

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

19 JULY 2023

STATEMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR MANAGING OUR ENVIRONMENT

Climate Change

The **Climate Change Strategy** consultation ended in April with the Young People's survey continuing into May. A team of officers have been out and about taking the strategy out to local community spaces such as libraries, markets and community events. Thank you to all the residents, businesses, visitors and community groups that responded, giving their views on how North Yorkshire Council should respond to the Climate Emergency we declared in July 2022. The themes of the Climate Change Strategy were well supported and are also evident in the emerging Economic Development Strategy and the Food Strategy, evidencing our commitment to embed climate change into and across all our services.

Whilst developing the Strategy, I am pleased to report that we continue to deliver climate actions and **bid for Government and other funding** to deliver programmes of work. These include:

- the Devolution Deal Net Zero Fund where several NYC bids have been asked to progress to full business case stage. This is not a guarantee of funding but does mean the bids have been shortlisted.
- the North Yorkshire Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural Development Programme for England, ensuring climate responsible actions are built into all the grant funding as the programme develops
Year 1 of the programme delivered
 - 50 Community Building Decarbonisation Plans
 - Decarbonisation plan for elderly people's flats in Richmondshire
 - Housing Stock survey to support HUG2 implementation
 - Farm based decarbonisation / energy programme at contracting stage.

For year 2 activity, workshops were held with communities and businesses in May and June to design the decarbonisation grant schemes and spend for year 2 of the programme which we hope to launch in the Autumn.

- Local Energy Advice Demonstrator – a bid for funding to this programme was made to provide locally based domestic energy efficiency advice, working with the LEP and with community based partners to deliver in rural communities across North Yorkshire.

Our support for **Electric Vehicle Charging Point** infrastructure continues with Scarborough EV Chargepoint rollout. There are now 18 EV charging sockets are now available across five sites in the centre of Scarborough as part of the 96-socket rollout project, with the rest expected by the end of July. Charging points have also been installed at County Hall ready for the EV Pool Car fleet which is on order.

We continue to share information and best practice with communities through the climate change newsletter and at events such as **Great Big Green Week**. The Council supported Coast and Vale Community Action to hold the Climate Change Roundtable event as part of Great Big Green Week in Scarborough, bringing together key local stakeholders to discuss how to best build on the Council's Climate Change Strategy with a particular focus on community energy.

Waste

Following last year's heatwave which saw refuse and recycling crews regularly working in temperatures over 30 degrees, the Council is trialling wearing high-visibility shorts while carrying out collection rounds. The trial is voluntary and will run until October with continual monitoring of crew to ensure their safety and welfare, the results of the trial will inform the working practices and personal protection equipment for future years.

Selby Garden Waste

At the Executive meeting on 20 June the Selby Area Garden Waste Service report was unanimously approved. The report recommended the introduction of a charge in the Selby area this financial year and the harmonisation of service delivery and charging across North Yorkshire from April 2024.

Filey Public Toilets

Following the completion of the new toilets at Filey Ravine and Country Park I am pleased to announce the opening of three new Changing Places toilets at Filey, Scarborough and Whitby. These blocks are for people with profound needs and allows them to visit our beautiful coastline and all it has to offer. The blocks have been delivered in partnership with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. They have been much needed, and I am pleased to be able to add these three sites to our network.

Allerton Waste Recovery Park (AWRP)

In May the Executive and full Council endorsed the response to DEFRA regarding the separate collection of food waste. The report recommends accepting DEFRA's transitional arrangements to implement separately collected food waste across North Yorkshire from 1 February 2043 and to explore options for NYC to implement separately collected food waste at an earlier implementation date.

AWRP has been issued a draft permit from the Environment Agency to implement changes to emissions monitoring. We are currently working with the contractor to understand any impacts for the project.

Government published its response to a 2022 consultation on removing charges for DIY waste disposal at Household Waste Recycling Centres. The changes will be brought into force in 2023 on a date to be determined. The most significant impact for the Council is the loss of income from receipt of this material and the additional disposal and haulage costs that we will incur. Until such time as the legislation changes, the existing practice of charging for DIY waste will remain at our HWRCs so that only those people that produce this material pay for it.

Licensing

Taxis - the new harmonised North Yorkshire Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy continues to settle in with continuous monitoring and adjustment to local and county wide procedures to improve consistency and our service to the trade. A final Licensing Member Working Group meeting took place in May to review and update on matters that were raised and considered during consultation for the current Policy. A full review of policy is planned to begin in autumn this year with proposed changes being taken to consultation then through to implementation in spring 2024.

During the original policy consultation it was recognised that some customers, particularly wheelchair users, were experiencing a lack of adapted taxis which was impacting on their daily lives. Tenders have now been received for an Inclusive Service Study and Plan to deliver improvements for passengers with differing abilities and with a particular focus on

wheelchair users. These are currently being evaluated with a view to work commencing in July.

