

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

26 FEBRUARY 2025

### STATEMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR MANAGING OUR ENVIRONMENT

#### **Climate Change**

There are multiple challenges posed by Climate Change. Members will be aware of our work to reduce and mitigate the CO2 emissions of the Council and in helping North Yorkshire businesses and residents do the same. We also need to accept that our climate is changing in the UK, including North Yorkshire. I am happy to inform Members that work has commenced on that next thematic priority in relation to Climate Adaptation - or how we prepare for impacts caused by a changing climate.

Work is being commissioned, in partnership with the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (Y&NYCA) and wider stakeholders, to produce a Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Assessment for the region. This will form the evidence base for the development of an Adaptation Strategy.

On the topic of regional partnership, we are pleased to highlight the planned refresh of the York and North Yorkshire Routemap to Carbon Negative and the associated regional carbon reduction targets. It is important to recognise our pivotal role in co-designing this review, alongside our regional partners, which demonstrates the unified approach to decarbonisation in our region.

In a previous report I have mentioned the ongoing work regarding the Shared Prosperity Fund and funding provided for Decarbonisation and Community Climate Action. Since my last update this project, delivered in partnership with the Y&NYCA has been shortlisted for the ASPE Awards in the 'best collaborative project' category. We eagerly await the announcement of the winner, later this month, congratulate our Climate Change colleagues for being shortlisted finalists, and wish them the very best of luck at the awards ceremony.

**Natural Capital Service** - Work continues on the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), following a round of farmer and landowner engagement promoting the identified priorities and measures (actions) and presenting the draft mapping outputs. The LNRS team are now preparing for the statutory consultation process and responding to a DEFRA consultation considering the future requirements for LNRS delivery, focusing on the resourcing and funding required.

The proposed Yorkshire Wolds Area of Natural Beauty (AONB) designation consultation, led by Natural England has now closed. I thank all members who engaged in the process, by contributing to the consultation or promoting it to your networks. NYC has submitted its statutory consultee response, collating the views across the organisation. I also wish to thank the officers for their support in responding to the consultation and to the officers leading on coordinating the response.

As many members will be aware, the second meeting of the North Yorkshire River Catchments Forum (NYRCF) took place on 2 December 2024. At this meeting, involving many key stakeholders and partners, the priority topics for the Forum to address were confirmed. The focus will now be on developing the detailed work programme for 2025 and arrangements for a North Yorkshire Rivers Summit to be held in September 2025.

Following the theme of Water and Water Quality, the Yorkshire Bathing Waters Partnership that includes Yorkshire Water, the Environment Agency (EA), NYC and other key stakeholders has held a workshop on the 20 January 2025 to explore the future operation and focus of the Partnership. Discussions are ongoing with key partners, in particular Yorkshire Water and the EA, on the implications of updated Bathing Water classifications and the actions now required to address issues highlighted by these.

Officers take a proactive approach in the preparation and submission of evidence to emerging national environmental policy, including key consultations in relation to Bathing Waters, the National Land Use Framework and Environmental Improvement Plan.

## **Waste**

**Harmonised Waste Collections** - Thank you to all members and particularly the TEEE O&SC and the All Party Task & Finish Working Group, for their constructive and valued contributions as we considered how we collect waste across the County. The recommendations for the proposed harmonised waste service were unanimously agreed at Executive on 21 January 2025. The funding for this forms part of the budget agreed at the Quarterly Meeting of Council on 14 February, with the policy being considered at this additional meeting of Full Council.

It is also intended to harmonise several waste collection practices, including assisted collections, lane end collections, and container sizes, into a single common approach. Again I wish to thank Members on both TEEE O&SC and the All Party Task & Finish Working Group for their contributions to this work to date. Once finalised the revised policies will be subject to Executive and Full Council approval.

**Waste Collection Days** - Our collection teams are preparing for the start of the 2025 garden waste season. Ahead of this we have made changes to the operating model for the service. The implementation of a standard way of working for all depots necessitates changing several collection days. This will impact nearly 50,000 subscribers. We are issuing notifications, to try and ensure people do not miss a collection, but I want to encourage customers to check their garden waste collection day, as there is a good chance that it will have changed.

Throughout the year the continuing harmonisation of the waste collection service will also result in a significant number of collection day changes, both for general waste and recyclables. Further information will be provided, to the affected localities, in advance of their implementation.

## **Licensing**

**Taxis** – The proposed new Inclusive Service Plan and draft revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy are out to consultation for a period of three months.

Uber was issued a Private Hire Operators Licence in January. The licence has been issued under the same terms and conditions that any other operator would need to comply with.

A series of joint inspections with North Yorkshire Police and the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) focussed on Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles in December. Several vehicles from North Yorkshire and from bordering licensing authorities were suspended pending repair.

**Other Licences** – Proposed new Licensing Act and Gambling policies, which are a harmonisation of previous district council policies, are now out to consultation for six weeks before being presented to Executive for final consideration and approval.

