

The North Yorkshire Council

Corporate Director of Community Development

Kittiwake Artificial Nesting Tower, project development funding application

Report of the Corporate Director, Community Development

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the submission of an application for funding of £24,000 grant, and the use of £6,000 from existing revenue budgets as match funding (£30k total) from the Director of Community Development in consultation with the Assistant Director- Resources.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 North Yorkshire Council is seeking approval to apply for a grant of £24,000 from York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority. This funding, together with NYC match funding of £6,000 will support the development of a potential project to help address the growing urban gull problem in Scarborough, particularly the impact of Kittiwake nesting on the Grand Hotel, a Grade II* listed building.
- 2.2 The project explores creating an Artificial Nesting Site (ANS) on the Grand Hotel Terrace, a council-owned brownfield site, to try and relocate the gulls in a way that protects both the birds and the built environment. This initiative aligns with the Council's emerging Urban Gull Strategy and supports priorities in the 2025–2029 Council Plan, including community pride and environmental stewardship.
- 2.3 Funding will enable progression from RIBA Stage 0 to 2–3, covering design, surveys, stakeholder engagement, and planning preparation. If this development project is successful and ultimately then secures full approvals and funding to proceed to delivery stage, the final project is expected to help reduce public complaints, improve safety, and support conservation efforts for the red-listed Kittiwake species.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 There is a perceived increase in the urban gull population in our coastal towns, particularly Scarborough, and the Council has received an increased number of complaints about gulls in 2024. These complaints centre on the aggressive behaviour, noise and mess generated by the birds, particularly during the breeding season. These issues can have a knock-on effect for some residents' quality of life and the experience for some tourists. Furthermore, a key nesting/breeding site for the Kittiwakes is on the roof of the Grand Hotel, Scarborough – which is a grade II* listed building. The 'guano' which Kittiwakes produce is corrosive and may be having a negative impact on this important heritage asset, as well as creating a health risk on the steps below, a key route to the seafront, which are steep and become dangerous. North Yorkshire Council is developing a new Urban Gull Strategy to address these issues. One of the emerging priorities of this document will be the gull proofing of buildings. This discourages nesting, without harming the birds.

- 3.2 North Yorkshire Council commissioned a feasibility study in January. The study sought to assess the value of recent innovations in nesting structures for Kittiwakes (*Rissa Tridactyla*) and whether these developments could be used to complement existing activity to minimise their impact on urban areas and functions while safeguarding gull populations, with particular reference to the reduction of guano build-up below and on nesting sites. This development project, if successful in securing funds, will build on this feasibility work.
- 3.3 This report is to seek permission to apply for a £24,000 grant from YNCA. There would be £6,000 of additional NYC match funding giving a total spend of £30,000. The funding would be used to develop this project from feasibility stage, RIBA 0, to RIBA 2-3, which typically includes design development, cost planning, and technical preparation. This work does not commit the Council to ultimately deliver the scheme but it will better inform next steps, costs and options for the Council to consider, including stakeholder engagement.

4.0 PRESENTATION OF THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE

- 4.1 The substantive issue is that members and the public have been, and are continuing to, complain about the 'guano' in Scarborough, produced by the Kittiwakes. The other issue is that the 'guano' is possibly corroding the roof of a grade II* listed building, The Grand Hotel. Deterrents such as avishock, netting and spikes were found to be not particularly helpful, as that would move the problem to another part of the town. The feasibility report, which was commissioned by North Yorkshire Council, found that the Grand Hotel Terrace, which is council owned brown field site, would be the only suitable site for a Kittiwake ANS (Artificial Nesting Site) due to various factors. Kittiwakes are a red listed species and thus need to be treated with extreme care and conservation. The new proposed site is within 100m from the original nesting site and could provide a solution to both issues noted above, as well as reduce the amount of stress caused to the birds by having to find another place to nest.
- 4.2 Funding is required to further explore this potential project and attempt to solve the issues. This funding application, if successful, will allow the Council to commission eight pieces of work to test the viability and feasibility of the project and take it to RIBA 2/3 stage and shape future decision making about next steps. Work will include:
- Site Survey (topographical and structural)
 - Architectural and Structural Design
 - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
 - Ecological Appraisal
 - Community and Stakeholder Engagement
 - Planning Pre – Application
 - Cost Planning and Procurement Strategy
 - Building Condition and Impact Survey

5.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSES

- 5.1 No formal consultation has taken place at this stage. However, discussions have occurred between Planning and the Urban Gull Strategy Officers (part of the Environment Directorate). The Grand Hotel, and Parks and Grounds have been contacted and would be an important part of the next stage engagement work if development funding is secured. Engagement would also take place between residents, businesses and other stakeholders, as well as further discussions with Planning, Heritage and Environmental services.

