

# North Yorkshire Council

## Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

18 January 2024

### Notice of Motion on United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Report of the Assistant Director – Environmental Services

#### 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present information on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) in response to a Notice of Motion submitted to Full Council on 15 November 2023. This information has been provided to enable the Committee to consider the proposal made in the motion and agree a response for Full Council's consideration on 21 February 2024.

#### 2.0 Background

- 2.1 At Full Council on 15 November 2023, the Chair, Councillor Ireton, decided that a Notice of Motion on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals should be passed to both the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Audit Committee for consideration, with the intention of it being considered and responses brought back to the 21 February 2024 meeting of Full Council.
- 2.2 The Notice of Motion (Appendix A) proposed by Councillor Steve Mason and seconded by Councillor Peter Lacey proposed that the council should:
- 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
- 2.3 The Audit Committee have also considered this motion and resolved at its meeting on 11 December 2023 to submit a response to the motion which:
- 1) notes that the Council is already working towards delivering some of the objectives that the UN SDGs outline; and;
  - 2) recommends that the Executive review this motion with a view to ensuring that its quarterly monitoring reports incorporate the Council's progress with respect to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

### 3.0 The Sustainable Development Goals

3.1 The UN SDGs also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.<sup>1</sup>

3.2 The 17 goals covering social, economic and environmental sustainability are:

1. No Poverty
2. Zero Hunger
3. Good Health and Well-Being
4. Quality Education
5. Gender Equality
6. Clean Water and Sanitation
7. Affordable and Clean Energy
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
10. Reduced Inequalities
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
12. Responsible Consumption and Production
13. Climate Action
14. Life Below Water
15. Life on Land
16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
17. Partnerships

3.3 These 17 goals are underpinned by 167 targets, some of which are applicable to the function of the council, for example reducing waste generation, integrating climate change measures into policies and plans or ensuring sustainable procurement; however, many are not, for example reducing the illicit arms trade, ending poaching, or combatting desertification.

3.4 The Local Government Association support the UN SDGs and listed the following reasons why councils should investigate and implement them<sup>2</sup>:

- a. 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.
- b. The SDGs can help focus efforts on the health and wellbeing of people that are the furthest behind.
- c. Engagement with the SDGs supports and complements the declaration of a climate emergency.
- d. 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.
- e. The SDGs can help councils to foster strategic partnerships, framing joint actions and shared priorities in terms of the goals.
- f. The resource burden for initial engagement with the SDGs is low.

---

<sup>1</sup> UN Development Programme Website, [Sustainable Development Goals | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals)

<sup>2</sup> LGA website, [UN Sustainable Development Goals: A Guide for Councils | Local Government Association](https://www.local.gov.uk/sustainable-development-goals)

3.5 In 2023, the mid-way point for the 15-year plan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations noted a lack of progress towards the goals.<sup>3</sup>

#### 4.0 The Motion

4.1 In response to the four parts of the motion, it is noted that:

Motion		Comment
1	Adopt the UN SDGs as a framework for informing our local authority's policies, work programs, and initiatives.	<p>The Council Plan 2023-27 is the performance framework for North Yorkshire Council, setting out the vision, ambition and priorities for the next four years, and the approach that will be taken to achieve them.</p> <p>The UN SDGs provide a useful check that enables us to assess if a new policy or plan covers the breadth that we would want. It is particularly useful when reviewing overarching strategies such as the Council Plan.</p> <p>The goals provide a comprehensive framework for the stated aim (to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity), however many of the targets are beyond the remit of the council, and others are aimed at those countries that are furthest behind, for example the targets around mortality rates or reducing poverty.</p>
2	Contribute to the achievement of the UN SDGs through the council strategies and developing plans.	<p>Mapping the UN SDGs against the objectives of the council plan (Appendix B) shows that the authority is already contributing to all 17 goals and acting where the targets are applicable.</p> <p>Each of the objectives in the council plan contribute to at least 2 of the UN SDGs with many contributing to far more, as can be seen in the table at Appendix B.</p> <p>Likewise, each of the UN SDGs is covered by at least 2 of the council plan objectives, demonstrating comprehensive coverage.</p> <p>Although all 17 goals are covered to varying degrees by the council plan objectives, many of the 167 targets associated to the UN SDGs are not. This is because those targets are not applicable to, or within the sphere of influence of the Council.</p> <p>Appendix C lists examples of how the authority is contributing to the UN SDGs.</p>

<sup>3</sup> UN website, [The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2023.pdf \(un.org\)](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/2023-sustainable-development-goals-report-2023.pdf)

3	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.	The LGA report referenced above provides useful guidance regarding the UN SDGs for local authorities. Initially an exercise has been undertaken to map the goals against the council plan as mentioned above, a similar approach has been taken by the City of York Council. This mapping will also enable the authority to articulate how it is advancing the UN SDGs.
4	Receive an annual report setting out the Council's contributions to the global agenda for sustainable development	The Council's performance and therefore its contribution to the UN SDGs is already monitored through quarterly reports. The mapping at appendix B plus some narrative could be added to these reports, so that those that want to follow the contribution to the UN SDGs can easily do so.

