

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

26 February 2025

STATEMENT OF EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR OPEN TO BUSINESS

Economic Development, Regeneration, Tourism & Skills

Skills Development and Funding

Officers are engaged with the Combined Authority in the development of delivery plans for the recently announced Government Trailblazer scheme linked to the Get Britain Working White Paper, to support economically inactive people back into work. Plans need to be in place by March 2025 in order to deliver the £10 million programme between April 2025 and March 2026.

Further discussions and scheme planning with the Combined Authority and City of York Council is also required over the next couple of months around the upcoming fourth year of Shared Prosperity funding in 2025/26 and the Connect to Work Programme which has an estimated start date of Autumn 2025. Connect to Work is a government funded, multi-year scheme to assist individuals with disabilities, health challenges and complex barriers to employment, find and stay in work.

Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funding

Officers are concluding the successful three year Shared and Rural England grant funding programme which has seen £23million invested in boosting Economic and Community activity and skills throughout North Yorkshire. All projects are to be completed by 31 March 2025. A full evaluation of this programme is underway and initial findings have informed initial Year 4 Shared Prosperity programme ideas. The York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority will take the lead on delivery of Shared Prosperity funding from April. A total of £8.8 million has been allocated to York and North Yorkshire.

Mayoral Investment Fund

Officers are involved in co design and communication of the opportunities to North Yorkshire arising from the £27.5 million Mayoral Investment Funds. Three of these funds are now live for applications: £10m Vibrant Towns and High Street Fund, £10m Carbon Negative Fund, £2.5m Skills Innovation Fund with the last one, Business Innovation Fund to be launched in March. This is in addition to the £10m Skills Trailblazer funds to be spent in the financial year 2025/2026.

NE Regeneration

The year started with a bang with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation carrying out demolition of property and site clearance in preparation for work to start on Catterick Garrison LUF project. Negotiations are progressing with the main contractor on cost and programme to ensure a successful delivery. Construction is expected to start in the Spring.

In Whitby, restoration work will start this month on the Old Town Hall. The weekly market has temporarily been moved to Dock End. Following the executive decision to allow the Whitby Maritime Hub to move to the construction stage, pre-construction conditions are being discharged and contract negotiations with the main contractor are underway ready for work to start later this year. And finally, a planning application has been submitted to build 49 affordable, sustainable homes in East Whitby. The target date for determination is 25 April.

The Scarborough Lights festival had a second successful run at the end of 2024, attracting thousands of visitors to the town. Options are being considered for the future of the events under the Scarborough Fair banner. The West Pier planning decision was considered at the January Strategic Planning Committee but was deferred. The Regeneration team are reflecting on the comments made by the Committee and will work with the harbour team to consider the next steps. We are keen to ensure the area can still maximise off-shore opportunities. Working with colleagues across the council, regeneration officers will also be looking at improvements to the town centre as part of the Sprucing Up Scarborough Programme

Permission was recently granted to apply for funding from the York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority to create Investment Plans for towns across the area. Regeneration officers will be working with colleagues, businesses and residents to ensure thriving communities and economic growth across the region. Area Committees will also play an important role as this work progresses.

SW Regeneration

A report was approved by Executive on 17 December 2024 to formally accept The Combined Authority for York and North Yorkshire Mayoral Investment Fund awards. The following funds have now been allocated and project teams established:

- £700k towards the improvement of public spaces surrounding Selby Station, as part of the Transforming Cities Fund scheme
- £700k towards a new boat lift and associated works at Scarborough
- £175K towards new EV charging infrastructure in Northallerton / Bedale / Stokesley / Thirsk / Easingwold / Gt Ayton
- £500K towards improved junctions, traffic signals and public space in central Harrogate, linked to the Transforming Cities Fund scheme.

Funds to develop the detailed business cases of future regeneration, transport, and housing projects:

- £150K for Selby Abbey Quarter
- £90K for Wyvern Link Road at Skipton
- £80K for Ripon mobility hub
- £100K for town centre regeneration sites at Scarborough
- £80K for proposals to deliver 200 new homes across several housing sites.

The full refurbishment of Tadcaster bus station building, and related waiting area canopy work, is now well under way. Work is programmed to be completed in April 2025.

The Sherburn in Elmet, Low Street Enhancement scheme, will start on site towards the end of this month. The project work will be completed in phases, and all work is programmed for completion in July 2025.

