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North Yorkshire Council

Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 17 October 2024 commencing at 10.00 am.

Councillor David Staveley in the Chair plus Councillors Philip Barrett, Derek Bastiman, Hannah Gostlow, George Jabbour (substitute), David Jeffels, Tom Jones, Steve Mason, David Noland (substitute), Subash Sharma, Phil Trumper, Steve Watson, Andrew Williams and Robert Windass.

In attendance: Councillor Paul Haslam (virtual), David Hugill and Mike Jordan.

Officers present: Helen Arnold, Will Baines, Aimi Brookes, Jon Clubb, Jos Holmes, Peter Jeffreys, Michael Leah, Nigel Smith and Brian Stanforth.

Apologies: Councillors Melanie Davis, John Cattanach, David Ireton and Arnold Warneken.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

9 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors John Cattanach, Melanie Davis, David Ireton (substitute Councillor George Jabbour) and Arnold Warneken (substitute Councillor David Noland).

10 Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 July 2024

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2024, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed as a correct record.

11 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Steve Mason declared a personal interest under item 7 (Climate Change Strategy) regarding procurement due to his employment as a sustainability advisor.

12 Public Participation

Three public questions were received.

1. Statement from Andy Hayes

I am a Director of Oliver's Mount Racing Ltd. that holds the licence with North Yorkshire Council to hold national level motorcycle race events at The Oliver's Mount race circuit in Scarborough. We host 6 motorcycle race events each year, and when all is going well, Oliver's Mount is estimated to bring tourism revenue of circa £4m per annum into the local area, and also provides direct annual revenue to the authority in the region of £80k - £100k. I previously attended this committee on 19th January 2023 to ask this same question.

Oliver's Mount uses Jackson's Lane as the sole route for public vehicular entry and egress once events are running and other entrances are closed off. Events will not be financially viable should Jackson's Lane be inaccessible over an event weekend.

Jackson's Lane is a publicly adopted road (reference U563/4/30) and North Yorkshire Council has a duty, as laid out in the Highways Act 1980, to maintain its highway network. This road has been in a state of disrepair and closed to the public since January 2019. NYCC Highways stated in November 2019 that Jackson's Lane should be repaired by June 2020

NYC Highways have permitted Oliver's Mount, amongst others, to use the road in a 1-way, traffic-controlled manner for events, but this causes quite a lot of traffic disruption and is expensive to resource and undoubtedly puts some customers off from coming to Oliver's Mount events. We have managed to live with it though, but due to some recent adverse survey data, we can no longer rely on the use of that road in even a one-way traffic managed operation. We were advised in the days leading up to our last event that our access to the road may be removed. We cannot therefore in good conscience, sell tickets for future 2025 events that we may not be able to provide access to. This renders events at Oliver's Mount financially unviable from this point on, as advised would be the case in my January 2023 attendance at this committee. 21 months on from my previous attendance at this committee, there does not appear to be a scheme or timescale to repair the road.

As a result of the lack of assurance that Jackson's Lane can be used in even a one-way managed scenario in the future, the major full-road closure events at Oliver's Mount will now likely cease and if this results in a prolonged cessation, they may very well never return as it will become increasingly difficult to retain the officials, marshals, competitors and spectators, as well as resurrect aged infrastructure that will not receive investment and maintenance whilst the circuit remains inoperable. There will also be a significant loss to the Scarborough tourism economy.

I would like to ask what is the plan and timescale to repair and reinstate Jackson's Lane to a 2-way carriageway in good order, or to replace it with a new road from Musham Bank roundabout on the A64, that may better alleviate local traffic issues and be built on more stable ground that would likely prove to be a more cost-effective solution in both the short and longer term.

Response of the Assistant Director, Highways and Transportation, Parking Services, Street Scene, Parks and Grounds, PROW, Barrie Mason

The Council recognises the importance to the local economy of the motorcycle race events at The Oliver's Mount race circuit in Scarborough and officers have been working closely with the event organiser to ensure a safe means of access using a strictly controlled traffic management solution and regular geotechnical monitoring surveys. Recently the council has allocated £780k capital funding to procure a design and build contractor to design a suitable permanent geotechnical design solution to this complex land instability problem. As the design solution is not yet known it is not possible to provide a timescale or cost for delivery however, the allocation of the funding for the design stage illustrates the high importance being given by the council to delivering a solution.