## 5.0 Issues to Consider

### Equalities

- 5.1 With goals and targets specifically around gender equality and reducing inequalities plus integrated goals and targets in related areas, a focus on the UN SDGs would have a positive impact on equalities.

### Climate Change

- 5.2 Environmental sustainability plays a large part within the UN SDGs. There are specific targets and goals focussed on affordable and clean energy, responsible consumption and production and climate action, as well as integrated goals and targets in other areas; therefore, a focus on the UN SDGs would also have a positive impact on climate change.

### Financial Implications

- 5.3 There are no significant financial issues associated with the motion text proposed. The Local Government Association listed one of the benefits of engaging with the UN SDGs as the resource burden for initial engagement being low.

### Legal Implications

- 5.4 There are no significant legal implications associated with the motion text proposed.

## 6.0 Way Forward

- 6.1 In considering the Notice of Motion put to Full Council in November 2023 and the information provided in this report, Members have the opportunity to consider the issues raised and make a recommendation to the meeting of Full Council on 21 February 2024.

## 7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 Committee members are asked to consider the information provided within the report and agree a way forward.
- 7.2 Leadership Teams to be made aware of the importance of and the commitment to the UN SDGs.

Michael Leah  
Assistant Director – Environmental Services  
County Hall,

Northallerton  
January 2024

Report Contributors:

Simon Moss Strategy and Performance Team Leader

Will Baines Principal Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer

Appendices:

A: Notice of Motion

B: Mapping: NYC Council Plan Objectives / UN Sustainable Development Goals

C: Examples of NYCs contribution to the UN SDGs

Background documents:

Constitution of North Yorkshire Council - [New Council Constitutions \(northyorks.gov.uk\)](https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/new-council-constitutions)

Full Council Meeting 15 November 2023 – [Agenda](#)

**Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.**

## Appendix A:

### Notice of Motion

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.

**Appendix B:**

Mapping: NYC Council Plan Objectives / UN Sustainable Development Goals

Council Plan Objectives	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals																
	No Poverty	Zero Hunger	Good Health and Well-Being	Quality Education	Gender Equality	Clean Water and Sanitation	Affordable and Clean Energy	Decent Work and Economic Growth	Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	Reduced Inequalities	Sustainable Cities and Communities	Responsible Consumption and	Climate Action	Life Below Water	Life on Land	Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	Partnerships for the Goals
<b>Place and Environment</b>																	
A clean, environmentally sustainable and attractive place to live, work and visit						√					√	√	√	√	√		
A well connected and planned place with good transport links and digital connectivity									√		√						
Communities are supported and work together to improve their local area						√					√	√	√	√	√		√
Good quality, affordable and sustainable housing that meets the needs of our communities	√										√		√		√		
<b>Economy</b>																	
Economically sustainable growth that enables people and places to prosper	√	√	√				√	√	√	√	√				√		
Culture, heritage, arts and sustainable tourism all play their part in the economic growth of the county								√	√		√	√					
New and existing businesses can thrive and grow	√							√	√		√						
North Yorkshire has a high profile, is influential nationally and receives its fair share of resources	√	√	√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√
<b>Health and Well-Being</b>																	
People are supported to have a good quality of life and enjoy active and healthy lifestyles		√	√							√	√					√	



Council Plan Objectives	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals																
	No Poverty	Zero Hunger	Good Health and Well-Being	Quality Education	Gender Equality	Clean Water and Sanitation	Affordable and Clean Energy	Decent Work and Economic Growth	Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	Reduced Inequalities	Sustainable Cities and Communities	Responsible Consumption and	Climate Action	Life Below Water	Life on Land	Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	Partnerships for the Goals
Reduced variations in health through tackling the root causes of inequality			√							√							
People can access good public health services and social care across our different communities			√							√							
People have control and choice in relation to their independence and social care support			√							√							
<b>People</b>																	
People are free from harm and feel safe and protected			√		√						√					√	
People can achieve their full potential through lifelong education and learning	√		√	√				√		√							
People are better supported, by strengthening families or other appropriate networks										√	√					√	
In times of hardship, support is provided to those that need it most	√	√								√	√					√	
<b>Organisation</b>																	
Good quality, value for money services that are customer focused and accessible to all												√				√	
A carbon neutral council							√					√	√		√		
A well-led and managed, financially sustainable and forward- thinking council											√	√				√	√
A diverse and inclusive council, where employees are supported and valued					√			√		√							

