

North Yorkshire Council

Corporate and Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee

10 June 2024

Notice of Motion on Right to Grow

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal & Democratic Services)

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present information in response to a Notice of Motion at Full Council in May 2024 that sought resident's right to grow. This information has been provided to enable the Committee to consider the proposal made and draft a response for full Council's consideration.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 At Full Council on 15 May 2024, it was agreed that a Notice of Motion seeking the Council's commitment to 'increase residents right to grow' be referred to Overview & Scrutiny for consideration, with the intention of it being considered and recommendations brought back to the July 2024 meeting of full Council.
- 2.2 On 24 May 2024 the Scrutiny Board considered the Notice of Motion and agreed it should be considered by the Corporate & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee, given its community focus and the required involvement of Legal Services.
- 2.3 The Notice of Motion as proposed by Councillor Hannah Gostlow (and seconded by Councillor Steve Mason) stated:

This Council notes:

- *Its own commitment to conserving biodiversity in order to help mitigate climate change by increasing capture and storage of carbon in ecosystems, and support adaptation to climate impacts.*
- *That trees and green space in urban environments can help prevent floods, cool streets, sequester carbon emissions, filter air pollution, and provide an important habitat for insect and plant-life.*
- *The increasing need to put the health and well-being of residents at the heart of our Council strategies.*
- *The powerful evidence which demonstrates the link between people's health and wellbeing and the availability of fresh locally produced food.*
- *That the cost-of-living crisis is creating real hunger reinforcing the need for healthy fresh food at an affordable price.*
- *That communities coming together to grow can radically reduce costs to NHS and social care budgets by reducing loneliness and providing healthy food.*
- *That there is plenty of under-used publicly owned land which could be used for community food growing while also improving the public realm.*

This Council agrees:

- *Identify and produce a map of all Council owned land suitable for community cultivation that is publicly available at no cost to residents, and actively promoted across all wards.*
- *Land should be considered suitable for cultivation for food or biodiversity unless containing proven hazards or unless development is due within 24 months.*
- *Make this land available for cultivation by a simple license to community organisations at no cost.*

- *Ensure the license does not contain conditions that present a significant barrier to residents in terms of financial or practical requirements.*
- *Ensure that where community groups cultivating on public realm land for food growing or wildlife spaces, the groups are given an opportunity to bid for the land should it be tendered to sale.*
- *Allow the necessary infrastructure such as access to water and/or for water harvesting to enable sustainable cultivation for all.*
- *Ensure that allotment provision adheres to the 1969 Thorpe Report which recommends a minimum provision equivalent to 15 plots per 1,000 households. In the 2011 census, 256,594 households were recorded in North Yorkshire.*

3.0 Way Forward

3.1 Officers in Property Services are currently pulling together information to inform this committee's consideration of the Notice of Motion. At this stage, Members have a number of options:

- Agree to hold an additional meeting on this Committee between 11 June – 11 July 2024 to consider information provided by appropriate officers and use that to inform this Committee's feedback report to Full Council on 24 July 2024 – Members availability may be limited during that timeframe given the coming general election and it would limit the time available to officers to fully explore the proposals within the Notice of Motion and (any) associated implications.
- Agree there is likely to be much to consider in regard to the proposals within the Notice of Motion and agree that all the relevant information be provided for the Committee's consideration at its next formal meeting in September 2024, with the intention of reporting back to full Council in November 2024 – this would allow officers ample time to fully explore the proposals and associated implications for the Council.
- Agree an alternative way forward and identify what additional information is required to support your considerations;

7.0 Recommendation

7.1 Members are asked to consider the information contained within this report and agree a way forward.

Melanie Carr
Principal Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer

29 May 2024