency.

We recommend that all relevant Government agencies, including CEFAS and the Environment Agency, should carefully monitor the area and stand ready to respond quickly to a similar event in the future. They must be prepared to take rapid samples of the water, sediment and animals affected to understand prevailing conditions and determine the causes of another mass die-off. Sampling and testing practices – both routine and for emergencies - should take into account the findings of the independent Panel's report: for instance, measuring dissolved oxygen levels in affected areas when appropriate and collecting tissue samples quickly enough to be able to screen for all potential pathogens. Measures should include thorough sampling and testing for chemical pollutants such as pyridine.

In our letter of 1 November, the Committee said that a dedicated, separate fund should be set up to support affected fishers and potters and the regeneration of crab and lobster stocks. It is also increasingly apparent that relations between the community, and Defra and the Government agencies involved have become strained.

In his reply of 15 November, the Minister for Food, Farming and Fisheries noted that Defra was continuing to assess the economic impacts of this incident.

We encourage Defra to swiftly complete its analysis of the economic impact of the incident and, pending its outcome, to provide initial financial support to those affected and for the regeneration of crab and lobster stocks. Steps to support the rebuilding of the local potting and fishing community would also help Defra to repair relations.

We would be grateful if you could reply within two weeks.

Yours sincerely

Rt Hon Sir Robert Goodwill MP
Chair, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

The Rt Hon Thérèse Coffey MP
Secretary of State Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

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Sir Robert Goodwill MP
Chair, Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs
Committee
By email only

7 February 2023

Dear Sir Robert,

Report of the independent Crustacean Mortality Expert Panel

Thank you for your letter dated the 31st January 2023.

The independent crustacean mortality expert panel (CMEP) published its findings on the 20th January 2023. The report states that a novel pathogen is about as likely as not to have caused the crustacean mortality event that occurred from October 2021.

Given the extent of the analytical work already undertaken, and further advice, I have decided that it is highly unlikely that we will find the cause and so no further analysis will be undertaken by the government.

The Environment Agency is the first responder. As for future events, there are sampling and testing protocols – both routine and for emergencies - in place where activities and events require, such as incident investigation, marine licensing etc. I have asked that Cefas be engaged promptly if a similar event occurs.

With respect to the economic impact, the landings data assessment as detailed in the NEIFCA stock monitoring report (September 2022) indicated, at a regional scale, landings in late 2021 were broadly in line with historic data and a significant reduction in landings in October and November 2021 were not observed. This does not preclude the possibility that some highly localised fishing grounds suffered significant mortalities. The stock monitoring report also found, as the 2022 season progressed, lobster landings at a regional level were in line with seasonal expectations.

There is no question of the government providing any compensation or specific support, however the UK Government currently provides a range of support to the English seafood sector through the Fisheries and Seafood Scheme (FaSS) and the £100 million UK

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Seafood Fund. Since opening in April 2021, FaSS has provided £2.2 million to seafood businesses in the North East and is open for applications now.

Yours sincerely,

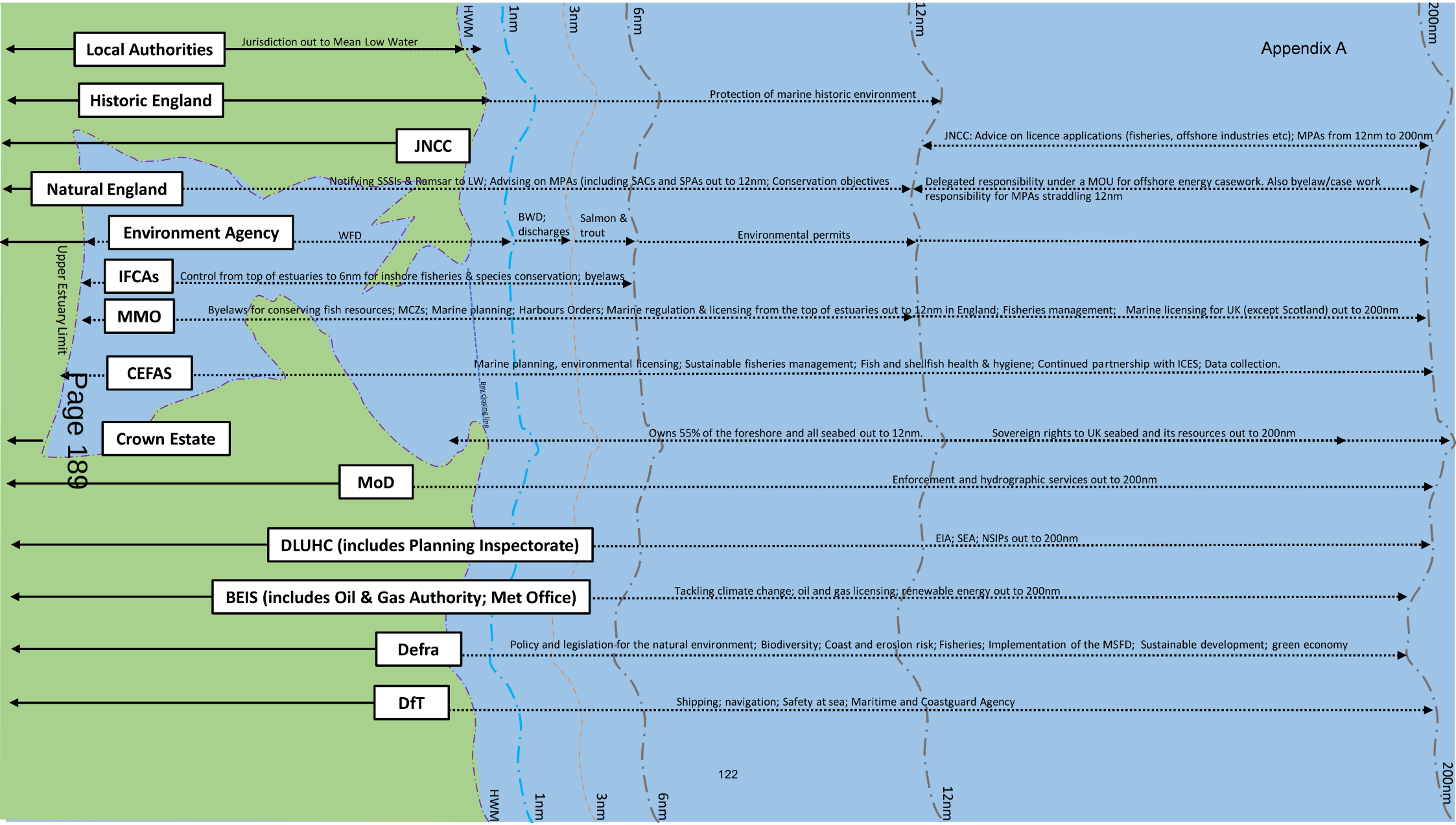
Selected Marine Governance Figures from:

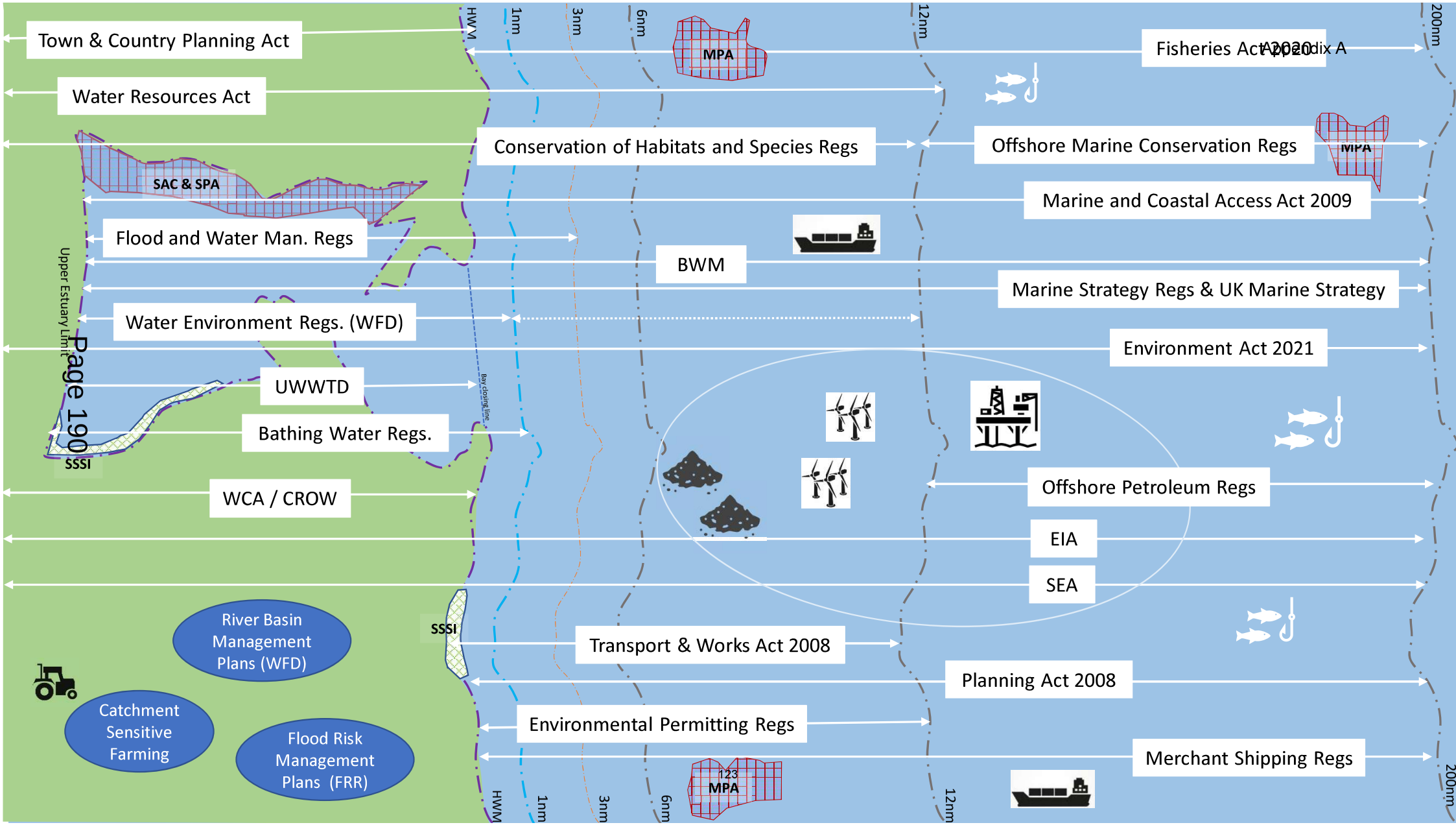
Natural England – Discussion Document – The Operationalisation, Governance and Achievement of Good Environmental Status for UK Marine Areas

Michael Elliott, Suzanne Boyes and Roland Cormier

International Estuarine & Coastal Specialists Ltd. (IECS Ltd.), Leven HU17 5LQ, UK.

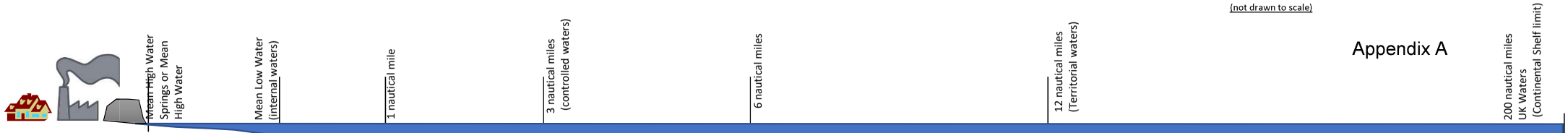
Preferred Citation: Elliott, M., Boyes, S.J. and Cormier, R. (2022). The operationalisation, governance and achievement of Good Environmental Status for UK marine areas. Unpublished Discussion Paper for Natural England, International Estuarine & Coastal Specialists (IECS) Ltd, Leven, HU17 5LQ, UK; pp112, https://www.iecs.ltd.


Appendix A
HWM
1nm
3nm
6nm
12nm
200nm
Local Authorities
Jurisdiction out to Mean Low Water
Historic England
Protection of marine historic environment
JNCC
JNCC: Advice on licence applications (fisheries, offshore industries etc); MPAs from 12nm to 200nm
Natural England
Notifying SSSIs & Ramsar to LW; Advising on MPAs (including SACs and SPAs out to 12nm; Conservation objectives
Delegated responsibility under a MOU for offshore energy casework. Also byelaw/case work responsibility for MPAs straddling 12nm
Environment Agency
WFD
BWD; discharges
Salmon & trout
Environmental permits
Upper Estuary Limit
IFCAs
Control from top of estuaries to 6nm for inshore fisheries & species conservation; byelaws
MMO
Byelaws for conserving fish resources; MCZs; Marine planning; Harbours Orders; Marine regulation & licensing from the top of estuaries out to 12nm in England; Fisheries management; Marine licensing for UK (except Scotland) out to 200nm
CEFAS
Marine planning, environmental licensing; Sustainable fisheries management; Fish and shellfish health & hygiene; Continued partnership with ICES; Data collection.
Bay closing line
Crown Estate
Owns 55% of the foreshore and all seabed out to 12nm.
Sovereign rights to UK seabed and its resources out to 200nm
MoD
Enforcement and hydrographic services out to 200nm
DLUHC (includes Planning Inspectorate)
EIA; SEA; NSIPs out to 200nm
BEIS (includes Oil & Gas Authority; Met Office)
Tackling climate change; oil and gas licensing; renewable energy out to 200nm
Defra
Policy and legislation for the natural environment; Biodiversity; Coast and erosion risk; Fisheries; Implementation of the MSFD; Sustainable development; green economy
DfT
Shipping; navigation; Safety at sea; Maritime and Coastguard Agency


Town & Country Planning Act
Water Resources Act
Conservation of Habitats and Species Regs
Offshore Marine Conservation Regs
Fisheries Act 2020
Appendix A
Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009
Flood and Water Man. Regs
BWM
Marine Strategy Regs & UK Marine Strategy
Water Environment Regs. (WFD)
Environment Act 2021
UWWTD
Bathing Water Regs.
Offshore Petroleum Regs
WCA / CROW
EIA
SEA
Transport & Works Act 2008
Planning Act 2008
Environmental Permitting Regs
Merchant Shipping Regs
River Basin Management Plans (WFD)
Catchment Sensitive Farming
Flood Risk Management Plans (FRR)
SAC & SPA
SSSI
MPA
HWM
1nm
3nm
6nm
12nm
200nm
Upper Estuary Limit
Bay closing line

(not drawn to scale)

Appendix A



Regulatory Authorities (England)

Local Authority - Planning, Coast protection work

Historic England - Protected wrecks; protection of marine historic environment out to 12nm

Natural England - Notifying SSSIs & Ramsar to LW; Advising on MPAs (including SACs & SPAs) out to 12nm and their conservation objectives

Natural England have delegated responsibility for offshore renewable casework and byelaw making powers and casework responsibility for MPAs straddling 12nm

JNCC – Advice on licence applications (fisheries, offshore industries etc); MPAs (MCZs & EMS) from 12nm to 200nm; Monitoring and mapping;

EA - Flood risk; WFD to 1nm; Bathing waters; Pollution control; Licensing & water discharges to 3nm; Salmon & trout fisheries to 6nm; Environmental permits to 12nm

Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCAs) – Control from top of estuaries to 6nm for inshore fisheries and species conservation; byelaws making powers out to 6nm

MMO – Fisheries to 200nm; Byelaws for conserving fish resources; MCZs; Marine planning; Marine regulation & licensing from the top of estuaries out to 12nm in England & offshore for UK (except Scotland) to 200nm

Crown Estate - owns 55% of the foreshore and all seabed out to 12nm. Sovereign rights of the UK seabed and its resources of the Continental Shelf related to offshore energy development, licences for extraction of marine resources and marine planning.

Ministry of Defence (MoD) - Enforcement and hydrographic services

Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) (includes the Planning Inspectorate) - EIA; SEA; nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs) e.g. large wind farms >100MW etc

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) (includes Oil & Gas Authority; Met Office) – Tackles climate change; Oil & gas licensing; renewable energy

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) - Policy and legislation for the natural environment; Biodiversity; Coast and erosion risk; Fisheries; Implementation of the MSFD; Sustainable development and the green economy

Department for Transport (DfT) (includes Maritime and Coastguard Agency) - Shipping; navigation; Safety at sea; Ballast water management

Legislation related to the above organisations (English Law)

Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Localism Act 2011

National Heritage Act 2002; Merchant Shipping Regs (various); Protection of Wrecks Act 1973; Protection of Military Remains Act 1986.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009; Environment Act 2021.

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regs 2010 (subsequently amended) - SACs & SPAs

Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habs &c.) Regs 2010; Environment Act 2021

Water Environment (WFD) (Eng & Wales) Regs 2017

Bathing Water Regs 2008

Urban Waste Water Treatment (Eng & Wales) Regs 1994 (coastal waters)

Land Drainage Act 1991; Water Res. Act 1991; Flood & Water Management Act 2010

The Environmental Permitting (Eng & Wales) Regs 2010 - out to 12nm

Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009; Sea Fish (Conservation) Act; Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act 1967

Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 - MCZs, Marine licensing, byelaws, offshore fisheries (replaces existing controls under Part II of the Coast Protection Act 1949 and Part II of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985)

Fisheries Act 2020 – sustainable management of fisheries; protection of species; Fisheries Management Plans for individual species and environmental purposes; Equal access. Sea Fisheries Act 1968 & Sea Fisheries Reg Act 1966

Merchant Shipping Act 1995

Planning Act 2008 - transport, water, waste & waste water projects out to 12nm; energy (within Renewable Energy Zone) out to 200nm (except Scotland); EIA Regulations 2020 - NSIPs

Electricity Act 1989; Energy Act 2008 & 2010; Climate Change Act 2008 - renewable energy; EIA Regulations 2020

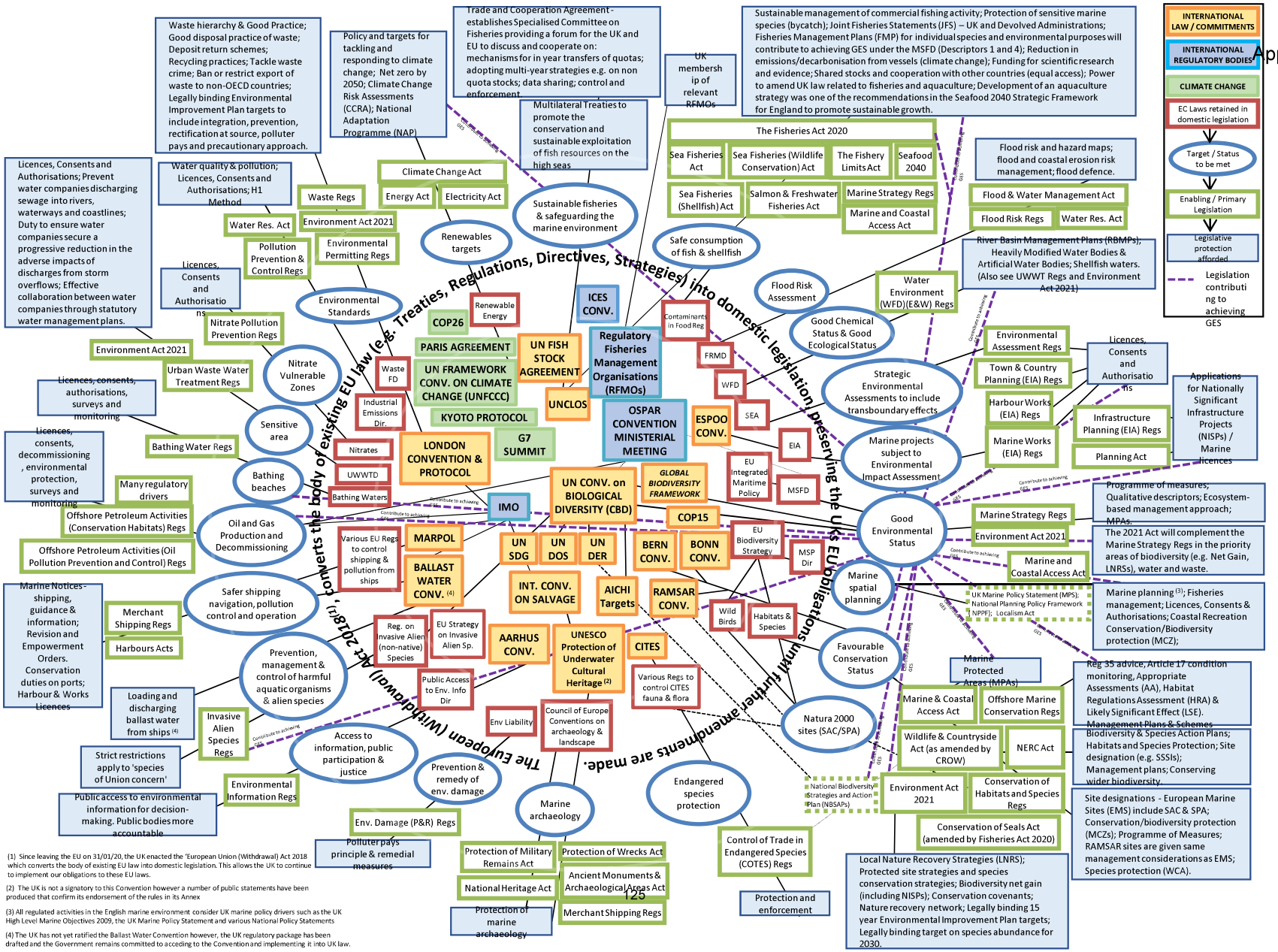
Planning Act 2008 – pipelines; Petroleum Act 1998 - oil and gas licensing

Offshore Petroleum Activities (Conservation of Habitats) Regs 2001

Offshore Petroleum Production & Pipelines (Ass. of Env. Effects) Regs 1999

Environment Act 2021 – Biodiversity, waste, water and air quality; Fisheries Act 2020; The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010 - Defra to ensure UK meets Good Environmental Status (GES)

Transport and Works Act 1992 - large scale projects & navigation


INTERNATIONAL LAW / COMMITMENTS
INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY BODIES
CLIMATE CHANGE
EC Laws retained in domestic legislation
Target / Status to be met
Enabling / Primary Legislation
Legislative protection afforded
Legislation contributing to achieving GES
Converts the body of existing EU law (e.g. Treaties, Regulations, Directives, Strategies) into domestic legislation, preserving the UK's EU obligations until further amendments are made.
The European (Withdrawal) Act 2018, as amended, converts the body of existing EU law into domestic legislation. This allows the UK to continue to implement our obligations to these EU laws.
Waste hierarchy & Good Practice; Good disposal practice of waste; Deposit return schemes; Recycling practices; Tackle waste crime; Ban or restrict export of waste to non-OECD countries; Legally binding Environmental Improvement Plan targets to include integration, prevention, rectification at source, polluter pays and precautionary approach.
Policy and targets for tackling and responding to climate change; Net zero by 2050; Climate Change Risk Assessments (CCRA); National Adaptation Programme (NAP)
Trade and Cooperation Agreement - establishes Specialised Committee on Fisheries providing a forum for the UK and EU to discuss and cooperate on: mechanisms for in year transfers of quotas; adopting multi-year strategies e.g. on non quota stocks; data sharing; control and enforcement
UK membership of relevant RFMOs
Multilateral Treaties to promote the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fish resources on the high seas
Sustainable management of commercial fishing activity; Protection of sensitive marine species (bycatch); Joint Fisheries Statements (JFS) – UK and Devolved Administrations; Fisheries Management Plans (FMP) for individual species and environmental purposes will contribute to achieving GES under the MSFD (Descriptors 1 and 4); Reduction in emissions/decarbonisation from vessels (climate change); Funding for scientific research and evidence; Shared stocks and cooperation with other countries (equal access); Power to amend UK law related to fisheries and aquaculture; Development of an aquaculture strategy was one of the recommendations in the Seafood 2040 Strategic Framework for England to promote sustainable growth.
The Fisheries Act 2020
Sea Fisheries Act
Sea Fisheries (Wildlife Conservation) Act
The Fishery Limits Act
Seafood 2040
Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act
Salmon & Freshwater Fisheries Act
Marine Strategy Regs
Marine and Coastal Access Act
Sustainable fisheries & safeguarding the marine environment
Safe consumption of fish & shellfish
Flood risk and hazard maps; flood and coastal erosion risk management; flood defence.
Flood & Water Management Act
Flood Risk Regs
Water Res. Act
River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs); Heavily Modified Water Bodies & Artificial Water Bodies; Shellfish waters. (Also see UWWT Regs and Environment Act 2021)
Licences, Consents and Authorisations; Prevent water companies discharging sewage into rivers, waterways and coastlines; Duty to ensure water companies secure a progressive reduction in the adverse impacts of discharges from storm overflows; Effective collaboration between water companies through statutory water management plans.
Water quality & pollution; Licences, Consents and Authorisations; H1 Method
Climate Change Act
Energy Act
Electricity Act
Waste Regs
Environment Act 2021
Water Res. Act
Pollution Prevention & Control Regs
Environmental Permitting Regs
Renewables targets
Licences, Consents and Authorisations
Environmental Standards
Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regs
Environment Act 2021
Urban Waste Water Treatment Regs
Nitrate Vulnerable Zones
Licences, consents, authorisations, surveys and monitoring
Sensitive area
Bathing Water Regs
Licences, consents, decommissioning, environmental protection, surveys and monitoring
Bathing beaches
Many regulatory drivers
Offshore Petroleum Activities (Conservation Habitats) Regs
Offshore Petroleum Activities (Oil Pollution Prevention and Control) Regs
Oil and Gas Production and Decommissioning
Marine Notices - shipping, guidance & information; Revision and Empowerment Orders. Conservation duties on ports; Harbour & Works Licences
Merchant Shipping Regs
Harbours Acts
Safer shipping navigation, pollution control and operation
Prevention, management & control of harmful aquatic organisms & alien species
Loading and discharging ballast water from ships (4)
Invasive Alien Species Regs
Strict restrictions apply to 'species of Union concern'
Public access to environmental information for decision-making. Public bodies more accountable
Environmental Information Regs
Access to information, public participation & justice
Prevention & remedy of env. damage
Env. Damage (P&R) Regs
Polluter pays principle & remedial measures
Waste FD
Industrial Emissions Dir.
Nitrates
UWWTD
Bathing Waters
COP26
Renewable Energy
PARIS AGREEMENT
UN FRAMEWORK CONV. ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)
KYOTO PROTOCOL
G7 SUMMIT
LONDON CONVENTION & PROTOCOL
IMO
MARPOL
Various EU Regs to control shipping & pollution from ships
BALLAST WATER CONV. (4)
Reg. on Invasive Alien (non-native) Species
EU Strategy on Invasive Alien Sp.
Public Access to Env. Info Dir
ICES CONV.
UN FISH STOCK AGREEMENT
UNCLOS
OSPAR CONVENTION MINISTERIAL MEETING
UN CONV. on BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (CBD)
GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK
COP15
UN SDG
UN DOS
UN DER
INT. CONV. ON SALVAGE
AARHUS CONV.
UNESCO Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage (2)
Env Liability
Council of Europe Conventions on archaeology & landscape
Marine archaeology
Protection of Military Remains Act
National Heritage Act
Protection of marine archaeology
Protection of Wrecks Act
Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act
Merchant Shipping Regs
Regulatory Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs)
Contaminants in Food Reg
FRMD
WFD
SEA
ESPOO CONV.
EIA
EU Integrated Maritime Policy
MSFD
BERN CONV.
BONN CONV.
EU Biodiversity Strategy
MSP Dir
AICHI Targets
RAMSAR CONV.
Wild Birds
Habitats & Species
CITES
Various Regs to control CITES fauna & flora
Endangered species protection
Control of Trade in Endangered Species (COTES) Regs
Protection and enforcement
Flood Risk Assessment
Water Environment (WFD)(E&W) Regs
Good Chemical Status & Good Ecological Status
Strategic Environmental Assessments to include transboundary effects
Marine projects subject to Environmental Impact Assessment
Good Environmental Status
Marine spatial planning
Favourable Conservation Status
Natura 2000 sites (SAC/SPA)
National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan (NBSAPs)
Environmental Assessment Regs
Town & Country Planning (EIA) Regs
Harbour Works (EIA) Regs
Marine Works (EIA) Regs
Licences, Consents and Authorisations
Infrastructure Planning (EIA) Regs
Planning Act
Applications for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NISPs) / Marine licences
Marine Strategy Regs
Environment Act 2021
Marine and Coastal Access Act
Programme of measures; Qualitative descriptors; Ecosystem-based management approach; MPAs.
The 2021 Act will complement the Marine Strategy Regs in the priority areas of biodiversity (e.g. Net Gain, LNRSs), water and waste.
UK Marine Policy Statement (MPS); National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); Localism Act
Marine planning (3); Fisheries management; Licences, Consents & Authorisations; Coastal Recreation Conservation/Biodiversity protection (MCZ);
Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)
Marine & Coastal Access Act
Offshore Marine Conservation Regs
Wildlife & Countryside Act (as amended by CROW)
NERC Act
Environment Act 2021
Conservation of Habitats and Species Regs
Conservation of Seals Act (amended by Fisheries Act 2020)
Reg 35 advice, Article 17 condition monitoring, Appropriate Assessments (AA), Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) & Likely Significant Effect (LSE). Management Plans & Schemes
Biodiversity & Species Action Plans; Habitats and Species Protection; Site designation (e.g. SSSIs); Management plans; Conserving wider biodiversity.
Site designations - European Marine Sites (EMS) include SAC & SPA; Conservation/biodiversity protection (MCZs); Programme of Measures; RAMSAR sites are given same management considerations as EMS; Species protection (WCA).
Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS); Protected site strategies and species conservation strategies; Biodiversity net gain (including NISPs); Conservation covenants; Nature recovery network; Legally binding 15 year Environmental Improvement Plan targets; Legally binding target on species abundance for 2030.
(1) Since leaving the EU on 31/01/20, the UK enacted the 'European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 which converts the body of existing EU law into domestic legislation. This allows the UK to continue to implement our obligations to these EU laws.
(2) The UK is not a signatory to this Convention however a number of public statements have been produced that confirm its endorsement of the rules in its Annex
(3) All regulated activities in the English marine environment consider UK marine policy drivers such as the UK High Level Marine Objectives 2009, the UK Marine Policy Statement and various National Policy Statements
(4) The UK has not yet ratified the Ballast Water Convention however, the UK regulatory package has been drafted and the Government remains committed to acceding to the Convention and implementing it into UK law.

INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANISATION (IMO)

UK Shipping

UK GOVERNMENT

Northern Ireland Executive

Scottish Government

Welsh Government

Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) - Replaces the functions of the European Commission and the European Environment Agency. Covers England and reserved matters across the UK with powers and duties set by the Environment Act 2021. Ensures environmental protection and the improvement of the natural environment by holding government and other public authorities to account (e.g. government departments & ministers, regulators, local authorities, some private bodies). Includes: 1. Scrutinising Environmental Improvement Plans and targets; 2. Scrutinising environmental law; 3. Advising government on environmental law; 4. Enforcing against failures to comply with environmental law.

