North Yorkshire Council

Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 25th May, 2023 commencing at 10am.

Councillor David Staveley in the Chair plus Councillors Nick Brown (substitute), Crane, Davis, Goodrick, Gostlow, Haslam, Jabbour (substitute), Jeffels, Jordan, Sharma, Slater (substitute), Windass, Warneken and Watson.

Transition (LGR) O&S Committee members in attendance: Councillors Broadbank (Virtual), Dickinson, Kevin Foster (Virtual), Richard Foster (Virtual), Griffiths, Moorhouse (Virtual), Pearson (Virtual) and Ritchie.

Officers present: Will Baines, Aimi Brookes, Jos Holmes, Peter Jeffreys, Michael Leah, Edward Maxwell, David Smith (Virtual) and Adam Vaughan.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

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1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cattanach, Ireton (substitute Cllr Jabbour), Mason (substitute Cllr Slater) and Trumper (substitute Cllr Nick Brown).

2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 April 2023

Councillor Warneken raised that his request to have an update on Active Travel at the next committee meeting on 10th July 2023 was not recorded under the minute for the Work Programme. It was reported that whilst the request for a report at the July meeting was not included in the minutes, it had been added to the Work Programme as seen at Agenda item 7 of the papers today and that a briefing note on Active Travel is expected ahead of the July meeting to update Members on progress and decide on future scrutiny.

Resolved –
That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2023, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Public Participation

David Tonge of the North Yorkshire Climate Coalition had registered to speak but did so before Agenda Item 6 – Climate Change Strategy Consultation Results. The following points were raised in his statement:

- Science has proved that climate change is occurring and therefore everybody needs to act urgently to combat it.

- North Yorkshire needs a clear Climate strategy that is ambitious and robust and NYC has the perfect opportunity for Councillors to cooperate to produce this.
- NY Climate Coalition believes that the current draft strategy lacks a clear pathway to net zero, a resourcing plan, review mechanisms, a robust methodology and timescales for delivery. It is Mr Tonge's view that these cannot all be addressed before the Strategy goes to the Executive on 18th July.
- The NY Climate Coalition recommended that climate friendly procurement be established through the planning system, that more nature-based solutions be used and that independent climate literacy training for all Councillors and senior council employees be undertaken.

5 Service Harmonisation - Waste and Recycling

Peter Jeffreys, Head of Service Waste at NYC, and Aimi Brookes, Service Delivery Manager at NYC, gave a presentation that looked at harmonising the waste collection service and the introduction of food waste collection. The following points were made:

- The presentation referred only to household waste as commercial waste is being looked into separately.
- The Environment Act 2021 introduced the need to collect dry recycling from the kerbside; the need to collect separated food waste from the kerbside weekly; it extended producer responsibility for packaging by no longer requiring Local Authorities to pay for the packaging that is collected, but instead requiring businesses to pay for the packaging that they produce; and it introduced the idea of a deposit return scheme where customers can return recyclable drinks containers for to receive their deposit back.
- There is the opportunity to look at the whole system as since LGR, NYC controls both collection and disposal. LGR has also opened up an opportunity to harmonise the process across North Yorkshire.
- An overview of the current waste collection processes was given and details of these can be found in the presentation slides. There are three approaches across the county: fully comingled, twin-stream and full kerbside sort. The work done by Allerton Waste Recovery Park (AWRP), Harewood Whin Waste Transfer Station, YORWaste and third parties was explained.
- The work done by volunteers that promote correct recycling and the reduction of waste was commended.
- It is expected that most Local Authorities will have to collect food waste from the kerbside by 2025 but North Yorkshire Council has transitional relief until 2043, the expiration date of the Allerton Waste Recovery Park contract. It was reported that some central government funding would be available, but that this may not cover the full costs.
- The following options were presented to Members. The processes used by other Local Authorities were used to shape these options.

1) A fully comingled option similar to that previously used by Craven District Council and Scarborough Borough Council in the past where residents would have two waste bins, one for dry recycling and another for household waste. This wouldn't greatly affect the recycling rate or the carbon impact, but it would increase the cost of sorting.