Officers are due to meet with the event organiser later this month to discuss the implications for the future of events on Oliver's Mount and the latest survey information which shows that the traffic management solution that has been successfully implemented during events this year is no longer considered feasible going forward.

Following this, the Chair expressed concern at the delays in delivering a solution at Jackson's Lane and committed to write to the Executive Member for Highways and Transportation and the Corporate Director for Environment to set these out. He noted that

the local member Councillor Rich Maw had also made written representations setting out his frustration ahead of the meeting.

Councillor Derek Bastiman advised that as the former Scarborough Borough Council, they had supported Oliver's Mount when the previous owners went into liquidation. He felt the income and publicity generated for the town on race weekends is huge and Oliver's Mount race circuit is a tremendous asset for Scarborough. He agreed with the comments made by the Chair around the unacceptable delays and insisted that the situation is treated with the urgency required.

2. Statement from Hazel Peacock

The review of the 20mph Speed Limit Policy in the report to the Corporate Director for Business and Environmental Services of 11 January 2022 set out how the recommendations of the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review of the previous 20mph speed limit policy had been achieved and sought Executive approval of the revised draft 20mph Speed Limit and Zone Policy.

This followed the conclusions drawn by the TEES committee from their 20mph Scrutiny and task force group in November 2020, including;

- A County Council policy on 20mph making it more explicit in considering 20mph speed limits around schools and thought given to extending distances traditionally considered around schools to encourage greater use of active modes of transport such as walking and cycling, and giving parents and pupils greater confidence that more roads, especially in urban areas would allow more home to school journeys to be undertaken safely using such modes.
- That it is not appropriate to have a standard or default application outside every school, community amenity or residential area, but for each application to be assessed on its own merit and an expectation of a move towards lower speed limits, especially outside of schools.
- And, for a list to be compiled of schools with 20mph speed limits across North Yorkshire to be updated accordingly, to provide a context of number and distribution throughout the county.

Would the committee advise how these recommendations for 20mph around schools have been delivered, with proven evidence and details of their impact?

Response of the Head of Network Strategy, Allan McVeigh

In a general sense, approval of the revised 20mph Speed Limit and Zone Policy in January 2022 signalled a far more positive approach towards 20mph schemes and the Policy's practical implementation in the subsequent months and years, has seen a step change in the number of schemes reviewed and introduced. Information collated in July 2024 indicated that in 2023/24, a total of eight 20mph schemes had been delivered, with another eight already approved for implementation and with another 14 schemes under consideration.

An important change in the revised Policy included a greater focus on the sense of place and community, particularly around schools. It was this and other progressive revisions that has enabled, subject to consultation, a proposed implementation of a large scale 20mph speed limit and zone scheme in South and West of Harrogate. This is currently a live scheme. Prior to the change in policy in 2022 there were very few, if any schemes

delivered on the ground.

Further, in May 2024, it was reported to Executive that good work had been done in progressing the review of speed limits outside schools starting with those located in national speed limit road (60mph), which was a logical position to start from, given this was where the potential severity of a collision is greatest. It was also reported that some of those speed limits will be reducing to as low as 20mph and 30mph where the local conditions allowed. At the time, over 25 schools had or were in the process of being reviewed with the majority seeing reductions in the posted speed limit. It was also recognised that this work would continue as a priority and maintaining the approach of looking incrementally at schools within the higher speed limits. If members wish, a more up to date position on progress towards reducing the speed limit outside schools will be available in Mid November, it is only due to leave commitments that these are not available now.

More broadly, through the relevant restructures and wider Transformation process, the highways service is currently reorganising itself, in order to ensure a more proactive and consistent approach to service delivery, eg in the application of the 20mph Speed Limit and Zone Policy and 20 mph scheme implementation, not just in relation to speed limits outside schools, but more broadly in relation to lower speed limits generally across the County. Members may recall a July 2023 report to the Executive, which set out these proposals in more detail and in doing so, also emphasised the importance, in urban areas, of priority locations such as schools and other high footfall areas, including those with greater concentrations of vulnerable groups and road users.

Following this, a point of clarification was asked around the numbers quoted in the response of schemes delivered / already approved for implementation under consideration and a request made for the detail of the individual schemes referenced.

