

Extract from: Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 11 July 2025 commencing at 10.00 am.

Councillor David Staveley in the Chair plus Councillors Melanie Davis, Philip Barrett, Derek Bastiman, Hannah Gostlow, David Ireton, David Jeffels, Steve Mason, David Noland, Yvonne Peacock MBE (substitute), Subash Sharma, Phil Trumper and Robert Windass.

In attendance: Councillor David Chance (virtual for item 5)

Officers present: Will Baines, Karl Battersby (virtual), Hugh Clear Hill, Barrie Mason, Nigel Smith.

Apologies: Councillors John Cattnach, Tom Jones, Steve Watson and Andrew Williams.

44 Winter Weather Response Review

The report was presented by Nigel Smith, Head of Highways Operations, to review the Council's response to the severe winter weather event that occurred between 4–13 January 2025, during which temperatures dropped below -10°C across North Yorkshire. The review acknowledged the exceptional nature of the event and its widespread impact on residents, infrastructure, and local services. The review aimed to assess the effectiveness of the Council's winter service and identify improvements for future resilience.

Nine recommendations were proposed as part of the review, focusing on enhancing communication, improving footpath treatment, supporting community-led gritting initiatives and reviewing contractor coverage.

In discussing the report, committee members considered:

- The lack of gritting on footpaths was a concern, especially in urban areas and new developments with unadopted roads.
- The absence of grit bins or their rapid depletion was noted, along with confusion over liability for snow clearance by community partnerships. It was clarified that liability for claims from third parties using North Yorkshire roads and footways rests with the council, apart from instances where the parish or town council acts in a negligent manner.
- The Committee discussed the importance of engaging parish and town councils and community organisations in winter preparedness. Suggestions included providing equipment through councillor locality budgets, clearer guidance on the Community Gritting Partnerships scheme, and better visibility of salt bin locations via the Council's website. Members also called or improved emergency contact protocols and signage, particularly for out-of-hours incidents.
- Concerns were raised about the disparity in service levels across different areas, particularly Selby, and the need for consistent treatment based on climatic domains. Officers confirmed that treatment decisions are made on a local area basis when hazard forecasts are triggered.
- The Committee also discussed long-term planning issues, including the adoption of roads in new developments, the role of land developers in winter maintenance, and the need for better communication during the property sales process around any arrangements in place.
- Climate change impacts on the highway infrastructure were acknowledged, with officers confirming that both winter and summer forecasts are monitored year-round.

In discussing the report, a number of suggestions were made, including the development of a winter service fact sheet to distribute to parish and town councils, as well as support for adding QR codes on grit bins to make it easier for residents and local organisations to request replenishment, and better co-ordination with the emergency planning team.

Members emphasised the need for clear, accessible communication and proactive engagement with communities to improve winter resilience in future seasons.

The committee were in support of taking the findings from the review of the winter weather event in January 2025 forward to a meeting of the Executive Member for Highways and Transportation and the Corporate Director in September, to consider the report and the feedback from the committee to agree actions for future winter seasons

[ENDS]