Home Office

Cabinet Office

Parliament

- House of Lords
- House of Commons

HM Treasury (Economic policy & sustainable growth)

National Infrastructure Commission (Advises government and the devolved administrations on major long term infrastructure challenges in the energy, transport, water and wastewater (drainage and sewerage), waste and flood risk management sectors)

The Crown Estate (Owns 55% of the foreshore (between mean high and mean low water) and approximately half of the beds of estuarial areas and tidal rivers in the UK; manages the seabed out to the 12 mile territorial limit; offshore energy development / leasing; licences for the extraction of marine sand and gravel resources; marine planning)

Department for Transport (DfT) (supporting the maritime sector by producing the overall strategy & planning policy for ports in England & Wales)

Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) (Enforces international shipping and pollution control conventions (MARPOL, SOLAS); ship surveys & inspections; receiver of wreck; shipping registry including fishing vessel registry; Emergency response & counter pollution; Ballast water management)

Secretary of State's Representative for Maritime Salvage & Intervention (SOSREP) (Salvage operations in UK waters involving vessels or fixed platforms, for significant risk of pollution)

Trinity House (Lighthouses in England, Wales, Channel Islands & Gibraltar)

Northern Lighthouse Board (Scotland & Isle of Man)

Marine Accident Investigation Branch (Regulates and influences the oil, gas & carbon storage industry; Promotes net zero; Investigates marine accidents involving UK vessels)

Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) (Investing in jobs, overseeing local government, planning and building safety)

Planning Inspectorate (Independent body examining applications for nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs) e.g. new harbours, offshore wind farms, which require a 'development consent' under procedures governed by the Planning Act 2008; planning appeals; marine licensing applications)

Local Authorities

Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) (Create fisheries and conservation by-laws out to 6nm; Research; Consulting on marine development work, MSP and MCZs; Enforcement; Liaising with fishermen & anglers.) *The EA, MMO & NE (Defra NDPBs) have statutory seats on the IFCAs.*

Ministry of Defence (MOD) (Protection of people, values, territories and interests at home and overseas)

UK Hydrographic Office (Provide hydrographic services for UK waters as required under SOLAS)

Oil & Pipelines Agency (Manage, operate and maintain 6 Naval Oil Fuel Depots and a Petroleum Storage Depot on behalf of the MoD)

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) (Tackle climate change; energy & clean growth; science, research & innovation)

UK Met Office (Provides weather and climate-related services. Supported by the Flood Forecasting Centre (see DEFRA))

Committee on Climate Change (Advises on emissions targets and progress on reducing greenhouse gas emissions)

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

UK Research & Innovation (include research councils e.g. NERC)

Oil & Gas Authority (Regulate and influence the oil, gas and carbon storage industries; EIA for licencing; Pipelines; Promotion of net zero)

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) (Protecting cultural heritage)

Historic England (Advisors to MMO and Defra on marine planning; protected wrecks; protection of marine historic environment; mapping historic seascapes; although not ratified, Historic England follows the Rules annexed to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Heritage to ensure best practice in marine underwater archaeology projects in UK)

DEFRA (see separate organogram)

Marine Science Coordination Committee (MSCC) A cross-government committee which aims to coordinate scientific knowledge, resources and communications to support marine policy decisions. It provides opportunities for the alignment and development of UK marine science to inform policy decisions and forward implementation of the UK Marine Science Strategy. Four partnership initiatives include Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership (MCCIP); Marine Environmental Data and Information Network (MEDIN); UK Integrated Marine Observing Network (UK-IMON); Underwater Sound Forum (USF). MSCC is supported and used by:

- Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)
- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)
- Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas)
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA-NI)
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
- Department for Transport (DfT)
- Environment Agency (EA)
- Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)
- Marine Management Organisation (MMO)
- Marine Scotland
- Met Office
- Ministry of Defence (MOD)
- Natural Resources Wales
- National Oceanography Centre (NOC)
- Plymouth Marine Laboratory (PML)
- Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland (MASTS)
- Marine Biological Association (MBA)
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
- Sea Fish
- United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO)
- United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI)
- Welsh Government

- Devolved Administrations
- Ministerial Departments
- Executive Agencies
- Executive Non-Departmental Public Bodies
- Cross-government Committee
- 'Other' Public Bodies
- Public corporations
- Independent Commercial Business
- Committees or joint committees of local government

INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

UK GOVERNMENT

- Northern Ireland Executive
- Scottish Government
- Welsh Government

Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) - Replaces the functions of the European Commission and the European Environment Agency. Covers England and reserved matters across the UK with powers and duties set by the Environment Act 2021. Ensures environmental protection and the improvement of the natural environment by holding government and other public authorities to account (e.g. government departments & ministers, regulators, local authorities, some private bodies). Includes:
1. Scrutinising Environmental Improvement Plans and targets; 2. Scrutinising environmental law; 3. Advising government on environmental law; 4. Enforcing against failures to comply with environmental law.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

Delivers policy and legislation for the natural environment, biodiversity, plants and animals; sustainable development and the green economy; food, farming and fisheries; animal health and welfare; environmental protection and pollution control. Coordination of the OSPAR Convention (Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic) and new powers for the Secretary of State under the new Environment Act 2021.

Animal and Plant Health Agency

Safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.

Responsibilities:
Managing plant health;
Managing disease;
Endangered species (CITES);
Scientific research.

Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture (CEFAS)

Collects, manages and interprets data on the aquatic environment, biodiversity and fisheries.

Responsibilities:
Climate change impacts & adaptation; Marine planning, environmental licensing;
Sustainable fisheries management;
Fish and shellfish health & hygiene;
Continued partnership with ICES;
Data collection.

Fish Health Inspectorate

Health of fish & shellfish: safe trade; fish farms; diseases; non-native species.

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)

Responsibility for nature conservation in the offshore marine environment (from territorial waters (12nm) extending to the UK Continental Shelf (UKCS).

Responsibilities: Informs policy development at national level;
Provides support for implementation of European & international laws;
Identifying, monitoring & advising on UK's offshore marine nature conservation;
Establishing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs);
Advice to offshore industries;
Supports nature conservation in the UK's 14 Overseas Territories and three Crown Dependencies;
Survey & monitoring.

Marine Management Organisation (MMO)

Protecting and enhancing the marine environment and support UK economic growth by enabling sustainable marine activities and development.

Responsibilities:
Marine planning (planning and licensing functions for English waters and developing marine plans covering the English marine area);
Fisheries (regulate fishing outside territorial waters and outside MPAs, dispensations, monitoring & enforcement, quotas, statistics & vessels licenses);
Protecting the environment (marine pollution, nature conservation (MCZs) & wildlife licences);
Marine regulation & licensing (consenting process, harbour orders (HO), Sec 36 of Electricity Act (>1MW to 100MW) (also with responsibilities for Sec 36 and certain HOs in Welsh inshore waters));
Safety Zone function for non-NSIPs;
Co-chair the Offshore Renewable Energy Licensing Group (ORELG).

Natural England (NE)

Advisor for the natural environment in England. Helps to protect and restore the natural world.

Responsibilities:
Advising government (strategic) & industry (regulatory) on marine conservation and seascape issues in England's territorial waters (out to 12nm) based on the principles of GES & FCS;
Wider sea advice; Advice on marine sea fisheries, marine renewable energy, regulation & licensing and spatial planning;
Reducing biodiversity decline & licensing protected species across England;
Designating national parks and AONBs; Management of NNRs and notifying SSSIs; Responsibility for MCZs, EMSs, SSSIs, Ramsar sites & the network of MPAs

Environment Agency (EA)

To protect and improve the environment and supporting sustainable development.

Responsibilities:
Climate change;
Waste and recycling;
Flood risk (rivers and sea) supported by Regional Flood and Coastal Committees;
Bathing water quality; Coastal erosion risk;
Water, air and land emissions (Environmental Permitting Regs);
Water quality (inc. coasts and estuaries);
Estuary and harbour navigations;
Fishing licenses;
Wildlife & conservation;
Regulation, advice & guidance for business & industry;
Policy implementation.

Flood Forecasting Centre

A public body to support the EA (and Met Office) providing forecasts for all natural forms of flooding (the sea, rivers, surface water and groundwater).

Sea Fish Industry Authority (SFIA)

Supports the seafood industry to work for a sustainable, profitable future.

Responsibilities:
Information (support for industry's business decisions); Safety at sea; Protecting the environment at sea & on land;
Regulation (understanding, interpreting & responding to legislation for industry);
Supporting quality & efficiency standards).

Sponsored by the Scottish government, Welsh Assembly and the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, as well as Defra

Science Advisory Council (SAC)

Provides expert independent advice on science policy and strategy to DEFRA and helps to guide Defra's scientific priorities and planning (both in the short and long term)

Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE)

Advice to UK Governments on the release & marketing of genetically modified organisms

Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management R&D

Collaborative academic led research providing flood risk professionals with information to manage flood risk. Part of EA, DEFRA, Welsh Government and NRW

- Devolved Administrations
- Ministerial Departments
- Executive Agencies
- Executive Non-Departmental Public Bodies
- 'Other' Public Bodies
- Advisory Non-Departmental Public Bodies

Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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Cllr Philip Thomson
Chair of the Crustacean Deaths Working Group
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Ridley Street, Redcar
Yorkshire, TS10 1TD

Our ref: PO2024/14852/LY

3 October 2024

Dear Cllr Thomson,

Thank you for your letter of 1 August to the Secretary of State regarding the sealife mortality events of 2021 in North-East England and the attached holding statement, which was also received by Cefas. I am replying on behalf of Cefas and the Secretary of State as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

I recognise the complexities and impacts of the mortalities that took place. Having consulted the Department's Chief Scientific Advisor, I agree with his advice that it has been too long since the incident took place in 2021 to seek more information on what caused that mortality and is it unlikely that a public enquiry would provide substantial new insights into the incident.

Defra and its arm's length bodies continued to investigate following the incident. As you will be aware, an independent panel of experts (Crustacean Mortality Expert Panel - CMEP) reviewed all available evidence but could not identify a single clear cause.[1] Additionally, Cefas scientists developed a new, validated method to test for the presence of the chemical pyridine in animal tissue and sediments, which I know several stakeholders remained concerned about. Their report was published, after which crab tissue samples collected during the 2021 incident were re-analysed.[2] Their findings matched the expert panel's conclusion that pyridine was very unlikely to be the cause of the mass mortality.

Since the 2021 incident, we have been working with the North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, Cefas and fishers to better understand the frequency and significance of wash ups in the area. This includes sample collection and analysis at Cefas where this is feasible. To date, where material has been available and suitable for testing, no analyses have revealed a presumptive cause. It is noted that observations of marine mortalities on the shoreline are not uncommon, particularly following storm events. However, we remain committed to improving both our knowledge of coastal health and our responsiveness to unexpected marine mortalities.

A recently initiated, Defra-led project is considering a data and analytical framework which is an early step to design and test a potential coastal monitoring framework to improve how government responds to marine events. Its focus is on marine situations of unknown cause(s) which negatively impact marine life around coastal regions of England.

[1] CMEP Report
[2] Pyridine Test Report

This work includes the development of a multi-agency framework to support a common understanding of processes and responsibilities and to ensure a collaborative and effective response should a similar incident occur in the future.

I understand the pressure the incident put on communities and that is why fishers in the North East were encouraged to access funding provided through suitable grant schemes. While these schemes were not envisaged as direct compensation schemes as they were open and existing schemes, they were seen as the quickest way to get support to those affected. I understand these schemes saw more than £2.6 million invested into the seafood sector in the North-East since April 2021, which helped to support the sustainability and long-term future of the sector, provide assistance for projects that boost the sale of seafood, support more environmentally sustainable practices, and bring economic growth to coastal communities.

To improve the health of the stocks and the needs of the crab and lobster industry we published the crab and lobster Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) in December 2023 following a 12-week public consultation.[3] The crab and lobster FMP sets out a framework for identifying and filling evidence gaps, and providing evidence based-management measures to improve crab and lobster stocks.

Defra continues to invest in the monitoring of fish and crustacean stocks as well as the wider ecosystem of the North Sea, including through crab and lobster stock assessments which are produced by Cefas every two to three years to assess the status of the stock. The latest stock assessments are from 2023.[4]

Your concerns have been noted, and I trust that you see from the range of activities set out that we remain vigilant and are working to improve our responses to incidents in the future.

Yours sincerely,

DANIEL ZEICHNER MP

[3] Crab and Lobster Fisheries Management Plan (2023)
[4] Crab and Lobster stock assessments 2023 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

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Directorate of Corporate Resources
Democratic Services
Civic Centre
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www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Mr Zeichner MP
Minister of State
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Contact: Councillor Thomson
Ref: Crustacean Deaths Working Group
Email: philip.thomson@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

15 November 2024

Dear Mr Zeichner,

Thank you very much for writing as per your letter of the 3 October which has just come into my possession yesterday.

I am pleased to learn that the impact of the crustacean die-off in the North East, which was devastating to local communities and that the inability to clearly identify the causation was and remains a cause for concern, is recognised by yourself and your Department.

Despite the early attempts to identify causation, the inability of a combined resource of intellect and administration has so far been impotent in attaining resolution.

The workings of the apolitical local authority group have been thwarted at practically every turn in attempts to consult with and engage in considered discussion of the incident, its implications and the ramifications that result.

The request for a public enquiry has been tabled in an attempt to bring this matter into a more public domain and to focus minds on a variety of factors including identification of causation but also to examine the apparent moribund structure that is tasked with the governance of the maritime and coastal environment.

The rejection of such a public enquiry is regretted and the passage of time argument, whilst understood, is a further reflection of the apparent inertia that seems to be symptomatic of the behemoth structure tasked with management of our maritime estate.

The work that you advise of that is being undertaken is welcomed.

There remains much to be done in terms of cooperative working, sharing of intelligence and aspiring to a more efficient regime focussed on more detailed analysis of environment and mechanisms which will adequately identify all the relevant factors which affect it, how these can be identified, monitored, analysed and a system of evaluation and determination that is open and transparent and be able to be held to account.

Representatives of the working group will be in Whitehall in the near future, and it is hoped that earnest dialogue can be engaged in, to progress this aspiration.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Councillor Philip Thomson

creating a better place
for people and wildlife

Environment Agency

Caroline Leng
Directorate of Corporate Resources
Democratic Services
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Civic Centre
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Our Ref: 23005
Date: 24 September 2024

By email: contactus@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Dear Ms Leng,

Crustacean deaths

Thank you for your letter of 5 August 2024 on behalf of the Crustacean Deaths Working Group in Tees Valley and North Yorkshire. I was interested to read about the working group's research, findings and recommendations.

The Environment Agency was part of the Defra led multi-agency response and investigation into the mass crustacean deaths in 2021, and I am aware of the devastation caused by the event, which affected people working and living along the North East coast. An independent Crustacean Mortality Expert Panel (CMEP) was convened in December 2022 to provide an independent scientific assessment of all the possible causes of the mass mortality incident using all relevant available evidence[1]. Despite significant efforts, the panel could not identify a clear and convincing single cause for the incident.

I have read each of the recommendations in your letter. Defra is best placed to respond to these specific recommendations. However, I have provided some information below, which may be of interest to the Crustacean Deaths Working Group. This includes information about work to improve the response to future marine incidents.

Validated method to test for pyridine

In response to the 2021 incident, The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture (Cefas) scientists developed a new, validated method to test for the presence of the chemical pyridine in animal tissue and sediments. Their report is published[2] and the method was used to re-analyse crab tissue samples collected during the 2021 incident. Their results aligned with the findings from the expert panel, and they concluded that it is very unlikely that pyridine was the cause of the mass mortality event.

Coastal health project

[1] CMEP Report
[2] Newly validated test to detect pyridine in animal tissues and sediments - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

A science led project, ‘coastal health’, is considering a data and analytical framework for the long-term resilience, sustainability, and growth of coastal regions around England. This project is an early step to designing a monitoring framework to improve how government responds to marine events. Its focus is on marine situations of unknown cause(s) which negatively affect marine life. This work includes the development of a multi-agency framework to ensure a collaborative response should an incident similar to the 2021 event occur in the future.

Protocol following the 2021 mass mortality event

Following the 2021 mass crustacean mortality event, a protocol on how to respond to new reports of wash ups was agreed between relevant organisations. This protocol was enacted to ensure that new intelligence would be consistently and reliably shared between organisations to facilitate the response to new incidents and investigations.

Current situation around Teesside and North Yorkshire coast

The Environment Agency continues to work with Defra and its partners to respond to any new reports of dead marine life washing up on North East beaches.

Between June 2021 and August 2024, the Environment Agency received 135 reports about dead animals and fish along the North East coast. The last of these reports was on 7 June 2024 when a caller reported dead crabs and thousands of small dead fish on the Teesmouth and Cleveland coast. Due to the reported numbers, a marine officer was deployed to investigate. The marine officer reported that the ‘crab body parts’ were empty shells, consistent with moults (this is a natural process where the crabs shell must be shed or moulted as they grow).

The Environment Agency continues to report to Defra routinely to inform them of any new reports that it has received.

I hope this information is useful for the Crustacean Deaths Working Group. If the Environment Agency can be of any further assistance or if you would like to discuss this matter further, Sarah Jennings, Area Environment Manager, is happy to talk with you. You can contact Sarah on Sarah.Jennings@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Philip Duffy
Chief Executive
Environment Agency

Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Directorate of Corporate Resources
Democratic Services
Civic Centre
Ridley Street
Redar
Yorkshire
TS10 1TD

Ref: L11 -EL
Date: 26/09/24

Subject: Acknowledgment of receipt

Dear Mrs Leng,

Thank you for your letters of 1st August and 9th September regarding the Crustacean Deaths Working Group. I can confirm that these letters were received, and the contents reviewed.

I can advise Cefas have contributed to a coordinated Defra response to the Holding Statement, which you will receive shortly. Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Neil Hornby
Chief Executive

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

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WARNING: This email came from outside of the organisation. Do not provide login or password details. Always be cautious opening links and attachments wherever the email appears to come from. If you have any doubts about this email, contact ICT.

Dear Ms Leng,

Thank you for your letters dated 9 and 23 September 2024 addressed to our Chair, Hilary Florek. The latter was received in our office 26 September and unfortunately, we were unable to respond in time for your meeting.

Marine Management Organisation (MMO) are unable to comment on the recommendations that you have made in relation to requests to the Secretary of State, nor are we able to comment on behalf of them.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) co-ordinated a response to the original incident as multiple ALBs/agencies were involved. MMO's role relates to marine licensable activities and notably dredging/disposal. A further independent panel was formed to review the incident. In January 2023, the independent Crustacean Mortality Expert Panel (CMEP) of experts from academia and industry concluded that:

'*it is about as likely as not that a pathogen new to UK waters – a potential disease or parasite – caused the unusual crab mortality*'
and that '*it is very unlikely that pyridine or another toxic pollutant caused the crab deaths. The panel considered industries on Teesside and concluded they could not be sources of any significant volume of pyridine during the period of the crab deaths.*'

All applications for the dredge and/or disposal of material in English waters undertake rigorous sampling under our obligations to the Ospar convention. As a responsible regulator MMO meet all of our international obligations for disposing of dredged material to sea and monitor disposal sites to ensure levels of contaminants aren't exceeded.

I am sorry that MMO are unable to provide comment on the areas of concern that you have raised as these are policy decisions made by Defra.

Yours sincerely,

Fern Skeldon
Marine Licensing Senior Case Manager | Project Speed | Marine Management Organisation
Lancaster House | Hampshire Court | Newcastle upon Tyne | NE4 7YH

fern.skeldon@marinemanagement.org.uk |

Our MMO Values: Together we are **Accountable, Innovative**, **Engaging** and **Inclusive**
Website Blog Twitter Facebook LinkedIn YouTube
I'm a PCS Union member. Join here to help improve and defend our pay, conditions and benefits: https://www.pcs.org.uk/get-involved/why-join-pcs
I am taking a blended approach to working. I will be working from Lancaster House 2 days a week and work the remainder of the week from home

PD Ports Limited
17-27 Queen's Square,
Middlesbrough, TS2 1AH
+44 (0) 1642 877000

4th October 2024

Caroline Leng
Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Directorate of Corporate Resources
Democratic Services
Civic Centre
Ridley Street
Redcar
TS10 1TD

Dear Caroline

Crustacean Deaths Working Group – Holding Statement

This is to confirm that we are in receipt of your Holding Statement regarding the research, findings and recommendations from the Crustacean Deaths Working Group dated 01 August 2024.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Frans Caljé
Chief Executive Officer

Registered in England No. 06928227 as PD Ports Limited.
Registered Office: 17-27 Queen's Square, Middlesbrough, TS2 1AH.

Appendix 17

Recommendations / Actions

	Action	Referred To
1	Further research does require to be undertaken in the fields of marine and river ecology and of its management. Defra and Cefas have initiated further research and it is imperative that relevant work be expedited to establish a greater understanding of the coastal environment, the pressures that bear upon it and the management structures that are best fitted to monitor and manage. Reports should be peer reviewed and placed in the public domain in a timely manner. All research that is being undertaken by Government agencies, scientific institutions, companies and sponsored individuals should be acknowledged and accessible for reference. The complexity of relationships needs to be simplified so that any future events of a similar nature can be more readily addressed.	Defra Group
2.	The Working Group commends the efforts of the lobster hatchery approach to improve stocks. The work being conducted at hatcheries in Whitby and Bridlington is to be commended and encouraged. Further hatcheries require to be evaluated to ensure that the restocking of lobsters is maintained to support a sustainable future for the inshore fishing industry.	Whitby Lobster Hatchery Defra Group

	Similar efforts to restore the population of crabs should also be explored.	
3.	Evidence received from academics, NEIFCA and the fishing community suggests that there are broad ecological implications from the incident. The Working Group to write formally to government agencies requesting that that the general ocean environment in the region be monitored to assess recovery. It is also recommended that scientific sampling work that is being undertaken in inland waterways in Yorkshire be extended to the RiverTees water way catchment area.	Defra Group NEIFCA MMO
4.	The Working Group to request monitoring of progress made towards the Defra commissioned investigations. In particular, the key line of enquiry relating to preparedness for future incidents.	Defra Group / Crustacean Deaths Working Group
5.	Given that the MMO advises 'relevant restrictions may be attached in the form of conditions to marine licenses granted by the MMO following consultation with bodies including the EA.', it is requested that the MMO be required to review current standards to ensure robustness, especially in areas affected by legacy contaminants. Levels of testing related to dredging licensing were advised as being in line with international standards and agreements. The frequency of testing and the periods during which they might be conducted did not appear to be stringent enough in environments where historic contamination had been identified.	MMO

	The deposition sites for dredged materials vary for maintenance and capital dredging. Both permitted distances should be reevaluated where historic levels of pollution have been highlighted and where current bed core sampling suggests potential pollutants, either in singular form or potential interactive form. Strong consideration should be given to ensuring land deposition be prioritised for capital dredging.	
6.	The current governance arrangements are incredibly complex. The Working Group recommends that efforts are made to improve collaboration, and a process instigated to ensure that local authorities can productively engage with appropriate stakeholders. The current areas of responsibility for the maritime coastal area surrounding the British mainland do need to be reviewed. The number of organisations would appear to be too great. The interaction between such organisations does not appear to be effective. The perceived lack of synergy experienced during the Group's explorations was not conducive to confidence building or ease of communication and understanding. A restructuring of the overall maritime management to reduce organisation numbers, better clarify remits, welcome public scrutiny and operate in a robust and timely manner is a requirement in need of prompt action.	All relevant stakeholders

7.	The Working Group noted that there were occasionally errors in process administration and some confusion in relation to dredging activity. The Group recommends that attention be given to ensuring robust administrative processes are in place and ready independent audit	All relevant stakeholders
8.	Sampling is only required on a 4-yearly basis, and consideration should be given to increasing the rate in the Tees, especially in view of the industrial legacy of the area. Risk assessments did not take into account the local sites of special scientific interest, which should not be omitted in future assessments. Waterways are dynamic environments that require further understanding, and there is a need to continue to explore water quality. Further engagement needs to be made with all companies responsible for water management.	MMO Statutory Harbour Authority
9.	The Working Group will not be continuing under its existing remit. Although no firm findings have been revealed to confirm the reasons for the Crustacean Die Off the deliberations of the Working Group have identified a real requirement for local authorities to be better advised of maritime matters where land boundaries border coastal or river environments.	Defra Group Coastal local authorities Local Coastal SIG

	Elected members would benefit from greater awareness of maritime legislation, organisational structure, and effective lines of communication and respective authorities should facilitate. There is a perceived need to continue to engage with government agencies. This could be achieved through existing frameworks, but these do need to be robust. The reinstatement of the Annual Coastal Forum should be considered, with a appropriate remit. A review of how local authorities are involved with and relate to relevant maritime organisations, either through Elected Member or Officer representation. Communications with members of the public require improvement. All government agencies and all relevant local authorities should be conscious of that responsibility and seek to be better informed and communicative om matters maritime and environmental.	

North Yorkshire Council

Executive

16 September 2025

Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030

Report of the Corporate Director Community Development

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To recommend to Full Council adoption of the Council's draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 By law councils must have published homelessness strategies. These strategies are used to set the direction of homelessness and rough sleeping services in their areas. This report seeks approval for the first ever Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for North Yorkshire Council.

2.2 The draft strategy, Appendix A, was shaped with input from Homeless Link (a national homelessness organisation) and by a wide range of partners. The Housing and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee has also fed into the development of the strategy and reviewed the draft on 11 June 2025.

2.3 To support the delivery of the strategy, an action plan for the first year has been developed and will be monitored through the East and West Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Forums and the NY Partnership meetings.

2.4 Approval is sought to present the strategy to Full Council for adoption.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 Under the Homelessness Act 2002, Councils must publish a homelessness strategy every five years. These strategies must outline plans to prevent homelessness and ensure adequate accommodation and support for those affected.

3.2 North Yorkshire has a strong record in homelessness prevention. This strategy builds on that success, informed by a comprehensive review involving staff, service users, and partners. It reflects past achievements, current service demands, and future needs.

3.3 This is the first strategy for the new unitary authority and sets out the Council's vision, priorities, and actions for the next five years.

3.4 The vision within the strategy is to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping wherever possible for North Yorkshire residents. Where homelessness cannot be prevented, we aim to make it rare, brief, and non-recurrent. This will be achieved through partnership working and ensuring access to quality temporary and long-term housing with appropriate support.

4.0 ALIGNING WITH OTHER NORTH YORKSHIRE STRATEGIES

4.1 This strategy supports the Housing Strategy's "Our People" theme, focusing on:

- Preventing and tackling homelessness
- Addressing needs across life stages
- Meeting supported housing needs

4.2 The **Housing Strategy 2024–2029** highlights rising demand for homelessness services, limited housing supply (especially in rural areas), affordability issues, and demographic shifts including ageing populations and new groups such as asylum seekers.

4.3 The **Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023–2030** promotes integrated working across housing, health, and social care to improve population health and reduce inequalities.

4.4 Health is a key factor in homelessness. This strategy aligns with:

- NHS Inclusion Health Framework
- Humber and North Yorkshire Inclusion Health Plan
- England's 10-Year Health Plan, including Integrated Neighbourhood Teams

4.5 The **Substance Use Strategy 2024–2028** includes a cross-cutting theme on 'Homes and Jobs'.

4.6 The strategy also aligns with plans on climate change, economic growth, autism, suicide prevention, domestic abuse, mental health transformation, and other local priorities.

5.0 KEY PARTNERSHIPS

5.1 The Council cannot effectively achieve the objectives of its homelessness strategy without input and support from a wide range of partners including statutory services, the voluntary sector and landlords. A range of partnerships are in place to support the delivery of the strategy including:

- The York and North Yorkshire Housing Partnership of social landlords, supporting affordable housing and community development (a subgroup of which has been established to focus on preventing homelessness and sustaining tenancies).
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Forums have launched in East and West areas, with around 70 attendees. The overarching Partnership group will drive joint working and strategy delivery.
- Wider partnerships covering domestic abuse, safeguarding, substance misuse, and public protection.
- Collaboration with the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA)

6.0 STRATEGY- THEMES AND PRIORITIES

The strategy addresses homelessness and rough sleeping across four themes:

6.1 **Preventing Homelessness**

- Early intervention before crisis
- Improving customer experience
- Partnering with voluntary and community sectors

6.2 **Increasing Suitable Accommodation**

- Expanding access to affordable housing
- Reducing the demand for temporary accommodation and improving the quality of temporary accommodation used.
- Enhancing supported housing provision

6.3 **Improving Support Services**

- Strengthening support pathways
- Supporting people with multiple disadvantages
- Promoting inclusive, trauma-informed practice
- Encouraging peer-led and community models

6.4 **Reducing Rough Sleeping**

- Meeting accommodation and support needs
- Supporting those with complex needs
- Engaging businesses and voluntary sector

6.5 Actions under each theme form a five-year plan, reviewed annually. Year one actions are detailed in Appendix B.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 The strategy was developed in close collaboration with Homeless Link, who conducted four site visits and reviewed internal and external data including data sent from our system direct to government on a quarterly basis, Young Persons Pathway, NY Home Choice, Discretionary Housing Payments, ONS data, and rough sleeping surveys.

7.2 Feedback was gathered from Housing Options staff via team meetings and draft comments. Around 30 stakeholders, including senior leaders, participated in discussions. Surveys and focus groups were held with service users, including an online Duty to Refer survey.

7.3 In June/July, the draft strategy was presented at the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Forum and shared with internal and external partners for comment. In addition, feedback has been received from Members via the Housing and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

8.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

8.1 Homelessness impacts on a host of organisations including housing, health, social care, criminal justice, and the voluntary sector and this strategy seeks to strengthens partnership working and fosters shared understanding of local challenges and priorities. It enables other organisations to align their strategies with housing and homelessness goals.

8.2 The strategy supports the development and implementation of joint protocols, funding arrangements, and coordinated service delivery for complex needs. Internally within the Council it links Housing, Social Care and Public Health, embedding trauma-informed and ensuring that frontline officers understand cultural differences and how this may affect how our customers access services.

9.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

9.1 The strategy supports North Yorkshire's Council Plan vision and four key themes:

- Thriving places and empowered communities
- Sustainable and connected places
- Safe, healthy, and well communities
- Maximising potential of people and communities

10.0 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

10.1 The strategy includes a range of performance measures. These include:

- Homeless assessments
- Prevention and relief duties
- Statutory homelessness acceptances
- Successful preventions and reliefs
- Temporary accommodation usage
- B&B and high-cost emergency accommodation
- Housing advice approaches

10.2 Quarterly returns are submitted to MHCLG, including rough sleeper and homelessness data and in 2025 a unified homelessness system was introduced, bringing the 7 former district Council systems together under one case management system.

10.3 In addition to the corporate performance management arrangements the on-going delivery of the strategy shall be overseen by the newly established partnership forums and through regular updates to the Housing and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Council also has regular (monthly) liaison meetings with MHCLG officials around progress.

11.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The delivery of the strategy has no new financial implication for the Council, with all proposed interventions included within existing budgetary parameters. Spend by the Council on meeting its statutory duties around homelessness is significant area. In 24/25 £8.5M was spent. This was made up of £4.3M on staffing costs, £2.7M on temporary accommodation and £1.5M on prevention.

11.2 Cost incurred by the Council is however offset with high levels of external grant funding from Government and income from housing benefit subsidy to help offset temporary accommodation costs (£4.3M in 2024/25, gross costs). The funding from Government includes Homelessness Prevention Grant (£2.9M in 25/26). These funds (some of which are ringfenced for specific purposes) cover covering staffing, emergency accommodation, IT, training, and prevention work.

11.3 In addition the Council receives a further Rough Sleeper Grant (£755K) which again funds staffing, partner allocations, and accommodation.

11.4 The net cost per person of providing homelessness services across North Yorkshire is low when compared to most Councils (@ £6 per person compared to the national average of all Councils @ £12 per person) and overall outcomes in terms of service delivery are good (with 0.88 households per 1000 in temporary accommodation as compared to the national average for all Councils of 3.06 per 1000 households).

11.5 However despite this, it is recognised that demand going forward is likely to increase with the associated risk of increased cost. A key financial challenge for the Council remains the cost of providing temporary accommodation. Council considered this issue in June 2024 and approved the adoption of a Business Case to invest £11.6M in capital funds to develop alternative in-house temporary accommodation provision and therefore reduce its reliance on resorting to expensive hotels and B&Bs. The delivery of this is on-going with 20 new temporary accommodation units developed as of August 25, however the focus needs to remain on preventing homelessness in the first place. Council cannot become complacent and the emphasis throughout this first homelessness strategy of the new Council is all around partnership working, preventing homelessness and reducing demand on statutory service provision.

12.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The Council is legally required to have a current homelessness strategy. This first strategy for the unitary authority meets all statutory requirements and is ready for adoption.

13.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

13.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed (Appendix C).

14.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

14.1 A Climate Change Impact Assessment has been completed (Appendix D).

15.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

15.1 The strategy fulfils the Council's statutory duty and requires Full Council approval.

16.0 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

16.1 Key risks include:

- Resource-intensive housing-first models
- Limited affordable housing supply
- Staffing challenges
- Increased demand due to asylum policies
- External crises affecting resources
- Potential funding reductions

17.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

17.1 The recommendation to full council for adoption of the strategy. The strategy is a legal requirement and supports positive outcomes for vulnerable individuals while ensuring effective resource use.