As a supplementary question, a definition of 'live' was asked for and whether the committee were comfortable with the pace of delivery and implementation of the 20mph schemes and whether staff capacity was sufficient. In response, the Chair stated the committee may return to the subject at a later date if it was felt progress with delivery was not sufficient.

3. Statement from Gia Margolis

Dear Councillor Staveley,

At the November meeting we asked this committee to investigate the millions of pounds of funding that has been wasted on consultants and reports. We asked you to investigate why no active travel schemes of any significance have been delivered in Harrogate in the last ten years. A small section of cycle path has been delivered but the adjacent section has been cancelled and an excellent safe scheme introduced on Beech Grove during Covid was withdrawn despite public approval. I sent the chair of the committee some questions in February 2024 following my statement at the November 2023 meeting. I have had no reply to those questions.

A suggestion was made that the failure of delivery was because North Yorkshire had only recently taken over Highways as the new combined authority. This shows a gross misunderstanding of the facts that North Yorkshire have managed the highways in Harrogate since 2009. Any of the schemes proposed by the new developments in the West of Harrogate are all within the development sites with no safe access to existing routes. All mitigation proposals are to increase capacity of cars at junctions by reducing pavement space.

Councillors are consistently being told that things will change and that reports and plans are being written but until this translates into the delivery of safe infrastructure then the problems of increased congestion will continue to plague our streets and damage the health

of our children and grandchildren. We have a climate crisis, we have a town where the norm is to drive even short journeys and we have a generation who do not feel safe to walk or cycle on our roads.

North Yorkshire rely on funding bids to build a safe cycle and walking network. This is because their LTP does not allocate any funding for active travel. The council has won significant funding bids. They have built nothing and there is no guarantee that anything will be built in the next financial year.

North Yorkshire have recently been told that they have not received funding from the latest round of Active Travel Fund bids and their own rating has been downgraded by Active Travel England. Have any of you looked at North Yorkshire's submission?

It is our view and we urge you to investigate further that this department does not have the skills or capacity to deliver an active travel scheme. The last scheme delivered was in Harrogate in 2014 and that officer has moved on. Is there an officer in post who has delivered any significant active travel scheme? You must ask this question. The department needs to fund a senior post or seek a secondment for one or two years of an officer who has experience of delivering active travel schemes and changing a culture where every scheme currently is stalled in a mire of processes where mistakes are regularly made, consultations, changes of design and spurious delays because of other things that "might happen". This appointment would see an officer who lives works and travels within the urban conurbation of Harrogate. That person would build on the existing network of active travel, see that quick wins can be part of the solution and build relationships with the community that would avoid the debacle of the Otley Road and Gateway schemes.

Over the last few years we have been given endless different reasons for the non delivery of projects. Timetables are given time and again but systematically pushed further away. The nett result is that every cycle scheme has been stripped out of every major project and any of the small schemes are in a perpetual process of delay. The latest reason for delay and one that the authority has known about for years is the development of houses on the West of Harrogate. This should not affect the ability of North Yorkshire to have gone ahead and delivered what was in their remit and for which they had funds.

I urge this committee not to fob us off for another twelve months when all these issues were raised at the November 2023 meeting and so far nothing has changed.

Response of the Head of Network Strategy, Allan McVeigh

Until recently there were no dedicated officers to oversee delivery of active travel schemes. This meant work had to be split between Operational staff who also manage capital program delivery, wider improvement scheme delivery and work reactively whenever issues arise – unfortunately some improvement schemes slipped down the list of priorities due to this.

Design of schemes is an iterative process involving officers and consultants along with rounds of stakeholder engagement. Safety Audits must be completed with satisfactory outcomes, and legal processes adhered to, particularly with reference to TRO's which will be impacted on almost all schemes. The TRO process is lengthy and resource heavy, with at least two rounds of consultation being required to satisfy legal requirements. If objections are received these must be considered, where they cannot be mitigated this might mean that schemes do not go ahead, need to be amended or may need to be removed from consideration. Objections being raised also means that a report to the Corporate Director is required to determine whether the order ought to be sealed – again this unavoidably adds to the timescales on schemes as well as officer workload; works cannot be delivered until the TRO process has concluded.