## Appendix C:

### Examples of NYCs contribution to the UN SDGs

UN SDG	Examples of NYC Activity / Services	Example NYC Strategies <sup>4</sup>
1. No Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits processing</li> <li>• Household Support Fund (HSF)</li> <li>• North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund</li> <li>• Refugee resettlement (Afghan ARAP/UKRS)</li> <li>• Asylum seeker dispersal and contingency hotel accommodation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and Young People Plan</li> <li>• Plan for Economic Growth 2021-24</li> </ul>
2. Zero Hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision and promotion of Free School Meals</li> <li>• Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme</li> <li>• North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund</li> <li>• Refugee resettlement (Afghan ARAP/UKRS)</li> <li>• Asylum seeker dispersal and contingency hotel accommodation</li> <li>• Homes for Ukraine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and Young People Plan</li> <li>• Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy</li> </ul>
3. Good Health and Well-Being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Health Service</li> <li>• Living Well Service</li> <li>• Leisure Services</li> <li>• Refugee resettlement (Afghan ARAP/UKRS)</li> <li>• Asylum seeker dispersal and contingency hotel accommodation</li> <li>• Homes for Ukraine</li> <li>• Outdoor Education Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy</li> <li>• Children and Young People Plan</li> <li>• Health and Adult Services 2025 Plan</li> </ul>
4. Quality Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Improvement</li> <li>• Outdoor Education Service</li> <li>• Adult Education Service</li> <li>• Library Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and Young People Plan</li> <li>• Strategic Plan for SEND Education Provision</li> <li>• Strategy for School Improvement</li> </ul>
5. Gender Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality Impact Assessments</li> <li>• Monitoring Gender Pay Gap within the authority and the county</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People Strategy</li> <li>• Corporate Equality Policy Statement</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> In addition to the Council Plan that covers all 17 goals

UN SDG	Examples of NYC Activity / Services	Example NYC Strategies <sup>4</sup>
6. Clean Water and Sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the Environmental Agency to reduce water pollution</li> <li>• Climate Change Impact Assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Change Strategy</li> </ul>
7. Affordable and Clean Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Change Impact Assessments</li> <li>• Green Energy procurement</li> <li>• Electric Vehicle Charging Points</li> <li>• Household Support Fund (HSF)</li> <li>• North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Change Strategy</li> </ul>
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic development</li> <li>• Regulatory Services</li> <li>• Adult Education Service</li> <li>• Refugee resettlement (Afghan ARAP/UKRS)</li> <li>• Asylum seeker dispersal and contingency hotel accommodation</li> <li>• Homes for Ukraine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for Economic Growth 2021-24</li> <li>• Local Plan</li> <li>• People Strategy</li> </ul>
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic development</li> <li>• Highway's development and maintenance</li> <li>• Integrated Passenger Transport</li> <li>• Regulatory Services</li> <li>• Transformation service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for Economic Growth 2021-24</li> <li>• Spatial Framework</li> <li>• Mobile Communications Strategy</li> <li>• Local Plan</li> <li>• Local Transport plan</li> <li>• Digital Strategy</li> </ul>
10. Reduced Inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality Impact Assessments</li> <li>• Inclusion Service (CYPS)</li> <li>• HR Monitoring</li> <li>• Demographic profiling</li> <li>• Work towards the Councils' Equality Objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for Economic Growth 2021-24</li> <li>• Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy</li> <li>• Children and Young People Plan</li> <li>• Health and Adult Services 2025 Plan</li> <li>• Plan for Economic Growth 2021-24</li> <li>• People Strategy</li> <li>• Corporate Equality Policy Statement</li> <li>• Modern Slavery Statement</li> </ul>
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger Communities Team</li> <li>• Economic Development</li> <li>• Tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for Economic Growth 2021-24</li> <li>• Spatial Framework</li> <li>• Climate Change Strategy</li> </ul>

UN SDG	Examples of NYC Activity / Services	Example NYC Strategies <sup>4</sup>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Change Impact Assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement and Contract Management Strategy</li> </ul>
12. Responsible Consumption and Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Change Impact Assessments</li> <li>• Use of green energy</li> <li>• Use of electric vehicles where practical</li> <li>• Monitoring use of resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for Economic Growth 2021-24</li> <li>• Climate Change Strategy</li> <li>• Procurement and Contract Management Strategy</li> <li>• Waste Strategy</li> </ul>
13. Climate Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beyond Carbon action plan</li> <li>• Climate Change Impact Assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Change Strategy</li> </ul>
14. Life Below Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harbours</li> <li>• Climate Change Impact Assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Change Strategy</li> </ul>
15. Life on Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with protected landscapes</li> <li>• Planning regulations</li> <li>• Climate Change Impact Assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Change Strategy</li> </ul>
16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refugee resettlement (Afghan ARAP/UKRS)</li> <li>• Homes for Ukraine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Governance Policy</li> <li>• Procurement and Contract Management Strategy</li> </ul>
17. Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Community Anchor Organisations</li> <li>• Health and Wellbeing Board</li> <li>• Drugs and Alcohol Partnership Group</li> <li>• Healthwatch</li> <li>• Safeguarding Boards</li> <li>• Disability Forum</li> <li>• Learning Disabilities Partnership Board</li> <li>• North Yorkshire Carers' Forum</li> <li>• Local Nature Partnership</li> <li>• Local Enterprise Partnership</li> <li>• Strategic Housing Partnership</li> <li>• Community Safety Partnership</li> <li>• Police and Crime Panel</li> <li>• Armed Forces Community Covenant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Governance Policy</li> <li>• Procurement and Contract Management Strategy</li> </ul>