18.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

18.1 Executive is asked to:

i) Recommend approval of the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2025-2030 for adoption by Full Council.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030 – Updated Version
Appendix B - Year 1 Reducing Homelessness Action Plan
Appendix C – Equalities Impact Assessment
Appendix D - Climate Change assessment

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: none

Nic Harne
Corporate Director – Community Development
County Hall
Northallerton
16 September 2025

Report Authors – Kim Robertshaw Head of Housing Needs

Presenter of Report – Andrew Rowe, Assistant Director for Housing

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

Appendix A

Homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2025 – 30

Report for North Yorkshire Council

May 2025

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Foreword

Foreword

As Executive Member for Housing, I am proud to introduce North Yorkshire Council's first Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy as a new unitary authority. This strategy sets out our shared ambition to prevent homelessness wherever possible — and where it cannot be prevented, to ensure it is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Homelessness in North Yorkshire is a complex and evolving challenge. From the pressures of rising housing costs and limited affordable options, to the growing number of people with multiple and complex needs, we are seeing increasing demand on our services. Our rural geography, ageing population, and economic inequalities add further layers of complexity. Yet, within these challenges lie opportunities to innovate, to collaborate, and to lead with compassion.

This strategy is rooted in the values of prevention, partnership, and person-centred support. It builds on the strengths of our communities, the dedication of our frontline teams, and the insights of those with lived experience. It aligns with our wider council priorities to support thriving places, ensure people are safe and living well, and deliver strong, local, and customer-led services.

We are investing in new models of supported housing, expanding our temporary accommodation offer, and strengthening our partnerships with the voluntary and community sector. We are embedding trauma-informed practice, improving access to services in rural areas, and developing innovative approaches like Housing First and the REACH and Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) projects. And we are committed to listening to the voices of those who use our services, and to the organisations that support them.

This strategy is not just a document it is a call to action. It reflects our belief that everyone in North Yorkshire deserves a place to call home, and the support they need to keep it. I invite all our partners, stakeholders, and residents to work with us to make this vision a reality.

Executive summary

The North Yorkshire homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2025 – 2030 sets the strategic direction for homelessness and rough sleeping services across North Yorkshire.

Our vision is of preventing homelessness and rough sleeping wherever possible and where homelessness cannot be prevented, to make it rare, brief, and non-recurrent. We intend to achieve this vision through working with our local statutory and voluntary, community, and social enterprise partners, and to ensure good quality and stable temporary and long-term housing is available, with support in place where this is needed. We have a commitment to working with people with lived experience.

The strategy sets out the context for homelessness and rough sleeping in North Yorkshire and how the council and its partners will seek to meet the challenges it faces across four key themes. These themes are:

1. Preventing homelessness.
2. Increasing the availability of suitable accommodation options.
3. Increasing availability and access to support services.
4. Reducing rough sleeping.

The strategy will be delivered through a reducing homelessness action plan.

Introduction

This is the first homelessness and rough sleeping strategy for the new unitary North Yorkshire Council. It outlines the council's vision for preventing homelessness and rough sleeping across North Yorkshire, its priorities, and the actions it will take to achieve these priorities over the next five years.

The strategy aligns with the vision and key priorities of North Yorkshire's Council Plan. The Plan's vision is to harness the power of North Yorkshire's natural capital, unique communities and businesses, continuously improving our services to enable a good quality of life for all. The Plan's overarching ambition is of one Council with strong, local and customer-led services. Its four key themes relate to:

- Supporting thriving places and empowered communities that live, work, visit and do business in North Yorkshire
- Developing more sustainable and connected places across North Yorkshire
- Ensuring the people of North Yorkshire are safe, healthy and living well
- Maximising the potential of North Yorkshire's people and communities.

Also we aim to support the work of the Our Skills Focus for York and North Yorkshire in relation to targeting hard to reach communities and the Get Britain Working inactivity trailblazer.

The strategy has been developed in the context of current and upcoming legal and regulatory changes. These include:

- The primary homelessness legislation – that is, Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. This provides the statutory under-pinning for action to prevent homelessness and provide assistance to people threatened with or actually homeless.
- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and Homelessness Code of Guidance (2018). The Homelessness Reduction Act significantly reformed England's homelessness legislation by placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. It also requires housing authorities to provide some homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who have 'priority need'. These include:
- (a) an enhanced prevention duty extending the period a household is threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days, meaning that housing authorities are required to work with customers to prevent homelessness at an earlier stage; and
- (b) a new duty for those who are already homeless so that housing authorities will support households for 56 days to relieve their homelessness by helping them to secure accommodation.
- **The Domestic Abuse Act 2021:** This creates a statutory definition of domestic abuse – covering emotional and economic, as well as physical abuse. Under the Act, all eligible victims of domestic abuse experiencing homelessness have an automatic priority need for homelessness assistance. Local authorities in England are now required to provide accommodation-based support to domestic abuse victims and their children, including in refuges and other safe accommodation. The Act also strengthens requirements for social tenants who have experienced domestic abuse to receive secure lifetime tenancies.

- **The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023:** This comes into effect in 2025/26. This act introduces a licensing regime and National Supported Housing Standards. Our role will include inspections to ensure compliance, and we'll work closely with social care and Revenues & Benefits to integrate licensing components. Aims to improve regulation of supported housing and improve the quality of supported exempt accommodation.

- **The Renters Rights Bill:** Is set to bring major changes to our responsibilities as a local housing authority. With the ending of Section 21 evictions, the removal of fixed-term assured shorthold tenancies, and the application of the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector, we can expect a substantial shift in how we operate. Our enforcement role will expand, shifting from reactive to proactive measures such as inspections and compliance checks to ensure landlords meet new standards, including Awaab's Law. We can retain financial penalties and access grants to support this workload.

Other recent changes mean that customers escaping domestic abuse, veterans, and care leavers no longer must demonstrate a local connection to the area in which they are seeking access to social housing. The closure of Home Office funded accommodation for ex-asylum seekers is increasing short term demand on local authority homelessness services. The Government has recently announced a new cross-departmental homelessness task force and plans for a new approach which is more clearly focused on homelessness prevention.

The new strategy has been developed through review of available data relating to homelessness and rough sleeping in North Yorkshire, engagement with local stakeholders – including the council, statutory partners, housing, and other voluntary, community and social enterprise services working with customers experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping, and customers using these services.

How this strategy aligns with other North Yorkshire strategies

The Housing Strategy 2024 – 2029 recognises the challenges brought about through increased demand for homelessness services and temporary accommodation, reduced supply of private and social rented accommodation (especially in rural areas), housing affordability, and demographic changes – including an ageing population and the emergence of new groups, such as asylum seekers and refugees. The council aims to meet these challenges through a range of initiatives, including:

- Bringing together homelessness prevention and support services.
- Developing innovative and existing accommodation solutions, including for temporary and affordable family accommodation.
- Specialist housing for specific groups, such as older people, those with a health need or requiring adaptation and those with multiple disadvantage.
- Supporting reductions in reoffending through looking at options around the provision of safe and secure accommodation for those leaving prison in partnership with statutory Criminal Justice Agencies
- Housing supply will be increased via delivering at least 800 affordable homes each year of the strategy – boosting council stock, working with existing social landlord partners

and new partners such as the Ministry of Defence, and aligning delivery with the council's new Empty Homes Strategy.

- The Council will also use its legal powers to enforce and raise standards in the private rented sector, including via selective licensing schemes.
- Working with Community Safety Team to increase the number of Safe Accommodation units available to households fleeing domestic abuse.

The North Yorkshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 – 2030 recognises the contributions of a wide range of local services to people's health and wellbeing, including housing, social care, community safety, and leisure. It highlights opportunities for joined up working offered by the introduction of integrated care boards, including across the NHS, local councils, and other partners and by integrated care systems, which can coordinate services and planning to improve population health and reduce inequalities between different groups. The strategy focuses on early intervention and prevention, using asset-based community development to support local solutions to improve health and wellbeing and addressing drivers of poorer health outcomes, such as transport, housing, and service access. There is also a focus on working with communities to develop collective understanding of and responsibility for actively managing health and wellbeing.

The proposed upcoming changes to the delivery of supported housing services is a new model for delivering short and long-term supported accommodation in North Yorkshire. It focuses on expanding and enhancing short-term accommodation and support, especially for customers with multiple disadvantages. With a flexible, multi-faceted support model improving support for customers with a range of needs and reducing reliance on temporary accommodation. The model will offer a new approach, which allows customers to move between levels of support, according to their needs and life circumstances. It will strengthen joint work between housing, Adult Social Care, and mental health services, and will be supported by a formalised multi-disciplinary offer and training for housing and Adult Social Care staff, and, in the longer-term look at options around a single assessment system. The commissioning strategy will also link with other programmes, including mental health integrated care, domestic abuse commissioning, and public health work around multiple disadvantage.

Health places a vital role in the experiences of our customers and can often be the reason for homelessness. This strategy therefore also aims to link with:

- The national framework for NHS – action on inclusion health
- Humber and North Yorkshire: Inclusion Health 3-Year Joint Action Plan.
- 10 Year Health Plan for England. This aims to shift NHS care from hospitals to communities and to increase use of digital platforms and focus on preventing illness, within the overall aim of building a more modern, accessible, and proactive health service. The 10 Year Health Plan also outlines use of Integrated Neighbourhood Teams. These will bring together professionals from different organisations, including social care and the voluntary and community sector, to provide coordinated care within a geographical area
- North Yorkshire Substance Use Strategy 2024-2028 – this includes a cross-cutting theme on 'Homes and Jobs.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy also aligns with North Yorkshire strategies around climate change, economic growth, North Yorkshire Autism All Age

Strategy 2025-2030, Suicide Prevention, North Yorkshire and City of York Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024-2028, North Yorkshire Mental Health Transformation and current local plans.

Key Partnerships

North Yorkshire Housing Needs managers are active members of North Yorkshire Home Choice (NYHC) Board so have strategic input into policy decision making and development.

We work alongside housing management, allocations and Registered Social Landlords. The council is involved in managing the scheme by chairing the North Yorkshire Home Choice project board, with the aim of reflecting local housing priorities and the requirements of residents and partners in the allocation process.

Through its membership of the York and North Yorkshire Housing Partnership, the Housing Service participates in boosting delivery of affordable homes, supporting economic development, and strategic aims around healthy and thriving communities.

The North Yorkshire Homeless and Rough Sleeper Partnership and Forums were relaunched in December 2024, with 70 local services in attendance. The Partnership is taking a wider strategic lead and the Forums will focus operational work in the East and West of the County.

The council also participates in:

- North Yorkshire, York, and Selby Homeless Network.
- The Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board and Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Strategic and Operational Boards
- North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults Board (NYSAB) and Safeguarding Children's Partnership (NYSCP). Housing Needs is a partner on NYSAB and NYSCP and is also the rough sleeper champion for NYSAB. Housing Needs is also represented on the Sub group for prevention and the Task and finish groups for rough sleeping and Transitions Child to Adult.
- Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE).
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC), Multi-agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP) and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).
- Drug and Alcohol Partnership Board.
- Community Safety Partnership
- Suicide Prevention Strategic Group.
- Humber and North Yorkshire Healthcare Partnership.
- NY Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Neuro-diversity Partnership Board
- York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority.

The profile of North Yorkshire

- North Yorkshire is the largest county in England and Wales, at over 8,000 square kilometres.
- As of 2024, the population was approximately 620,000.

- North Yorkshire is a largely rural county, with a population density of only 77 people per square kilometre, much lower than the national average of 432 per square kilometre. Only two towns (Harrogate and Scarborough) have a population of over 50,000.
- North Yorkshire's population has grown by 2.85% since 2011. Its population is ageing, with 25% of people now aged 65 or over.
- North Yorkshire is among the least deprived local authority areas in England, however, there are pockets of deprivation, particularly in Scarborough.[1]
- In 2024, the median salary in North Yorkshire was around £35,500 p.a. However, in some localities, median salaries are significantly below the national average of £26,000.
- Over 108,000 residents are limited by health and disability.[2]
- The average house price in 2024 was £284,000. The average rent is £730 per calendar month.
- 18.7% of people rent privately, but less than 12% of households live in social rented housing.
- There are over 9,000 active applications on North Yorkshire Home Choice.

Key challenges

Key challenges affecting North Yorkshire include:

- **A severe shortage of affordable housing:** This continues to limit our ability to prevent homelessness and rehouse people quickly. The stock of social housing remains below national average levels, house prices are high, and private rents continue to rise. Gaps between Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and market rents make it harder for low-income households to access or sustain tenancies. Reduced availability of private rented housing, including through conversions to holiday lets and second homes in some areas, is compounding these challenges and placing particular pressure on rural and coastal housing markets.
- **Geographic inequalities and rurality:** Create access challenges for many of our residents – North Yorkshire's size, dispersed population, and localised housing markets mean that people's access to housing and support varies depending on where they live. In rural areas, distance, limited public transport, and digital exclusion can delay or prevent engagement with services, particularly where provision is already stretched. Supported and specialist accommodation is unevenly distributed, limiting access for vulnerable groups in rural areas.
- **Economic pressures and insecure employment:** Increase homelessness risk. The cost of living crisis, low wages, and insecure work mean more households are struggling to afford housing costs, even where their needs are not complex and may previously not have required support from statutory services. These pressures are reducing resilience and contributing to rising presentations, particularly among single adults and younger households.
- **An ageing population:** This is reshaping the pattern of housing-related support needs across North Yorkshire. One in four residents are already aged 65 or over, and this is expected to rise to one in three by 2035. Older people increasingly require housing that is accessible, affordable, and linked to care, support, or prevention services, including through home improvement, adaptations, and supported move-on options.

[1] Data North Yorkshire (2015) Background to the Indices of Deprivation. Available here.
[2] North Yorkshire Council (2024) Housing Strategy 2024 – 2029. Available here.

- **Increasing complexity of need:** Shapes who comes to us for support. There has been a rise in single people with support needs, including mental health, substance use, and involvement with the criminal justice system. More customers are presenting in housing crisis, limiting the potential for early intervention and increasing demand for relief and temporary accommodation services.
- **Pressure on move-on and supported accommodation:** People are staying longer in temporary accommodation due to a shortage of suitable move-on options. Achieving successful outcomes in supported accommodation is becoming harder, with increasing levels of need, limited specialist provision, and reduced revenue funding.
- **Inconsistent experiences of our services:** Reflecting variation in how customers access support and how it is coordinated across teams and services. While there are strong examples of good practice, access routes, commissioning structures, and data systems, these are not yet fully aligned, which can make joint planning and early intervention more difficult.
- **Workforce confidence in trauma-informed practice and mental capacity.** Many homeless people experience complex mental and physical health needs, addiction, complex trauma and invisible disabilities. However, not all teams feel equipped to respond to customers with multiple disadvantages or lived experiences of trauma, exclusion, or inequality. There is an ongoing need to embed skills, through training, consistent supervision, reflective practice, and joint training across housing, social care, and wider partnerships.
- **Ongoing policy reform and national change:** The context in which we operate is reshaping. We are adapting to new responsibilities under the Domestic Abuse Act, Renters' Rights Bill, Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act, and changes to asylum accommodation and early release from prison. These reforms increase demand for housing and support services and require clear coordination across systems and sectors.

Opportunities and aspirations

North Yorkshire's opportunities and aspirations include:

- **Strong leadership and unified structures:** Will give us a solid foundation to drive change. There is strong political will and senior-level commitment to addressing homelessness and rough sleeping across the council. The creation of a new unitary authority brings the opportunity to simplify service access, strengthen internal collaboration, and develop consistent models of housing and support across the county.
- **Improving the customer journey:** This has been a strategic priority for North Yorkshire Council. We have invested in aligning access routes, standardising triage processes, and ensuring a more consistent offer across the former districts. These changes are already improving how customers navigate homelessness services and access support. We now have an opportunity to build on this work, embedding a more person-centred approach across all localities and strengthening consistency in decision-making, communication, and outcomes.
- **Integrated approach with Housing Management**
  As a council we also have landlord functions, we have completed some really strong integrated work over the years within North Yorkshire Home Choice, and the priority banding the policy gives for all homeless cases, and gold band for those at risk/in priority need and main duty, inc. exceptions to non-qualifying criteria; the use of direct offer where required. This is now embedded as part of the day to day work we do. We can now build

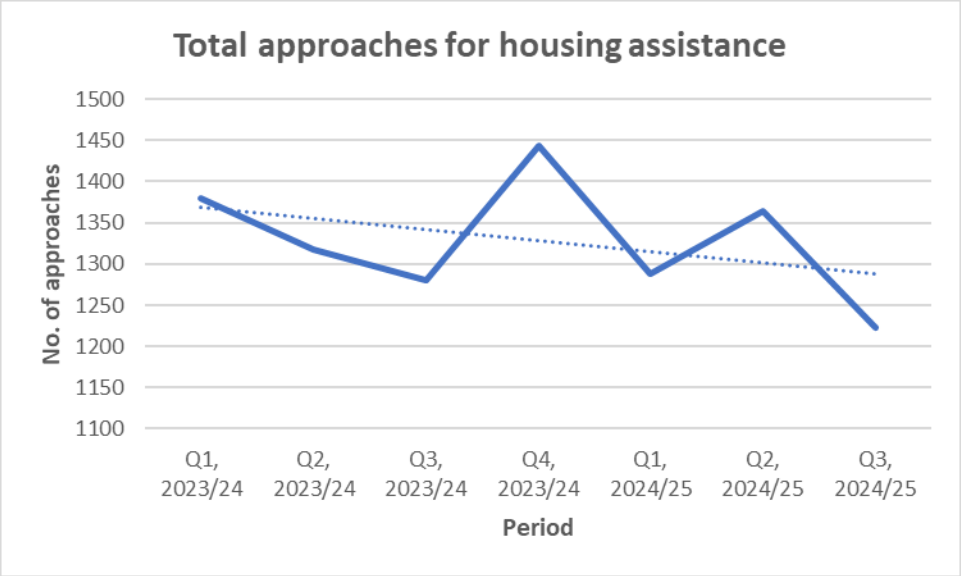
on this internally with landlord services and partner RSLs to prevent homelessness, early inventions, aim for reduced evictions and smooth transitions and successes into social housing.

- **Digital transformation and data-led prevention:** Strengthens how we work. A single IT system for homelessness, integrated benefits systems, and access to council-held data will enable earlier identification, improved triage, and targeted support. Alongside this, we have streamlined access points, aligned processes across former districts, and begun improving the customer journey. These changes are helping us shift from reactive to preventative practice, using the data more effectively to shape future services, making it easier for customers to navigate services and receive the right help at the right time.
- **Joint Strategic planning, commissioning and delivery:** We are expanding collaboration between housing needs, Adult Social Care, and public health. We are progressing the development of a dedicated support offer for customers who experience multiple disadvantage for consistency, including with the Substance Use Strategy. The MECC (Making Every Contact Count) approach will improve the customer journey. We also want to continue a joint commissioning approach with Children and families through the Young People's pathway.
- **Partnerships with the voluntary, community, and social enterprise sector:** Through renewed homelessness forums, partnership projects, and closer work with Community First Yorkshire and our localities team, we are building stronger links with community-based organisations. These partnerships help us reach residents earlier, especially in rural areas.
- **Working with local councillors and Town and Parish councils**
  There will be many competing priorities for councils in the years ahead and tackling homelessness must be one that takes centre stage. Councillors have a vital role to play in this. Whether by supporting our front line staff who deal with homeless people every day, linking up with voluntary organisations who can share knowledge of what is happening locally or making the case for investment that helps both those in need and ease future demand, councillors are able to provide genuine local leadership.
- **Lived experience and peer-led approaches:** There is clear interest across services in involving people with lived experience more meaningfully in the design and delivery of services. Harrogate's Lived Experience Network offers a strong foundation to build from, and we are committed to developing this further through a county-wide forum and consistent co-production principles. Also, the utilisation of the tenancy involvement team engaging with customers with lived experience in Council Housing.
- **Innovative models of housing and support:** Projects such as Housing First, REACH, Derwent Lodge supported accommodation and our in-house temporary accommodation service demonstrate the benefits of flexible, trauma-informed, and person-centred approaches for customers with multiple disadvantages We aim to replicate and expand these models to reflect need. The RACCS accommodation pathway for customers working with the probation service access to settled housing in the community and is recognised as good practice across criminal justice sector partners.
- **A clear strategy for developing supported accommodation:** The forthcoming new way of delivering supported housing services will deliver a flexible model with additional placements, improving support for people with a range of needs and reducing reliance on temporary accommodation.
- **Sustainable investment in housing priorities:** The 100% council tax premium on second homes is expected to generate over £10m per year to support affordable housing,

temporary accommodation, supported housing and improvements to the private rented sector. This gives us the financial capacity to take forward long-term solutions.

Theme 1: Preventing homelessness

Approaches to the council for homelessness assistance have fluctuated in recent years, peaking at the end of 2023/24, before falling back slightly.



Approaches are consistently highest in Scarborough and Harrogate. We are seeing more single homeless people and more people declaring support needs and multiple disadvantages, including mental health, substance use, domestic abuse, and contact with the criminal justice system. Recently, more asylum seekers have been seeking support from the council, as they receive positive decisions on their case and are given notice to leave Home Office hotels. We are also seeing an increase in the number of larger Afghan families who have ended their period of stay in Ministry of Defence (MOD) accommodation and high numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC), due to legislative changes around the National Transfer Scheme (NTS).

As of 2023/24, end of private rented tenancy remained the most common reason for households owed a homeless prevention duty, with friends/family no longer willing to accommodate being the most common reason for households owed the homeless relief duty. However, many customers were at risk of homelessness following the loss of a tenancy due to domestic abuse or loss of a social tenancy. In addition, more customers are at risk of homelessness due to financial difficulties and around 30% of customers seeking assistance from the council are in work. Some customers approaching for assistance lack tenancy management skills, especially care leavers and other single young people.

There has been an upward trend in main duty acceptances – from 121 in the last quarter of 2022/23 to 168 in the second quarter of 2024/25. At the start of 2022/23, just under half (47.8%) of households were owed a prevention duty. However, by the start of 2024/25, this proportion was just over a third (35.6%). The fact that many people approach the council when they are already in housing crisis is hampering the council's ability to prevent, rather than

relieve, homelessness and underlines the need for effective homelessness prevention interventions.

Priority 1: Intervening before people reach housing crisis

Our new Housing Needs Service structure brings together the seven former North Yorkshire districts and boroughs into four new localities (Hambleton and Richmondshire, Harrogate and Craven, Selby and Ryedale, and Scarborough). This structure enables us to develop services and partnerships to identify and meet emerging, existing and changing trends around homelessness.

We employ dedicated Housing Options officers, Support officers, Young people's Homelessness Prevention workers and Temporary Accommodation officers throughout the county and also Private Rented Sector Officers currently in Selby, Ryedale, and Harrogate. Through our Homelessness Prevention Toolkit, we offer rent bonds and rent in advance, support around arrears, mortgage payments, and domestic abuse, and referrals to specialist services inside and outside of the council. We support households to manage rent arrears, removals, and other housing costs.

In certain localities assistance around homeless prevention also comes via Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs). In certain localities all DHP awards are agreed collectively with benefits staff, ensuring we target households most in need, we need to aim to create a consistency across all areas. We need to ensure that DHPs are utilised where possible to assist in the prevention of homelessness and targeted through joint working with the Housing Needs teams.

We work closely with Housing Management staff, including to review households' support needs, independent living skills and community links before they start their new social tenancy.

We also work with statutory criminal justice agencies to provide safe and secure accommodation for people leaving prison and to support reductions in reoffending.

We will investigate working with North Yorkshire Credit Union to help vulnerable customers to tackle financial and social exclusion. This includes access to Budgeting Accounts and purchase of domestic household appliances.

Our new county-wide homelessness standby service provides a route for all calls via a single customer services number. This enables checks to be completed on Adult Social Care and Children's Services systems, giving housing needs standby officers all the information they need to make a homelessness decision. Additionally, we have unified our IT systems for homelessness and we have a single allocation policy throughout North Yorkshire, with the recent addition of the Harrogate area. Also to aid consistency across the county our single benefits system for North Yorkshire went live in June 2025.

We will:

1. Expand the private rented sector offer across North Yorkshire.
2. Improve the employment and training opportunities for vulnerable households through collaborative work with the DWP, mayoral combined authority, internal partners including the Adult learning and skills service, companies, voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations.
3. Expand pre-tenancy support and life skills across North Yorkshire.

4. Work with Children and Young people's service to explore the introduction of youth and schools-based early intervention programmes through our Young People's Prevention workers.
5. Ensure all staff working with customers who are homeless are equipped with the right safeguarding skills through completion of all mandatory training
6. Continue to develop our data systems and explore what additional use can be made of housing benefit, council tax and other available data to identify households in financial stress and who are at future risk of homelessness.
7. Develop our relationship with North Yorkshire Credit Union to improve access to accounts and financial assistance for our customers across the county. This could include an offer of interest free loans to vulnerable families. Ensure all frontline staff receive adequate training to ensure effective signposting to relevant services to assist customers.
8. Ensure regular interactions between housing management and housing needs teams through joint meetings and collaboration on a consistent approach to information sharing, early interventions and preventative work to sustain social rented tenancies

Priority 2: Improving the customer journey

There are currently variations between localities in how customers can approach the council and access housing options and homelessness support. This includes information available around available housing options and support from the council and other services, being able to self-refer, and access online support and in-person appointments. This can make it difficult to access support early, especially for people in rural areas where public transport is limited or digital access poor. Some council homelessness services are perceived by customers as being difficult to navigate.

North Yorkshire has a higher percentage of households referred via a duty to refer than the national average. We also operate a commitment to refer, giving housing associations and other organisations the opportunity to refer people at risk of homelessness. We are now able to accept online duty to refer referrals and more easily provide updates to referring organisations. However, use of duty to refer varies across referral organisations and not all staff are fully aware of the duty to refer process.

The process of application and awards for Discretionary housing payments (DHP) from Housing benefits is recognised as not yet being consistent across North Yorkshire.

Additionally, not all housing needs and Adult Social Care staff have a full mutual understanding of respective statutory frameworks and service offers. This can negatively impact on customers experiences of North Yorkshire services.

To meet these challenges, we will:

1. Develop a county-wide action plan to ensure a consistent customer journey for customers receiving support from the Housing Needs Service.
2. Ensure all our homelessness prevention offers, including debt management/income maximisation, DHP, and rent deposits/rent in advance are consistent across localities.
3. Improve the self-serve offer on the Council website for customers to apply for assistance and understand their likely entitlements to housing and support.

4. Deliver refresher duty to refer/commitment to refer and Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) training to all relevant frontline staff. This will include sessions at upcoming meetings of the Homelessness Forums and the Registered Social Landlord Partnership.
5. Increase use of the AI technology to support frontline staff with information and guidance around housing, care, and mental health legislation
6. Continue to be an active member of the Children's safeguarding partnership to ensure support and information is available for all partners.

Priority 3: Working with voluntary, community, and social enterprise sector to prevent homelessness

North Yorkshire's voluntary, community, and social enterprise sector works closely with communities, meaning they are well-placed to understand local needs and how best to engage with people about the support the council can provide to help them avoid homelessness. Many of these organisations are based in areas of North Yorkshire where the council does not have a local office/presence. A network of community hubs and organisations provides food, food vouchers, clothing and financial support, including energy advice, loneliness and friendship/social spaces.

We already have effective partnerships with some providers, such as North Yorkshire Citizens Advice and Law Centre. Since April 2025, these organisations have run the Information and Advice Service contract, including the provision of homeless advice.

However, more work is needed to develop these partnerships and to build voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations' capacity to support the council's agenda around homelessness prevention. Additional funding needs to be made available to support the organisations to develop.

We will:

1. Work closely with North Yorkshire Council's localities team, Parish and Town Councils and Community First Yorkshire, to identify needs of individual communities and to develop engagement strategies, to encourage earlier engagement with council services around housing needs.
2. Link in with pre-existing community hubs/anchors and organisations with outreach programmes, including Mind and North Yorkshire Citizens Advice and Law Centre
3. Develop opportunities around Warm and Well (North Yorkshire Citizens Advice- led) and warm places/spaces.
4. Improve links with community organisations that offer North Yorkshire Local assistance fund vouchers to vulnerable customers.
5. Review current voluntary, community, and social enterprise capacity, build knowledge of the council's service offer around homelessness, explore options for funding and promote joint working with the Housing Needs Service.
6. Increase council presence and visibility in community settings. This might include joint working between voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations and the DWP, to provide a single access point for support which could also promote the council's homelessness assistance offer.

7. Work with the recently re-launched homelessness forums for the East and West of North Yorkshire to increase voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations' involvement in decisions around developing and delivering community-led solutions.

Theme 2: Increasing the availability of suitable accommodation options

We want everyone facing homelessness in North Yorkshire to have access to safe, suitable accommodation. This theme focuses on the availability, quality, and distribution of temporary, supported, and settled housing across the county. It includes our work to increase affordable housing, improve the use and supply of temporary accommodation, and strengthen supported housing models for customers with different levels of need.

Priority 1: Increasing access to suitable and affordable housing

In March 2023, median house prices in North Yorkshire ranged between £195,000 in Scarborough to £323,000 in Harrogate. Almost 70% of households in North Yorkshire are in owner occupation. Social rented housing accounts for less than 12% of households and in Craven and Harrogate, this figure is less than 10%. This compares to an England-wide average of 16.6%.

As of September 2024, the median salary in North Yorkshire was around £35,500 p.a. However, in some localities, median salaries are significantly below the national average of £26,000. Low wages exacerbate housing unaffordability, meaning that fewer local households can afford to purchase a home on the open market and are reliant on other forms of tenure. 18.7% of households in North Yorkshire rent privately. Median rents in North Yorkshire have increased significantly over recent years, and in 2024 the average rent was £730 per calendar month. There is a particular lack of affordable housing options in rural areas, especially for young people.

There is competition for private rented properties from professional households and other services or organisations providing accommodation for vulnerable groups. The stock of privately rented housing has reduced recently, as some landlords have exited the market due to anxieties around new legislation, increased mortgage rates, reductions in tax allowances and increasing numbers or properties are used as second homes or holiday lets. In addition, some landlords are reluctant to let to homeless households. There are large shortfalls between Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates and market rents. For a two-bed property these shortfalls currently range from around £95 p.c.m in Scarborough, to around £120 p.c.m in Harrogate.[3] As rents increase, so do top ups required by councils to sustain tenancies and prevent homelessness. Together these factors are driving rent increases, with a disproportionate impact on vulnerable households and those on benefits.

In 2025, total active applications on North Yorkshire Home Choice are 9530, with highest demand in Harrogate and Scarborough. Approximately half of applicants self-report a support need, mainly around their mental health and/or mobility. Around 50% of applications in most localities relate to one-bed properties. Total social lettings are decreasing, in 2023/24, the total was 2,310 lettings – a 10% fall on the total for 2019. At the same time, some applicants have unrealistic expectations around available housing options and support and may not be aware of services in other parts of North Yorkshire which could support them.

[3] This figure uses 2023 rental information and LHA rates.

Due to the strong integration and partnership working with North Yorkshire Home Choice, households experiencing homelessness in North Yorkshire receive priority banding to prevent or minimise the time that they are homeless, in addition to exceptions to non-qualifying criteria and the use of direct offers where required.

There has been a significant increase in non-commissioned exempt accommodation in North Yorkshire in recent years. As of March 2025, there were 1,149 exempt accommodation claims across 918 properties in North Yorkshire. However, there is currently a lack of oversight and quality assurance in this type of accommodation.

With a high proportion of elderly residents, housing development must be adaptable for all life stages. Affordable housing is crucial in rural areas where population decline, and second-home ownership threaten the sustainability of local communities. A complex picture of homelessness and specialist housing shortages also adds to the housing demand.

To meet these challenges, we will:

1. Provide transparent information on housing availability and waiting times, relevant services, and support across other parts of North Yorkshire, to help housing applicants make informed choices about where they would like to live.
2. Improve how we can make best use of existing data, from Home Choice, public health needs assessments of vulnerable populations, and DEFRA mapping data, to identify gaps in commissioned support services in rural areas and identify demand for property sizes.
3. Improve the way we share needs information with the York and North Yorkshire Housing Partnership and work with them strategically to identify ways of delivering additional affordable homes where it is needed.
4. Increase access to privately rented accommodation through enhanced landlord liaison and relationship-building, financial incentives, and support for landlords and working through landlord forums.
5. Continue to utilise direct lets where needed, applying consistently across all localities.
6. Work up a business case to create a model for leasing and managing properties from private landlords countywide to provide affordable housing for council-nominated homelessness applicants, helping prevent repeat homelessness.

