

North Yorkshire Council

Executive

16 September 2025

Closure of Wentworth Street & Back of Micklegate Public Conveniences

Report of the Corporate Director – Environment

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval from the Executive to permanently close Wentworth Street, Malton & Back of Micklegate, Selby Public Conveniences.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report recommends the permanent closure of two public toilet facilities due to ongoing operational challenges, financial pressures, and the availability of alternative provision.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 North Yorkshire Council maintains a network of public conveniences across the county. As part of an ongoing strategic review of assets, the council has identified sites that are underused, costly to maintain, or subject to repeated anti-social behaviour. The Wentworth Street facility in Malton has been identified for closure for some time, due to the close proximity to the Market Place toilets, which is less than a five-minute walk away. The site at Market Place is more centrally located in the town and has sufficient capacity to provide adequate provision for the immediate area. The closure of the Malton facility was considered by Executive on the 17 June 2025 who authorised; *the closure of the Wentworth Street public toilets upon successful transfer of the site at Market Place*. Regrettably the double devolution of the toilets at Market Place has not yet taken place, at the request of Malton Town Council. A decision is therefore sought on closure of this site in isolation of the Market Place toilet block, which will remain operational and unaffected.
- 3.2 The Back Micklegate facility in Selby has been the subject of persistent vandalism and drug-related activity for a number of years, in February 2025 alone, there were seven acts of vandalism/Anti-Social Behaviour in addition to multiple accounts of rough sleepers attempting to gain access. Drug related litter was also recorded most days, as a result of this and the need for a large capital investment, the site is temporarily closed. It has low to medium footfall and there is provision nearby, with the next nearest facility just a seven-minute walk away.
- 3.3 The cost of vandalism/anti-social behaviour is not recorded separately however not only is there a financial cost of repairing the facilities, there is a service impact to prospective users by having to close the sites temporarily.

4.0 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 If approved, both facilities will be closed immediately, with appropriate signage advising of alternative facilities and any directional signage to these sites will also be corrected. Work will also start with colleagues on long-term redevelopment opportunities for both sites.

5.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSES

- 5.1 As part of the paused double devolution work at Malton, extensive dialogue took place with the Town Council. They were supportive of the closure of Wentworth Street, alongside the refurbishment at Market Place, for which a scheme is currently being drawn up.
- 5.2 Back Micklegate toilets have been temporarily closed since March 2025, to date there has been little feedback on this arrangement. Local Members have been advised alongside Selby Town Council around the intention to permanently close this location due to the issues identified.

6.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PLAN

- 6.1 The provision of public conveniences supports support two themes within the Council Plan;
- thriving places and empowered communities that live, work, visit and do business in North Yorkshire
 - ensuring the people of North Yorkshire are safe, healthy and living well.
- 6.2 The closures contribute to the requirements around financial sustainability, community safety, and efficient use of public funds.

7.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Wentworth Street could remain operational with a refurbishment programme drawn up in due course, with the ongoing operation contributing to the Service overspend, but the site at back Micklegate will require an immediate and significant investment to repair the years of vandalism. However, due to the discretionary nature of the service and the availability of nearby alternative provision, neither option is considered viable.

8.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

- 8.1 Minimal impact anticipated.

9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Closure of both sites will result in operational savings in excess of £21,000 annually and help reduce the ongoing overspend position in the Service. Furthermore, closure of the public conveniences at Back Micklegate will avoid the need to invest a significant sum in repairing the facilities. Any future redevelopment of either site will be drawn up and costed separately and brought forward for an investment decision at the appropriate time.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no statutory requirements to provide public conveniences, both sites are owned by the Council.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken. While closures may affect some users, mitigation is in place through nearby facilities. Signage will be installed to direct users accordingly.

12.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 Closure will reduce energy and water consumption, contributing to the council's climate objectives.

13.0 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

13.1 Closure mitigates risks associated with vandalism, drug misuse, and public safety concerns.

14.0 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

14.1 The public conveniences at Wentworth Street and Back of Micklegate are cleaned and maintained by an external contractor. As such, there are no direct human resources implications for North Yorkshire Council staff. The contractor has been notified of the proposed closures, and no contractual penalties or staffing impacts are anticipated.

15.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

15.1 Closure of the Back of Micklegate facility is expected to reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour.

16.0 CONCLUSIONS

16.1 While any network rationalisation is regrettable, there is sufficient provision nearby and the closures will generate an ongoing saving for the service, with minimal impact on users.

17.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

17.1 Due to persistent anti-social behaviour the temporary closure at Selby needs confirming as a permanent change to the network. The closure of Malton has already been agreed as part of a wider programme of work, which while on pause, requires a clear decision separate to any devolution at Market Place.

18.0 RECOMMENDATION

18.1 That the public conveniences at Wentworth Street, Malton and Back of Micklegate, Selby be permanently closed immediately.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 2 – Climate Change Impact Assessment

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

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Presenter of Report – Karl Battersby/Michael Leah Director & Assistant Director Environment

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