Other licences – the first Statutory Licensing Committee and General Licensing and Registration Committee took place in May. Harmonised procedures for licensing hearings for North Yorkshire were agreed. Individual licence applications are now being determined in locations across North Yorkshire by Sub-Committees of three Elected Members from the two Committees. Work continues to bring together best practice from the former district authorities and to harmonise and improve working arrangements for Sub-Committee hearings.

The Licensing areas on the Council's website are under constant review and development to improve the customer experience. Adjustments are being made weekly to improve access to information and to processes, including licence applications and payments.

Work will be commencing soon to plan for harmonisation of all the other types of licences that we administer including alcohol and entertainment, gambling, street trading, scrap metal and many more. Specific officer groups and communication channels have been established to ensure that we are working as one team, to share best practice and to further harmonise procedures across the range of licenses that North Yorkshire Council issues.

Trading Standards

Healthier Choices webinar for schools

The Trading Standards healthy eating team, 'Healthier Choices', has hosted a webinar for 12 local schools in collaboration with the North Yorkshire Public Health, Healthy Schools team. Using the learning from previous engagement with Selby High School which involved the renovation of the entire canteen and seating area, a drastic improvement in the healthiness of the food being offered and removal of thousands of single use plastic bottles, the Healthier Choices team will audit the food provision at participating schools, providing guidance and support to enable each school to make improvements to the food offer within their establishment.

Recycling disposable vapes – awareness raising project

In collaboration with colleagues in Waste and Public Health, the team is working to raise awareness of the need to recycle disposable vapes in a safe and appropriate manner. This will include a press release, circulation of awareness raising materials at the point Public Health disseminate vapes as a tool to stop smoking and via messages within vape retail settings which will be visited as part of a wider compliance project.

In addition to this a reporting form has been created for schools and youth clubs to help identify retailers who are selling vapes to children. The reporting form will be used to inform the team of any concerns. This process is being presented to the School PHSE leads on 28 June at an event in Ripon. The school leads will then cascade this information throughout their organisations. Problem traders will then be targeted as part of the ongoing vape project.

Greg Chapman wins national award - 'Outstanding Contribution to Community Alcohol Partnerships'

Community Alcohol Partnerships (CAPs) are local partnerships of councils, police, retailers, schools, health providers and community groups which aim to reduce alcohol harm among young people, improve their health and wellbeing and enhance their communities. There are 80 CAPs in the UK and Senior Enforcement Officer, Greg Chapman, has won a national award, 'Outstanding Contribution to Community Alcohol Partnerships', for his work across the eight North Yorkshire partnerships. He was due to collect his award from Yvette Cooper MP at the House of Commons on 27 June.

Environmental Health

Food Exports

Since April we have been made aware that there have been a few issues with large food exports being held at foreign border control. North Yorkshire Council issues export certificates allowing the food to pass through borders but other countries such as Dubai and Turkey have questioned the validity of the new North Yorkshire Council certificates as they were used to the former Districts ones. Officers have supported businesses by communicating with foreign border control directly and providing them with evidence that the export certificates are legitimate. All exports have passed through successfully after our intervention.

Fly Tipping Awareness

Environmental Protection Officers have been working with Marketing and Communications Officers to develop appropriate wording and providing some thought provoking photographs for use in social media posts and for internal messages to be sent in the weekly news update to highlight the issues of fly-tipping, emphasising the importance of taking responsibility of disposing of waste in appropriate ways. The posts are aimed to make people think about how they can dispose of waste suitably, highlighting that we all have a duty of care to make sure that our waste does not end up being fly tipped.

Air Quality

Environmental Health and Public Health are keen to adopt a holistic approach to air quality issues, integrating health promotion and education with regulation and enforcement, to achieve better outcomes. As a start, North Yorkshire Council is committing as a “supporter” of Clean Air Day, the UK's largest air pollution campaign. Clean Air Day took place on 15 June and the council has placed information posts on its social media as part of the campaign.

Bereavement Services

Invest to Save Projects - Heat Exchanger

A Heat Exchanger has recently been installed at Woodlands Crematorium in Scarborough. On the back of a recent office extension to Scarborough's Crematorium, a heat exchanger has just been installed to connect its cremators to the on-site Chapel. The exchanger works by transferring the heat generated by the cremators to fulfil most of the heating requirements of the Chapel. This improvement will lead to a significant reduction in the Crematorium's overall gas utility bills. Harrogate Crematorium already uses this technology so we are currently looking to see whether similar projects would be possible at our Skipton and Thirsk sites.

Coroners Service

Early discussions have taken place with North Yorkshire Police to develop closer partnership working in respect of the Coroner's support service. Both the Police and NYC are keen to make the best use of resources to help the Coroner deliver an effective service and these discussions are also picking up best practice from elsewhere in the country notably Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR GREG WHITE