Priority 2: Meeting the needs for and improving temporary accommodation

The number of households in temporary accommodation is increasing, with demand being particularly strong in Scarborough and Harrogate. There are more people in temporary accommodation who have multiple disadvantages Gross spend on emergency accommodation has grown rapidly in recent years, from just over £500,000 in 2019/20 to over £2.1m in 2022/23 – an increase of 400%. Particular pressures are within the Scarborough area, with more people staying longer in emergency accommodation. Across North Yorkshire length of time in temporary accommodation is also increasing because of lack of access to suitable move-on accommodation. There are also concerns about the quality of some temporary accommodation.

We understand that reducing numbers in temporary accommodation is dependent on approaches to the council, however we want to reduce the number of customers that are in bed and breakfast accommodation/emergency accommodation and move this to more

sustainable temporary accommodation through in-house provision providing a high level offer to our customers who are in need of this accommodation.

We are investing £11.6m within a four-year temporary accommodation development programme. This will provide an additional 116 additional bedspaces by 2027. This increased supply will reduce reliance on hotels and B&Bs, and save the council, based on current homelessness levels, an estimated £1.919m, with savings being reinvested to support our homelessness prevention and partnership working with voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations. The programme will initially involve partnership working with registered providers, with the council providing grant funding for property refurbishment, acquisition, and/or support services, in return for property nomination rights. In the longer-term, we will seek to provide all temporary accommodation through our own assets, as this is the most financially advantageous option for the council.

The council currently has access to 191 purpose-built and converted temporary accommodation units, this has grown from 169 available 12 months ago, some of which it owns and manages through the temporary accommodation development programme and bed and breakfast usage has started to reduce. However, temporary accommodation provision is not evenly distributed across localities, and the physical quality of accommodation varies considerably.

We also employ Homelessness Prevention Support officers who support all customers within temporary and emergency accommodation and this is supporting service improvements.

We have recently completed a review around mental capacity of emergency accommodation residents - this has identified the need for closer joint working with Adult Social Care around people who may be eligible for Care Act support.

We will:

1. Audit the locations and physical standards of existing temporary accommodation to undertake an improvement plan.
2. Upgrade current temporary accommodation stock to improve standard and comply with decent homes standard.
3. Upgrade certain temporary accommodation units by adding security features to comply with safe accommodation standards, ensuring suitability for households escaping domestic abuse, with specialist support available.
4. Reduce the usage of emergency accommodation across the County

Priority 3: Increasing access to supported housing

North Yorkshire Council already provides supported housing for homeless and other vulnerable single people, to build independence and tenancy management skills. There are currently 131 short-term units, providing up to two years' support for people with mental health, substance use, and offending needs,[4] and specialist support for people with multiple disadvantages, including our REACH (reducing the exclusion for adults with complex housing-needs) service in Scarborough. We also provide 84 units of floating support. Long-term supported accommodation is available for people who are eligible for support under the Care Act. We have a jointly commissioned Young People's Pathway with Children and families

[4] Total of units listed in supported housing proposal, March 2025.

Service, which offers 172 units across all localities and provides up to two years of supported accommodation for young people at risk of homelessness and care leavers. Despite these resources, it is becoming harder to achieve successful supported accommodation outcomes – due to the increasing complexity of customers' needs and lack of specialist accommodation for some groups.

To meet this challenge, we will develop a new way of delivering supported housing. This will provide additional supported housing and floating support placements across North Yorkshire. The new model will support customers with low, medium, and high needs and flex to people's changing needs and life circumstances. The strategy will be supported by up to £12m second homes council tax funding. The strategy will include £4m of investment for a 20-bed 'Place of Change' project for people with multiple disadvantages. The model for the project will draw on learning from Fern House in Harrogate. We intend to lease the building to a registered provider, using rental income to generate revenue savings or recycle funds to support further initiatives.

The new commissioning programme will provide additional pathways for care leavers, people trying to access the Young People's Pathway (YPP), and those currently in emergency accommodation – thus supporting Adult Social Care and mental health services and reducing demand for temporary accommodation and other support. It will also help to reduce duplication of interventions and "shunting" of customers between housing and Adult Social Care. Alongside this, we will support young people to access employment and skills opportunities, as well as tenancy, social and independent living support.

We will:

1. Develop an integrated offer between council directorates, to remove multiple access routes across housing and Adult Social Care and increase focus on achieving positive outcomes for individuals.
2. Work with public health around multiple disadvantage (MDOM), to support customers with a defined housing need, alongside wider care and support needs.
3. Strengthen the alignment of jointly commissioned Young People's Pathway with wider supported housing models. Further detail on how the Young People's Pathway functions as a support pathway is provided in Theme 3.

Theme 3: Improving availability and access to support services

People experiencing homelessness in North Yorkshire often face challenges in accessing the right support at the right time. Too many only encounter our services in crisis, when opportunities for prevention have passed. Services and support pathways vary across the county, and those with overlapping needs, such as poor mental health, trauma, substance use, or contact with the criminal justice system, are not always well served by traditional models. In this theme, we set out how we will strengthen the system of support that surrounds housing, with a focus on inclusive, trauma-informed, and multi-agency approaches that respond more effectively to people's circumstances.

Priority 1: Strengthening housing related support pathways

We provide a range of housing-related support pathways for different groups, but people's experiences of these can vary across the county. Some, such as the Young People's Pathway and our domestic abuse offer, are well-established, while others — including hospital

discharge arrangements, support for veterans, and housing planning for people leaving prison — are still developing. Certain groups, including women with multiple disadvantages, care leavers, and people in contact with the criminal justice system, may face particular gaps or inconsistencies. We need to work with partners to improve these pathways and ensure support is timely, equitable, and responsive to people's needs.

Young People's Pathway and care leavers

The housing and Children and families' joint Young People's Pathway is a widely used and nationally recognised model for supporting young people at risk of homelessness, including care leavers and 16/17 year olds. The internally delivered homeless prevention arm of the pathway aims to sustain young people's current accommodation or return them to safe accommodation with family or friends. The second supported accommodation element is delivered both in-house and in partnership with commissioned providers, both are supported by integrated working between housing and Children's Services. In most areas, young people receive tailored, wraparound support, including key working, life skills, and links to education, training, or employment.

Referral pathways have become more consistent since North Yorkshire became a unitary authority. This and the integration of Young People's homelessness prevention workers into housing need teams are improving continuity of support, case coordination and homeless prevention.

However, some gaps remain. Move-on options can be limited, particularly for care leavers and young people ready to live more independently. Even though the group is supported through the Council's allocation policy with gold banding through resettlement and backdated priority banding.

In some areas, there are fewer opportunities for engagement or meaningful activity, and limited input from mental health services. There is currently no formal housing protocol with Adult Social Care to support care leavers transitioning from supported accommodation, which is a significant gap in ensuring smooth and sustainable move-on. Work is currently taking place regarding a transitions framework between Children's and adults' services, which includes care leavers if they meet the eligibility criteria, housing needs will ensure involvement within this work.

The pathway is currently being recommissioned, with a new contract due in 2026. This offers a clear opportunity to build on the pathway's strengths while addressing the specific needs of care leavers, aligning the offer with the new supported housing model, and embedding trauma-informed, non-transactional approaches that reflect young people's diverse experiences and aspirations.

Additional work is being done with the Leaving care team on the care leavers housing protocol, this is being reviewed and will provide a holistic housing offer pulling together all options available. Domestic abuse housing and support pathway

Domestic Abuse Housing and Support Pathway

North Yorkshire has a strong domestic abuse housing offer. We provide dispersed safe accommodation across rural and urban areas, including refuge spaces, dispersed units, and

hosting schemes. This is supported by a county-wide referral and assessment hub delivered by Independent Domestic Abuse Services (IDAS), and underpinned by inclusive, trauma-informed practice. The service is widely recognised for its innovation and accessibility. It supports people with no recourse to public funds, larger families, men, and LGBTQ+ survivors. Staff are supported through training aligned to Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) principles and a Champions Network.

The council is also working towards a co-ordinated and consistent approach for victims and survivors of domestic abuse across the county. To facilitate this we have employed two Domestic Abuse Housing Coordinators who will work closely with the Housing Service and Community Safety Team to address the housing and safety needs of victim and survivors of domestic abuse across North Yorkshire.

In addition the Council's allocation policy acknowledges there will be occasions where a person is unable to return to a local authority area where they have a local connection because they are fleeing domestic abuse. In line with statutory guidance, the Partnership will consider applications from those who have escaped domestic abuse in another local authority area and are living in a refuge or other form of safe temporary accommodation within North Yorkshire.

However, there are areas to strengthen. We currently lack a clearly defined pathway for women with multiple disadvantages or those at risk of violence against women and girls (VAWG). Referral numbers from military families remain low, despite outreach and awareness-raising work. We will continue to strengthen our domestic abuse offer by reviewing gaps in provision, embedding good practice through DAHA training, and developing clearer support routes for under-served groups.

Criminal Justice and Safety Pathway

All partners working in the Criminal Justice System have a strong determination to place the safety of the public and victims at the forefront of their work. The council works closely with North Yorkshire Probation Service and Prisons to ensure that those involved in criminal activity are closely monitored, and that risks to others are safely managed.

Many people who are homeless find themselves involved with justice services at some point in their lives. Stable and affordable housing is a critical element in ensuring people avoid a return to reoffending and can change their lives to make a positive contribution to their local community.

All criminal justice partners are committed to working with the Council in supporting this strategy, to improve outcomes for all North Yorkshire residents.

Armed forces

Veterans experiencing homelessness may face multiple barriers linked to trauma, mental health, substance use and difficulties transitioning to civilian life. While military service does not directly cause homelessness, it can increase vulnerability through factors such as mobility, combat exposure or lack of stable support on leaving accommodation. North Yorkshire's housing allocations policy includes specific provisions for armed forces personnel, including exemption from local connection criteria, disregarding compensation lump sums from income thresholds, and additional preference for those in urgent housing need. The council has also agreed that bids will not be overlooked due to arrears linked to service-related mesne profit accounts. An Armed Forces Audit is currently underway to assess and improve the council's

wider offer to the armed forces community, and to inform the development of a new Armed Forces Guide.

As one of the first places in the UK to have an Armed Forces Covenant in place, North Yorkshire Council's policy in relation to this specifically mentions aspects of housing around equal access and simple processes for the armed forces community.

Hospital discharge

Hospital discharge arrangements vary across the county. Some localities, such as Selby, have established regular multi-disciplinary team meetings involving housing and health partners, enabling well-planned discharges and reduced delays. In other areas, there is less consistency. Stakeholders report issues such as Friday discharges, out-of-area placements, and limited involvement of housing in discharge planning. These gaps increase the risk of housing instability and homelessness for people leaving hospital, particularly those with high needs.

Through the Council's allocation policy Emergency Band, which gives the highest priority can be provided this is allocated in extreme circumstances only and may be subject to a time limit or a direct offer of accommodation. Applicants on the waiting list who are unable to return from hospital to their current home within North Yorkshire as it is deemed permanently unsuitable and cannot be adapted for their needs or where major works are deemed not feasible

Our Home Improvement Agency and Healthy and Sustainable Homes teams will continue to support older residents to remain safely at home. This involves early intervention around mobility, energy costs, and social inclusion, contributing to hospital discharge planning and reducing delayed transfers of care—key goals of the Health and Housing Integration strategy.

We will:

1. Strengthen the Young People's Pathway (YPP) through the current recommissioning process, ensuring dedicated support for 16/17 year olds and care leavers, clearer transition points, and improved move-on into training, employment, and settled housing.
2. Co-produce a Care Leaver Housing Protocol with Leaving Care and other partners to support young people transitioning from care or supported accommodation.
3. Ensure the domestic abuse pathway remains inclusive and trauma-informed, while reviewing gaps in provision for women with multiple disadvantages, including those at risk of violence against women and girls (VAWG).
4. Develop multi-agency planning and support arrangements between housing, A&E services, hospital wards and Integrated Care Board (ICB) partners, to ensure consistent safe discharge, reduce out of area discharges and develop better transitions into housing and support, to reduce the risk of homelessness. This will draw on good practice from Selby.
5. Promote consistent support offers across localities, including access to the same models and standards of pathway-based support regardless of where people live.
6. Engage with the findings of the Armed Forces Audit to strengthen our housing and homelessness offer for veterans, including through clearer referral routes, improved awareness among staff, and the development of an Armed Forces Housing Guide.

7. Comply with the requirements of the new Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act. This will include reviewing local supported housing in line with a set of national standards and setting up licensing schemes for local supported housing providers, to ensure minimum quality standards
8. Continue to work with criminal justice partners to develop a strategy for those being released from prison and serving community sentences.

Priority 2: A dedicated support offer for people facing multiple disadvantage

We know that people experiencing multiple disadvantage, such as homelessness alongside mental ill health, substance use, trauma, or contact with the criminal justice system, often struggle to access coordinated support. People can fall between service thresholds, experience repeat homelessness, or cycle in and out of crisis. Many are well known to services but continue to face gaps in care.

We are already delivering some promising models. Our REACH project in Scarborough brings together a multi-agency team offering intensive, trauma-informed support. It takes a housing-led approach and moves away from traditional, appointment-based services – helping people address underlying issues such as mental health, substance use, and isolation. The team includes housing staff, a mental health nurse, a dual diagnosis worker, a clinical psychologist, domestic abuse worker, and holistic support workers, seconded or employed by partners including Tees, Esk, and Wear Valleys NHS Trust, IDAS, Horizons, and Beyond Housing. In Harrogate, the SAFE service provides a similar model for adults over 25. Both services show how partnership, shared risk and strengths-based approaches can engage people who are often excluded from mainstream systems. We are committed to expanding these models across the county. We are also embedding the national Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) approach through our Multiple Disadvantage Network which will supersede SAFE as a model building on the already established networks. This includes co-located teams, a strategic coordinator, and formalised protocols based on delegated authority and shared planning. The services we will be providing in Scarborough and Harrogate aim to reduce pressure on crisis services and enabling more joined-up responses.

We recognise that access to mental health and substance use services remains a challenge, particularly for people with dual diagnosis. Fragmented systems and unaligned thresholds also present barriers to early intervention. Work is underway to develop a new approach to supported housing provision , linked to a flexible model of accommodation. This will be supported by shared protocols, data sharing, and delegated authority. Housing and Care Practice Support Meetings, involving housing, Adult Social Care, mental health, and other partners, will oversee planning and provide data and guidance to help ensure that support is flexible, personalised, and responsive to changing needs.

Temporary accommodation also plays a growing role in our support system. Not all temporary accommodation settings are yet designed to support recovery, and we are working with Adult Social Care, public health, and partners to strengthen support planning and pathways out of temporary accommodation for people with multiple disadvantages, and to ensure the support model is aligned with our wider case management and housing-led response.

We will:

1. Expand learning from the REACH and SAFE models across other North Yorkshire localities, including their approaches to housing stability, trauma-informed practice, and integrated, multi-agency working.
2. Continue to embed the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) approach through the North Yorkshire Multiple Disadvantage Network, supporting co-located teams, shared risk planning and delegated decision-making through the pilot in Harrogate
3. Formalise and extend multi-disciplinary team working across localities, building on current practice in Selby for hospital discharges.
4. Develop a longer-term ambition for a single assessment process to reduce duplication and improve customer experience.
5. Strengthen joint working with mental health and substance use services, particularly to support customers with dual diagnosis or inconsistent engagement.
6. Ensure that temporary accommodation can support customers with multiple and multiple disadvantage. This will include findings from our current review of support planning processes and to develop our support model and to design suitable move-on pathways and input from Adult Social Care, substance use, and other relevant services to ensure appropriate care and support is given
7. Offer training to frontline staff around supporting customers with multiple and multiple disadvantages, including around mental capacity and safeguarding.
8. Take forward opportunities for joint commissioning and shared accountability between housing, Adult Social Care, and health services for people with multiple disadvantages.
9. Deliver joint training for housing and Adult Social Care staff on legal frameworks, responsibilities, and thresholds to improve support planning and coordination in complex cases.
10. Establish joint housing protocols with probation and North Yorkshire Youth Justice Service to support people leaving institutions and reduce repeat homelessness.
11. Develop clear pathways with partners out of temporary accommodation for people with multiple and multiple disadvantage, to support sustained recovery and reduce repeat homelessness.

Priority 3: Embedding inclusive, trauma informed, and culturally competent practice

We are committed to embedding trauma-informed, psychologically informed, and culturally competent approaches across all homelessness services. We recognise that people's experiences of trauma, identity, exclusion, and discrimination shape how they engage with support, and how support needs to be delivered. We are already building on strong foundations. Our Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) learning and development programme, the strengths-based approaches in REACH and SAFE, and reflective practice within our Housing Options teams are helping to shape more inclusive and psychologically aware ways of working.

However, we also know that practice remains inconsistent. Not all staff feel confident in applying trauma-informed approaches in day-to-day work, and some accommodation settings, particularly shared or emergency provision, are not always designed to promote safety and recovery. People accessing services in crisis may also struggle to understand complex systems or navigate administrative processes, particularly when support is not tailored to their circumstances. We recognise the need for a more consistent understanding of trauma-informed and psychologically informed practice across teams. By improving shared language and approaches between housing, Adult Social Care, and voluntary, community, and social

enterprise partners, we can create more responsive, inclusive systems of support. We are committed to strengthening supervision, joint training and reflective spaces as part of this.

As a member of North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adult Board need to take learning from national and local Safeguarding Adult Reviews. Homeless people are vulnerable to serious violence (including murder), criminal and sexual exploitation, county lines, financial, domestic, and other forms of abuse and self-neglect. A comprehensive strategy is needed to set out how agencies will people experiencing homelessness safe.

We will:

1. Continue to roll out training on trauma-informed and psychologically informed practice across housing and homelessness services through joint working with Adult social care
2. Develop a shared understanding of trauma-informed and psychologically informed approaches across Housing, Adult Social Care and voluntary sector partners, including through joint training and reflective spaces
3. Support staff through supervision to build confidence and consistency in working with customers affected by trauma, exclusion, or systemic inequality
4. Work with accommodation providers to ensure environments support recovery and inclusion, particularly for people with mental health needs or those who have experienced trauma
5. Improve access to culturally competent and identity-aware services, particularly in rural areas and for people with communication or accessibility needs
6. Review service policies and processes to ensure they are inclusive and culturally competent, and co-designed where possible
7. Work with North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults Board to develop a safeguarding policy for housing
8. Strengthen safeguarding protocols and clarify joint procedures between Housing Options and Children and Young People's Services in situations involving families found intentionally homeless
9. Improve the way we capture and act on feedback from customers and tenants from diverse backgrounds, as part of improving service quality and inclusion.

Priority 4: Supporting voluntary, community, and social enterprise engagement and peer-led models

Voluntary, community and social enterprise partners play a vital role in early intervention and specialist support, especially in rural areas where statutory services may be less visible. While we have relaunched Homelessness Forums across the county, we know more is needed to embed meaningful involvement of voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations in strategy, service design and delivery.

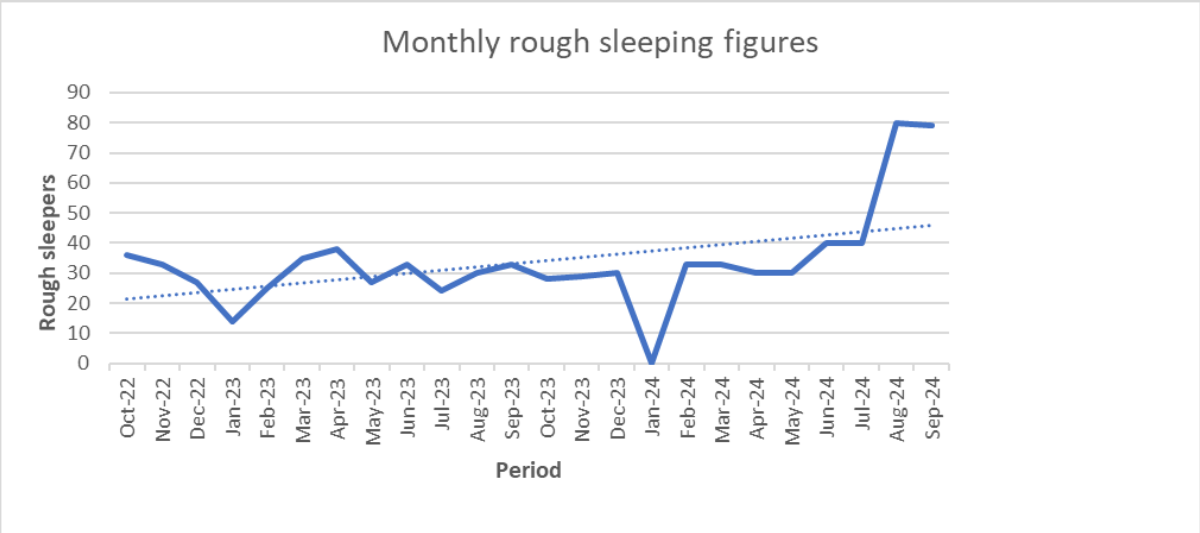
This also applies to people with lived experience. We have heard clearly that individuals with direct experience of homelessness want to be involved in shaping services. Harrogate's Lived Experience Network is already demonstrating the value of peer-led approaches, and we are committed to expanding this work across the county. Through the Multiple Disadvantage Network, we will support the development of a lived and living experience reference group to inform service design, commissioning and implementation. This will help make co-production a standard feature of our housing and homelessness services.

We will:

1. Strengthen the long-term role of voluntary, community, and social enterprise partners in delivering homelessness support, including through improved commissioning opportunities, funding partnerships, and involvement in strategic planning.
2. Support voluntary, community, and social enterprise capacity to deliver outreach and tenancy sustainment support, particularly in rural and underserved areas.
3. Work with housing management to support them to enhance their support offer to customers to ensure sustainment
4. Expand Homelessness Forums as vehicles for shared planning and communication.
5. Establish a county-wide lived experience forum, building on good practice such as the Lived Experience Network in Harrogate, and develop principles and structures to ensure it is inclusive, resourced, and embedded in decision-making around commissioning and service design. This will build on current tenant participation approaches and the work of Connected Spaces lived experience recovery organisation.

Theme 4: Reducing rough sleeping

The number of people sleeping rough in North Yorkshire is increasing. Monthly rough sleeping figures for the period October 2022 – September 2024 indicate an upward trajectory.



Source: MHCLG.

In 2024, North Yorkshire's annual street count found 34 people sleeping rough on a single night – a significant increase on the corresponding figure in 2023 of 14 people. There is also a wider group, estimated at around 100 people, who are at risk of rough sleeping in North Yorkshire. This group includes sofa surfers, people sleeping in cars, people at risk of losing their first accommodation placements, and those at risk of repeat homelessness.

Most people experiencing rough sleeping in the annual street counts were male, aged 26 or over, and UK nationals. There has been a recent increase in rough sleeping amongst women and couples over 30. All North Yorkshire's localities have people experiencing entrenched

rough sleeping, and people experiencing rough sleeping with multiple disadvantages, including around substance use, physical health, mental health, and offending. Rough sleeping in North Yorkshire is linked to loss of employment, substance use, and relationship breakdown. We know a small number of people come onto the streets each month after leaving prison or other institution.

Some people experiencing rough sleeping are not able to re-access accommodation because of previous challenging behaviour and/or perceived risks to themselves or others. Some people do not engage well with homelessness support because of previous negative experiences of services. Others are transient, moving between North Yorkshire localities or other local authority areas. There is migration to our coastal areas to sleep rough, especially during the summer months. This includes some people who are known to have tenancies in other areas. This transience is also linked to inconsistent service engagement.

Priority 1: Meeting the accommodation and support needs of people experiencing rough sleeping

Our new county-wide rough sleeper team brings together all staff and funding from the previous locality-based services. In addition, our Scarborough rough sleeper team is co-located with partner agencies. The new team structure and staffing help us better meet local demand and enable people experiencing rough sleeping who have exhausted all accommodation and/or support options in one locality to access support in another area. We carry out outreach shifts at least once each week in all localities. Outreach shifts are multi-disciplinary, including police and staff from Horizons, our commissioned substance use service.

The service also has access to 49 units through RSAP/NSAP rough sleeper resettlement programmes, these are provided both inhouse and through partners. Support within these units is provided through the Rough sleeper team. Access to this accommodation is not consistent across NY and a clear pathway needs to be developed to ensure transparency across and to improve the customer journey.

The high degree of transience amongst people experiencing rough sleeping and their often sporadic engagement with services, combined with North Yorkshire's large geography and rurality, means it is difficult to reach all people experiencing rough sleeping and to build trusting relationships with individuals. This is especially the case for those who are entrenched in their rough sleeping and/or who have multiple disadvantages. We provide emergency accommodation for rough sleepers via Selby Sleepsafe and Harrogate Homeless Projects No Second Night Out (NSNO) service in Harrogate. NSNO offers emergency accommodation, person-centred support, and move on into appropriate housing and support, and has reduced rough sleeper numbers in Harrogate and short-term B&B use. However, we do not currently have emergency accommodation for rough sleepers in all localities.

The council also activated Severe weather emergency provisions (SWEP) 16 times during winter 24/25. We helped 130 individuals with accommodation. Access to accommodation for this group is particularly difficult to find throughout NY and puts a strain on our services. In addition to this we have provided access to water and sun protection during periods of significantly hot weather as well as information relating to 'safe shelter'. This area of service provision is unlikely to reduce as weather conditions continue to be extreme. It is essential we

work with partners to look at what additionality we can provide around improved support to this vulnerable group during these times.

We will:

1. Continue to develop resource-sharing across localities, to maximise opportunities for people experiencing rough sleeping to access housing and support opportunities across North Yorkshire.
2. Continue to work with police and other partners to share intelligence around rough sleeping.
3. Further develop outreach services to work with people experiencing entrenched rough sleeping, and those experiencing rough sleeping with multiple disadvantages.
4. Develop a consistent emergency accommodation offer for people experiencing rough sleeping, based on the NSNO model. We will work in partnership with North Yorkshire council colleagues, B&B providers to increase provision available for this purpose.
5. Review our approach to reconnecting people experiencing rough sleeping to their local authority area of origin, with a view to making this more robust.
6. Provide support to people experiencing rough sleeping with multiple needs in temporary and supported accommodation via the new Multiple Disadvantage offer.
7. Ensure consistent access to RSAP/NSAP properties for rough sleepers across North Yorkshire
8. Work with partners to provide additional support when Severe weather provisions are instigated across North Yorkshire

Priority 2: Supporting people experiencing rough sleeping with multiple disadvantages

As well as loss of a home, rough sleeping is often linked to issues around mental health or substance misuse, or lack of access to tenancy sustainment or other support services. Rough sleepers are some of the most vulnerable people in society and are open to abuse and neglect, including self-neglect.

Our Harrogate SAFE (Services for Adults Facing Exclusion) and Scarborough REACH (Reducing Exclusion for Adults with Complex Needs) projects work with people experiencing entrenched rough sleeping. REACH was recently externally evaluated, and this work produced some valuable learning about how the project can be developed in future to support rough sleepers with multiple needs.
The REACH scheme in Scarborough provides accommodation and support for 9 people with a history of rough sleeping. This has been very successful in supporting people to maintain these tenancies.

We hold regular locality-based casework meetings. In Scarborough this includes fortnightly multi-agency tasking meetings and weekly multi-disciplinary team meeting, involving Adult Social Care, Horizons, and a local GP. At present, some high-risk people experiencing rough sleeping are not routinely identified via local tasking groups and data collection systems. Not all frontline staff are confident in working with people experiencing rough sleeping with multiple needs.

North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adult Board has done much work in recent years to raise the profile of rough sleeping issues. Rough sleeping is one of North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adult Board's three priorities and a prevention sub-group has been established to explore how organisations can work together to meet the needs of this group.

The homeless health clinic in Harrogate provides specialist care for rough sleepers. North Yorkshire has also developed working relationships and referral routes to enhance care via GPs and other primary care services. We are developing the work of SAFE in Harrogate through a new Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM), Multiple disadvantage offer. We are working closely with Public Health and Adult Social care to bring the services together, there will be Rough Sleeper coordinators and Housing Options officers, who specialise in mental capacity as part of this team, we hope collectively we can support some of the most vulnerable members of the community.

We will:

1. Expand the Housing First model across localities – utilising North Yorkshire council stock and seeking agreement with registered providers around offering up additional units of accommodation.
2. Implement learning from the evaluation of REACH. This will include clarifying principles and protocols, to ensure consistent support and buy-in from partners; extending support outside of Monday – Friday office hours; ensuring that support continues beyond the end of a tenancy and where sideways moves are made; and sourcing additional safe and suitable housing, in order to expand the scheme.
3. Make data recording around rough sleeping more consistent – adding rough sleeping data to our existing casework management system or developing bespoke IT solutions.
4. Develop a move-on pathway for entrenched people experiencing rough sleeping, including people with multiple disadvantages and/or a dual diagnosis.
5. Develop multi-disciplinary offer to deliver holistic support for people experiencing rough sleeping. These teams would be co-located and be likely to include substance use, dual diagnosis, IDAS, and housing support staff.
6. Ensure that training in psychologically-informed practice is available for staff in all services working with people experiencing rough sleeping
7. Build on work with primary care services to improve access to dentistry for rough sleepers.

Priority 3: Working with local business and the voluntary sector

There are well-established day services in North Yorkshire. These include the Rainbow Centre in Scarborough, Springboard in Harrogate, and Project 6 in Craven. The St. Giles outreach service operates from a camper van, covering rural areas in Ryedale. St. Giles offers advice, guidance, and referrals to other services. The model has been successful in engaging with vulnerable women and there are plans to start a second van service in the Skipton/Craven area. There are opportunities to strengthen collaborative working with these services and to extend the reach of outreach services.

Harrogate StreetAid enables the public to make small donations via a card terminal. Local homelessness organisations bid for this money, which is then donated to individual customers. To date, donations have funded health and wellbeing-related purchases – including bikes, driving lessons, and gaming consoles. As well as generating additional funding for people experiencing rough sleeping, StreetAid works to combat the perception of increased begging in Harrogate town centre and educates the council's partners and communities on the difference between begging and rough sleeping.

Harrogate BID (Business Improvement District) Town Centre Support Officer works to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, including by people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping.

We need to look at support organisations with additional funding where appropriate and available, also utilising government grants to improve services for our customers.

We will:

1. Provide better integrate outreach services and day services. This will include hubs across North Yorkshire.
2. Undertake a cost benefit analysis of commissioning a “welfare bus” to engage with people experiencing rough sleeping in rural areas, which offers support around housing, substance use, mental health, and welfare benefits.
3. Develop the StreetAid offer to support engagement with people experiencing rough sleeping and others engaged with street activity.
4. Maximise opportunities to work with BIDS across North Yorkshire.

Governance structure and performance framework

Governance Structure for Monitoring the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2025–2030):

A number of meetings and groups are already in place that will assess and monitor the impact of the strategy:

NY Homelessness Partnership group, this group together with both **Homeless and Rough Sleeping Forums** will help to guide the strategy implementation and monitor its outcomes.

The NY Homelessness partnership group (NYHPG) will be the overarching governance for monitoring the strategy, the group comprises of members drawn from the following disciplines and partner organisations;

- Adult Social care
- Community development
- Housing, Homelessness and Housing Options service
- Children and Young people’s service
- Public health
- The Probation Service
- Tees, Esk and Wear valley, (TEWV)
- North Yorkshire Police
- Community Safety
- Voluntary, Community and Faith services
- Registered providers

The purpose of the group will be to oversee the delivery of the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy and action plan, ensuring it achieves its stated aims and outcomes through the delivery of high quality, consistent services which meet the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness across North Yorkshire.

