

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

16 NOVEMBER 2022

STATEMENT OF EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR OPEN TO BUSINESS

including Economic Development, Regulatory Services, the management of Waste Disposal and the integration of Waste Collection

Avian Influenza

In late September 2022, High Pathogenic H5N1 Avian Influenza was confirmed at two premises in North Yorkshire. The first, a commercial farm in Easingwold with 17,000 birds and the second, a commercial farm from Thorganby with 32,000 birds.

Following confirmation of the disease by Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA) vets, 3km Protection Zones and 10km Surveillance Zones were declared around both of the infected premises. Humane culling of the birds took place and both sites were subject to cleansing and disinfection. Trading Standards undertook foot patrols, knocking on every door within each 3km Protection Zone to ensure all poultry keepers were aware of the heightened risk and the mitigation techniques brought in by way of the Governments Declaratory Orders.

In addition, the Comms team updated the NYCC website with further information and they shared social media content. Public Health monitored the human health risk and Highways colleagues positioned road signs warning of the prevalence of the outbreaks at the roadside of the boundaries of the Surveillance Zones.

Farming, Food and Health managers are also in communication with East Riding counterparts for they have an outbreak in Goole, in which the 10km Surveillance Zone crosses the North Yorkshire border. Highways has assisted by placing signs on the roads that cross the county lines, warning of the prevalence of the control zone.

Since 1 October 2022 there have been 68 cases of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza (HPAI) in England. In total there have been 202 cases in England since the H5N1 outbreak began in October 2021. As a result of the increased infection rate, on 17 October the government introduced a nationwide Prevention Zone requiring poultry keepers to maintain enhanced bio-security measures to prevent further increase.

Investment Zones

An expression of interest to establish an Investment Zone in North Yorkshire was submitted to Government on 14 October 2022. This put forward eleven commercial sites already identified for development set within strategic transport corridors and growth areas. In the Government proposals, new and existing developments will adhere to liberalised planning regulations and businesses will benefit from time-limited tax incentives over 10 years. In order to minimise detrimental environmental impacts, the proposed sites are not in designated protected areas. The eleven sites proposed are:

- Hambleton: Dalton 49 (commercial site)
- Harrogate: Harrogate 47– at Junction 47 of the A1 (commercial site); Harrogate Convention Centre
- Richmondshire: A1 Junction 52 & 53 Triangle (commercial site)
- Ryedale: Eden Camp East, Malton (commercial site)
- Scarborough: Scarborough Business Park (commercial site)
- Selby: Eggborough Core 62, Gascoigne Wood Rail Interchange, Olympia Park, Kellingley Konect 62, Sherburn 2/42 (all commercial sites)
- Craven: No site proposed – potential sites fall within conservation zones or require significant infrastructural development to be unlocked

If Government takes forward any of these sites there will be further scrutiny of the implications of any agreement before approval is given.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Government allocated a three year UK Shared Prosperity Fund grant of £16.9 million to North Yorkshire subject to a North Yorkshire Investment Plan being submitted and approved. On 25 October Executive agreed to progress the delivery of the fund in the current financial year of just over £2 million and begin commissioning of the programmes outlined in a delivery framework submitted with the Executive report. Feedback from Government is still being awaited however there has been positive feedback from civil servants. The Investment plan has a strong focus on supporting communities and businesses through current challenges. Funds are allocated to the following themes:

- Addressing rurality and tackling inequality
- Building pride in our places
- Decarbonising our communities and economy
- Boosting productivity
- Challenging labour market

Rural England Prosperity Fund

North Yorkshire has been initially allocated £5,417,114 from the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) covering two financial years (2023–25) dependant on submitting an addendum to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) North Yorkshire Investment Plan and approval of those proposals. The REPF is for capital investment only whereas the UK SPF is largely revenue funding. The fund covers the UK SPF themes of Communities and Place and Supporting Local Business. The prospectus states that rural areas and settlements of up to 10,000 population are eligible for funding and that market or ‘hub towns’ with populations of up to 30,000 that serve their surrounding rural areas as centres of employment and in providing services are also eligible. Further guidance is expected on this point however it seems clear that the fund excludes the towns of both Harrogate and Scarborough. The programme of delivery outlined in the Government’s UKSPF prospectus allows for the initial calls for funding to be launched in November of this year subject to approval of the addendum by Government.

Levelling Up Fund Round 2

Officers supported Richmondshire District Council to submit a circa £20 million bid to the Levelling Up Fund Round Two. Assessment by Government is underway and details of whether this has been successful is expected in December.

Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund

Local authorities across England have identified tree and woodland planting as a key part of their response to the climate change and biodiversity crises. A lack of capacity to develop and design planting proposals and organise planting has been identified as a key barrier to progress. The Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund (WCAF) is designed to support local authorities accelerate the delivery of tree planting and woodland creation commitments. North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) submitted a bid to the WCAF in July 2022 for the maximum sum available to the Council, £150,000 and this has been successful. This grant money will be used to employ tree and property experts who can identify opportunities for tree planting on public land and progress planting.

Howardian Hills Area of Natural Beauty (AONB) Team

The HH AONB team is delivering the Government’s three year Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (FiPL) working closely with the North York Moors National Park who has its own programme. This is Year two of the three year programme and spend this year will be £190,338, of which £162,738 will be spent on grants with the remainder on farm advice and administration. The FiPL scheme is being delivered in all five protected

landscapes (two National Parks and three AONBs) across North Yorkshire which has enabled farmers and landowners to test new sustainable farming techniques in almost 50% of the county geography ahead of the new environmental land management schemes that are being announced.

This year's Defra grant to the HH AONB team was £334,858.42 and the team is looking for additional external funding this year to enhance and promote the walking network for residents and visitors.

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects:

Drax Bio Energy and Carbon Capture Storage (BECCS)

This is the creation of a Carbon Capture Storage facility at the Drax Power Station site to service the Bio-energy generators. The application has been submitted. The preliminary meeting is expected on 15 November which will officially begin the six month examination period and officers are busy completing the Statement of Common Ground and Local Impact Report.

Power Grid Ventures - Humber Low Carbon Pipeline Project

The project is to install a Carbon Capture pipeline to carry the carbon away from Drax and other facilities in the area and store it underground in the North Sea. The affected area starts at Drax and moves east and as such the land within the North Yorkshire boundary is relatively small. Officers have responded to the scoping report and are preparing to respond fully to the statutory consultation when it begins on 31 October.

Highways England – A66 Improvements

This entails 10 separate highway improvement schemes, two are within the North Yorkshire boundary; Stephen Bank to Carkin Moor is one and there is a second scheme proposed at Scotch Corner. The Local Authorities have secured additional funding through the existing PPA to support the highways authorities' technical response and a project manager has been appointed to assist all local authorities to respond to the challenging examination timetable. The first hearing is expected on 29 November.

Power Grid – Yorkshire Green Energy Project

The project will increase capacity of overhead lines between York and Selby with some increased 'on the ground' infrastructure. Officers have responded to the statutory consultation and continue to work with the applicant. The application is expected to be submitted on 15 November with examination expected to start in the new year.

Helios Solar Farm

The application is for a large solar farm to the north east of the Drax Power Station site connecting to the National Grid connection, inclusive of battery storage facilities. Officers have recently responded to the scoping report. Key issues include the effect on landscape character and the use of best and versatile land.

Boom Power East Riding Solar Farm

This project is primarily out of North Yorkshire but the development will be connected by underground cable to the national grid connection at Drax. It is in the early stages but the key concerns are the same as with the Helios solar farm as well as the overall cumulative impact of these developments.

Waste

This year North Yorkshire County Council's 'North Yorkshire Rotters were celebrated by the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC). LARAC highlight successful projects, small or large, which have been instigated by local authority officers to reduce municipal waste generation and/or prevent waste arising.

North Yorkshire Rotters is a volunteer scheme coordinated by Jeff Coates to promote home composting, reduce, reuse and recycling and the 'love food hate waste' campaigns at events, talks and schools. Jeff successfully coordinates a series of free talks and activities across North Yorkshire supported by the Rotters. These campaigns highlight practical ways that residents can reduce waste, save money and help the environment.

The LARAC event took place in October and the Rotters volunteer scheme was shortlisted to the final three in the 'Best Waste Minimisation or Prevention project' category, narrowly missing out on the award. Well done to Jeff and the team

District/Borough Visits

I have been visiting each of the district/borough economic development and regeneration teams over the last month or so to understand their work, priorities and to discuss the transition to the new Council. They have been very positive, constructive and informative and we have seen really motivated teams and many examples of great projects and good practice which the new Council can learn from and seek to replicate across North Yorkshire. Ensuring the momentum on projects is continued and the need for starter and grow-on space to support the significant micro and SME business sector in North Yorkshire are key messages I have taken away from these visits.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR DEREK J BASTIMAN