In addition to the above, there are numerous constraints to scheme delivery, including staff

resource across various different departments, availability of contractors who must also deliver capital program, lack of space within adopted highway, Stray land etc which all make delivery in Harrogate and the wider area a challenge. Unfortunately schemes that are perceived to be “quick wins” on the surface are often not in practice.

A new post (Improvement Project Delivery Manager) was created and since November 2023 a lot of progress has been made on various schemes advancing through the above work stages and overcoming numerous challenges encountered along the way. This means that from Q4 24 and onwards into 2025/26 financial year we should start to see more Active Travel schemes delivered on the ground.

With regard to progress being stalled due to West of Harrogate, it took a tremendous amount of work by officers and consultants to finalise the West of Harrogate Transport Strategy which fed into the HTIP report. These two projects could not be looked at in isolation since they consider the same parts of the network. It would benefit nobody to look at Active Travel Improvements in isolation from developer funded works as this could lead to works being completed on site and then subsequently being removed if issues arose in future due to development traffic.

Officers bid for all available funding to provide active travel infrastructure and with the emerging York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority there will be greater opportunities for funding. The Major Scheme Development Pipeline includes all priority corridors identified from the various Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans. The last Active Travel England (ATE) funding pot that was available to NYC was Active Travel Fund 4 in February 2023 and we were not successful with our bid. NYC have since successfully bid for funding from the YNYCA Net Zero Fund and were successful in securing funding for a scheme between Kildwick and Silsden which will be delivered in Spring 2025.

NYC completed a self-assessment, as requested by ATE, in August 2022 in which we set out that we were at a Level 1 (out of 0 -4) ATE agreed with this status. 51% of Local Authorities in England were rated as a level 1. In December 2023, NYC submitted a second self-assessment in which we provided evidence which we believed suggested that we had improved and were a Level 2 authority. ATE disagreed and so we remained a Level 1. 52.5% of English LA's are currently at Level 1. The majority of LA's (92.5%) are currently rated at level 1 or 2. Officers are working with ATE to improve our level for future years by attending sessions set up by ATE and utilising Capability Funding (also from ATE) to develop active travel schemes to a bid ready status.

13 NY Highways Performance and Progress

The Committee considered a report of Nigel Smith, Head of Highways Operations, NYC, detailing the performance of NY Highways.

An overview of the report was given, with the key points as summarised below:

- During 2023/24, budget savings in revenue activities of £1.9m was achieved as a consequence of efficiencies and reduced costs of delivery.
- Healthy and Safety performance figures for 2023/24 were positive, with an improvement on previous years, even with the setting of more challenging targets. Campaigns were introduced to improve safety, for example with driving at work, stress and preparedness for ISO Accreditation.
- For 2024/25, it is hoped to achieve an external works profit of greater than £100,000, carry out more than 90% of the cyclical gully programme, reduce the carbon footprint and further improve the carbon intensity value.

There followed a discussion, the key points of which are as summarised below:

- The links between NY Highways and street cleansing colleagues, with a working group known as 'HAT 03' set up to develop initiatives to deliver efficient and effective services, with an aspiration for cost savings along the way. This involves a review of equipment and fleet deployed.
- The capabilities of the gully cleaning system to ensure blocked gullies are cleaned frequently? A 'Find and Report' approach is adopted. Also ongoing is a review of locations where frequent non-programmed (reactive) gully cleansing is required, and then adjusting the risk rating to reflect that.
- The number of apprenticeships employed across NY Highways was encouraging to see.
- The work undertaken with parking services to co-ordinate gully cleaning to give prior notice to parked vehicles to move in order to allow the required works to take place. Occasions when work is unable to take place due to vehicles not moving is closely monitored, currently at around 6% for 2024/25 to date.
- Are poor response rates to non-essential queries linked to staff capacity? It was noted an NYC transformation restructure is ongoing to fill vacant posts. It was noted that resilience could be brought in from the NYC arms length companies if required.
- A fear of flooding with the wetter weather has led to increased reports of blocked gullies. When warning is given of named storms or future serious weather events, teams can be quickly deployed to flooding hotspots to ensure those parts of the drainage system are working efficiently.
- How work is evaluated for quality control? It was explained that getting things right first time is the priority, with completed works photographed and kept on file, together with regular sampling of works. On occasions when work is not up to standard, these are reviewed by both Heads of Highways Ops, and an improvement plan put in place, at no additional cost to the Council.
- It was noted that the level of sickness absence for NY Highways is higher than the previous year. This was felt partly to be due to the aging workforce of NY Highways.