Strategic oversight will also come from the;

Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB)

- Rough sleeping is now a strategic priority under the SAB, recognised nationally as best practice
    - The Head of Housing needs is a named board member leading on rough sleeping, ensuring accountability and system-wide integration
    - Prevention Sub group of the board focuses on rough sleeping, transitions, and self-neglect ,Includes members from NHS, Adult Social Care, Housing, and voluntary organisations. Responsible for mapping services, identifying gaps, and proposing solutions.
    - Task and Finish Groups have been formed to address specific challenges such as health assessments, GP access, and service consistency including representatives from housing, health, social care, and voluntary sectors.

The homelessness and Rough Sleeping Forums for the East and West will feed into the NY Homelessness and Rough Sleeping partnership and assist in bringing the operational teams together to meet the targets within the action plan.

Operational Delivery

- The frontline Homelessness and Housing Options Team will be responsible for statutory delivery under the Homelessness Act

Data and Feedback

- We will incorporate lived experience and customer surveys into service reviews
- Annual reviews and updates to the strategy based on outcomes and feedback
- Regular meetings with advisers from the MHCLG Homelessness and Advice Support Team (HAST)

Performance measures

The aim of the performance frameworks is to;

- Understand demand within the homelessness and housing options system, including changing pressures
- Inform future investment needs and redesign opportunities, including building long term partnerships
- Highlight successes and understand areas for improvement
- Improve the quality of data

In order to track and measure the impact of the strategy, the following high level performance monitoring framework is in place.

Statutory measures

North Yorkshire Council submits quarterly returns to MHCLG via the DELTA system for homelessness. In addition to this additional infomation is submitted to government though;

- Regular reporting on KPIs from the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) 2022–2025
- Monthly homelessness pressures

Corporate Performance indicators

Largely reflecting statutory HCLIC returns, but includes additional housing advice cases and provide a breakdown of type of temporary accommodation used.

Homeless assessments completed:
Number of households given a prevention duty.
Number of household given a relief duty.
Households accepted as statutory homeless (Main duty)
Number of successful homelessness preventions and reliefs (breakdown recorded below to be able to provide a percentage of all duties ended also).
Total number in all temporary accommodation:
Number of households in B&B emergency accom as at the end of the quarter.
Number of households in high cost self contained emergency accom as at the end of the quarter.
Number of households in general temporary accommodation as at the end of the quarter.
Number of approaches for Housing Advice (inc. homelessness).

About Homeless Link

This strategy was developed in partnership with Homeless Link.

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for organisations working with people experiencing or at risk of homelessness In England. We aim to develop, inspire, support, and sustain a movement of organisations working together to achieve positive futures for people who are homeless or vulnerably housed.

Representing over 900 organisations across England, we are in a unique position to see both the scale and nature of the tragedy of homelessness. We see the data gaps; the national policy barriers; the constraints of both funding and expertise; the system blocks and attitudinal obstacles. But crucially, we also see – and are instrumental in developing – the positive practice and ‘what works’ solutions.

As an organisation we believe that things can and should be better: not because we are naïve or cut off from reality, but because we have seen and experienced radical positive change in the way systems and services are delivered – and that gives us hope for a different future.

We support our members through research, guidance, and learning, and to promote policy change that will ensure everyone has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.

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Appendix B

Year 1 Reducing Homelessness Action Plan:

Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
Theme 1. Preventing homelessness.					
	Expand the Private Rented Sector Offer across North Yorkshire	Housing Needs staff	Housing Needs	Source funding for posts. Review current role description and ensure consistency across localities. Develop comms for other professionals and the public.	More North Yorkshire residents can access and sustain private rented tenancies.

Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
Priority 1: Intervening before people reach housing crisis.	**Expand pre-tenancy support and life skills across North Yorkshire.**	Housing Needs, Housing Market Development	Housing Needs	Evaluate current approach, identify support gaps across TA, hostels and other homelessness projects and prioritise areas for action. Identify good practice from other areas. With service providers, assess capacity for delivering an expanded service.	Support not tied to locality or temporary accommodation type. More placements are sustained.
	Continue to develop our data systems and	Housing Needs, Revenues &	Housing Needs	Review current data collection around	Better identification of at-risk households.

2

Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
	explore what additional use can be made of housing benefit, council tax and other available data to identify households in financial stress and who are at future risk of homelessness.	Benefits, DWP, Council Tax, Adult and Children's Care, Integrated Care Boards.		households in financial stress and at future risk of homelessness. Review what data is currently shared between services and organisations and what additional data-sharing agreements need to be developed. Agree key indicators to be used to identify households in financial stress and	Increased opportunities for early intervention, which improves homelessness prevention outcomes.

3

Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
				risk of homelessness. Scope outreach and other possible interventions to support homelessness prevention.	
Priority 2: Improving the customer journey.	**Develop a county-wide action plan to ensure a consistent customer journey for customers receiving support from the Housing Needs Service.**	Housing Needs	Housing Needs	Publicise customer journey to internal and external stakeholders. Seek regular customer feedback about their experience of using	All people receiving support from the Housing Needs service have a consistent customer journey.

4

Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
				homelessness services.	
	Ensure all our homelessness prevention offers, including debt management/income maximisation, DHP, and rent deposits/rent in advance, are consistent across localities.	Housing Needs	Housing Needs	Review current provision of interventions in localities, including debt management/ income maximisation, DHP payments, and rent deposits/rent in advance.	All people receiving support from the Housing Needs service across localities have similar access to the service offer.
	Improve the self-service offer on the Council website for customers to apply for assistance and understand their likely	Housing Needs	Housing Needs	Review current website content. Agree arrangements for regularly updating website information.	People requiring assistance can easily access information and understand their entitlements to housing and support.

5

Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
	entitlements to housing and support.			Seek customer feedback about the usefulness of information and ease of access.	
	Deliver refresher duty to refer/commitment to refer and Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) training to all relevant frontline staff. This will include sessions at upcoming meetings of the Homelessness Forums and the	Housing Needs	Housing Needs	Review current training delivery programme content. Agree future delivery timetable. Agree delivery mechanisms, including sessions at upcoming meetings of Homelessness	All frontline staff feel confident to deliver assistance and support in these areas.

6

Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
	Registered Social Landlord Partnership.			Forums and Registered Social Landlord Partnership.	
Priority 3: Working with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to prevent homelessness.	**Work closely with North Yorkshire Council's localities team, Parish and Town Councils and Community First Yorkshire, to identify needs of individual communities and to develop engagement strategies, to encourage earlier engagement with**	Housing Needs North Yorkshire Localities Team Community First Yorkshire	Housing Needs	Map individual communities in NYC, their current engagement with NYC homelessness services and forums and gaps in this Draft engagement strategies for individual communities.	Earlier and more comprehensive engagement with NYC homelessness services increases opportunities for homelessness prevention.

7

Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
	council services around housing needs.			Seek funding for a dedicated role, to increase VCSE capacity, understanding of NYCs homelessness service offer and promote joint working with Housing Needs.	
	Increase council presence and visibility in community settings. This might include joint working between voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations and the DWP, to provide a	Housing Needs, Community First Yorkshire, DWP	Housing Needs	Scope joint working opportunities, including around provision a single access point for support and alternative approaches.	More people are aware of and access the council's service offer around homelessness; increased opportunities for homelessness prevention.

8

Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
	single access point for support which could also promote the council's homelessness assistance offer.			Review good practice from other areas. Identify potential venues for the single access point/other preferred intervention. Develop service specification and budget. Develop delivery action plan.	

Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
Theme 2. Increasing the availability of suitable accommodation options.					
Priority 1: Increasing access to suitable	**Provide transparent information on housing availability and waiting times, relevant services, and support across in other parts of North Yorkshire, to help housing applicants make informed choices about where they would like to live.**	Housing Needs Housing Management and Landlord Services.	Housing Management and Landlord Services.	Review current publicly available information and identify gaps. Agree timescale for developing new text and uploading on North Yorkshire Council website.	Customers have access to transparent information which enables them to make more informed choices about where they wish to live; this increases acceptances of offers.
	Increase access to privately rented accommodation through enhanced landlord liaison and relationship-building, financial incentives,	Housing Needs	Housing Needs	Build relationships with private landlords	More residents are able to access decent quality private rented accommodation.

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Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
and affordable housing	**and support for landlords and working through landlord forums.**			Enhance financial incentives for private landlords Ensure landlord forums are functioning in all localities and can provide support to private landlords. Ensure private landlords understand requirements within recent legislation.	
Priority 2: Meeting the needs for and	**Audit the locations and physical standards of existing temporary**	Housing Needs	Housing Needs	Audit locations and physical standards in	All TA is of adequate standard. There is sufficient supply to

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Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
improving temporary accommodation.	**accommodation to undertake an improvement plan.**			current TA properties. Explore if underspend from Homelessness Prevention Grant and other budgets can be utilised to upgrade current TA stock.	meet local needs; improved mental and physical health for TA residents.
Priority 3: Increasing access to supported housing.	**Develop an integrated offer between council directorates, to remove multiple access routes across Housing and Adult Social Care and increase focus on achieving positive**	Housing Needs Adult Social Care Children's Services	Housing Needs	Map current access routes and identify/highlight duplication (multiple routes). Scope integrated access point	Reduced duplication provides clarity and makes access easier for people requiring support.

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Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
	outcomes for individuals.			between council directorates – identifying barriers and if/what funding would be needed to develop this.	
	Work with public health around multiple disadvantage (MDOM), to support customers with a defined housing need, alongside wider care and support needs.	Housing Needs, Public Health Team	Housing Needs	Scope opportunities for joint working for people with a defined housing need alongside wider care and support needs.	People with multiple disadvantage can access all the services they need to help them leave homelessness.
Theme 3. Improving availability and access to support services.					

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Appendix B

Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
Priority 1: Strengthening housing related support pathways.	**Strengthen the Young People's Pathway (YPP) through the current recommissioning process, ensuring dedicated support for 16/17-year-olds and care leavers, clearer transition points, and improved move-on into training, employment, and settled housing.**	Housing Needs, Leaving Care services, Housing Management and Landlord Services	Housing Management and Landlord Services.	Map current support, transition points, move-on pathways, employment and training opportunities. Work with Housing Management and Landlord Services to ensure these issues are identified and addressed within recommissioning for housing-related support.	All 16/17 year olds using the YPP have access to appropriate accommodation and support.

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Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
	Co-produce a Care Leaver Housing Protocol with Leaving Care and other partners to support young people transitioning from care or supported accommodation.	Housing Needs Adult Social Care Leaving Care services	Housing Needs	Work with Adult Social Cre and other partners to co-produce a Care Leaver Housing Protocol With Adult Social Care (building on the transitions framework between CSC and Adults services for eligible care leavers).	All relevant services are aware of and able to implement the protocol. There is reduced homelessness within this group.
	Ensure the domestic abuse pathway remains inclusive and trauma-informed, while reviewing gaps in provision for women with multiple	Housing Needs, Domestic Violence Services, Housing Management and	Domestic Violence Services	Review current provision and identify gaps for women with complex needs and women and girls at risk of violence.	The domestic abuse pathway is able to meet the needs of all women and girls experiencing, or at risk of domestic abuse.

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Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
	disadvantages, including those at risk of violence against women and girls (VAWG).	Landlord Services		Explore additional commissioning opportunities and potential funding sources.	
	Comply with the requirements of the new Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act.	Housing Needs, Housing Management and Landlord Services.	Housing Management and Landlord Services.	Review local supported housing, to assess its alignment with new national standards Set up licensing schemes for local supported housing providers, to ensure minimum quality standards.	All properties meet legal requirements; all relevant staff understand and feel confident in implementing these.

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Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
				Develop and deliver training for all relevant staff.	
	Continue to work with criminal justice partners to develop a strategy for those being released from prison and serving community sentences.	Housing Needs, Probation Service.	Probation Service	Map existing pathways, capacity. Identify gaps and funding opportunities Draw on good practice in other areas.	Fewer prison leavers become homeless/repeat homeless.
Priority 2: A dedicated support offer for people	**Expand learning from the REACH and SAFE models across other**	Housing Needs North Yorkshire Multiple	North Yorkshire Multiple	Work with the Multiple Disadvantage Network to:	All frontline staff are confident in delivering trauma-informed support;

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Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
facing multiple disadvantage.	**North Yorkshire localities, including their approaches to housing stability, trauma-informed practice, and integrated, multi-agency working.** **And** **Continue to embed the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) approach through the North Yorkshire Multiple Disadvantage Network, supporting co-located teams,**	Disadvantage Network.	Disadvantage Network	• Disseminate learning from REACH and SAFE models • Continue to embed the MEAM approach • Extend multi-disciplinary team working across localities, including: co-located teams, shared risk planning, delegated	multi-disciplinary working improves outcomes for service users around homelessness prevention.

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Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
	shared risk planning and delegated decision-making through the pilot in Harrogate			decision-making structures and processes (utilising existing models in NYC).	
	Deliver joint training for housing and Adult Social Care staff on legal frameworks, responsibilities, and thresholds to improve support planning and coordination in complex cases.	Housing Needs Adult Social Care Mental Health Services		Review current training offer Update training materials. Agree training delivery plan.	Better understanding of legal frameworks, capacity and thresholds improves support planning and coordination of complex cases.

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Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
	Establish joint housing protocols with probation and North Yorkshire Youth Justice Service to support people leaving institutions and reduce repeat homelessness.	Housing Needs, Probation, Youth Justice services.	Housing Needs	Develop joint protocols with Probation and youth justice services for people leaving institutions. Develop an accommodation and support pathway for people leaving prison or being supervised in the community.	All people leaving institutions will have access to appropriate support and are less at risk of homelessness; reduced reoffending; increased public safety.
Priority 3: Embedding inclusive, trauma informed, and culturally competent practice.	**Develop a shared understanding of trauma-informed and psychologically informed approaches**	Housing Needs Adult Social Care VCSE partners		Develop a shared understanding of trauma-informed and inclusive approaches across Housing,	All policies and processes are inclusive and culturally competent.

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Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
	across Housing, Adult Social Care and voluntary sector partners, including through joint training and reflective spaces			Adult Social Care and VCSE partners. Review service policy and processes.	
	Improve the way we capture and act on feedback from customers and tenants from diverse backgrounds, as part of improving service quality and inclusion.	Housing Needs		Explore how to better capture and act on feedback from these service users. Identify good practice from other areas.	There are a range of mechanism through which service users can provide feedback and inform service design and commissioning; the impact of this can be demonstrated.
Priority 4: Supporting voluntary, community and social enterprise		Housing Needs, Community First	Community First	Map current provision, focusing	

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Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
engagement and peer-led models.	**Strengthen the long-term role of voluntary, community, and social enterprise partners in delivering homelessness support, including through improved commissioning opportunities, funding partnerships, and involvement in strategic planning.**			on rural and underserved areas. Assess current capacity within VCSE services Explore funding options to increase capacity for additional service delivery.	
		Housing Needs	Housing Needs	Explore how forums can be used as vehicles for shared	Homelessness forums are fully operational; there are specific examples of how forums have

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Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
	Expand Homelessness Forums as vehicles for shared planning and communication.			planning and communication.	informed service delivery and/or communication.
	Establish a county-wide lived experience forum, building on good practice such as the Lived Experience Network in Harrogate, and develop principles and structures to ensure it is inclusive, resourced, and			Establish a county-wide lived experience forum, building on good practice from the Lived Experience Network in Harrogate Develop Terms of Reference for the new forum.	

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Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
	embedded in decision-making around commissioning and service design			Explore a codesign approach for lived experience involvement and utilisation of this forum to influence commissioning and service design.	
Theme 4. Reducing rough sleeping.					
	Develop a consistent emergency accommodation offer	Housing Needs, B&B providers, Private landlords.	Housing Needs	Review current emergency accommodation for rough sleepers and gaps in provision. Identify good practice in other areas,	There is a consistent service offer which all rough sleepers in North Yorkshire can access; this reduces time spent on the streets by individuals.

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Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
Priority 1: Meeting the accommodation and support needs of people experiencing rough sleeping.	**for people experiencing rough sleeping, based on the NSNO model.**			focusing on the NSNO model. Identify suitable buildings for procurement and/or adaptation for emergency accommodation.	
	Review our approach to reconnecting people experiencing rough sleeping to their local authority area of origin, with a view to making this more robust.	Housing Needs	Housing Needs	Review current approach to reconnection to UK local authority areas, including budget for travel costs and other needs.	There is a consistent approach, which is offered to all rough sleepers. This reduces time spent on the streets.

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Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
				Develop guidance for frontline staff, which promotes reconnection as a positive housing outcome for some rough sleepers without a local connection to North Yorkshire.	
	Expand the Housing First model across localities – utilising North Yorkshire council stock and seeking agreement with registered providers	Housing Needs, [Housing procurement]		Review current capacity and identify unmet need. Explore potential to access additional units of accommodation	Expanded capacity enables all eligible rough sleepers to access Housing First accommodation and support.

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Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
Priority 2: Supporting people experiencing rough sleeping with multiple disadvantages.				within NYC stock and RPs.	
	Make data recording around rough sleeping more consistent – adding rough sleeping data to our existing casework management system or developing bespoke IT solutions.	Housing Needs [data/IT teams]	Housing Needs	Explore if/how rough sleeping data can be added to existing casework management systems Explore costs and benefits of developing a bespoke IT solution.	Data recording is more consistent and gives a more accurate picture of rough sleepers' needs.
	Input via NYSAB Prevention Group to	Housing Needs, NYSAB	NYSAB	Review workforce skills	Fewer safeguarding incidents and SARs.

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Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
	strategy for rough sleepers experiencing multiple disadvantage.				
Priority 3: Working with local business and the voluntary sector.	**Provide better integrate outreach services and day services. This will include hubs across North Yorkshire.**	Housing Needs	Housing Needs	Review data to understand engagement with outreach services by entrenched rough sleepers and those with multiple disadvantages. Explore the need for additional outreach capacity and/or specific resources for these groups.	Outreach services successfully engage with entrenched and multiply disadvantaged rough sleepers and can support them into accommodation.
	Undertake a cost benefit analysis of commissioning a	Housing Needs	Housing Needs	Explore costs and benefits of commissioning a	Rough sleepers in rural areas have access to multi-

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Area	Action	Key Stakeholders	Lead	Activities	Outcome
	"welfare bus" to engage with people experiencing rough sleeping in rural areas.	VCSE providers		'welfare bus', which offers support around housing, substance use, mental health, and welfare benefits.	agency assistance to address housing and support needs.
	Develop the StreetAid offer to support engagement with people experiencing rough sleeping and others engaged with street activity.			Explore potential benefits of expanding StreetAid offer to support engagement with people engaged in street activity. Identify good practice in other areas.	People engaged in street activity can access to other sources of financial support; this reduces substance misuse and anti-social behaviour.

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APPENDIX C

Equality impact assessment (EIA) form: evidencing paying due regard to protected characteristics

(Form updated October 2023)

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025/2030

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are public documents. EIAs accompanying reports going to County Councillors for decisions are published with the committee papers on our website and are available in hard copy at the relevant meeting. To help people to find completed EIAs we also publish them in the Equality and Diversity section of our website. This will help people to see for themselves how we have paid due regard in order to meet statutory requirements.

Name of Directorate and Service Area	Community development, Housing Needs
Lead Officer and contact details	Kim Robertshaw, Head of Housing Needs
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the EIA	Sarah Wintringham, Housing Needs Service Manager Maggie Gibson, Housing Needs Service Manager Richard Mair, Corporate Strategy and Performance Lead (Community Development)
How will you pay due regard? e.g. working group, individual officer	The overarching EIA has been carried out by the Housing Needs team in consultation with Strategy and Performance. Legislation- Equality Duty As a local authority that provides services to the public, North Yorkshire Council has a legal responsibility to ensure that we can demonstrate having paid due regard to the need to: • Eliminate discrimination, • harassment, victimisation. • Advance Equality of Opportunity Foster good relations for the following protected characteristics: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion and belief, Sex (Gender), Sexual orientation *What is prohibited?* • Direct Discrimination

	• Indirect Discrimination • Harassment • Victimisation • Discrimination by association • Discrimination by perception • Pregnancy and maternity discrimination • Discrimination arising from disability • Failing to make reasonable adjustment
When did the due regard process start?	May 2024

Section 1. Please describe briefly what this EIA is about.

Adoption of a North Yorkshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-30.

To adopt a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy is a statutory requirement, providing an agreed strategic approach to delivering housing options and homelessness services.

Under the Homelessness Act 2002, all housing authorities have a statutory duty to have in place a homelessness strategy based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their district. The strategy must be renewed at least every five years.

The strategy must set out the authority's plans for the prevention of homelessness and for ensuring that sufficient accommodation and support are or will be available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so.

The Homelessness and Rough sleeping strategy is the Council's overall strategic plan. It is the public facing document expressing the Council's vision and priorities for housing needs services over the next five years.

The Strategy is also the key strategic document which sets the framework for our housing options and homelessness service. It also contains information about specific service delivery.

Section 2. Why is this being proposed? What are the aims? What does the authority hope to achieve by it?

This will be the first Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy for North Yorkshire. The strategy informs of the current position and challenges for homelessness across the County. It also sets out the priorities and actions that together aim to prevent homelessness and reduce rough sleeping in line with the relevant legislation. Homelessness is not just a term for someone that is rough sleeping, but covers those that are in temporary accommodation, are at risk of losing their home, are in unsuitable accommodation or cannot afford to remain in their current home.

The purpose of the strategy is to inform stakeholders including elected members, officers, partners and residents about the Council's vision for housing options and homelessness services, our key objectives and the priorities for the organisation as the strategic housing authority.

The strategy identifies the priorities of the authority and the framework for delivering improvements to the services.

The strategy has been drafted in the context of service demand pressures across the housing service and our main internal partners. Funding provided by central government to local authorities to deliver homelessness services has been available for many years; changes to this funding would have detrimental effects on the service provision.

Section 3. What will change? What will be different for customers and/or staff?

The Strategy provides the framework for the service, its ambitions and priorities. Adoption of the strategy will signify the council's commitment to delivering what is set out. Action plans will be developed to improve our offer to residents and enhance our services.

The service often deals with people who are with dependent children, pregnant, vulnerable due to mental health, age, physical or mental disability or other special reason Vulnerable as a result of having been a member of His Majesty's regular naval, military or air force Vulnerable as a result of having served a custodial sentence, remanded in custody Care Leavers Victims of Domestic abuse People who have lost their home as a result of an emergency This is to ensure that the services designed to meet the statutory homeless duties are shaped to ensure all groups have access to services and are considered in our approach to preventing homelessness.

Section 4. Involvement and consultation

As part of the development of the strategy we relaunched the NY Homeless Forum's both in the East and the West, with the first one in Sept 24, attended by 45 partners and agencies, workshops undertaken as part of the meetings to understand issues from our partners

- Subsequent Homeless Forums in the East and West of the County took place in Dec, attended by around 70 local services
- Analysis of internal and external data, including:
  - H-CLIC
  - Young Persons Pathway and Homechoice quarterly reports, DHP awards
  - ONS population and house price data
  - Rough sleeping snapshots and monthly surveys.
- Surveys to all staff within the team for user feedback
- One-to-one and small group discussions with a total of around 30 internal and external stakeholders – including with executive member, service Director and Assistant Director
- Feedback on key areas for the strategy via team meetings
- Site visits undertaken by Homeless Link (partnering charity) – all four localities
- Client focus groups/surveys.

June – July 25 – consultation on the draft document
August 25 – analysis of responses and amendments to draft document.

Section 5. What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?

Adoption of the strategy and its priorities will not have an immediate budget implication. Delivery of the action plans and individual projects will have budgetary implications which will be assessed and agreed on a case-by-case basis. The strategy gives direction to the spend of Homelessness Grants that will all be consolidated from April 2026, amount of funding for NY not disclosed to the authority until Dec 25.

Section 6. How will this proposal affect people with protected characteristics?	No impact	Make things better	Make things worse	Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.
Age		×		41% of our customers approaching for Housing Advice or Homelessness were single under 35, meaningmeaning accommodation is less affordable for this age group due to the restrictions with local housing allowance. Due to the restriction on Local housing allowance. We also have 53% of the register for NYHC have a 1-bed need and 35% of tenancies commenced in the last quarter were into one beds. The strategy has outlined how the council will continue the joint partnership with CYPS to deliver 172 units as part of the Young people's pathway for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, including care leavers under 25 North Yorkshire has a lower proportion of young people than the national average- 24.5% under 25 compared to 29.2% nationally. In 2021, 25% of the county's adult population was over the age of 65. This is higher than the national percentage of 18.4%.
Disability		×		Health needs are a majority issue for most of our customers. This is explained in the strategy how we will link up services and capture information better to ensure our services and offers are appropriate for our customers needs. North Yorkshire has a lower proportion (19.3%) of people with a disability or long-term limiting illness whose day-to-day activities are limited a lot- against the national average of 23.69%. In terms of population projections in North Yorkshire, between 2025 and 2047, the number of people aged 65+ will increase by 58,100 - a 34.3% rise. So we could expect an increase in the number of people with a disability going forward, although this may not be exactly in line with the rise in those aged 65+. By recognising the needs of our residents who may be more vulnerable or have specific accessibility and adaptability requirements we will improve access to housing for these groups.

				Consultation has taken place with Health and Adult Services and with wider Health Services to help determine wider strategic approaches, which is reflected within the strategy;
Sex	×			This would have no effect. Homeless priorities are focused on vulnerabilities which would mean typically females may be favoured as they would typically be the main carer for children. The proportion of females is slightly higher (51%) than that of males (49%). This pattern is reflected across all localities, with the exception of Richmondshire where the large number of predominantly male military personnel have the effect of reversing the proportions. According to the DA needs assessment, the gender of victims reporting domestic abuse in North Yorkshire and in the City of York remained fairly consistent across the two years 2019-20 to 2021-22, with between 67% and 68% of identified victims recorded as being female, and between 18% and 19% recorded as male. Across all two years, 5-6% of victims were recorded as unknown, and fewer than 1% of victims were recorded as identifying as non-binary, transgender or other, combined across all two years. While domestic abuse and subsequent homelessness can happen to all genders, women are particularly at higher risk. The strategy is inclusive of all genders whilst training for frontline operational staff within housing options will acknowledge that domestic abuse is a gendered issue. Our ambitions will not have any anticipated impacts on people specifically due to them sharing this particular protected characteristic.
Race	×			The policy will be applied equally amongst the groups and cases dealt with by case by case basis, and so the policy will have a neutral effect on this group. North Yorkshire has a much lower proportion (4.77%) of people who identify with a non-UK identity than the national average (12%). Our ambitions will not have any anticipated impacts on people specifically due to them sharing this particular protected characteristic.

Gender reassignment	×			Information from the DA needs assessment states only 5-6% of victims who accessed services in the last three years were recorded as gender unknown, and fewer than 1% of victims identified as non-binary, transgender or other. Currently, there are not specific commissioned services for LGBTQIA people locally; however commissioned services are using innovative trauma-informed methods to meet the needs of this group especially those threatened with the potential impact to 'outing'. The new strategy would have no effect
Sexual orientation	×			This would have no effect In the 2021 census 11,291 (2.2%) of residents across North Yorkshire identified themselves as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Other (LGB+). National data suggests that LGBTQ+ victims of abuse are more likely than heterosexual individuals to experience abuse from multiple partners, are almost twice as likely to have attempted suicide, are more than twice as likely to have self-harmed and are more than twice as likely to have experienced historic abuse from a family member. Therefore, it is vital that the sexual identity of domestic abuse victims is recorded and understood. This group has been considered and the strategy will work with partners to address the specific needs of this community. Our ambitions will not have any anticipated impacts on people specifically due to them sharing this particular protected characteristic.
Religion or belief	×			North Yorkshire has higher levels of Christians (55.6%) than the national average (46.2%), and lower levels of all other religions than the national average. Percentages of those with no religion or not stating their religion are broadly similar to the national average. The traditional relationship dynamic may be different in some cultures, and research shows that people within certain cultures may be more likely to suffer domestic abuse and become homeless. This could have several effects including victims being more reluctant to report or resistant to their partner being arrested. In North Yorkshire there are some diverse communities across urban and rural localities. Some residents have recently arrived in the UK and are not familiar with the legal protections afforded to victims of domestic abuse or homeless legislation. Therefore, it is important

				to provide cultural awareness to staff of these communities. Training for frontline staff will include awareness raising of cultural issues and the importance of using independent translators when working with customers who do not speak English. We anticipate that the strategy will improve for people in the category. Our ambitions will not have any anticipated impacts on people specifically due to them sharing this particular protected characteristic.
Pregnancy or maternity	×			In 2021 there were 5133 live births in North Yorkshire. In 2020 the conception rate per 1000 for under 18's was 10.9. This is below the rate for England (13). In 2020/21 4.2% of deliveries in North Yorkshire were to mothers from ethnic minorities, compared to the England value of 21.6%. Our ambitions will not have any anticipated impacts on people specifically due to them sharing this particular protected characteristic.
Marriage or civil partnership	×			A higher percentage of North Yorkshire's population is married or in a civil partnership (53.7%) than the national average (46.8%) Our ambitions will not have any anticipated impacts on people specifically due to them sharing this particular protected characteristic.

Section 7. How will this proposal affect people who…	**No impact**	**Make things better**	**Make things worse**	**Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.**
..live in a rural area?		×		The population in North Yorkshire is generally sparser than the national average (77 people per square kilometre as opposed to 434 nationally). In some parts of the county this is lower still (Ryedale 36, Richmondshire 38, Craven 48, Hambleton 69). Distance travelled to access services is further than the national average. The Lower Super Output Area (LSOA), which covers the Dales ward in Ryedale, is in the 10% most deprived in England for Geographical Barriers to Services.

				Rurality can also mean higher costs for such things as fuel for heating. Our ambitions will make things better for people living in rural areas, addressing affordability and supply of housing in rural areas. As part of the placement of households in temporary accommodation, where possible this will be within the chosen localities, transport costs will be provided where this is not possible. All offers of temporary accommodation for households accepted as homeless need to do suitable and reasonable and subject to a review
…have a low income?		×		The proportion of households in deprivation in North Yorkshire reduced between 2011 and 2021. In 2011 52.1% of households in North Yorkshire were deprived in at least one of the four dimensions (employment, education, health and disability, housing). By 2021 this had fallen to 46.7%. This 5.4 percentage point reduction in North Yorkshire compared with a 5.9 percentage point reduction across England as a whole, with the proportion of households in deprivation in North Yorkshire remaining below the national average. Scarborough is the only North Yorkshire district above the national average level of deprivation. 9 out of the 10 most deprived neighbourhoods in North Yorkshire in 2021 were in Scarborough district. North Yorkshire also has a number of lower super output areas within the 20% most deprived in England (23 in 2019, rising from 18 in 2010) and three LSOAs in Scarborough town are within the most deprived 1% in England. Figures for long-term unemployment in North Yorkshire (0.8%) are lower than the national average (1.9%). The percentage of children in absolute low-income families is 11.3%, compared to the England value of 15.1%. The percentage of the population who claim out of work benefits in North Yorkshire is 2.0%, compared to a Great Britain percentage of 3.7% (Nomis – ONS September 2022). Percentage of people in North Yorkshire unemployed (June 2021 – June 2022) 3% - Great Britain 3.8%. Our ambitions will make things better for those on a low income, improving partnership working, access to specialist services and

				access to affordable homes through NYHC as well as a Private sector project to assist those able to move into the private rented sector.
…are carers (unpaid family or friend)?	×			Carers' allowance claimants make up 0.98% of North Yorkshire's population. This is lower than the average for England (1.42%) but there are variations across the county. It is likely, however, that these figures do not reflect the true number of people carrying out caring roles in the county as many do not claim allowances. Our ambitions will not have any specific impact on carers.
….. are from the Armed Forces Community		×		North Yorkshire has 29,831 Armed Forces Veterans. Richmondshire has the highest proportion of Armed Forces Veterans in North Yorkshire at 9.5% (3,962), which is the third highest nationally. The proportion of veterans in Richmondshire is more than double the national average rate, which is 3.8%. Harrogate has the highest number of Armed Forces Veterans in North Yorkshire with 7,076 (5.2%). Our ambitions will not have any specific impact on those from the armed forces community and we will deliver services in line with the Armed Forces Covenant. The service has highly trained housing Options officers as well as a Housing Needs champion for the Armed forces.

Section 8. Geographic impact – Please detail where the impact will be (please tick all that apply)	
North Yorkshire wide	√
Craven	
Hambleton	
Harrogate	
Richmondshire	
Ryedale	
Scarborough	
Selby	

If you have ticked one or more areas, will specific town(s)/village(s) be particularly impacted? If so, please specify below.
The Strategy is the Council's overall strategic plan.