6.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 6.1 The project supports the key theme of supporting thriving places and empowered communities from the 2025-2029 Council Plan. It will achieve this through fostering local pride and identity through regeneration and investment.

7.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Alternative options considered at this time were not to submit the funding application. However, this is a good opportunity to try and secure investment into the next development stages for this project.
- 7.2 Other sites were identified as possible ANS sites in the earlier feasibility study but were dismissed as being not suitable for purpose. The Council-owned site at the Grand Hotel Terrace is therefore the only site worthy of further consideration at this time.

8.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

- 8.1 The impact is limited at this stage as the funding application is only for further development work – if secured, this work will ensure a full understanding of project costs, benefits, risks and deliverability to inform future decision making. If ultimately the project moves into a delivery stage, the full could have the following impacts on services (these would be explored fully at the next stage of work):
- The pavement below the Grand Hotel should need to be cleaned less frequently by the Street Cleaning and Littering Team.
 - The Parks and Grounds team will need to manage the guano build up, but potentially only annually.
 - Community safety and ASB risk could be reduced significantly or removed entirely.
 - Could contribute towards the future delivery of the Councils emerging Urban Gull Strategy.

9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 If the grant is accepted, the council would have to provide £6,000 in match funding. This would be met from the existing regeneration revenue budgets (specifically the EDRS General Fund cost centre) in 25/26. Although, this is a relatively small amount of money, it still is an implication. There are no ongoing costs arising from the use of this grant funding.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no legal implications arising from submission of the funding bid. Grant terms are not available at the present time but will be reviewed by Legal Services when released, should the bid be successful. In the event that the bid is successful, any contracts entered into in respect of the grant funding will be in accordance with the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules, and if relevant the Procurement Act 2023.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no equalities implications arising from the submission of an application to this fund.

12.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The project directly supports NYC's Climate Change Strategy, particularly the supporting nature pillar, as Kittiwakes are a red listed species. If taken to delivery stage and installed, an ANS would be subject to planning permission, therefore, a Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA) screening form would be completed as part of future reports. At this stage, a pre-planning assessment will be undertaken and then if successful, full planning permission will be requested.

13.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no policy implications in submitting a funding application for this development project, however the policy implications of potential future delivery will be considered as part of the work if funding is secured, including the potential for this project to help deliver the emerging Urban Gull Strategy.

14.0 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

14.1 This funding is a limited amount, with no ongoing cost impacts as it is only at feasibility and revenue stage project development. The risk is therefore considered low.

14.2 There is a risk that £30k is insufficient; this is considered low, but if it occurred, any cost would need to be absorbed within other Regeneration revenue budgets.

14.3 As the funding is coming from YNYCA UKSPF funds, the expenditure needs to be incurred by 31 March 2026. If the grant is awarded and accepted, work will start immediately and so there is little risk of not meeting this requirement.

14.4 There is a risk that the cost development of the project is undertaken but is then not advisable or possible to proceed to the next stage and to deliver the actual ANS – this is a normal risk in development stage work of this nature.

15.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There are no community safety implications from submitting this funding application.

16.0 CONCLUSIONS

16.1 The proposed project represents the opportunity to further explore a potentially proactive and innovative response to the growing challenges posed by the Kittiwakes in Scarborough, nesting on the Grand Hotel. By progressing the feasibility study to RIBA Stage 2–3, North Yorkshire Council will be better positioned to understand the costs, benefits and deliverability of a potentially sustainable, conservation-led solution that could help address public concerns, possibly protects a heritage asset, and enhances community safety. The development of an Artificial Nesting Site (ANS) on the Grand Hotel Terrace could offer a unique opportunity to balance environmental stewardship with urban regeneration, aligning with council priorities and climate objectives – but further work is needed to understand the full implications with minimal financial risk and significant potential benefits, submitting a funding application to further explore this project is an important next step.

17.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

17.1 For the reasons set out in the report above, it is recommended that approval be given to submit the grant application of £24,000 to YNYCA.

18.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

18.1 That the Corporate Director for Community Development in consultation with the Assistant Director Resources (Community Development) approve the submission of the grant application of £24,000 from York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority to support the development of a potential project to help address the growing urban gull problem in Scarborough.

APPENDICES:

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

[Kittiwake ANS Feasibility](#)

[Urban Gull Strategy - Report](#)

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21 August 2025

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Presenter of Report – Eddie Caverhill

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.