It was resolved to note the information in the report.

14 Review of Future Household Waste Collection Options

The Committee considered a report of Peter Jeffreys (Head of Service Waste), Aimi Brookes (Service Development Manager – Waste) and Michael Leah (Assistant Director – Environmental Services, Climate Change & Integrated Passenger Transport, to seek views on the plans for the future harmonisation of waste and recycling services across North Yorkshire.

Some of the key points highlighted in the report were as follows:

- A Waste Harmonisation Task and Finish Group, with representation from all of the council's political groups, had been meeting regularly since November 2023 as the proposals and public consultation process had developed.
- Discussions of the various options started three years ago, as it became clear that future funding for North Yorkshire from national government would depend on how efficient and effective the waste collection service is.
- The current service includes:
 - Fully comingled – Craven, Scarborough – 1 wheelie bin
 - Twin stream – Hambleton (box & wheelie bin), Harrogate (boxes & bags, rolling out wheelie bin)
 - Kerbside sort - Richmond, Ryedale - (boxes & bags)

- Twin stream (alternate fortnightly) – Selby (2 wheelie bin)
- Capacity varies from 115 litres to 295 litres per fortnight
- A desktop options appraisal, looking at nine assessment criteria, found the alternate fortnightly option with two recycling wheeled bins (Selby model) scored the highest, followed by the kerbside sort option with three containers, with the fully comingled option scoring the lowest.
- Previous experience in North Yorkshire is that changing from boxes/bags to wheelie bins does increase recycling. For example, comparison of kg/household in 2019/20 (pre covid) to 2023/24 (post covid) showed a big increase in Selby recycling rates following the service change.
- The initial estimated cost of implementing the changes would be around £8 million over the next five years, but it is anticipated the alternate fortnightly collection option with two wheeled bins would save about £560,000 per year, with the potential for even more savings.
- Wheelie bin systems require the fewest vehicles and staff due to the efficiency of collection.
- One of the key findings from the ‘Let’s Talk Rubbish’ public consultation (over 10,000 responses) was the need for clear and concise communications with residents. Nearly nine in ten residents say it is ‘important’ or ‘very important’ to have access to an equal recycling service in North Yorkshire.
- With regard to carbon modelling, all of the three options considered reduce greenhouse gas emissions compared to the baseline. Kerbside sort saw the biggest reduction, followed by alternate fortnightly collections then fully comingled delivers the least benefit.
- Officers are conscious that one size doesn’t fit all, and there are storage concerns around the two bin approach. Where there are genuine issues with storage or access for properties, bespoke/alternative collections will be provided. Approximately 7.5% of properties in North Yorkshire currently receive a sack collection or are classed as ‘hard to reach’.
- The Malton area will be the first area for the rollout this summer, linked to the vehicle replacement programme requirements, with the rest of the county phased in over a two-to-three year period.
- The work to date suggests the most efficient and effective way to collect recycling across North Yorkshire is the alternate fortnightly collection of 2 wheeled bins. This service:
 - Requires low vehicle and staffing numbers
 - Requires the least financial resources across a range of rebate values
 - Reduces greenhouse gas emissions
 - Meets existing criteria not to collect separately (subject to government policy review)
 - Meets residents preference for wheeled bin(s)
 - Is flexible so that all property types and access arrangements are either accommodated or provided with a bespoke solution.

Following this, significant points highlighted by committee members were:

- Whether the online waste collection calendars and associated guidance for residents of the new collection approach would be ready to explain the changes in good time ahead of the new arrangements coming into force. In response, it was noted that Local Government Reorganisation had brought together waste officers from across the county with lots of experience of initiating service changes. The waste collection online calendars had been harmonised this year. Physical calendars were under consideration to assist residents, along with other communication methods such as messaging and linking in with key local

stakeholders such as the relevant elected member and the parish and town councils.