Section 9. Will the proposal affect anyone more because of a combination of protected characteristics? (e.g. older women or young gay men) **State what you think the effect may be and why, providing evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.**

The proposal will not affect anyone more because of a combination of protected characteristics

As a service we deal with all need groups including resettlement and asylum seekers as well as current and ex armed forces personnel and their families. Throughout the strategy we discuss our actions to improving how we will work with partners on those with multiple disadvantages, which will include people with low literacy levels and health issues.
The strategy has a section on partnerships which explains how the council will strengthen these to remove barriers to access to services. Strengthening the partnerships will assist those people in hard to reach to groups can benefit from our service and any gaps in service can be reduced.
The strategy ensures the council has a plan to focus on these priority groups and how the actions over the next 5 years will be dedicated to preventing and resolving their homelessness. The policy does not have a detrimental impact on households. This has a positive impact to improve and define services for those most vulnerable.

Section 10. Next steps to address the anticipated impact. Select one of the following options and explain why this has been chosen. (**Remember:** we have an anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people can access services and work for us)	**Tick option chosen**
1. No adverse impact - no major change needed to the proposal. There is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact identified.	√
2. **Adverse impact - adjust the proposal -** The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We will change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, or we will achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people.	
3. Adverse impact - continue the proposal - The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We cannot change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, nor can we achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people. (There must be compelling reasons for continuing with proposals which will have the most adverse impacts. Get advice from Legal Services)	
4. Actual or potential unlawful discrimination - stop and remove the proposal – The EIA identifies actual or potential unlawful discrimination. It must be stopped.	
Explanation of why option has been chosen. (Include any advice given by Legal Services.)	

Section 11. If the proposal is to be implemented how will you find out how it is really affecting people? (How will you monitor and review the changes?)

The associated action plans will be reviewed on a yearly basis. Potential barriers and negative impact will be recorded on a quarterly summary for this to be included in the review or sooner if deemed necessary. This will be recorded by the Housing needs management team.
This will be built into the action plan process to ensure the strategy still meets the requirements of the cohort and that appropriate accommodation is provided. Recommendations of this assessment

will help shape the data gathering and how we shape our process to record data on our customers to ensure all processes are accessible and meet the needs of the client group approaching as homeless.

We will use service data; customer contact, complaints, North Yorkshire Home Choice applications to ensure that services are not negatively impacting on any protected characteristic.

Section 12. Action plan. List any actions you need to take which have been identified in this EIA, including post implementation review to find out how the outcomes have been achieved in practice and what impacts there have actually been on people with protected characteristics.

Action	**Lead**	**By when**	**Progress**	**Monitoring arrangements**
Ensure that the action plans relating to the specific service changes contributing to achieving the broad outcomes of the Strategy are appropriately assessed to identify any potential equality impacts on people with protected characteristics before specific decisions are taken.	Housing Needs Service managers	Annually		NY Homelessness and Rough sleeping partnership, NY Homelessness Forums (East,West) Safeguarding Adult Board
Ensure that equalities information on jigsaw for the service is completed and analysed as part of data collection.	Housing Needs Service Managers	Ongoing		Reports taken from Jigsaw

Section 13. Summary Summarise the findings of your EIA, including impacts, recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

Our ambitions in the Homelessness and Rough sleeping Strategy are for better outcomes for all North Yorkshire residents despite a tough financial climate and unprecedented service demand pressures.

The anticipated impacts of our ambitions are therefore positive ones.

Due regard to equalities will be paid when making decisions on actions to realise these ambitions and, where appropriate, these will be subject to full EIAs.

Section 14. Sign off section

This full EIA was completed by:

Name: Kim Robertshaw
Job title: Head of Housing Needs
Directorate: Community Development
Signature:

Completion date: August 2025

Authorised by Assistant Director: Andrew Rowe
Date: 26th August 2025

Appendix D

Climate change impact assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to help us understand the likely impacts of our decisions on the environment of North Yorkshire and on our aspiration to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030, or as close to that date as possible. The intention is to mitigate negative effects and identify projects which will have positive effects.

This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. The final document will be published as part of the decision making process and should be written in Plain English.

If you have any additional queries which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Please note: You may not need to undertake this assessment if your proposal will be subject to any of the following:
Planning Permission
Environmental Impact Assessment
Strategic Environmental Assessment

However, you will still need to summarise your findings in the summary section of the form below.

Please contact climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk for advice.

Title of proposal	**North Yorkshire Homelessness and Rough sleeping Strategy 2025-30**
Brief description of proposal	**Adoption of a Homelessness and Rough sleeping Strategy for North Yorkshire**
Directorate	**Community Development**
Service area	**Housing**
Lead officer	**Kim Robertshaw**
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	**Sarah Wintringham, Maggie Gibson**
Date impact assessment started	**August 25**

Options appraisal

There is a statutory duty for housing authorities to have a Homelessness and Rough sleeping strategy and this needs to renewed every 5 years. This will be the first one for North Yorkshire since local Government reorganisation. The Strategy is a high-level overview of the strategic vision, priorities and the actions the council will undertake to deliver its strategic housing options and homelessness functions.

A climate change assessment is a crucial component of a homelessness strategy, as it helps identify how climate-related events and long-term changes might exacerbate existing homelessness issues and affect service delivery. This assessment should consider how climate change could impact vulnerable populations, leading to increased homelessness or making it harder to escape homelessness.

What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?

The strategy will be delivered within existing service budgets and government funding.

How will this proposal impact on the environment? **N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.**		**Positive impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**No impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Negative impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?** **Where possible/relevant please include:** • **Changes over and above business as usual** • **Evidence or measurement of effect** • **Figures for CO_2e** • **Links to relevant documents**	**Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.**	**Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.**
Minimise **greenhouse**	Emissions from travel	**X**			Where possible temporary accommodation will be provided		

How will this proposal impact on the environment? **N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.**		**Positive impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**No impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Negative impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?** **Where possible/relevant please include:** • **Changes over and above business as usual** • **Evidence or measurement of effect** • **Figures for CO_2e** • **Links to relevant documents**	**Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.**	**Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.**
gas emissions e.g. reducing emissions from travel, increasing energy efficiencies etc.					within the current locality, however there may be times when customers need to move around the county to access available housing. However the development of additional temporary accommodation within localities will reduce the ned for this		
	Emissions from construction			**X**	An ambition to deliver additional temporary accommodation properties will generate emissions from construction however, this could be offset by the construction methods employed and subsequent gain from developing high quality, low carbon homes. The majority of the homes we have acquired have been off the shelf	-use of low carbon construction methods. - green space design - EPC 'A' in all new build council homes - making use of existing stock/ buildings where feasible.	-use new council homes standard as an example to other developers.

How will this proposal impact on the environment? **N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.**		**Positive impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**No impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Negative impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?** **Where possible/relevant please include:** • **Changes over and above business as usual** • **Evidence or measurement of effect** • **Figures for CO_2e** • **Links to relevant documents**	**Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.**	**Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.**
					from development so no additional affect.		
	Emissions from running of buildings	**X**			- Commitment to EPC C for all new council homes and retrofit programme to bring all social stock Up to EPC C will reduce emissions from council homes. Commitment to bringing up standards across all tenures		
	Emissions from data storage		**X**				
	Other		**X**				
Minimise **waste:** Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost e.g. reducing use of single use plastic			**X**				

Appendix D

How will this proposal impact on the environment? **N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.**	**Positive impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**No impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Negative impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?** **Where possible/relevant please include:** • **Changes over and above business as usual** • **Evidence or measurement of effect** • **Figures for CO_2e** • **Links to relevant documents**	**Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.**	**Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.**
Reduce **water** consumption		**X**				
Minimise **pollution** (including air, land, water, light and noise)		X				
Ensure **resilience** to the effects of climate change e.g. reducing flood risk, mitigating effects of drier, hotter summers		×		These hazards can disproportionately impact people experiencing homelessness due to factors like lack of access to shelter, inadequate clothing, pre-existing health conditions, and limited access to resources. We are aware that exposure to climate hazards directly affect individuals, such as increased risk of heatstroke, hypothermia,		

How will this proposal impact on the environment? **N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.**	**Positive impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**No impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Negative impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?** **Where possible/relevant please include:** • **Changes over and above business as usual** • **Evidence or measurement of effect** • **Figures for CO_2e** • **Links to relevant documents**	**Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.**	**Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.**
				respiratory problems, and infectious diseases. We need to ensure we instigate our severe weather provisions throughout the year. The council activated Severe weather emergency provisions (SWEP) 16 times during winter 24/25 when temperatures were 0 or below for 3 or more days. We helped 130 individuals with accommodation. In addition to this we have provided access to water and sun protection during periods of significantly hot weather as well as information relating to 'safe shelter'. This area of service provision is unlikely to		

How will this proposal impact on the environment? **N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.**	**Positive impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**No impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Negative impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?** **Where possible/relevant please include:** • **Changes over and above business as usual** • **Evidence or measurement of effect** • **Figures for CO_2e** • **Links to relevant documents**	**Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.**	**Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.**
Page 295				reduce as weather conditions continue to be extreme. It is essential we work with partners to look at what additionality we can provide around improved support to this vulnerable group during these times. We work with partners as part of the rough sleeper team to provide outreach support to those sleeping rough to ensure they are keeping safe and well. Working with health partners to see what additionality they can provide to this group during these times		

Appendix D

How will this proposal impact on the environment? **N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.**	**Positive impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**No impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Negative impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?** **Where possible/relevant please include:** • **Changes over and above business as usual** • **Evidence or measurement of effect** • **Figures for CO_2e** • **Links to relevant documents**	**Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.**	**Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.**
				We are ensuring that the homelessness strategy is aligned with other relevant services from health and social care. We collate data on SWEP provisions to track climate-related incidents. Head of housing needs is also part of the emergency planning response and has provided services during times for flooding for displaced households. The strategy will make sure that emergency response plans are adequate to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness		

How will this proposal impact on the environment? **N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.**	**Positive impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**No impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Negative impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?** **Where possible/relevant please include:** • **Changes over and above business as usual** • **Evidence or measurement of effect** • **Figures for CO_2e** • **Links to relevant documents**	**Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.**	**Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.**
				during and after climate-related events.		
Enhance **conservation** and wildlife		X				
Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of **North Yorkshire's landscape**		X		We work closely with the enforcement team to ensure any rough sleepers causing issues on Council land are provided with a welfare assessment and supported into accommodation or reconnected to their respective local connection areas.		

How will this proposal impact on the environment? **N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.**	**Positive impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**No impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Negative impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?** **Where possible/relevant please include:** • **Changes over and above business as usual** • **Evidence or measurement of effect** • **Figures for CO_2e** • **Links to relevant documents**	**Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.**	**Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.**
Other (please state below)		X				

Are there any recognised good practice environmental standards in relation to this proposal?
There are specific climate-related risks faced by people experiencing homelessness, and through our rough sleeper team we have targeted interventions to mitigate those risks and enhance their resilience. Severe weather provisions are instigated by the Council and are well used across NY, this only provides an interim solution and as such the actions within the strategy all assist to ensure there is long term accommodation for vulnerable people. Changes to the climate will mean these measures are utilised more which may have budgetary implications for the service. Therefore, climate change considerations are central to supporting this vulnerable population.

Summary Summarise the findings of your impact assessment, including impacts, the recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

The Homelessness and Rough sleeping Strategy 2025 to 2030 does not have any explicit environmental impacts in itself, its vision or strategic themes. Specific priorities and projects identified in the Homelessness strategy may have environmental impacts, for example the provision of additional temporary accommodation to meet housing needs. The environmental impacts associated with specific projects and work programmes identified by the development team will be identified and addressed in the relevant project documentation for those projects / programmes as they move forward. This will be done in conjunction with the Climate Change Team and in line with the Council's Climate Change Strategy.

Extreme Weather Exposure can affect Homeless individuals, especially rough sleepers, when directly exposed to increasingly severe weather events. Heatwaves, cold snaps, storms, and flooding pose serious risks. The new Rough Sleeper team across NY, working with health colleagues mitigates this risk to this population within NY.

Health Vulnerabilities: Homeless people often have underlying health conditions that make them more susceptible to climate-related illnesses.

Climate change increases the risk of homelessness by damaging homes through flooding, wildfires, and rising sea levels. It also drives up energy costs, pushing vulnerable households into fuel poverty.

The actions within the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy are all designed to mitigate the risk to homeless people through better enhanced and coordinated services across the council.

Sign off section

This climate change impact assessment was completed by:

Name	**Kim Robertshaw**
Job title	**Head Of Housing needs**
Service area	**Housing**
Directorate	**Community Development**
Signature	
Completion date	**August 2025**

Authorised by Assistant Director: Andrew Rowe

Date: 26th August 2025

North Yorkshire Council

Executive

16 September 2025

Brierley Homes Independent Review and Funding Update

Corporate Director Resources

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To report to Executive the outcome and recommendations of an external independent review carried out in relation to Brierley Homes on behalf of the Shareholder, and

1.2 To request additional loan facility headroom approval to Brierley Homes of £2m at the market rate of interest of 6% above base rate, such facility to be reviewed after 6 months to ensure Brierley Homes has appropriate cashflow over the short term. Any draw down on this additional loan facility would be subject to evidence of need and approval of the Corporate Director Resources in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader (Executive Member for Finance) and Chief Executive.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 Following a request by the Shareholder through the Brierley Group meeting, an independent external review of the operating model, structure, financial position and resilience of Brierley Homes has been carried out. This was undertaken by Tony Dodds consulting and the findings were reported to Brierley Group in July 2025 and Executive at this meeting. Tony Dodds is a real estate professional with over 30 years' experience working in the land use sector, with a strong emphasis on residential development. He has set up and led two local authority owned trading companies in the UK engaged in providing new homes both for market sale and for affordable purposes and therefore has the appropriate skills and experience to carry out the review.

2.2 It was acknowledged as part of commissioning this review that further work was also required over the next few months to prepare for a possible extension of the loan facility headroom which would be a decision of the Executive.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 Brierley Homes was set up in 2017 by the then North Yorkshire County Council to deliver homes for market sale with the profits to be reinvested into frontline services. The company also delivers wider shareholder value for the Council in respect of the profits generated but also loan interest and service level agreements from the Council.

3.2 After initially delivering homes only for market sale, Brierley Homes has continued to gain momentum in securing a positive pipeline of over 500 homes with over 200 of them being affordable with estimated delivery for all in the next 4 years. Brierley Homes has enabled the grant of £2.6m for a 49-unit affordable scheme at Broomfields, to be secured with the continuation of working relations with Broadacres and the NYC housing team. The confirmed pipeline is made up from all NYC existing sites. Brierley Homes future development profile includes a shift in strategy for forward profiling to where they are delivering 100% affordable homes under contracts with monthly payments. This will improve their ability to predict income more accurately and will have a positive impact on cashflow once this is in place.

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3.3 In terms of the financial performance of the market sale homes, as with any new company it has taken time for Brierley Homes to establish itself. The company has endured a difficult initial trading period with global impacts, some disappointing contractor performance and some cost overruns, project delays and an erosion of profits. Due to this, an independent external review of the company was deemed appropriate and timely by the Shareholder, the outcome of which is detailed below. In parallel to this review, there is now more focus on sites being delivered within timescales with Brierley Homes reviewing and improving structures and systems with more certainty being provided over delivery programmes and costs. On this basis the financial position of the company is projected to improve in 25/26 and beyond.

4.0 DETAILED PRESENTATION OF THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE

4.1 Brierley Homes has delivered to date 100 market sale properties and 19 affordable homes. The Company has a business plan which is updated annually with the latest 5 year business plan issued in March 2025 with a further programme of 55 market sale homes and 43 affordable homes delivered in the 2025/26 financial year. The following 4 year life span of the plan relates to a further 124 market sale and 154 affordable homes demonstrating the business plan shift to deliverable cash based projects and a move away from 100% market sales. The current business plan utilises this delivery model to also allow 100% affordable schemes to be delivered, notably sites at Broomfield and Whitby. Brierley Homes involvement in this method of delivery of affordable schemes has allowed grant funding to be secured and planning permission for the delivery of 49 Affordable Eco homes has been secured. The current business plan profile has 3 projects of this type and currently a further 3 in feasibility stage. The business plan states that these cash flow positive projects will become essential in the current market to allow a robust management of Brierley Homes financial position.

4.2 In the current business plan, Brierley Homes have also revised schemes to include only market sales homes of a suitable size that the opportunity would be available for the homes to be sold as affordable homes thereby providing an exit route for any project should there be a downturn in the market. During the current trading year the market has slowed and Brierley Homes consider the current strategy including all the above mentioned strategies will allow effective management of the current financial position and provide a robust pipeline with confirmed sales income dates. The Market will fluctuate over time and this structure will allow Brierley Homes to react accordingly in order to balance cashflow through income from affordable homes sales with profit from market sales as the market strengthens.

4.3 Some uncertainty on timing of sales income has effectively constrained cashflow making short term planning difficult as expenditure is relatively linear and predictable but income from property sales is uneven and not controllable within short time scales. There is therefore an ongoing risk when Brierley Homes is at the ceiling of its loan facility that if delays to sales happen, many of which are outside of the company's control, there could be an adverse impact on the company's ability to pay its supply chain and other invoices due in the short term, hence the requirement for additional loan headroom.

4.4 Brierley Homes core business remains the delivery of homes for market sale. Brierley Homes have plans for a pipeline of sites over the next four years. Given the fluctuating nature of the timing of sales income it is possible that additional funding in the region of £2m is required to deliver these sites. It is proposed that a facility is agreed for up to that sum to be provided to Brierley Homes from NYC at the usual market rate of 6% above base rate. It is proposed that this facility be drawdown upon with the agreement of the Corporate Director Resources in consultation with Leader, Deputy Leader (Executive Member for Finance) and Chief Executive and is reviewed after the initial 6 months. This funding would be in addition to the £25m commercial loan facility currently granted to Brierley Homes and which Brierley Homes have now utilised £24.5m of to deliver its pipeline of schemes, bringing the total commercial loan facility to £27m. It is also in addition to the £1.4m loan facility granted in July 2025 to deliver affordable housing above policy.

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4.5 **Independent external review**

4.5.1 As summarised above, the Shareholder requested an independent external review of the operating model, structure, financial position and resilience of Brierley Homes be carried out. This was undertaken by Tony Dodds consulting and the findings were reported to Brierley Group in July 2025 and Executive at this meeting. Tony Dodds is a real estate professional with over 30 years' experience working in the land use sector, with a strong emphasis on residential development. He has set up and led two local authority owned trading companies in the UK engaged in providing new homes both for market sale and for affordable purposes and therefore has the appropriate skills and experience to carry out the review.

4.5.2 The following areas were covered by the review:

I. A review of the operating model of the company and its resilience.
II. A review of the structures and decision making. This should include looking at the permanent establishment and the short term/ agency staff
III. Its financial position in the short and medium term. So, covering cashflow and profitability of the pipeline and also development margin
IV. Options going forward: continue to build out the pipeline and wind up, extend the pipeline to pay back the loan and then wind up, continue to develop the company
V. Is the model of operation of delivering market facing homes for profit the right one, or does the company model change to one of delivering affordable homes / difficult sites given we are now unitary

4.5.3 The review concluded that:
"Brierley Homes is a business that is based on a sound operating model and an achievable goal, that of building new homes for profit. It has diversified and adapted, now building a high proportion of affordable homes and delivering construction in different ways.

It has endured a difficult initial trading period with global impacts, disappointing contractor performance and some poor project management leading to cost overruns, project delays and an erosion of profits. It now faces high debt levels, delays in crystalising Shareholder Value and criticisms for its unpredictable performance.

Despite this the company is delivering high quality projects with a pipeline and forecast to deliver Shareholder Value over the medium term. Structures and systems are being improved, and more certainty is being provided over delivery programmes and costs.

Further efficiencies are required, for example to the delivery team itself, which requires additional support and a clearer structure. Sales strategies need more robustness and improvements to the transparency and accuracy of information being exchanged with the shareholder need to continue. Development margins need reviewing and the way sites and land values are appraised aligned more to the proven methodology of the private sector.

The company also needs flexibility from its shareholder with respect to the development loan used to support its activities. Beneficial changes can help the company return to a more stable and sustainable financial trading position sooner, allowing more new projects to be delivered and greater Shareholder Value to be created.

The shareholder also needs to support the business as publicly owned commercial entity as it interacts with other parts of the Council. Making business decisions in its own interests can lead to conflicts which need careful handling to ensure optimal results for all parties.

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The new homes market in North Yorkshire has a positive outlook but remains affected by macro-economic influences. Careful planning is required to achieve sales at acceptable values and rates, with a focus needed on building homes that people want to buy, in good locations, with alternative exit options available as a back-up. Continued investment into delivering affordable homes under contract to third parties should be encouraged as a cash efficient and low risk part of the business model.

Similarly proper project planning and assessment is vital to ensure that unnecessary costs and delays are avoided. Early evidence suggests that the new construction delivery methods are proving successful and with inflation easing the ability of the company to deliver projects to budget and on time looks promising.
The quality and specification of the homes BH is producing is excellent and exceeds the market. Build costs are broadly market comparable and programmes for delivery in line with expected rates of output. Legacy issues on current sites are being reconciled and the lessons learned applied positively to new schemes.
The brief for this report asks if the operational model for BH is still appropriate or are there better alternatives. In answer, there is no reason to cease the trading of BH or change its current operating model, nor are there any other models that better satisfy achieving the goals of the shareholder.

The company has a positive impact on the County in addition to its core aim of generating Shareholder Value. These benefits are varied and tangible and BH can continue to provide a valuable contribution to the economy and environment of the area. "

4.6 Building on these conclusions, the following recommendations were raised:

- **Review of the loan terms** – give some flexibility which will allow the company freedom to trade in a more stable financial environment
- **Use a private sector funding structure** – loan up to 70% of direct costs for projects, cashflow each project separately, pay off debt and interest with initial sales income
- **Change the project appraisals** – increase the KPI development margins and use updated residual land value calculations
- **Support the team** – rationalise the structure and recruit for improved management, resilience, less freelance contracts and to plug the in-house skills gaps
- **Update sales strategies** – plan for an alternative exit, look at sales rates and values, allow for incentives, avoid unpopular house types
- **Review Council / Company interaction** – look at issues that may affect the operation of the business where it interacts with the shareholder
- **Business Continuity Plan** – produce one
- **Update criteria for Shareholder Value** – promote the true and fuller benefits of the company
- **Overheads and administrative costs** – review these including the role of SLA's
- **Accounts** – report balance sheet as well as profit and loss to reflect WIP and stock to give a truer picture of company health
- **Affordable Homes** – develop relationships and encourage delivery of further cashflow friendly build contracts
- **Information production** – continue to improve the detail and accuracy of data to inform all parties of trading position

4.7 These recommendations have been considered by both the Shareholder and the company with the responses and actions from these recommendations set out below:

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Use a private sector funding structure – loan up to 70% of direct costs for projects, cashflow each project separately, pay off debt and interest with initial sales income	In principle this is agreed. It is accepted that the current market rate charged of 6% above base rate is an appropriate market rate for market sale houses. It is proposed to review the value of the loan which is attributable to delivering affordable homes above policy and it was agreed as part of the urgent July 2025 decision that this element of the loan would be separate to the main loan for the company and would not attract a commercial rate of interest, instead it would be at base rate to recognise the social benefit of delivering the affordable homes. Loan of £1.4m has been used to date on affordable above policy with plans for additional affordable homes in the pipeline.
Change the project appraisals – increase the KPI development margins and use updated residual land value calculations	This is already in progress. A review of margin is being considered to ensure it is in line with the industry.
Support the team – rationalise the structure and recruit for improved management, resilience, less freelance contracts and to plug the in-house skills gaps	A review of the structure is taking place. This will pick up the split between Brierley Homes staff and freelance staff and make the whole staffing structure less linear. The cost implications of this need to be worked through.
Update sales strategies – plan for an alternative exit, look at sales rates and values, allow for incentives, avoid unpopular house types	Already being progressed. New sales strategy in place with a sales post appointed. Alternative exit route of shared ownership being considered as part of business cases and sales strategy along with work with the councils housing department for any homes that are not successful at market sale. Other incentives also being considered by the company such as stamp duty payment and some research being done as to what the rest of the industry is offering. Unpopular house types have already been identified and company is no longer offering.
Review Council / Company interaction – look at issues that may affect the operation of the business where it interacts with the shareholder	Issues are being addressed particularly with planning and highways departments to understand issues from both Organisations' perspectives.
Business Continuity Plan – produce one	This will be developed to be complete by December 2025.
Update criteria for Shareholder Value – promote the true and fuller benefits of the company	This is currently the loan margin and 10% of the SLAs. The definition of shareholder value and social value will be considered in future.
Overheads and administrative costs – review these including the role of SLAs	This is being addressed as part of the work on structures and margin set out above.
Accounts – report balance sheet as well as profit and loss to reflect WIP and stock to give a truer picture of company health	Agreed this would improve financial reporting and is the direction of travel. Full financial information including P&L, balance Sheet, work in progress and Cashflow are prepared and reconciled at year end and so a full picture of the company is available. The intention is for Brierley Homes to move to a new finance system following NYC go live on 1 April 2026 and so this will be picked up as part of that project.
Affordable Homes – develop relationships and encourage	This is in place and is something Brierley Homes will look to build on in the future. 2 fully affordable schemes

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delivery of further cashflow friendly build contracts	commence on site in August with monthly income associated with this and a further 3 fully affordable schemes in the development pipeline. Brierley Homes are working with a registered provider and need to continue developing the conversation with the council's housing team to start developing homes to support the HRA. The availability of additional grant funding to deliver such schemes will also be explored.
Information production – continue to improve the detail and accuracy of data to inform all parties of trading position	Significant progress in this area with the build and sales tracker and weekly cashflow both of which are updated weekly and shared with team members weekly and Board as appropriate. This has greatly increased visibility of what income is to be received and the amounts and timing of payments. The detail included and the accuracy of these documents will continue to be refined. Sales income in year is also now fully detailed with risk included so that this can be tracked and issues highlighted early. Relationships between different teams have also developed with better joint working.

4.8 Based on this review, there is support for the Council to continue with the Company as set out along with ensuring improvements, as per the recommendations, are progressed.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 There is an option not to approve any additional loan, but this runs the risk of some payments being unable to be made if there is any delay in sales income being received and the development pipeline of Brierley Homes being constrained.

6.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

6.1 There was no impact on any other services or organisations.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The company reported a draft outturn position as at 31 March 2025 of Gross Profit £0.05m and a Net Loss of £3.2m, after taking account of £2.3m financing costs and £1m overheads. This result was driven by delays in receiving sales income for a variety of reasons. Processes have been implemented to ensure stronger more robust procedures and governance is in place to support the development of Brierley Homes going forward. The draft forecast outturn for 25/26 as at quarter one is a profit of £0.3m with this rising to £3.2m in 26/27. Shareholder value in 25/26 is forecast to be £1.9m. The Business Plan provides for gradual repayments to be made on the loan.

7.2 The following statement was included in the independent report in terms of the pipeline and loan repayment: "An assessment of the current pipeline projects suggests that over the next 4 years trading through these schemes can enable BH to repay almost all of the principal debt whilst also covering the company overheads and making the necessary loan interest payments."

7.3 The income from sales forecasts at the time of the 21 July 2025 urgent decision report was for £4.724m to be received by the end of August. At the time of writing, £3.27m of this income has been received. The remaining income is due in during September / October in line with some movement in sales completion dates.

7.4 The Council has an existing loan facility to Brierley Homes of £25m at a commercial rate of interest and, following the urgent decision on 21 July 2025, an additional loan facility of £1.4m to deliver affordable homes above policy. This loan to deliver affordable housing is at base rate of interest to reflect the social benefit to support the delivery of affordable homes.

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7.5 The additional loan facility to deliver market housing of £2m is proposed to be at a commercial rate in line with the existing loan and would therefore provide additional shareholder value for the Council. It is proposed that any draw down on this loan facility would be delegated to the approval of the Corporate Director Resources in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader (Executive Member for Finance) and Chief Executive.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The proposed loan does not meet the criteria for a subsidy because it does not confer an economic advantage, as it aligns with the terms available in the market.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific equalities implications arising from this report. See Appendix A

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no specific climate change impacts arising from this report. Brierley Homes houses are built in line or above current policy. See Appendix B

11.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

11.1 Additional loan facility is required in order to potentially allow the company time for sales to be received over the next few months and ensure Brierley Homes can continue to make all payments due to suppliers in the event of some delayed sales in the coming months.

12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 For the Executive to note the conclusions and recommendations of the independent external review that has been carried out.

12.2 For Executive to approve additional loan facility headroom to Brierley Homes of £2m at the usual commercial rate of interest to be reviewed after 6 months to ensure Brierley Homes has appropriate cashflow over the short term. Approval of draw down on this additional loan facility to be delegated to the Corporate Director Resources in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader (Executive Member for Finance) and Chief Executive and is subject to evidence of need being demonstrated.

APPENDIX
Appendix A – EIA
Appendix B – CCIA

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

Gary Fielding
Corporate Director Resources
County Hall
Northallerton
5 September 2025

Report Author – Vicki Dixon – Assistant Director - Resources, Environment

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

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Initial equality impact assessment screening form
This form records an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to a proposal, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.

Directorate	Resources
Service area	Finance
Proposal being screened	Brierley Homes Independent Review and Funding Update
Officer(s) carrying out screening	Vicki Dixon
What are you proposing to do?	To report the outcome of an independent review of Brierley Homes and to seek approval for additional loan facility of £2m.
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	Based on this review, there is support for the Council to continue with the Company and the additional loan headroom will ensure no payments are unable to be made if there is any delay in sales income being received.
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details.	The proposal requests additional loan headroom of £2m from NYC – the report proposes that this is at a commercial rate of interest.

Impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYC's additional agreed characteristics

As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions:

- To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics?
- Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important?
- Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to?

If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be an adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate. You are advised to speak to your directorate representative for advice if you are in any doubt.

Protected characteristic	**Potential for adverse impact**		**Don't know/No info available**
	Yes	**No**	
Age		X	
Disability		X	
Sex		X	
Race		X	
Sexual orientation		X	
Gender reassignment		X	
Religion or belief		X	
Pregnancy or maternity		X	
Marriage or civil partnership		X	
People in rural areas		X	
People on a low income		X	
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		X	
Are from the Armed Forces Community		X	
Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (for	No		

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example, disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.				
Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (for example, partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.	No			
Decision (Please tick one option)	EIA not relevant or proportionate:	✓	Continue to full EIA:	No
Reason for decision	No adverse impact identified			
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)	Vicki Dixon			
Date	04 September 2025			

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Climate change impact assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to help us understand the likely impacts of our decisions on the environment of North Yorkshire and on our aspiration to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030, or as close to that date as possible. The intention is to mitigate negative effects and identify projects which will have positive effects.

This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. The final document will be published as part of the decision making process and should be written in Plain English.

If you have any additional queries which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Version 2: amended 11 August 2021

Please note: You may not need to undertake this assessment if your proposal will be subject to any of the following:
Planning Permission
Environmental Impact Assessment
Strategic Environmental Assessment

However, you will still need to summarise your findings in the summary section of the form below.

Please contact climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk for advice.

Title of proposal	Brierley Homes Independent Review and Funding Update
Brief description of proposal	To report the outcome of an independent review of Brierley Homes and to seek approval for additional loan facility of £2m.
Directorate	Resources
Service area	Finance
Lead officer	Vicki Dixon
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	N/A
Date impact assessment started	4 September 2025

Options appraisal
Were any other options considered in trying to achieve the aim of this project? If so, please give brief details and explain why alternative options were not progressed.

An option was considered not to require any additional loan but this runs the risk of some payments being unable to be made if there is any delay in sales income being received and the development pipeline of Brierley Homes being constrained.

What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?

Please explain briefly why this will be the result, detailing estimated savings or costs where this is possible.

The proposal requests additional loan headroom of £2m from NYC – the report proposes that this is at a commercial rate of interest.

