

North Yorkshire Council

Audit Committee

11 December 2023

Motion from Full Council referred to the Audit Committee

1. Motion from Full Council Audit Committee

- 1.1 Council met on 15 November 2023. At that meeting, the Motion on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Cllrs Mason and Lacey) was referred to the Transport Economy, Environment & Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee and also the Audit Committee for review and then referral back to the February, 2024 meeting of Council.
- 1.2 The Audit's Committee's comments and response are sought today in this matter. The Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee will also consider its response the motion at its meeting to be held on 18th January, 2024.
- 1.3 The Motion referred from Full Council is reproduced below:

“United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Background - the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(UNSDGs\)](#) are a set of 17 goals that aim to address global challenges and foster sustainable development worldwide. These goals cover a range of issues, including strong economic growth, strong institutions, poverty eradication, equality, clean energy, climate action, and nature protections, among others.

Motion to Council - A more equitable, sustainable, and resilient North Yorkshire

This Council notes with concern the recent Special Report from the United Nations Secretary General – [“Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: towards a rescue plan for people and planet”](#) - published in July 2023 to mark the midpoint between 2015 and the delivery date of 2030.

The Secretary General finds that “... *many of the Goals are moderately to severely off track and puts forward five major recommendations to rescue the Goals and accelerate implementation between now and 2030.*”

This Council notes the third of those recommendations, calling upon Governments to “... strengthen national and subnational capacity, accountability and public institutions to deliver accelerated progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.” Furthermore, this council recognises the main reasons of the Local Government Association as to why councils should investigate and implement the UNSDGs:

- Making progress towards these comprehensive and universal global goals by 2030 will depend on action at the local level, and councils are key actors at that level.
- The SDGs can help focus efforts on the health and wellbeing of people that are the furthest behind.

- Engagement with the SDGs supports and complements the declaration of a climate emergency.
- The SDGs can provide councils with a framework for strategic planning, policy review and action for sustainable development – for economic progress, social justice and inclusion, protection of the climate, environment and biodiversity, and ensuring no one is left behind.
- The SDGs can help councils to foster strategic partnerships, framing joint actions and shared priorities in terms of the goals.
- The resource burden for initial engagement with the SDGs is low.

To that end, North Yorkshire Council resolves to adopt the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) as a framework for informing our local authority's policies, work programs, functions, and initiatives. By doing so, we commit to aligning our strategies with the national and global agenda for sustainable development and working towards achieving these goals within our sphere of influence; thus recognising the significance of the UN SDGs as a comprehensive framework for sustainable development at the global level. We shall seek to apply the UN SDGs at the local level for the wellbeing of our residents.

The Council believes that:

1. Adopting the UN SDGs will provide a clear direction for our local authority's policies, work programs, and initiatives, ensuring their alignment with the national and global agenda for sustainable development.
2. Emphasising the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration and partnerships will help in implementing the UN SDGs effectively.
3. Committing to regular monitoring, reporting, and evaluation of our progress towards achieving the UN SDGs is vital to engage our community in the process.
4. Encouraging cooperation and knowledge-sharing with other local authorities across the UK and world that have already adopted the UN SDGs, will help in promoting collective action and learning both locally and globally.

The Council therefore agrees to:

- A. Adopt the UN SDGs as a framework for informing our local authority's policies, work programs, and initiatives.
- B. Contribute to the achievement of the UN SDGs through the council strategies and developing plans.
- C. Actively engage and collaborates with other local authorities, organisations, and community groups to share best practices, experiences, and lessons learned in advancing the UN SDGs.
- D. Receive an annual report setting out the Council's contributions to the global agenda for sustainable development.

By taking this step, we can also demonstrate our commitment to act at a local level whilst contributing to the global effort to achieve a more equitable, sustainable, and resilient world for future generations.”

4. Recommendation

4.1 That the Audit Committee:

Consider and provide a response to the Full Council motion referred to the Committee

Councillor Cliff Lunn
Chairman

County Hall
Northallerton

1 December 2023