- Members queried the level of engagement with key stakeholders such as the National Parks, the Planning Authority and the impact on occupiers of listed buildings.
- Reference was made to the recent member visit to see the Selby refuse collections and the amount of bins brought out on collection days for crews to navigate.
- Provision made within planning policy that all new planning applications require appropriate bin storage at new housing developments that reflects the agreed approach. It was noted that discussions have started with Planning team colleagues to reflect this in policy terms, for example to ensure access roads are accessible and fit for purpose for collection vehicles to operate in and out of.
- Concerns were raised that the costs of providing alternative services to households unable to receive the standard two recycling wheeled bins has not been fully quantified and appraised. There was an assurance that officers will work with a local area as there is a need to be sensitive to different locations and also flexible enough to meet local housing types and access arrangements. It was noted that when the former Selby District Council moved from a box to a wheeled based scheme, approximately only an additional 50 (out of 40,000 properties) could not accept the two wheeled bin recycling service rolled out. Therefore the cost of additional bespoke arrangements is highly unlikely to significantly affect the financial assessment of the waste collection options.
- Areas that currently use boxes and bags would be encouraged to reuse them for other purposes once the switch to wheeled bins has been carried out, otherwise the household waste recycling centres would accept them for recycling and excess stock offered to local organisations to make sure they are reused as much as possible.
- Officers were referred to a recent decision by a neighbouring authority, to adopt comingled collections due to diminishing amounts of paper and card. Following the meeting, officers have reviewed publicly available documents and also spoken with respective officers and have established that residents in the neighbouring authority were issued with a small, wheeled bin insert called a caddy, for paper and card. It is felt that restricting the capacity of recycling containers would adversely affect the quantities of recycling collected.
- How the move to a four day working week for the waste collection teams could be communicated most effectively to residents, with the suggestion that information is included within the annual Council Tax bills if appropriate. This idea would be considered.

Resolved - That the elected member feedback of the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee be fed into the Executive and Full Council reports to show the areas of concern raised, in particular around i) the financial modelling, ii) the future planning policy and iii) learning from other local authorities when deciding the household waste collection scheme to be adopted in the future.

Following this, the report on Allerton Waste Recovery Park (AWRP) performance was considered.

Some of the key points highlighted in the report were as follows:

- AWRP consists of 3 technologies: Mechanical Treatment plant, Energy from Waste

(EfW) plant, Anaerobic Digester, plus Offices & Visitor centre. Services commenced 1 March 2018.

- The facility has two main contractual targets; recycling or composting a minimum of 5% of Contract Waste and diversion of a minimum of 70% of Contract Waste away from landfill. Failure to achieve these targets leads to financial deductions. AWRP do recover plastics before material is burnt, this is a bespoke arrangement and helps.
- Outside of reported targets the visitor centre welcomed over 2,800 visitors ranging in age from seven to ninety-two. The contractor had closely worked with Yorwaste, helping with their Christmas campaign and their upcycling Fashion Show launch. Community initiatives include sponsoring the local scout group in the Knaresborough Bed Race, Go Green for Halloween, working with the North Yorkshire Rotters, and donating fleeces and Hi-Viz jackets to local groups and litter pickers.
- In relation to recent national news stories concerning waste incineration, it was noted that EfW technology was never seen as a permanent long-term solution that fixes all of the issues with waste disposal. With the move away from landfill, due to the harmful impact it can have on the environment, EfW is seen as a better alternative in this regard.
- Attention still needs to be paid to the materials and packaging that consumers purchase in the shops and supermarkets. Some of this will begin to be addressed through the introduction of the Extended Producer Responsibility, making companies responsible for the disposal of their products, which in turn will help to meet the circular economy targets of the government.

Following this, key points raised by elected members were as follows:

- The progress made during this current reporting year towards improving the recycling performance rate for 2024/25.
- The financial deductions incurred by the operator as a result of not meeting the contractual targets at AWRP.
- The implications of national policy changes such as the future introduction of the UK Emissions Trading Scheme.

It was resolved that the AWRP section of the report be noted, but that in future years a standalone annual report be provided to the committee.

15 Climate Change Strategy Performance

Report of Jos Holmes, Climate Change Strategy Manager and Michael Leah, Assistant Director – Environmental Services, Climate Change and Integrated Passenger Transport, to provide a progress report on the implementation of the Climate Change Delivery Pathway.