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How will this proposal impact on the environment? **N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.**		**Positive impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**No impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Negative impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?** **Where possible/relevant please include:** • **Changes over and above business as usual** • **Evidence or measurement of effect** • **Figures for CO_2e** • **Links to relevant documents**	**Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.**	**Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.**
Minimise **greenhouse gas emissions** e.g. reducing emissions from travel, increasing energy efficiencies etc.	Emissions from travel		X				
	Emissions from construction		X				
	Emissions from running of buildings		X				
	Emissions from data storage		X				
	Other		X				
Minimise **waste:** Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost e.g. reducing use of single use plastic			X				
Reduce **water** consumption			X				

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How will this proposal impact on the environment? **N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.**	**Positive impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**No impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Negative impact** (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	**Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?** **Where possible/relevant please include:** • **Changes over and above business as usual** • **Evidence or measurement of effect** • **Figures for CO_2e** • **Links to relevant documents**	**Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.**	**Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.**
Minimise **pollution** (including air, land, water, light and noise)		X				
Ensure **resilience** to the effects of climate change e.g. reducing flood risk, mitigating effects of drier, hotter summers		X				
Enhance **conservation** and wildlife		X				
Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of **North Yorkshire's landscape**		X				
Other (please state below)		X				

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Are there any recognised good practice environmental standards in relation to this proposal? If so, please detail how this proposal meets those standards.
Brierley Homes houses are built in line or above current policy

Summary Summarise the findings of your impact assessment, including impacts, the recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.
There are no specific climate change impacts arising from this report. Brierley Homes houses are built in line or above current policy

Sign off section

This climate change impact assessment was completed by:

Name	**Vicki Dixon**
Job title	**Assistant Director, Resources (Environment)**
Service area	**Finance**
Directorate	**Resources**
Signature	**Vicki Dixon**
Completion date	**04 September 2025**

Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature): Vicki Dixon

Date: 04 September 2025

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North Yorkshire Council

Executive

16/09/2025
RECHARGING FOR SCHEDULED PARISH ELECTIONS

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive – Legal and Democratic Services

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1. To seek a decision from the Executive on whether NYC should recharge parishes for the cost of all scheduled elections (next due to take place in 2027), including uncontested elections (scheduled and unscheduled) from April 2026.

1.2. If recharges should be made, to seek a decision from the Executive on the preferred option to form the basis of those recharges.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1. This report seeks to review the existing policy on recovering the costs from parishes for their scheduled elections which take place on a 4 yearly cycle, the next being due in May 2027. More details on the costs involved and the options can be found at Appendix A.

2.2. If not recharged the additional cost to North Yorkshire Council for contested parish scheduled elections is estimated to be between £150k and £200k (plus inflation) for each 4-year election cycle. Further costs will also be incurred by North Yorkshire Council in relation to uncontested elections.

2.3. There is the potential to recover circa £350k if adopting a shared basis for some cost elements as explained in this report.

2.4. This report also seeks to introduce recharges for uncontested by-elections which are not currently captured within the existing policy, from April 2026.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1. Elections for parish councils are held every 4 years, with the next elections scheduled for 6th May 2027 (to be combined with elections to North Yorkshire Council). Between scheduled elections, casual vacancies can occur at any time, due to death, disqualification, or resignation of a councillor. The Returning Officer (RO) as appointed under Section 35 RPA 1983 is the RO for parish elections within the principal authority boundary area.

3.2. Under Section 36 Representation People Act 1983 the RO is entitled to reclaim from the parish council, expenditure incurred in relation to each parish council election, using a fixed scale of fees set at principal council level. This includes the ability for the RO to reclaim costs incurred at scheduled parish elections. Scheduled parish elections usually coincide with principal authority elections, and some costs can be shared.

3.3. The current policy is to only recharge for contested parish by-elections. This was agreed by the Executive on 18th July 2023 with a commitment to review the policy before the next scheduled elections in 2027. The current policy therefore does not provide for recharging any costs relating to:

- Uncontested elections (scheduled or unscheduled)
- Contested scheduled elections (May 2027 + 4 yearly)

4.0 PARISH ELECTIONS SINCE VESTING DAY AND THE NATURE OF RECHARGES

4.1. Since April 2024, there have been 6 contested parish elections, the most recent being held on 31st July 2025. The full costs of holding these elections have been recharged to the relevant parish (save that North Yorkshire Council officer time during normal working hours has not been recharged).

4.2. In addition, scheduled elections to the new Harrogate and Scarborough Town Councils were held on 1st May 2025. As these were scheduled elections for newly formed entities it was agreed that North Yorkshire Council would incur the full costs of those elections which was circa £200k.

4.3. The main costs incurred for a parish election are print and postage of poll cards, print and postage of postal votes, production of ballot papers and other election stationery, election staffing, and the hire of premises.

4.4. Some costs incurred for elections can be predicted when applied to the variables of the parish, which will help to provide indicative figures to parishes in advance:

- Staff fees are set based on an agreed North Yorkshire Elections Fees schedule (contained within schedule 2 in Appendix A), which uses national election fee pay bands set by central government as its basis.
- An external print contract has been entered into by NYC for election printing, which also covers outwards postage costs of poll cards and postal votes
- Cost of venue hire for polling stations and the count – although this varies per venue
- Royal Mail postage costs – inwards return postal votes

4.5. There are 412 Parish Councils within North Yorkshire, which comprise of 632 electoral areas (wards of parishes or parishes within a group) which could go to a contest. In 2022, 45 electoral areas were contested, for 239 seats (see appendix A schedule 6). The estimated additional cost of this situation being mirrored in 2027 is £70,000. This does not include the wards of Harrogate or Scarborough Town Council which all went to election in May 2025 and may well also go to a contested election in 2027.

UNCONTESTED POLLS

4.6. Since vesting day there have been a number of parish casual vacancies arising where 10 electors have requested the vacancy be filled by election and then insufficient nominations are received for a contested election. In these cases, some costs associated with printing are still incurred as proof documents need to be produced in advance of the close of nominations. These costs could be recharged to the relevant parish but are not currently.

4.7. Officer time is required to prepare and publish election notices and to receive, check and process candidate nominations (whether at scheduled elections or by-elections). North Yorkshire has 2900 parish level seats which will require considerable resource at the

nominations stage. Appendix A (page 5&6) sets out a proposed schedule of uncontested election fees for parish by-elections and scheduled parish elections.

COMBINED POLLS

4.8. The cost of a parish election can also depend on how many elections are being held on the same day, for example if there is a North Yorkshire Council election, UK Parliamentary election, or Combined Mayoral election on the same day. Some printing (combined poll cards) and postage costs, polling accommodation and staffing are among the items that could be shared. However, anything that relates solely to the parish such as ballot papers could be charged in full (and currently are for by-elections). Sometimes, it is not preferred to issue combined poll cards or postal vote packs due to deadlines and risk management.

4.9. A list of the cost elements for an election, and the basis on which they can be shared with a combined poll, are set out in within the policy options document at schedule 1 in Appendix A.

4.10. If a parish by-election is combined with another poll held on the same day, approximately 60% of by-election costs are directly attributable to the parish contested (print of ballot papers and postal votes, postage), with 40% of costs being shared between the polls occurring on the same day (venue hire and staffing for example).

5.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

5.1. A well-led and managed, financially sustainable and forward- thinking council

6.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1. Option 1 in Appendix A: To continue recharging parishes for by-elections and introduce recharges at scheduled elections (May 2027 + 4 yearly) for both the costs solely attributable to the parish election (i.e. ballot papers and postal vote packs if dispatched separately) **in addition** to the shared element costs such as venue hire, staffing fees.

6.2. Option 3 in Appendix A: To continue with parish recharge arrangements in place since April 2024, only recharging for the cost contested by-elections.

6.3. Option 4 in appendix A: To not recharge at all for any parish elections

7.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

7.1. Town and parish councils have the power to finance the cost of their elections from the local precept. Without a recharge policy in place, all NYC council taxpayers would bear the burden of the cost of parish elections through the NYC precept, regardless of whether they reside in one of the areas where there is a contested election. A recharge policy ensures the cost is met by the local residents of the relevant parish area through the parish precept.

7.2. When considering the potential introduction of election recharges for town and parish councils, concerns were expressed about the potential impact on democracy and candidates potentially being discouraged from standing to avoid the need for a poll and therefore any recharge costs. In addition to the statutory notices produced by the principal council, it is for the parish councils to promote the elections in their areas encouraging candidates to stand for election. Electoral administrators across North Yorkshire have been

unable to find any evidence demonstrating that parish by-elections decrease due to recharges.

7.3. For some areas within North Yorkshire, a recharge policy for scheduled elections will impact on parish budgets where a recharge is being applied for the first time, such as in the former district and borough areas of Harrogate and Ryedale. Other former district areas of Craven, Hambleton, Richmondshire, Scarborough and Selby have previously recharged parish councils in their area for scheduled elections, and Ryedale have partially charged but only for polling station hire.

7.4. It is understood that budget setting activity for the next financial year takes place in December for most parish councils, and it is recommended that any policy for recharging for scheduled elections is communicated to parishes within North Yorkshire as soon as possible to allow planning for any precept increases.

7.5. Communication with parishes would include an initial communication in Autumn 2025, followed up with the opportunity to meet and discuss the changes and charges, and if required, indicative charges provided before December 2025 (though this can be difficult to predict exactly due to the many variables and some external provider fees beyond our control).

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1. Amending the recharge basis for parish council elections will produce a reduction in the Council spend but this figure is difficult to quantify accurately as it is entirely dependent on how many electoral areas are contested in 2027, and the number of casual vacancies between scheduled elections at parish level.

8.2. If a similar number of parishes were to go to election in 2027 as in the last scheduled elections in May 2022 (see list in schedule 5 in appendix A), the **additional costs** of those elections (over and above the estimated cost of the scheduled North Yorkshire Council elections) is likely to be £150-200k, which could be recharged (option 2 in appendix A).

8.3. If the full costs of combined elections in 2027 (including those divisible elements mentioned in 4.10 above) were to be shared equally between North Yorkshire Council and the parish, town or city councils with contested elections, then around £350k of costs could be recharged to those councils (option 1 in appendix A). This estimate is based on 35% of North Yorkshire (by electorate) having a contested parish election on the same day as the North Yorkshire Council elections. The equates to a cost of roughly £2 per elector in the parish.

8.4 Each occurrence of an uncontested by-election costs NYC around £250.

8.5 Introducing a charge for uncontested scheduled elections (see section 4.7 above) could recover an estimated £35k (based on those areas that did not go to contest in 2022).

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1. The relevant legal powers are referenced in the body of this report.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1. An Equalities Impact Assessment screening has been completed (Appendix B), and a full EIA is not required at this time. Any future proposed changes will be subject to separate EIA screening.

11.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

11.1. There are no climate change implications arising from this report (see appendix C).

12.0 CONCLUSIONS

12.1. Parishes being financially responsible for their elections ensures affected electors are contributing towards the cost of parish democracy via specific area parish precept, rather than all electors across North Yorkshire paying for parish elections in the entire North Yorkshire area.

12.2. There is no evidence of recharging parishes having a detrimental impact on parish level democracy.

12.3. Introducing parish recharges from the next scheduled elections due May 2027 onwards allows time for changes to be communicated and managed by parishes when it comes to any potential budgetary impact.

12.4. The recommendation to rechange parish councils for uncontested by-elections can be implemented from 1 April 2026 to ensure the council can recover those costs for by-elections sooner than 2027.

13.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1. To reduce the financial burden on North Yorkshire Council for parish election costs. Parishes becoming more financially responsible for their elections ensures affected electors are contributing towards the cost of parish democracy via specific area parish precept, rather than all electors across North Yorkshire paying for parish elections in the entire area.

14.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

i. That the Council continue to recharge parish councils for by-elections.

ii. That the Council recharges parish councils at scheduled elections (May 2027 + 4 yearly) for the additional costs solely attributable to the parish election, as per option 2 in Appendix A to form the basis of those recharges.

iii. That the Council introduces the proposed recharges for uncontested parish elections from April 2026, as set out in appendix A.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Options for proposed Election Recharges to Parishes
Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form
Appendix C – Climate Impact Assessment Form

Barry Khan
Assistant Chief Executive – Legal and Democratic Services
County Hall
Northallerton
September 2025

Report Author – Kerry Russett

Note: Members are invited to contact the author or presenter in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

Appendix A - Options for Election Recharges to Parishes

2025 Proposals

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Why do we recharge?

Elections can be called at any time, when parish councillors are no longer in office due to resignations, death, or disqualification. Every parish election incurs costs such as the hire of polling stations, staffing, the printing of ballot papers and postal votes, and postage. By-elections also incur these types of cost, and the number of parish by-elections is unpredictable. Scheduled parish elections are held every 4 years. All parish, town and city councils will have all out elections in May 2027.

The Returning Officer for North Yorkshire Council (NYC) is responsible for organising and delivering elections for all parishes within North Yorkshire. Section 36 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 allows the Returning Officer to recover from local Town & Parish Councils administration fees and costs incurred.

The recharges to parishes are on a cost recovery basis only, and no income will be generated by NYC as profit.

When will recharges apply?

Option 1

Recharges will apply for all parish elections and by-elections, whether contested or uncontested.

The costs associated exclusively with a parish election and by-election will be recharged in full to the parish council.

Where a parish election is combined with elections to North Yorkshire Council, or any other poll, the cost of common facilities and services will be shared equally by the number of polls combined on the same day (for example the costs of hiring a polling station and employing polling staff will be split 50:50 between the parish or town council with the election and North Yorkshire Council). If there are more than 2 polls combined on the same day those divisible elements will be shared between the number of polls being held. See schedule 1 below.

Option 2

Recharges will apply for all parish elections and by-elections, whether contested or uncontested.

The costs associated exclusively with a parish election and by-election will be recharged in full to the parish council.

Where combined with the election of North Yorkshire Council councillors, only the additional costs of holding the parish elections will be recharged (for example the core cost of polling stations and polling staff will not be recharged as that cost would be incurred for the North Yorkshire Council elections anyway, only the staffing ‘uplift’ fees for combined poll will be recharged (see schedule 2).

Option 3

Recharges will only apply for unscheduled by-elections (as now).

At scheduled elections (usually 4 yearly), no recharges will be made.

Option 4

North Yorkshire Council bear the cost of all parish elections, making no recharges to parishes to recover costs.

What is recharged?

Parishes election costs depend on many variables, such as:

- parish electorate;
- number of postal voters;
- geographical area affecting number of polling stations and staffing required; and
- whether poll cards are issued or not.

Costs incurred at an election relate to:

Cost Element	
Hire of venues	Polling & count
Delivery of equipment to venues	Polling booths and or other equipment, if required
Printing	Poll cards, postal votes, ballot papers, election notices
Postage	Poll cards and postal votes, general administration
Staffing (& mileage)	At the polling station, the opening of postal votes, the count of votes, and for general administration
Returning Officer Fee	

Poll card issue

The issue of poll cards is optional for the parish but strongly recommended.

Upon receipt of the necessary requests for a parish by-election, NYC will calculate the cost of production and postage of poll cards and inform the parish in advance to allow a decision to be made by the parish on whether to issue them or not. Whilst not issuing poll cards can reduce the cost of a by-election, the Returning Officer recommends issuing poll cards for all contested elections to increase awareness and turnout for improved democracy. For scheduled elections, poll cards will be combined with the North Yorkshire Council elections on one card.

Combined Polls

Usually, where a local election is combined with a national poll (like a General Election), the costs of printing and postage, polling accommodation and staffing are among the items that can be shared. However, anything that relates solely to the local element such as

ballot papers are charged in full. The same principal can apply where a parish election is combined with local government elections.

A list of the cost elements for an election, and the basis on which they can be shared with a combined poll, are set out in schedule 1.

Staff working at the election are paid using rates of pay agreed by NYC. A schedule of staffing fees is provided in schedule 2. Note that the rates of pay are subject to annual uplift in line with the national election fees schedule.

The costs incurred also vary depending on the prices charged by Royal Mail and service providers for a particular election. The anticipated costs incurred for printing and postage (outwards) can be found in schedule 3.

An indicative example of the costs involved in a parish election under different recharging schemes can be found in schedule 4.

A list of parishes that went to a contested election in 2022 and 2024 can be found in schedule 5.

Uncontested Fees

When a casual vacancy occurs, a Notice of Vacancy is published by the parish or town clerk giving electors 14 working days notice to request in writing that the vacancy be filled by election. If 10 such requests are received by North Yorkshire Council's Monitoring Officer with the 14 working day period, an election to fill the vacancy must be held.

Usually when this happens, sufficient candidates come forward to stand at the election for it to be contested. Occasionally however, there are insufficient candidates for a contested poll. The same also applies at scheduled elections. For reference, in 2022, out of 608 potential parish contests (across the 412 parish, town and city councils in North Yorkshire), only 45 were contested.

Where the poll is uncontested, North Yorkshire Council still incurs costs. To prepare for an election, Electoral Services need to engage with a print supplier to prepare the printed materials needed should the poll be contested. This incurs a cost. Officer time is also required to produce the legal notices for the poll and to run candidate nominations.

For this reason, it is proposed that where a parish by-election is uncontested, the printer's setup costs could be recharged (actual cost incurred) to the relevant parish council and for all scheduled parish elections, an administration fee for an uncontested election charged at the following rates:

Number of Vacancies	Electorate in affected electoral area	Fee
Less than or equal to 7	Less than or equal to 1,000	£50
Less than or equal to 7	More than 1,000	£75
8 or 9	All	£100
10 or more	All	£125

How much could be recharged?

As explained in the above section, costs vary greatly between parishes due to many variables.

Indicative calculations can be provided upon request for each parish (or ward of a parish if warded), though it must be noted that these are estimates only.

By way of example, parish by elections can cost anywhere between £1,500 and £10,000 depending upon the size of the electorate and geographical area.

Currently parishes should expect to receive an invoice from NYC for the cost of a by-election within 2 months of the date of the poll. This allows the costs incurred from external organisations (polling station hire, print and postage) to be received, paid and reconciled by NYC before calculating the total cost of a parish by-election.

Paying the recharges

Parishes receive a precept via the Local Authority Council Tax to run the parish and this includes services such as allotments, lighting, cemeteries etc. Parishes need to factor the contingency cost of by-elections into their budget setting activity, and ensure they have sufficient funds to cover elections.

Invoices for by-election recharges must be paid in full, within 30 days.

Invoices issued by NYC can be paid by following the information provided on the back of the invoice, which explains how to pay the invoice by any of the following methods:

- via the council website using a debit or credit card
- by telephone – automated payment line
- by bank transfer
- at the bank
- by post (cheque)

If any parish is struggling to pay their election recharges, they should contact electoral services on the details below.

Schedule 1 - Cost Elements for a Parish Election

(Combination share)

The following table lists the cost elements of an election, and the basis on which they could be shared if combined with another poll on the same day (as per Options 1 & 2):

Chargeable Service or Item	Cost recharged to parish at by-election	If combined with another poll:
Hire of polling stations (varies by venue)	actual cost	shared equally by the number of polls (option 1) no cost to parish council (option 2)
Production of Poll cards (optional for the parish)	Refer to schedule 3	shared equally by the number of polls (if able to issue combined poll cards) (option 1) no cost to parish council (if able to issue combined poll cards) (option 2)
Postage of Poll Cards (optional for the parish)	Refer to schedule 3	shared equally by the number of polls (if able to issue combined poll cards) (option 1) no cost to parish council (if able to issue combined poll cards) (option 2)
Production of ballot papers (and other election stationery)	Refer to schedule 3	Actual cost of parish element (options 1 & 2)
Production/print of postal votes	Refer to schedule 3	shared equally by the number of polls (if able to issue combined packs - not always possible) (option 1) If not possible to combine - full cost recharged. (options 1 & 2) If possible to combine, no cost to parish council (option 2)
Outward postage of postal votes	Refer to schedule 3	shared equally by the number of polls (if able to issue combined packs - not always possible) (option 1) If not possible to combine - full cost recharged. (options 1 & 2) If possible to combine, no cost to parish council (option 2)
Inward postage votes	In line with Royal Mail	shared equally by the number of polls (if able to issue combined packs - not always possible) (option 1)

Chargeable Service or Item	Cost recharged to parish at by-election	If combined with another poll:
		If not possible to combine - full cost recharged. (options 1 & 2) If possible to combine, no cost to parish council (option 2)
Hire of count venue	Actual (varies per venue)	electorate to station proportion (option 1) no cost to parish council (option 2)
Staffing (polling staff &, count staff etc)	Refer to schedule 2	Polling - shared equally by the number of polls (Option 1) Polling – only additional cost recharged to parish (option 2) Count – 100% to parish for specific staff time counting parish ballot papers (Options 1 & 2)
Returning Officer Fees	Refer to schedule 2	Unable to share if combined (Options 1 & 2)
Mileage incurred by staff	45p per mile	shared equally by the number of polls (option 1) no cost to parish council (option 2)

Schedule 2 - Election staff rates of pay

North Yorkshire Council agreed schedule of fees (2025/26)

Job / Role	Rate of Pay
Returning Officer	8p per elector, or £56 (whichever is the greater)
Presiding Officer Uplift for combination poll	£278.80 / day £55.76 / day
Poll Clerk Uplift for combination poll	£201.60 / day £40.32 / day
Polling Station Inspector (if required)	£303 / day
Attendance at training (if required)	£18.05 / hour
Coordinator Role: • Poll Card Checks / Issue • Postal Vote Issue / opening	£21.86 / hour – day £32.80 / hour – eve
Supervisor Role • Poll Card Checks / Issue • Postal Vote Issue / Opening	£18.05 / hour – day £27.07 / hour – eve
Assistant Role Postal Vote issue / opening	£14.05 / hour – day £21.08 / hour – eve
Senior Count Manager / Supervisor	£29.85 / hour – day £42.07 / hour – eve
Count Supervisor	£20.09 / hour – day £30.14 / hour - eve
Count Assistant	£14.05 / hour – day £21.08 / hour – eve
Clerical (supervisory level)	£15.50 / hour - day £23.25 / hour – eve
Clerical (admin level)	£14.04 / hour – day £21.08 / hour - eve
Staff mileage	45p / mile

Schedule 3 – External Print and Postage Costs

The following table details our contracted rates for the production, printing and postage for election material by NYCs specialist contracted provider:

Element	Cost
Job setup costs	Under £1k
Poll card printing	contracted rate
Poll card postage	£0.60 per poll card
Postal vote printing	contracted rate
Postal vote postage – outward	£1.25 per postal vote envelope
Postal vote postage – return	£1.67 per envelope (Royal Mail costs)
Ballot papers – ordinary	contracted rate
Ballot papers – tendered	contracted rate

Schedule 4 – Worked Example, Parish with electorate of 3,246, 1 polling station

Chargeable Service or Item	Cost recharged to parish at by-election (not combined)	Cost to parish at scheduled election if amount shared equally between NYC and Parish – Option 1	Cost to parish at scheduled election if only additional costs of parish election recharged – Option 2 (Recommended)
Hire of polling stations (varies by venue)	£346.50	£173.25	£0
Production of Poll cards	£431.14	£215.57	£0
Production of Postal votes	£758.75	£758.75	£758.75
Postage of Poll Cards (optional for the parish at by-elections)	£1,897.76	£948.88	£0
Postage of Postal Votes (outward)	£833.25	£833.25	£833.25
Production of ballot papers (and other election stationery)	£361.60	£361.60	£361.60
Inward postage (postal votes)	£811.62	£811.62	£811.62
Hire of count venue	Usually count at one of polling stations (no extra cost)	£100	£0
Staffing (polling staff &, count staff etc)	£750	£375	£236.40
Returning Officer Fees	£259.68	£259.68	£259.68

Chargeable Service or Item	Cost recharged to parish at by-election (not combined)	Cost to parish at scheduled election if amount shared equally between NYC and Parish – Option 1	Cost to parish at scheduled election if only additional costs of parish election recharged – Option 2 (Recommended)
TOTAL	£6,450.30	£4,837.60	£3,261.30

Schedule 5 – All Contested Parish contests - most recent scheduled elections

Parish Contested Elections May 2022		
Contest Name	**Seats**	**Electorate**
Appleton Wiske	7	389
Arkengarthdale	5	189
Boroughbridge, Boroghbridge Ward	10	3151
Byland-with-Wass	3	121
Coniston Cold	5	168
Cotcliffe & Crosby	1	30
Cridling Stubbs	5	141
Croft-on-Tees	5	361
Cropton	5	201
Danby Wiske with Lazenby	5	264
Darley & Menwith	7	901
Dishforth	5	768
Easingwold	11	4674
Filey, Filey Ward	12	5583
Great Smeaton	3	166
Hornby	3	220
Kirkby Malzeard	5	710
Knaresborough, Aspin & Calcutt Ward	3	2987
Knaresborough, Castle Ward	3	3405
Knaresborough, Eastfield Ward	3	2963
Knaresborough, Scriven Park Ward	3	3576
Linton	5	107
Long Preston	7	626
Luttons	9	325
Malton	12	4972
Manfield	4	225
Newby	5	183
Newsham	5	294
Nunnington	5	192
Osmotherley	5	483
Ripon, Moorside Ward	3	3235
Ripon, Spa Ward	3	3248

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Ripon, Ure Bank Ward	3	3237
Scagglethorpe	7	181
Scriven	5	205
Selby, North Ward	5	4729
Selby, South Ward	5	4578
Skipton, East Ward	4	3154
Skipton, North Ward	4	3210
Skipton, South Ward	4	2700
Thorganby	9	305
Thornton-Le-Breans	4	201
Tockwith, Tockwith Ward	7	1583
Topcliffe	5	748
Well	5	209
Town Council Contested Elections May 2025		
Harrogate Town Council - Bilton Grange Ward	1	3046
Harrogate Town Council - Bilton Woodfield Ward	1	3093
Harrogate Town Council - Central Ward	1	3051
Harrogate Town Council - Coppice Valley Ward	1	3099
Harrogate Town Council - Duchy Ward	1	2495
Harrogate Town Council - Fairfax Ward	1	3165
Harrogate Town Council - Harlow Ward	1	3139
Harrogate Town Council - High Harrogate Ward	1	3333
Harrogate Town Council - Hookstone Ward	1	2826
Harrogate Town Council - Kingsley Ward	1	3422
Harrogate Town Council - New Park Ward	1	2846
Harrogate Town Council - Oatlands Ward	1	3306
Harrogate Town Council - Old Bilton Ward	1	2856
Harrogate Town Council - Pannal Ward	1	1072
Harrogate Town Council - Saltergate Ward	1	1614
Harrogate Town Council - St Georges Ward	1	3455
Harrogate Town Council - Starbeck Ward	1	2793
Harrogate Town Council - Stray Ward	1	3329
Harrogate Town Council - Valley Gardens Ward	1	3136
Scarborough Town Council - Castle Ward	3	5528
Scarborough Town Council - Falsgrave & Stepney Ward	3	6243
Scarborough Town Council - Northstead Ward	3	5448
Scarborough Town Council - Weaponness & Ramshill Ward	3	6021
Scarborough Town Council - Woodlands Ward	3	5220

Appendix B - Initial equality impact assessment screening form
This form records an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to a proposal, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.

Directorate	Central Services – Legal & Democratic
Service area	Electoral Services
Proposal being screened	Decision on whether to, and on what basis to recharge parish councils for scheduled and uncontested elections across North Yorkshire
Officer(s) carrying out screening	Barry Khan, Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services)
What are you proposing to do?	Recharge all parish councils for **all** elections (rather than just by-elections), scheduled or unscheduled, from 01 April 2026, including uncontested, for fees incurred. Communicate the recharge basis with parishes across North Yorkshire in Autumn 2025 before any parish budget setting activity.
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	To ensure that electors in parishes are fairly treated in respect of costs incurred locally for parish elections in relevant areas rather than all electors bearing the costs for specific parish elections. Contribution to the Councils financial stability.
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details.	No. Impact will be on parish council budgets, rather than NYC budgets, and will vary from parish to parish.

Impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYC's additional agreed characteristics

As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions:

- To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics?
- Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important?
- Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to?

If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be an adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate. You are advised to speak to your Equality rep for advice if you are in any doubt.

Protected characteristic	**Potential for adverse impact**		**Don't know/No info available**
	Yes	**No**	
Age		✓	
Disability		✓	
Sex		✓	
Race		✓	
Sexual orientation		✓	
Gender reassignment		✓	
Religion or belief		✓	
Pregnancy or maternity		✓	
Marriage or civil partnership		✓	
People in rural areas		✓	
People on a low income		✓	
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		✓	

Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (e.g. disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.	No – all areas affected			
Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.	**No.** The impact will be on parish budgets, which will impact parish precept setting.			
Decision (Please tick one option)	EIA not relevant or proportionate:	✓	Continue to full EIA:	✘
Reason for decision	This proposal is not likely to have any adverse impact in relation to equalities on organisations or individuals.			
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)	Jennifer Norton			
Date	02/09/2025			

Initial Climate Change Impact Assessment (Form created August 2021)

The intention of this document is to help the council to gain an initial understanding of the impact of a project or decision on the environment. This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. Dependent on this initial assessment you may need to go on to complete a full Climate Change Impact Assessment. The final document will be published as part of the decision-making process.

If you have any additional queries, which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Title of proposal	**Parish Recharge Policy**
Brief description of proposal	**Make changes to the existing recharge policy, which only includes recharging parish councils for unscheduled contested by-elections, to include recharging parish councils for costs of scheduled (4 yearly elections) and uncontested election costs, from 01 April 2026.**
Directorate	**Legal & Democratic**
Service area	**Electoral Services**
Lead officer	**Kerry Russett, Head of Electoral Services**
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	**Ben Nattrass, Electoral Services Manager**

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The chart below contains the main environmental factors to consider in your initial assessment – choose the appropriate option from the drop-down list for each one.

Remember to think about the following;

- Travel
- Construction
- Data storage
- Use of buildings
- Change of land use
- Opportunities for recycling and reuse

Environmental factor to consider	For the council	For the county	Overall
Greenhouse gas emissions	No effect on emissions	No Effect on emissions	No effect on emissions
Waste	No effect on waste	No effect on waste	No effect on waste
Water use	No effect on water usage	No effect on water usage	No effect on water usage
Pollution (air, land, water, noise, light)	No effect on pollution	No effect on pollution	No effect on pollution
Resilience to adverse weather/climate events (flooding, drought etc)	No effect on resilience	No effect on resilience	No effect on resilience
Ecological effects (biodiversity, loss of habitat etc)	No effect on ecology	No effect on ecology	No effect on ecology
Heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape

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If any of these factors are likely to result in a negative or positive environmental impact then a full climate change impact assessment will be required. It is important that we capture information about both positive and negative impacts to aid the council in calculating its carbon footprint and environmental impact.

Decision (Please tick one option)	Full CCIA not relevant or proportionate:	✓	Continue to full CCIA:	X
Reason for decision	No climate impacts			
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)	Jennifer Norton			
Date	02/09/2025			

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North Yorkshire Council

Executive

16 September 2025

Closure of Wentworth Street & Back of Micklegate Public Conveniences

Report of the Corporate Director – Environment

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek approval from the Executive to permanently close Wentworth Street, Malton & Back of Micklegate, Selby Public Conveniences.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 This report recommends the permanent closure of two public toilet facilities due to ongoing operational challenges, financial pressures, and the availability of alternative provision.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 North Yorkshire Council maintains a network of public conveniences across the county. As part of an ongoing strategic review of assets, the council has identified sites that are underused, costly to maintain, or subject to repeated anti-social behaviour. The Wentworth Street facility in Malton has been identified for closure for some time, due to the close proximity to the Market Place toilets, which is less than a five-minute walk away. The site at Market Place is more centrally located in the town and has sufficient capacity to provide adequate provision for the immediate area. The closure of the Malton facility was considered by Executive on the 17 June 2025 who authorised; *the closure of the Wentworth Street public toilets upon successful transfer of the site at Market Place*. Regrettably the double devolution of the toilets at Market Place has not yet taken place, at the request of Malton Town Council. A decision is therefore sought on closure of this site in isolation of the Market Place toilet block, which will remain operational and unaffected.

3.2 The Back Micklegate facility in Selby has been the subject of persistent vandalism and drug-related activity for a number of years, in February 2025 alone, there were seven acts of vandalism/Anti-Social Behaviour in addition to multiple accounts of rough sleepers attempting to gain access. Drug related litter was also recorded most days, as a result of this and the need for a large capital investment, the site is temporarily closed. It has low to medium footfall and there is provision nearby, with the next nearest facility just a seven-minute walk away.