2) A multi-stream approach similar to that used in the former Ryedale District Council area. Residents would receive at boxes and a bag for dry recycling, and a waste bin for household waste. The recycling rate and carbon impact of this approach is similar to option one but, rather than producing an additional cost, this option would produce a saving.

3) An approach similar to that used in the former Selby District Council area. Residents would receive a waste bin for paper, a waste bin for household waste and a waste bin for dry recycling. This approach has a similar recycling rate and carbon impact to the above two options and a similar cost saving to option two.

4) Another option used a similar approach to option three above, but once dry recycling is harmonised, food waste would also be collected. In the same way as some other Local Authorities, residents would be provided with a 5 litre kitchen bin and a 23 lite outside bin (with a lockable lid) to collect food waste. A separate fleet of collection vehicles would be required. This approach would lead to a significant increase in the recycling rate (option three would be 43% and this option would be 51%), a significant carbon benefit even with the additional fleet of vehicles but also a significant increase in the cost.

5) The final option presented to Members was an approach where dry recycling is harmonised at the same time as introducing food waste collection. This approach would involve a three-weekly cycle of household waste, mixed paper and cardboard, and dry recycling, with food waste being collected weekly. Food waste would be collected in separate pods on the vehicles that are making the other collections. This would deliver the highest recycling rate at 54% as well as a significant carbon benefit and cost reduction because a separate food waste fleet would be no longer required. This approach would however require central government funding due to the short timescales.

- It was reported that whichever option is proceeded with, it would cater to the residents if special circumstances were required. This may include the provision of smaller or larger waste bins depending on circumstances.

- Before a decision is made, a public consultation will take place and this is estimated to be in 2025.

- It is the current aim to have the approach rolled out in 2027.

The following points were then discussed in the debate:

- There is no time frame for when the transitional relief legislation is going to be in place. A few local authorities are in a similar position to NYC regarding transitional relief as they also have long contracts. NYC have some of the longest transitional arrangements

due to AWRP only being opened in 2018.

- AWRP will need to be converted to efficiently recycle food waste and the cost of doing this is included in the options set out. When food waste starts being collected, household waste will still be sorted at the site. AWRP do recover recycling that is put in the household waste bin. They have targets to meet, otherwise they will be charged by NYC.

- The issue of wind blowing recycling out of recycling boxes was raised. Compartmental wheelie bins have been discussed; however they lead to increased cross-contamination and raise health and safety concerns.

- The bins currently used are partially made of recycled plastic and are recyclable. Members wanted this to be publicised more. Members also questioned whether other materials had been looked into and officers reported that the procurement process would look into alternative options.

- Policies started by the previous district and borough councils have to be continued, for example the rollout of wheelie bins in Harrogate. This will not be a waste, as harmonisation will most likely move in that direction.

- To improve the aesthetics of an area, could communal, rather than individual household bins be used? This could be included as part of the planning policies associated with the new Local Plan for new housing developments.

- Issues concerning the lane end collection policy were discussed. It was reported that these would be looked at on a case-by-case basis and that a balance between providing a service for residents and protecting the waste management crews needs to be found.

- Commercial bin collections are not currently included in business rates as waste does not have to be collected by the council, although NYC offers this service, and businesses produce different levels of waste. Food waste could be collected from businesses. Members suggested that businesses that don't recycle could be penalised.

- Allerton Waste Recovery Park has the capability to recover garden waste that has been put into the household waste bin. However, it is still better to use a garden waste bin as the organic waste can then be recycled more efficiently. Members questioned how the public could be incentivised to subscribe to garden waste collections, rather than using their household waste bins and they were informed that it is not often done and that enforcement powers were available.

- Garden waste subscriptions are already harmonised across NYC, apart from the former Richmondshire DC area, which has smaller bins and therefore a lower charge (this is until next year), and the former Selby DC area, which may have it's charges harmonised next year, dependent on the Executive decision on 20th June 2023. This decision will also harmonise the service that is provided across the county, making sure that there are the same number of collections per year in each area and deciding a policy on Christmas tree collections. Disposal of this garden waste is always done as locally as possible.

- Volunteer networks are introducing community composting schemes which benefit

those that don't have garden bins.

- The current fleet of waste collection vehicles cannot be retrofitted with the food waste collection pods and so a new fleet would be required. This would coincide with the waste vehicle replacement programme. In other areas there have been reported issues surrounding health and safety when introducing the pods.