Some of the key points outlined in the report were:

- Over 100 current actions from the Climate Change Delivery Pathway were being delivered or recognised as priority areas of focus and progress reported against each of these.
- The estimated level of investment in climate change delivery with the available figures over a two year period to March 2025 is £2.8million internal funding and £32.7million utilising external funding (this excludes some investment figures not currently available) across the three sections of Mitigation, Adaptation and Supporting Nature.
- Officers are currently preparing a new round of funding proposals and projects to Great British Energy and an initial pipeline of proposals has been submitted to the

York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority as part of its Carbon Negative Challenge Fund.

- Annual 'territorial' statistics from the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero are included with an 18-month time lag with the figures for North Yorkshire in 2022 and a comparison to 2020 figures. Also included are the North Yorkshire Council Operational Carbon Emissions for the 2023/2024 year. This is the first year of operational emissions for the new Council and data indicates the total emissions and derivation of emissions. This now provides a baseline for the new Council, but the calculation will vary depending on the addition or removal of building assets and ongoing transformational activity or organisational restructures.
- It is the intention to bring the carbon emissions of Brierley Group companies into these calculations in future years.
- The focus of the policy development work over the coming months is the development of an Adaptation Strategy by March 2025.

Following this, key points raised by committee members were:

- To detail the work ongoing around active travel and sustainable travel initiatives. In response, support for programmes such as North Yorkshire Lift Share were highlighted and encouraging low carbon travel options through the Bus Service Improvement Plan. One of the proposals submitted to the Combined Authority is the development of a multi-departmental, cross cutting project on air quality, cycling & walking and education. It is hoped to pilot this in the Darlington Road area of Richmond, where five schools with similar finish times experience regular congestion and air quality issues.
- Examples of inadequate cycling and walking provision were highlighted and how these discourage residents and visitors from using more sustainable travel options, particularly as part of new housing developments built with poor active travel infrastructure.
- In deeply rural areas there has been substantial investment in a community transport decarbonisation project, installation of electric vehicle charging points in rural areas through the LEVI programme, where points were not seen as commercially viable, mainly due to a lack of grid capacity.
- The importance of local bus services for rural communities as a low carbon option and increasing the frequency and reliability of the services is a key part of increasing passenger numbers and improving wider connectivity.
- Ways of reducing the cost of electric vehicle charging to make it affordable and realistic option for many communities.
- Work by the Council to champion community energy initiatives. In response, the opportunities and grants available through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Devolution Deal decarbonisation fund for community buildings was highlighted. Four to five larger community energy schemes have been supported through to feasibility stage, to hopefully enable the selling of energy 'behind the meter' in areas where they are grid constrained.
- The Member Champion for Climate Change, Councillor David Hugill, spoke to highlight the 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' programme and the developing plans to encourage cycling in the National Parks. He looked forward to future involvement.
- In rounding up the discussion, the officer noted plans to set up a forum of all protected landscapes - not just National Parks, but AONBs to discuss environmental matters. It is also hoped to link in with the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority to address a common set of challenges.

Resolved that Members acknowledge the progress related to the implementation of the Climate Change Delivery Pathway and proposed next steps.

Following the meeting, the North Yorkshire Operational Emissions 2023/24 table at Appendix 2 was updated to correct the figures originally supplied.

Emissions from staff business travel are now 2,089.83tCO₂e

This means total emissions (scope 1, 2 and 3) are now 29,951.10tCO₂e

The updated table with the correct information is set out below:

Scope		FY 24 (Year 1 of new NYC)	
		Emissions (tCO₂e)	Percentage of total emissions
Scope 1		14,676.47	49.0%
Scope 2	Market based	6,571.64	21.9%
	Location based	6,571.64	21.9%
Operational emissions		21,248.11	67.1%
Scope 3		8,702.98	29.1%
Total		29,951.10	

The change in business travel mileage is as a result of the claimed mileage figures provided not being accurate. Therefore, we have had to use the paid mileage figure as this was felt to be a more reliable and replicable figure to use.

16 Development of a Tree and Woodland Policy

Report of Jon Clubb, Head of Parks and Grounds and Helen Arnold, Tree and Woodland Manager to provide a progress update on the development of North Yorkshire Council's first Tree and Woodlands policy.