3.3 The cost of vandalism/anti-social behaviour is not recorded separately however not only is there a financial cost of repairing the facilities, there is a service impact to prospective users by having to close the sites temporarily.

4.0 PROPOSAL

4.1 If approved, both facilities will be closed immediately, with appropriate signage advising of alternative facilities and any directional signage to these sites will also be corrected. Work will also start with colleagues on long-term redevelopment opportunities for both sites.

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5.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSES

5.1 As part of the paused double devolution work at Malton, extensive dialogue took place with the Town Council. They were supportive of the closure of Wentworth Street, alongside the refurbishment at Market Place, for which a scheme is currently being drawn up.

5.2 Back Micklegate toilets have been temporarily closed since March 2025, to date there has been little feedback on this arrangement. Local Members have been advised alongside Selby Town Council around the intention to permanently close this location due to the issues identified.

6.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PLAN

6.1 The provision of public conveniences supports support two themes within the Council Plan;

- thriving places and empowered communities that live, work, visit and do business in North Yorkshire
- ensuring the people of North Yorkshire are safe, healthy and living well.

6.2 The closures contribute to the requirements around financial sustainability, community safety, and efficient use of public funds.

7.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 Wentworth Street could remain operational with a refurbishment programme drawn up in due course, with the ongoing operation contributing to the Service overspend, but the site at back Micklegate will require an immediate and significant investment to repair the years of vandalism. However, due to the discretionary nature of the service and the availability of nearby alternative provision, neither option is considered viable.

8.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

8.1 Minimal impact anticipated.

9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Closure of both sites will result in operational savings in excess of £21,000 annually and help reduce the ongoing overspend position in the Service. Furthermore, closure of the public conveniences at Back Micklegate will avoid the need to invest a significant sum in repairing the facilities. Any future redevelopment of either site will be drawn up and costed separately and brought forward for an investment decision at the appropriate time.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no statutory requirements to provide public conveniences, both sites are owned by the Council.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken. While closures may affect some users, mitigation is in place through nearby facilities. Signage will be installed to direct users accordingly.

12.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Closure will reduce energy and water consumption, contributing to the council's climate objectives.

13.0 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

13.1 Closure mitigates risks associated with vandalism, drug misuse, and public safety concerns.

14.0 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

14.1 The public conveniences at Wentworth Street and Back of Micklegate are cleaned and maintained by an external contractor. As such, there are no direct human resources implications for North Yorkshire Council staff. The contractor has been notified of the proposed closures, and no contractual penalties or staffing impacts are anticipated.

15.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

15.1 Closure of the Back of Micklegate facility is expected to reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour.

16.0 CONCLUSIONS

16.1 While any network rationalisation is regrettable, there is sufficient provision nearby and the closures will generate an ongoing saving for the service, with minimal impact on users.

17.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

17.1 Due to persistent anti-social behaviour the temporary closure at Selby needs confirming as a permanent change to the network. The closure of Malton has already been agreed as part of a wider programme of work, which while on pause, requires a clear decision separate to any devolution at Market Place.

18.0 RECOMMENDATION

18.1 That the public conveniences at Wentworth Street, Malton and Back of Micklegate, Selby be permanently closed immediately.

APPENDICES:
Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment
Appendix 2 – Climate Change Impact Assessment

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

Karl Battersby
Corporate Director – Environment
County Hall
Northallerton

Report Author – Harry Briggs, Head of Waste Operations and Street Scene

Presenter of Report – Karl Battersby/Michael Leah Director & Assistant Director Environment

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Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

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Equality impact assessment (EIA) form: evidencing paying due regard to protected characteristics

(Form updated October 2023)

Closure of Wentworth Street & Back of Micklegate Public Conveniences

If you would like this information in another language or format such as Braille, large print or audio, please contact the Communications Unit on 01609 53 2013 or email communications@northyorks.gov.uk.

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে বলুন।

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are public documents. EIAs accompanying reports going to County Councillors for decisions are published with the committee papers on our website and are available in hard copy at the relevant meeting. To help people to find completed EIAs we also publish them in the Equality and Diversity section of our website. This will help people to see for themselves how we have paid due regard in order to meet statutory requirements.

Name of Directorate and Service Area	Environment – Waste Operations and Street Scene
Lead Officer and contact details	Steven Goddard <Steven.Goddard@northyorks.gov.uk>
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the EIA	Steven Goddard
How will you pay due regard? e.g. working group, individual officer	Service users
When did the due regard process start?	Ongoing process

Section 1. Please describe briefly what this EIA is about. (e.g. are you starting a new service, changing how you do something, stopping doing something?)

This Equality Impact Assessment is about the proposed permanent closure of two public toilet facilities—Wentworth Street in Malton and Back of Micklegate in Selby. It assesses the potential impact of stopping these services on different groups within the community, particularly those with protected characteristics, and outlines measures to mitigate any negative effects.

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Section 2. Why is this being proposed? What are the aims? What does the authority hope to achieve by it? (e.g. to save money, meet increased demand, do things in a better way.)

The proposal aims to permanently close two public toilet facilities—Wentworth Street in Malton and Back of Micklegate in Selby—to improve financial sustainability, reduce safety risks, and support more efficient asset management. The council hopes to achieve cost savings by eliminating high maintenance and refurbishment costs, while also addressing persistent issues such as vandalism and anti-social behaviour. By redirecting resources to better located and more accessible alternatives, the authority seeks to deliver public convenience services in a safer, more effective, and sustainable manner.

Section 3. What will change? What will be different for customers and/or staff?

The main change will be the permanent removal of public access to the Wentworth Street and Back of Micklegate toilet facilities. For customers, this means they will need to use alternative nearby toilets, such as those at Market Place in Malton. While this may cause some inconvenience—particularly for elderly users, disabled individuals, or those unfamiliar with the area, additional signage will be provided to help redirect users. For staff, there will be minimal impact, as the facilities are maintained by external contractors who have been notified, and no staffing changes or contractual issues are anticipated.

Section 4. Involvement and consultation (What involvement and consultation has been done regarding the proposal and what are the results? What consultation will be needed and how will it be done?)

Consultation has taken place with local ward members and stakeholders regarding the proposed closure of the Wentworth Street facility in Malton. While some concerns were raised, there was general recognition of the site's operational challenges and proximity to alternative provision. No formal consultation has yet been carried out for the Back of Micklegate facility in Selby, which has been closed since March 2025 with minimal feedback received. Further consultation will be required for this site and will involve engaging local stakeholders, community representatives, and service users through appropriate channels such as public notices, direct communication, and local forums to ensure all views are considered before a final decision is made.

Section 5. What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?

The proposal will reduce costs for the council by eliminating ongoing expenses related to maintenance, cleaning, utilities, and security at both sites. Refurbishment of Wentworth Street was deemed financially unviable, and Back of Micklegate has incurred repeated repair costs due to vandalism. Closure of these facilities will contribute to the council's broader efficiency targets and support its financial sustainability objectives.

Section 6. How will this proposal affect people with protected characteristics?	**No impact**	**Make things better**	**Make things worse**	**Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.**

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Age			X	Older individuals may find it more ~~difficult~~ inconvenient to travel to alternative facilities, especially if mobility is limited.
Disability			X	People with physical or hidden disabilities may rely on accessible public toilets and could be affected. Additional signage be installed to direct users to nearby alternative facilities.
Sex	X			No impact
Race	X			No impact
Gender reassignment	X			No impact
Sexual orientation	X			No impact
Religion or belief	X			No impact
Pregnancy or maternity			X	During pregnancy, there is a need to access facilities more frequently However, there are alternative facilities nearby
Marriage or civil partnership	X			No impact

Section 7. How will this proposal affect people who…	**No impact**	**Make things better**	**Make things worse**	**Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.**
..live in a rural area?	X			
…have a low income?			X	Individuals with limited financial means may be less able to access private facilities (e.g. cafés or shops) and rely more on free public toilets.
…are carers (unpaid family or friend)?		X		Carers accompanying dependents may benefit from clearer signage and improved facilities at Market Place.
….. are from the Armed Forces Community	X			No impact

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Section 8. Geographic impact – Please detail where the impact will be (please tick all that apply)	
North Yorkshire wide	
Craven	
Hambleton	
Harrogate	
Richmondshire	
Ryedale	X
Scarborough	
Selby	X
If you have ticked one or more areas, will specific town(s)/village(s) be particularly impacted? If so, please specify below.	

Section 9. Will the proposal affect anyone more because of a combination of protected characteristics? (e.g. older women or young gay men) **State what you think the effect may be and why, providing evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.**
N/A

Section 10. Next steps to address the anticipated impact. Select one of the following options and explain why this has been chosen. (**Remember:** we have an anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people can access services and work for us)	**Tick option chosen**
1. No adverse impact - no major change needed to the proposal. There is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact identified.	
2. **Adverse impact - adjust the proposal -** The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We will change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, or we will achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people.	
3. Adverse impact - continue the proposal - The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We cannot change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, nor can we achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people. (There must be compelling reasons for continuing with proposals which will have the most adverse impacts. Get advice from Legal Services)	**X**
4. Actual or potential unlawful discrimination - stop and remove the proposal – The EIA identifies actual or potential unlawful discrimination. It must be stopped.	
Explanation of why option has been chosen. (Include any advice given by Legal Services.)	

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The Council does not have a statutory responsibility to provide public conveniences, but in order to continue to be able to provide a service it is proposed to review and rationalise current facilities within an agreed framework.

There could be negative impact for some service users and this may disproportionately impact on some groups including older people and disabled people.

Section 11. If the proposal is to be implemented how will you find out how it is really affecting people? (How will you monitor and review the changes?)

Closed sites should display clear signage directing the public to the nearest available facility, including RADAR or Changing Places toilets where relevant, along with a brief explanation for the closure. To ensure the changes are effective and equitable, a formal review should be undertaken after 12 months of operation, incorporating public consultation and an assessment of the impact on all user groups, particularly those with protected characteristics.

Section 12. Action plan. List any actions you need to take which have been identified in this EIA, including post implementation review to find out how the outcomes have been achieved in practice and what impacts there have actually been on people with protected characteristics.

Action	Lead	By when	Progress	Monitoring arrangements

Section 13. Summary Summarise the findings of your EIA, including impacts, recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

The EIA found potential negative impacts on older people, disabled individuals, and families due to reduced toilet access. To mitigate this, it recommends clear signage at closed sites, explanations for closures, and a 12-month review with further consultation. Legal advice highlights the need to meet Equality Act duties. Next steps include implementing signage, updating the EIA, and planning the review.

Section 14. Sign off section

This full EIA was completed by:

Name: Steven Goddard
Job title: Public Conveniences Manager
Directorate: Environment

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Signature: **Completion date: 12/08/2025** **Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature):** **Date:**

OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE

Initial Climate Change Impact Assessment (Form created August 2021)

The intention of this document is to help the council to gain an initial understanding of the impact of a project or decision on the environment. This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. Dependent on this initial assessment you may need to go on to complete a full Climate Change Impact Assessment. The final document will be published as part of the decision-making process.

If you have any additional queries, which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Title of proposal	Plan for the Provision of Public Conveniences
Brief description of proposal	To seek approval from the Director & Assistant of Environment to permanently close Wentworth Street, Malt & Back of Micklegate, Selby Public Conveniences. As part of the new strategic direction for the service, a number of changes are proposed for how the network operates and works collaboratively with other organisations.
Directorate	Environment
Service area	Public Conveniences
Lead officer	Steven Goddard
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	

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The chart below contains the main environmental factors to consider in your initial assessment – choose the appropriate option from the drop-down list for each one.

Remember to think about the following;

- Travel
- Construction
- Data storage
- Use of buildings
- Change of land use
- Opportunities for recycling and reuse

Environmental factor to consider	For the council	For the county	Overall
Greenhouse gas emissions	Decreases emissions	Decreases emissions	Decreases emissions
Waste	No effect on waste	No effect on waste	No effect on waste
Water use	Decreases water usage	Decreases water usage	Decreases water usage
Pollution (air, land, water, noise, light)	No effect on pollution	No effect on pollution	No effect on pollution
Resilience to adverse weather/climate events (flooding, drought etc)	No effect on resilience	No effect on resilience	No effect on resilience
Ecological effects (biodiversity, loss of habitat etc)	No effect on ecology	No effect on ecology	No effect on ecology
Heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape

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If any of these factors are likely to result in a negative or positive environmental impact then a full climate change impact assessment will be required. It is important that we capture information about both positive and negative impacts to aid the council in calculating its carbon footprint and environmental impact.

Decision (Please tick one option)	Full CCIA not relevant or proportionate:	X	Continue to full CCIA:	
Reason for decision	The proposals are modest and serve only to reduce carbon emissions from distance travelled associated with cleaning the facilities firstly by having a smaller network and the operation of more locally based labour.			
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)				
Date	12th August 2025			

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FORWARD PLAN

The decisions likely to be taken by North Yorkshire Council in the following 12 months are set out below:

Publication Date: 5 September 2025 Last updated: 5 September 2025

Period covered by Plan: 5 September 2025 to 30 September 2026

PLEASE NOTE:-

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to information)(England) Regulations 2012, at least **28 clear days' notice**, excluding the day of notification and the day of decision taking, must be published on the Forward Plan of any intended key decision. It is also a requirement that **28 clear days' notice** is published of the intention to hold a Executive meeting or any part of it in private for the consideration of confidential or exempt information. For further information and advice please contact the Head of Democratic Services and Scrutiny on 01609 533531.

FUTURE DECISIONS								
Likely Date of Decision	**Decision Taker** (a full list of the membership of the Council and all its Committees is set out in Part 3 of the Constitution)	**In Consultation with** (Executive Member or Corporate Director)	**Description of Matter** – including an indication if the report contains any exempt (not for publication) information and the reasons for this	**Key Decision** **YES/NO**	**Decision Required**	**Consultees** (ie the identity of the principal groups whom the decision-taker proposes to consult)	**Consultation Process** (ie the means by which any such consultation is to be undertaken)	**How representations may be made and details of Contact Person** (Tel: 0845 034 9494) unless specified otherwise)
7 Oct 2025	Executive		Richmond Pool Options Appraisal	Yes	To agree a way forward in respect of the outcomes of the options appraisal for Richmond Pool. NB this is currently on the Forward Plan for the Exec in November alongside the Leisure Investment Strategy, however, this is to bring the Richmond item forwards to enable any works to be started as quickly as possible.	Public consultation undertaken. Consultation with key stakeholders Overview and Scrutiny – 23 September 2025	Public survey has been undertaken in July in respect of the options appraisal for Richmond Pool. Issues to be considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Leisure and Housing) on 23 September 2025.	Jo Ireland, AD Culture, Arts & Leisure jo.ireland@northyorks.gov.uk
21 Oct 2025	Executive		Whitby Cliff Lift	Yes	This report informs the Executive that the lift has remained out of service since 2022. It outlines the available options for	There is no consultation proposed in relation to the decision to infill the cliff lift. A public consultation will take place over Summer 2025 into the	Public consultation via website.	Chris Bourne, Head of Harbours and Coastal Infrastructure Email: chris.bourne@northyorks.gov.uk

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					addressing the issue and seeks approval to proceed with the recommended course of action. A replacement bus service has been in operation and will continue throughout 2025 to mitigate the impact of the lift closure. The report also requests approval for a capital budget allocation of £600,000 to undertake the necessary works.	provision of a free replacement bus service – not forming part of this decision.		
21 Oct 2025	Executive		Report and Recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Member Allowances for 2026/2027	Yes	To make a recommendation to Full Council based on Independent Remuneration Panel Recommendations	Independent Remuneration Panel and Members	Independent Remuneration Panel meetings	Barry Khan, Assistant Chief Executive (Legal & Democratic Services) barry.khan@northyorks.gov.uk

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21 Oct 2025	Executive		Amendments to the Council's Constitution	Yes	Consideration of proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution for recommendation to full Council. Subject to any comments Members may have, to recommend the proposed amendments to the Constitution to full Council for approval.	Relevant NYC Officers and Members The Members' Working Group on the Constitution	Correspondence and meetings	Moira Beighton moira.beighton@northyorks.gov.uk
21 Oct 2025	Executive	Executive Member for Highways & Transportation	Business Case for Devolution of Knaresborough Market	No	To consider the business case submitted by Knaresborough Town Council in respect of devolving to them the management and responsibility for operating the weekly charter market in	Knaresborough Town Council (KTC), divisional members for North Yorkshire Council (NYC), officers from relevant NYC service areas including but not limited to; Property Services, Parking Services, Finance and Legal	Direct meetings with representatives of KTC, Officers of the Double Devolution Project Group (internal to NYC).	Jonathan Clubb, Head of Parks and Grounds Jonathan.clubb@northyorks.gov.uk

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					Knaresborough.	Services.		
21 Oct 2025	Executive		Introduction of a new Enforcement Policy aligned with Renters Rights Act	Yes	Following the introduction of the Renters Rights Act (currently due October 2025) we will need to align our enforcement policy to ensure compliance. There are significant changes proposed which will affect tenants and landlords within communities across North Yorkshire.	As this is a legislative change consultation has been undertaken at government level, our policy will reflect the requirements set in the legislation.	Email, MS Teams and face-to-face meetings	Lynn Williams, Head of Housing Renewal lynn.williams@northyorks.gov.uk
21 Oct 2025	Executive		Corporate Property Strategy	Yes	The purpose of our property strategy is to guide the effective and efficient management of our portfolio of assets to achieve our key objectives. The strategy will	Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Meetings	Kerry Metcalfe, AD Property, Procurement & Commercial kerry.metcalfe@northyorks.gov.uk

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					provide the Council with a structured approach to respond to service needs and priorities and will also form the basis on which the Councils team of property professionals will manage and operate the portfolio with support from key services in legal, procurement and finance.			
21 Oct 2025	Executive		To consider adoption of the New Settlement (Maltkiln) Development Plan Document	Yes	To consider the adoption of the New Settlement (Maltkiln) Development Plan Document following the outcome of the Report on the Examination of Plan issued by the	Management Board Selby & Ainsty Area Committee Development Plan Committee Legal, Finance, Equalities, Climate	Correspondence, meetings, email	Natasha Durham, Planning Manager (Policy) natasha.durham@northyorks.gov.uk

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					Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State. To agree whether to adopt the Development Plan Document, incorporating the Inspector's recommended Main Modifications and Additional Modifications.			
4 Nov 2025	Executive		Report to consider the findings of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman report – Housing Services Disabled Facilities Grant	Yes	The report sets out the key findings of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's investigation into Housing Services: Disabled Facilities Grant. It also outlines the actions the Council has taken or intends to take in response, including the	Executive Members Finance Legal Climate Equalities	Email and MS Teams	Lynn Williams, Head of Housing Renewal lynn.williams@northyorks.gov.uk

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					recommendation to adopt defined timescales for the delivery of various categories of major adaptations.			
21 Oct 2025	Executive		North Yorkshire Council Local Enforcement Plan	Yes	The Local Enforcement Policy (LEP) describes how the Council will undertake its role of enforcing planning control. The report seeks adoption of the Council's new Planning Enforcement Policy (Local Enforcement Plan).	Town and Parish Councils Members Head of Legal, Property, Planning and Environment Corporate Director of Community Development Executive Member for Corporate Services Executive Member for Open to Business Assistant Director Resources Corporate Strategy and Performance Lead Climate Change Business Partner	Teams meetings/presentation Email consultation	Ann Rawlinson, Development Manager - Enforcement and Central ann.rawlinson@northyorks.gov.uk
21 Oct 2025	Executive		Procurements for the Provision of Extra Care	Yes	To seek approval to undertake any future Extra Care	Lead Officers, partners and potential providers	Meetings and correspondence	Michael Rudd, Head of Housing Marketing

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			Housing		Housing procurements under this overarching governance for a period of 5 years with the option to extend the governance for a further 3 + 2 years (10 years in total – 5+3+2).			Development (Commissioning), Health and Adult Services Email: Michael.rudd@northyorks.gov.uk / Tel No: 01609 535347
21 Oct 2025	Executive		Harrogate Transforming Cities Fund - Project update and Contract Entry Authority	Yes	To update the Executive and seek delegated authority for the Corporate Director - Environment to enter into all agreements necessary to progress and deliver the scheme.	Members of the public, business stakeholders and internal NYC departments.	Face to face and on-line meetings	Richard Binks, Head of Major Projects & Infrastructure richard.binks@northyorks.gov.uk
21 Oct 2025	Executive		Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) Review	Yes	The purpose of this report is to update the Executive on the	North Yorkshire residents and businesses	A 12-week engagement exercise from November 2023	Michael Leah, Assistant Director - Environment and Transport

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					outcomes of the recent consultation regarding Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) and to seek agreement on the preferred next steps from the options presented. Subject to the agreed direction, relevant policies will be updated to reflect the new approach.		to January 2024 invited North Yorkshire residents and businesses to submit their views on potential changes to HWRCs.	Email:Michael.leah@northyorks.gov.uk
21 Oct 2025	Executive		Scarborough Harbour West Pier Delivery	Yes	The report will seek approval: 1.To agree final budget for delivery of the Scarborough Harbour West Pier Deliver. 2.To request approval of the NYC required funding. 3.To request	Community Development: Economic Development, Regeneration, Tourism and Skills, Resources Environment: Harbours, Resources Legal and Democratic Services: Legal Resources: Property, Procurement and	Email and briefing	Helen Jackson, Regeneration Projects Manager helen.jackson1@northyorks.gov.uk

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					approval to enter into a contract with construction contractor to deliver agreed works.	Commercial		
21 Oct 2025	Executive		Response to Residents Parking Petition for Back Dragon Avenue, Harrogate	No	To share with Members the responses received to the residents parking petition on Back Dragon Avenue, Harrogate	Residents	Survey	Heather Yendall, Improvement Manager heather.yendall@northyorks.gov.uk
21 Oct 2025	Executive		Response to Residents Parking Petition for Brewster Terrace and Christian Terrace, Ripon	No				Heather Yendall, Improvement Manager heather.yendall@northyorks.gov.uk
4 Nov 2025	Executive (Skipton)		Plan for the Provision of Public Conveniences	Yes	To agree a series of measures to take forward the public convenience service and an agreed approach	Parish/town councils in Jan-April 2025 alongside key stakeholders; disability action groups, chambers of commerce, Business	Individual meetings and drop-in sessions.	Steven Goddard, Public Conveniences Manager steve.goddard@northyorks.gov.uk

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					for the role of Parish and Town Councils in managing the current network	Improvement Districts.		
4 Nov 2025	Executive (Skipton)		Housing Delivery Joint Venture	Yes	The purpose of the report is to seek approval for the Council to enter into a Limited Liability Partnership to create a Housing Joint Venture Vehicle.	Housing and Leisure Overview & Scrutiny Committee Management Board Cabinet Officers from Resources, Legal, Climate and Equalities	Presentation to Housing and Leisure Overview & Scrutiny Committee Email and MS Teams meetings	Hannah Heinemann, Head of Housing Delivery and Partnerships Hannah.Heinemann@northyorks.gov.uk
4 Nov 2025	Executive (Skipton)		Director of Public Health Annual Report 2025	No	The Director of Public Health Annual Report is an independent report on the health of the local population. The Director of Public Health has a duty to write an annual report, whereas the local authority's duty is	The report includes reflections on engagement already undertaken with a wide range of stakeholder groups. The report will be shared with HAS leadership teams, Executive Portfolio Holder and Management Board for	Not applicable	Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health Email: louise.wallace@northyorks.gov.uk

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					to publish it. The focus of this year's report is on the Public Health opportunities afforded by Local Government Reorganisation. The Executive committee will be asked to consider and note the report.	comment as it progresses, and to the Health and Wellbeing Board, Scrutiny of Health Committee and Care and Independence Overview & Scrutiny Committee for information following Executive.		
4 Nov 2025	Executive (Skipton)		Leisure Investment Strategy and Options Appraisals	Yes	To agree a way forward in respect of the outcomes of the Leisure Investment Review and associated options appraisal for Richmond Pool.	Public consultation undertaken. Consultation with key stakeholders Overview and Scrutiny – 23 September 2025 Executive Member Corporate Director Finance Legal Climate and Equalities officers	Public survey has been undertaken in July in respect of the options appraisal for Richmond Pool. The Leisure Investment Strategy was informed by the "let Talk Active" consultation. Issues to be considered by Overview and Scrutiny	Jo Ireland, AD Culture, Arts & Leisure jo.ireland@northyorks.gov.uk

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							Committee (Leisure and Housing) on 23 September 2025.	
4 Nov 2025	Executive (Skipton)		North Yorkshire Council Enforcement Stratey	Yes	To seek approval for the adoption of a unified Enforcement Strategy for North Yorkshire Council. The strategy will set out a clear, consistent, and transparent framework for how the Council will undertake enforcement activities across its services. It aims to ensure that enforcement is carried out in a fair, proportionate, and effective manner, supporting compliance, protecting public	NYC internal process		Dean Richardson, Head of Regulatory Services dean.richards@northyorks.gov.uk

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					interests, and promoting community confidence in Regulatory services.			
4 Nov 2025	Executive (Skipton)		NYC Local Plan: Call for Sites – proposed submissions for Council owned sites	Yes	The purpose of the report is for the Executive to approve (or otherwise) the submission of NYC owned land to the NYC Call for Sites planning portal.	Executive	None	Stewart Brown, Strategic Land Consultant Tel No:07855 195648
4 Nov 2025	Executive (Skipton)		Variation of Restrictive Covenant – Land at Sherburn in Elmet	Yes	To seek authority for the variation of a Restrictive Covenant over land at Sherburn in Elmet to enable the landowner to progress proposals for the development of the land. NYC benefits from	None	Not applicable	Philip Cowan, Non-Operational Property Manager, NYCC Property Services philip.cowan@northyorks.gov.uk

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					an overage agreement and a restrictive covenant over the land. The variation of these agreements will provide a capital receipt for the Council. Given the likely value of the capital receipt, a decision will need to be taken by NYC's Executive.			
18 Nov 2025	Executive		Q2 Performance Monitoring and Budget Report	Yes	Q2 Performance Monitoring and Budget report including: Revenue Plan; Capital Plan; Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators	Management Board	Meetings	Gary Fielding, Corporate Director of Resources gary.fielding@northyorks.gov.uk
16 Dec 2025	Executive		Redeployment of land to the north	Yes	To approve the proposed	Executive members and Management		Philip Cowan, Non-Operational

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			and south of Crosshills Lane, Selby		redeployment of the property	Board at the informal Executive meeting held on 8 June 2021		Property Manager, NYCC Property Services Philip.Cowan@northyorks.gov.uk
16 Dec 2025	Executive		Review of North Yorkshire Pavement Licence Policy	Yes	To consider consultation responses and seek adoption of a new North Yorkshire Pavement Licence Policy with or without amendments.	Trade and other interested parties.	Direct consultation with existing licence holders and via the Council's website.	Sharon Cousins, Licensing Manager sharon.cousins@northyorks.gov.uk
16 Dec 2025	Executive		North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery (LNRS) Strategy) - Publication	Yes	To seek approval to formally publish the statutory outputs of the North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery (LNRS) Strategy comprising -local habitat map -statement of biodiversity priorities. As developed in accordance with	Natural England City of York Council North York Moors National Park Authority Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Stakeholders and members of the public across NY and City of York	Online hosting	Timothy Johns, Senior Policy Officer timothy.johns@northyorks.gov.uk

FUTURE DECISIONS								
Likely Date of Decision	**Decision Taker** (a full list of the membership of the Council and all its Committees is set out in Part 3 of the Constitution)	**In Consultation with** (Executive Member or Corporate Director)	**Description of Matter** – including an indication if the report contains any exempt (not for publication) information and the reasons for this	**Key Decision** **YES/NO**	**Decision Required**	**Consultees** (ie the identity of the principal groups whom the decision-taker proposes to consult)	**Consultation Process** (ie the means by which any such consultation is to be undertaken)	**How representations may be made and details of Contact Person** (Tel: 0845 034 9494) unless specified otherwise)
					the LNRS Regulations 2023.			
16 Dec 2025	Executive		Tree and Woodland Policy	Yes	North Yorkshire Council has a legal duty and powers to manage the risk and to protect trees on the land that we manage. This should be reasonable and proportionate to balance the many benefits that trees and woodlands bring. Developing a county wide approach to policy will provide Officers, elected Members and all other stakeholders clarity on how this will be managed. The report will present the Tree and Woodland Policy for	Members of the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview Property Services, Risk and Insurance, Health	Engagement with the TEEE O	Helen Arnold, Tree and Woodland Manager Helen.arnold@northyorks.gov.uk

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					adoption.			
16 Dec 2025	Executive		Howardian Hills and Nidderdale National Landscapes Management Plans	Yes	The report will set out the two Management Plans for the two National Landscapes that fall within the responsibility of North Yorkshire Council, as per the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 which requires local authorities whose area includes a National Landscape to prepare and review on a 5-yearly cycle management plans for that protected landscape. Agreement is sought to adopt The Howardian	Local community organisations, conservation organisations and general public	Public consultation process under auspices of each National Landscape's Joint Advisory Committee	Estelle Hook, Manager - Howardian Hills National Landscape, Iain Mann, Manager - Nidderdale National Landscape estelle.hook@northyorks.gov.uk or iain.mann@northyorks.gov.uk,

FUTURE DECISIONS								
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					Hills National Landscape Management Plan and the Nidderdale National Landscape Management Plan. Both plans set out objectives relevant to their local area to deliver their statutory purpose to conserve and enhance natural beauty.			
6 Jan 2026	Executive		School Admissions Arrangements for the School Year 2027-28	Yes	To provide information about proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools for the school year 2027-28. The decision required is for the	Consultation in respect of the proposed arrangements will be undertaken with: - • Headteachers and Governing Boards of Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools • Headteachers and Governing Boards of Voluntary Aided and	Consultation documents will be published on the council's website, with hard copies, including in alternative formats, available on request. Responses will be made via an	Jon Holden, Head Strategic Planning (CYPS) jon.holden@northyorks.gov.uk

FUTURE DECISIONS								
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					proposals to be referred to the meeting of the Full Council on 13 February 2026 for determination. The Council has a statutory duty to have determined the arrangements by 28 February 2026.	Free Schools, Academies and Foundation Trusts • Parents • Diocesan authorities • Neighbouring local authorities (13); and • Other stakeholders	online survey or in hard copy. Most of the consultees noted above will be contacted via email to advise of the consultation exercise and invited to make responses. Schools will be requested to display posters to promote the consultation exercise to parents and provide links to the website where further information will be available.	
20 Jan 2026	Executive		Revenue Budget 2026/2027 and Medium Term Financial Strategy - To make	Yes	To consider and recommend to Council the Revenue Budget for 2026/2027 and	Management Board	Budget consultation process	Gary Fielding, Corporate Director of Resources gary.fielding@northyorks.gov.uk

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			recommendation to Full Council		the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) including: Revenue Plan; Capital Plan; Treasury Management; Prudential Indicators			
20 Jan 2026	Executive		Council Plan 2026-2030 - To make recommendation to Full Council	Yes	To consider and recommend to council the Council Plan for 2026-2030	Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee Management Board	Meetings	Will Boardman, Head of Strategy & Performance will.boardman@northyorks.gov.uk
17 Feb 2026	Executive		Q3 Performance Monitoring and Budget Report	Yes	Q3 Performance Monitoring and Budget report including: Revenue Plan; Capital Plan; Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators	Management Board	Meetings	Gary Fielding, Corporate Director of Resources gary.fielding@northyorks.gov.uk
17 Feb 2026	Executive		North Yorkshire Council Regulatory Services Urban	Yes	To seek approval of a North Yorkshire Council	Stakeholder consultation held February/March 2025	Survey/questionnaire completed by stakeholders.	Dean Richardson, Head of Regulatory Services

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			Gull Strategy		Regulatory Services Urban Gull Strategy	to inform the strategy development work.	Draft strategy scheduled at Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scarborough and Whitby Area Committee in 2026 prior to submission to Executive	dean.richardson@northyorks.gov.uk

Should you wish to make representation as to the matter being discussed in public please contact Daniel Harry Email: (daniel.harry@northyorks.gov.uk) Tel: 01609 533531.

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