After a lengthy investigation by the Council, an illegal dog breeding establishment was due to be sentenced on 24 January at York Magistrates' Courts. The hearing was adjourned for the fifth time to a new date of 6 June.

Two taxi driver appeals were also in the Magistrates' Courts on 24 January. One was adjourned, the other found in the Council's favour with costs of £1,925.25 being awarded.

A review of all discretionary licence fees for 2025/26 is underway.

### **Regulatory Services**

**Steel stockholder fined £250,000 after death of worker** - Regulatory Services have successfully prosecuted Cleveland Steel and Tubes Ltd, of Dalton, near Thirsk, following an incident in November 2022, after the death of an employee at work. An investigation by a North Yorkshire Council Environmental Health Officer found the machine did not have a suitable guard which would have prevented people coming into contact with its moving parts.

Cleveland Steel and Tubes Ltd pleaded guilty to one offence under Regulation 11(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. The charge related to failures in working practices at the site, including a failure to ensure dangerous parts of machinery were suitably guarded.

The Court heard environmental health, working alongside a specialist inspector from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), served a prohibition notice on the company at the time of the incident, preventing further use of the equipment until suitable guarding had been installed. Cleveland Steel and Tubes Ltd did not appeal the notice and complied with this requirement in June 2023.

York Magistrates Court heard the case on 22 January 2025 and the company has been fined £250,000 and ordered to pay costs of £9,796 along with a victim surcharge of £2,000. Our sympathies go out to the family and friends of the man who lost his life in this incident.

**Avian Influenza outbreaks confirmed** - Two cases of bird flu have been confirmed in North Yorkshire, both around the Sutton on the Forest and Linton on Ouse area. At each premises the infected birds have been killed and a deep clean instigated by the Animal and Plant Health Agency. The government has also introduced Control Zones around each of the infected premises, bringing requirements such as the need for appropriate record keeping, enhanced biosecurity measures, mandatory housing of birds and the restriction of unnecessary bird movements for all bird owners.

To prevent further spread of the disease, an Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) – which the government had previously put in place across East Riding of Yorkshire, Kingston Upon Hull, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk – has been extended to cover York and North Yorkshire. The measures imposed by the Prevention Zone include mandatory enhanced biosecurity and housing for all kept birds. This means that all poultry and captive birds across North Yorkshire should be housed until further notice.

The risk to public health from the virus is very low, and properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs, are safe to eat. However, it is important that people do not pick up sick or dead birds.

### **National Trading Standards eCrime Team**

**Operation Toffee – sale of illegal TV streaming devices** An investigation into a social media group selling devices that enabled free streaming of pay per view services. The person who ran the group, which had over 3,900 members, was sentenced to two years imprisonment

after he pleaded guilty to selling the devices, having made over £108,000 in an 18-month period.

**Operation Joseph – sale of illicit vapes on-line** Following the concerted month of action, we removed 4,486 listings of illicit vapes from social media platforms. A further 9,008 listings remain to be tackled. A report has been prepared for National Trading Standards highlighting the challenges in tackling the outstanding listings with a series of recommendations as to improvements for future phases of this work.

**Operation CeCe – sale of illicit tobacco online** At the request of HMRC we have prepared a series of proposals for an expansion of the work to tackle sale of illicit tobacco online. These proposals will be shared and discussed with HMRC in February with a view to securing further long-term funding and we will inform Members of the outcome of those discussions.

### **Registration Service**

A consultation on the structure of the service is underway and will conclude in early March. Proposed changes will allow the service to effectively deliver both statutory registration activities and statutory and elective ceremonies.

Death registrations in the last three months of 2024 were 4% higher than the same months of 2023. Coupled with the death registration reforms implemented in September, this has resulted in some delays in Medical Examiner Services being able to provide documentation to allow the service to register deaths. This situation is being monitored and discussions held with the Lead Regional Medical Examiner. Regardless of this delay, the average time between documentation being received by the service, and registration taking place in December was three days, well within the national performance target of five days.

### **Coroners Service**

The introduction of single hearing inquests is now well established. This allows the inquest to be concluded within a matter of weeks, thereby allowing bereaved families a faster conclusion as to the cause of death. Automatic listings of inquests on the Council website will soon commence, improving efficiencies and speed of display in addition to removing manual processes.

The planning for the transfer of civilian police staff into the local authority is underway and dialogue continues with North Yorkshire Police to enable this to occur in early Summer.

### **Bereavement Service**

Planning permission has been granted for the construction of an extension to Pateley Bridge Cemetery, and groundworks will be established to provide for the next 50 years. The contract will be undertaken by NY Highways and commence this Summer.

The service is working together with officers from property, finance, climate change and sustainability to develop proposals for the replacement of the gas cremators at each of the crematorium sites starting with the Woodlands Crematorium in Scarborough. An options paper will be tabled as soon as this work is complete to allow discussions to start about the future planning for the service.

Building on the existing legacy council proposals for cemetery extensions and additions a further paper will be tabled in the early summer detailing options for Council burial provision alongside other secular and non-secular provision within the county.