Key points outlined in the report included:

- A new Tree and Woodland team was created within the Parks and Grounds service as part of the new North Yorkshire Council because of restructuring the previous legacy authorities' teams. This has created an integrated and coherent team that works across the disciplines of arboriculture, tree surveying, tree operations, and woodland creation.
- Four of the previous legacy authorities had developed individual approaches to tree and woodland management, prior to local government reorganisation. These documents remain in place in the interim, however as the new unitary authority, North Yorkshire Council has a unique opportunity to combine this knowledge and experience to develop a robust policy framework for the county.
- Trees form a significant element of our urban and rural areas. They make an important contribution to the natural beauty, culture, and heritage of our landscapes, whilst providing a range of ecosystem services such as habitats for wildlife, pollution control, flood risk alleviation and mitigation from the impacts of climate change.
- North Yorkshire Council has a legal duty and powers to manage the risk and to protect trees on the land that we manage (such as in open spaces, the highway and across property assets) and within the private realm. This should be reasonable and proportionate, to balance the many benefits that trees and woodlands bring. Therefore, developing a county approach to policy is crucial to this undertaking

and provides all stakeholders with clarity on how this will be managed.

- Themes of the new policy will include sections such as risks from trees, methodology to inspect trees, operational works and what will and won't be undertaken and the legislative tools at our disposal.
- As the policy is built up, engagement and consultation will be very important. Trees are right across the county and estates and many different council services will have some interaction with trees, such as: Children and Young People Service, Planning, Highways, Housing, Bereavement, Countryside Access, Environment and Climate Change, and Insurance and Risk.
- The Tree and Woodland team has been broken down into four separate areas:
 - Protected trees – planning consultations, TPOs, conservation areas and high hedges.
 - Tree asset management – tree surveying and inspection with a focus on benefits and risks
 - Tree operations – mixture of in-house tree surgeon teams in the East and the West, together with external contractors
 - Tree and woodland creation – initiatives such as the Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund and the White Rose Forest partnership
- The new policy will act as the rule book for all interested parties and to manage expectations while protecting the tree asset. It will act as an essential go-to reference for local stakeholders and landowners, as well as guide the council in managing vast numbers of trees and using resources effectively.
- Officers will be using the Tree and Woodland Strategy Toolkit from the Tree Council as a key document to refer to in developing the new strategy, along with reviewing and benchmarking against other similar sized local authorities, with Durham City Council, Oxford County Council and Norfolk County Council to be reviewed initially.
- The policy applies to how we manage trees under our ownership or within our responsibility, trees in private ownership that pose a risk to public safety and also private land where duties apply. After the policy is in place, tree inspection procedures and tree planting guidance notes will follow.
- The full draft strategy is planned to come to a future meeting of this committee for consideration and feedback.

Following this, key points raised in the discussion were:

- Committee members were very supportive of the development of an exciting new policy in this important area.
- The benefits to mental health and wellbeing from trees and woodland, and how trees can help with other environmental issues such as surface water run off to help local communities.
- Community engagement will be key to whether the new team succeeds. It is planned to use exemplar projects such as 'Birmingham TreePeople' to adopt similar schemes in areas of North Yorkshire.
- Link in with public health teams, as an example around how shade from trees can reduce UV exposure, provide shelter and prolong the lifespan of tarmac surfaces by mitigating heat exposure.
- In order to submit successful grant fund applications in the future, it was important for the team to be ready for these to maximise these as much as possible.
- Potential economic benefits to the council around slowing the flow, natural capital approach and biodiversity net gain.
- The tree protection team will be solely focussed on the statutory protection of trees,

where they are necessary.

- The need for education of landowners around tree matters, with the new centralised specialist team better placed to advise on these requests or to improve the knowledge and understanding of others.
- If was asked if the policy could take reference to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as part of the new policy.

Resolved

- i) That the report and appendix be noted
- ii) That a full draft of the policy is submitted to a future meeting of TEEE O&S Committee for comment.

17 Work Programme

The report of the Senior Scrutiny Officer inviting Members to consider the work programme and confirm, amend or add to the areas of the work listed.

Following discussions as part of a previous item, a private briefing on Allerton Waste Recovery Park was requested by the committee.

Resolved -

That the work programme be noted and updated to reflect the discussions at the meeting.

18 Any other items

There were no other items of business.

The meeting concluded at 3.15 pm.