The commencement of the Abbey Quarter feasibility and development work, funded through the Mayoral Investment Fund, began in February with an engagement and information session at Selby Abbey. State of the art 3D digital modelling and virtual reality headsets were used to help interpret early proposals for the park and encourage participants to suggest their own proposals for future use of the park.

Tourism

The team are busy delivering activity set out in the Destination Management Plan, engaging and working with stakeholders across North Yorkshire to prioritise actions from within it.

Significant work continues on the development of the new VisitNorthYorkshire.com website, which will replace legacy council destination websites from 1 April. The website is the foundation for all the service marketing activity, providing potential visitors with information on places to visit, eat and stay.

Several exciting destination marketing campaigns that will position North Yorkshire as a must-visit destination and inspire future visits are planned for 2025. "There's more to North Yorkshire" campaign is the first of these campaigns, with a focus on myth-busting some perceptions of North Yorkshire identified in 2024 research. The campaign will take place between May and July to coincide with the launch of the new website.

Tourism sector drop-in events are planned over the next few months to offer businesses the opportunity to meet members of the Visit North Yorkshire team and find out about how the service is evolving alongside the launch of the new website in April.

Officers continue to meet with Make it York, City of York Council and Visit England on a monthly basis to continue development of the York & North Yorkshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP). Engagement with the York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA) on the draft LVEP growth plan and partnership agreement continues and a report on the role of the YNYCA within the LVEP is scheduled for the MCA Board in March.

Planning

Delivery and Infrastructure

The Delivery and Infrastructure team has continued to make progress in accelerating the delivery of housing across North Yorkshire and ensuring developer contributions are collected and spent effectively. Key milestones and highlights include:

- Significant committee decisions on sites the West of Harrogate following approval of the Infrastructure Delivery Strategy.
- The Development Plan Document (DPD) to guide delivery of Maltkiln is now at an advanced stage, currently subject to an examination in public. Consultation on modifications to Plan commenced on 10 February and will hopefully enable the Planning Inspectorate to issue a final report. An adopted DPD will put the Council in good stead to ensure development is comprehensive and high quality.
- Maintaining and monitoring a pipeline of sites to ensure the council is well positioned for external funding opportunities, as well as highlighting opportunities and challenges.

Planning Policy & Place Team

The Planning Service continues to make significant progress on the Council's future planning policies and land allocations:

- Preparation of the local plan evidence is well under way and targeted informal consultation continues with members, infrastructure providers, the development industry, businesses, neighbouring authorities and other key stakeholders.
- The Government has updated the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and has set a new methodology for calculating housing need, resulting in a housing need figure of 4077 new homes per year for North Yorkshire.
- The launch of the first major public consultation on key issues and options for the new plan is scheduled to take place in May, which will take into account the changes made to NPPF.
- The initial "Call for Sites" consultation has taken place and officers are starting to assess the sites submitted for consideration to help to meet the future needs of North Yorkshire. This work will feed into the second stage of consultation on the local plan after the issues and options consultation has taken place. Members of the public can view all of the sites submitted so far on the Council's dedicated call for sites webpage.
- Further to presentation to Executive on 4 February, a recommendation to stop work on the Selby Local Plan is being considered by Full Council today, 26 February.
- The Local Development Scheme (the timescale for producing the local plan and other development plan documents) is currently being updated and will be reported to Executive in March.
- The service continues to support the preparation of numerous Neighbourhood Plans, led by local communities across North Yorkshire.

Harbours

At the end of November 2024, the Scarborough and Whitby Area Constituency Committee received reports on the successful Port Marine Safety Code inspection and a general harbours update.

A dredging licence for Scarborough was received in December 2024 and dredging began in the harbour entrance just prior to Christmas. Notwithstanding the recent storms, strong winds and rough sea conditions, all of which prevent dredging, good progress has been made and a wide parallel channel has been opened for safe navigation in the harbour entrance. A large sandbank has also been removed from the rear of the 12 m berths.

The dredging licence application for Whitby is still in progress and is awaiting the result of the sediment sampling.

Repair works have been instructed for the Fish Quay at Whitby which will see the replacement of 10 steel piles and timber fenders to bring this dilapidated area back into use. Works will begin in March 2025 and be completed in April 2025.

The feasibility and options appraisal for the boat lift infrastructure has been received and a revised application for funding is being prepared to be submitted to the Mayoral Combined Authority for additional funding towards the boat lift project.

The portfolio holder attended a walkover meeting with users of Filey Coble Landing to discuss operational improvements to the area. This was followed up by an audit of the condition of vessels and trailers by the Harbour staff.

COUNCILLOR MARK CRANE