

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

26 FEBRUARY 2025

### STATEMENT OF CHAIR OF THE TRANSPORT, ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT & ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Since the last Full Council meeting in November 2024, the committee met on Thursday 30 January 2025 to receive the following reports:

#### **12 Month Review of Motion on Water Quality for improvements in health, wildlife, biodiversity and economy**

After the motion on water quality was passed at Full Council back in November 2023, and following a six-month review by the committee back in July, we considered a twelve-month review on progress at our most recent meeting.

As part of the officer presentation, it was noted that since the six-month review point a substantial number of new policy initiatives, emerging legislation, inquiries and reports relating to the water sector have been introduced following the General Election. It was noted that general awareness of water issues remains very high at both a local and national level.

Added to this is the progress of the North Yorkshire River Catchments Forum following its second meeting, which took place just before Christmas. A clear action plan is in development, to pinpoint where value can be added by partners and to avoid overlap with other initiatives. It was highlighted that the Forum forms part of a lot of partnership activity taking place across the piece, with recent national commitments made around support for the river catchment partnerships to be welcomed. Early preparations for a 'North Yorkshire Rivers Summit' later in the year are taking place, to bring together stakeholders, including Elected Members, in a similar style to the bathing water summits held in Scarborough regarding water quality in the South Bay.

The link into the new Local Plan for North Yorkshire and planning policy was also discussed, with the 'Issues and Options' consultation coming up later this year. The recent consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework has now put a greater emphasis on sustainable drainage systems and recognised all forms of flooding, such as ground water and surface water flooding, which should help to strengthen measures to improve water quality as part of planning applications coming forward. Regular discussions continue with statutory water providers and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will be reviewed shortly.

It was agreed to continue to monitor progress in this important area, with a review of the water quality motion to be programmed in for twelve months' time. In the meantime, there was a renewed call by the committee to invite the water companies that operate within North Yorkshire to appear at a future meeting.

#### **Review of Household Recycling and Waste Collection Guidance**

Following consideration of the policy at the last committee meeting, officers presented the proposed guidance for households and residents on household recycling and waste collections.

Although much of the new guidance had already been harmonised across the county, there remained areas such as bin sizes, missed collection protocol, proof of assisted collection requirement and treatment of excess refuse waste where there are currently differences in the approach taken among the former legacy district and borough areas.

In considering the new guidance, committee members raised the following points:

- The importance of working with property owners and residents where bin storage practices are inadequate and unacceptable, as once a routine is established it is difficult to break. It was noted in response that the use of education and enforcement was key in areas where bins were permanently left out on the street.
- It was felt that enforcing a smaller refuse bin size of 180 litres as standard would ultimately encourage more recycling. It was also emphasised that new wheelie bins would not be introduced until the current bins had reached the end of their usable life.
- Members then discussed the impact of the delayed food waste collections for North Yorkshire, which it is expected will drive down the amount of residual waste to be collected. It was commented in response that there was no government requirement to collect food waste until 2043, due to the Council's contract with Allerton Waste Recovery Park. Members also discussed the costings of offsetting the burning of waste.
- Members were generally in agreement that 180 litre refuse bins should be introduced as the standard for households up to 4 people, and that a larger or additional bin could be requested for larger households.
- Following a suggestion of providing a more bespoke service for households on the size of the wheelie bins they receive, officers raised concerns around the practicalities of swapping bin sizes, and the administrative challenges about tracking which type of bin would be left when residents move house. It was agreed that there was an operational advantage of having one bin size.
- In response to a comment from a Member in the Selby locality, it was confirmed that the new bins that had been procured were a minimum of 4mm in thickness, so stronger than the bins currently used in the Selby locality.
- The use of education to inform households around what should be placed in a residual bin was also noted.
- Committee members felt that it was important that the assisted collections process was not too restrictive and onerous, to ensure that vulnerable residents were not deterred from requesting one.
- Officers were also asked to review the presence of mini-recycling centres / bring sites, as in the past a number had been provided as an alternative to kerbside recycling services for properties with limited external storage space. It was noted that recycling centres would be looked at on their own merits individually, with no decisions made until the effects of new household collection policy can be seen, as it should reduce the amount of recycled waste.

Taking into account all the feedback received from the committee, this will feature as part of the report to the Executive in March.

### **Notice of Motion on Adoption of an Active Travel Strategy**

The discussion points, deliberations and recommendations back to Full Council of the motion text we considered on the adoption of an active travel strategy are covered in a separate report on this agenda.

### **Notice of Motion on support for Climate and Nature Bill**

Following the Climate and Nature Bill standing adjourned in the House of Commons at its second reading, it was conceded by all present, that it was now unlikely to become law when it returns to Parliament in July.

In introducing the rationale for originally submitting the motion, Councillor Mason felt there was still a need for robust protection for climate and nature matters in particular, as had been set out in the Climate and Nature Bill, along with clear targets and support to mitigate issues such as pollution.

The committee reached a view that given the current status of the Climate and Nature Bill in Parliament, that under the circumstances the motion should be withdrawn as part of the meeting today. There was a recommendation put forward to write as a council to Government to call for the principles set out in the Climate and Nature Bill and existing environmental protections to be respected, while ensuring they are not undermined by new policies that may come forward.

COUNCILLOR DAVID STAVELEY

February 2025