- The vehicles used in the options presented to Members would most likely be internal combustion engines (ICE) as the electric technology is not yet suitable for the geography of the area. Electric, hybrid and hydrogen alternatives have been investigated and will continue to be considered.

- Whilst some Local Authorities collect food and garden waste together, this incurs additional costs as often different facilities are required. Food waste is likely to have to be collected weekly due to legislation, and therefore garden waste would have to be the same. Also, not all residents have garden waste subscriptions.

- Should NYC lobby to have the weekly food waste collections changed to bi-weekly?

- LGR means that waste and highways departments can cooperate more easily to stop residents leaving bins on footpaths

- The recycling rates of the options presented to Members were lower than other Local Authorities are managing (some reach as high at 64%) because they were only based on the kerbside sort and not on the recovery centres.

- Officers are part of a regional group that looks at the recycling policies of local authorities and NYC may model any future approach on other councils.

- The introduction of a deposit return scheme may reduce the amount of recycling collected by the council and therefore must be considered when deciding on a future approach to follow.

Resolved –

i) That the report is noted.

ii) That a visit to Allerton Waste Recovery Park for Members is to be organised.

iii) That the Waste Management Team return to the Committee to provide updates on progress.

6 Climate Change Strategy Consultation Results

Jos Holmes, Climate Change Policy Officer and Adam Vaughan, Climate Change & Environmental Project Officer, introduced the report and presentation raising the following:

- An outline of the background to the report and consultation on the North Yorkshire Council climate change strategy was given.

- It was noted that the strategy needs to be evidence based and the public consultation has produced a very thorough review of the strategy so far. Member's comments will

help to shape the revised strategy that goes to the Executive in July.

- It is essential to have energy efficient housing before the focus is switched to renewable energy production.
- A climate change action plan is being developed to focus on the delivery of the key priorities within the climate change strategy.
- The successes of the council so far were highlighted, and it was reported that a focus on climate change is being embedded into service plans across the new authority.

The following points were then discussed in the debate:

- The methodology of the strategy was commended.
- Members suggested that the strategy could be improved in the following ways:
  - By adding an action plan to make targets, and ways of reaching these targets, stronger. Officers reported that specific targets are not set in the strategy, and that the action plan comes after the strategy is adopted. Members were informed that the strategy endorses the York and North Yorkshire Routemap to Carbon Negative but hopes to make the performance targets more understandable.
  - That the definition of net zero is made clearer.
  - That the climate change programmes of the former Borough, County and District Councils are integrated into the new strategy. Officers reported that this had been done at an early stage.
  - That all Councillors and senior officers be required to take climate literacy training.
- The number of responses to the consultation was better than average and these responses seem to accurately reflect residents views. Work needs to be done on how to increase the number of responses from the Scarborough and Selby areas.
- Responses to the consultation often discussed climate change in general and didn't refer to the strategy directly.
- The importance of keeping North Yorkshire's peat reserve was highlighted.
- According to the presentation given, public transport is vital for the strategy. Members raised a number of areas that this could be improved, for example, lobbying to extend the £2 cap for bus fares, introducing bus lanes and lobbying for contactless tap-in for buses.
- It is proposed that the strategy will be reviewed every 6 months and refreshed every 2 years.

Following the debate, Councillor Warneken proposed that the draft strategy be noted but that once revised should come back for members of the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide comments on before going to the Executive in July. This was approved.

Resolved –

i) That the report is noted.

ii) That the revised North Yorkshire Council Climate Change Strategy is brought back to an informal meeting of the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee before the end of June 2023.

7 Work Programme

The Principal Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer introduced the report and Members made the following suggestions:

- That an air quality report be added to the work programme. This may include the following discussion points:
    (a) How we currently measure air quality and how we can measure it in the future.
    (b) Whether LGR is an opportunity to change the way we review air quality
    (c) How we compare to other local authorities.
- Following the briefing note regarding Active Travel, it may be necessary to have a report on the topic to a future meeting.

Resolved –

i) That the work programme is noted.

ii) That the above items are added to the work programme.

8 Any Other Items

There were no other items of business.

The meeting concluded at 1.30 pm.