

North Yorkshire Council

Skipton and Ripon Area Committee

5 March 2026

Rural Energy Policies and Local Fuel Pricing Update

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Members have requested an update on rural energy policies and local fuel pricing disparity across the Skipton and Ripon area.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Skipton and Ripon is a geographically large and predominately rural constituency with dispersed settlements, older housing stock, and limited access to the gas grid in some areas which are factors that heighten susceptibility to fuel poverty and volatile energy prices.
- 2.2 The Skipton and Ripon Area Committee has previously highlighted concerns around fuel poverty due to the combined effect of energy inefficient homes, lower household incomes and rising fuel prices. Members have also queried notable variations in petrol and diesel prices across relatively short distances within the Skipton and Ripon area.

3.0 SKIPTON AND RIPON HOUSEHOLD ENERGY AND FUEL PROFILE

- 3.1 The UK does not publish heating oil or fuel price data at a constituency level, however constituency specific fuel poverty data is available. Fuel poverty in England is measured using the Low Income Low Energy Efficiency indicator.
- 3.2 According to [National Energy Action](#) fuel poverty statistics, 7808 households (16.8%) in the Skipton and Ripon parliamentary constituency live in fuel poverty. For every 1000 Skipton and Ripon homes, on average 63.3 receive support from the main national energy efficiency programme.
- 3.3 Fuel poverty in the wider Yorkshire and Humber region is 17.5%, showing that Skipton and Ripon sits slightly below the regional average but remains significantly affected.
- 3.4 Household fuel costs represent a significant and growing pressure for many residents across the Skipton and Ripon constituency. Key factors affecting household energy costs include:
- Reliance on heating oil and LPG in rural areas, exposing households to global market volatility. These fuels do not benefit from the regulated price cap applied to mains gas and electricity.
 - Older, energy inefficient housing requiring higher levels of heating.
 - Localised power supply issues in some remote rural areas.
- 3.5 Fuel poverty is unevenly distributed across North Yorkshire, with parts of Skipton in particular experiencing particularly high levels of deprivation.

4.0 HOUSEHOLD ENERGY AND FUEL COSTS ACROSS SKIPTON AND RIPON

- 4.1 Heating oil and LPG users are particularly exposed to pricing volatility, as fuel costs can vary sharply throughout the year depending on international oil markets, seasonal demand, and local delivery costs. Many suppliers require minimum order quantities, which can create affordability barriers for low income households who may struggle to pay for large deliveries upfront. Off grid households also lack the ability to spread costs evenly through predictable monthly billing.
- 4.2 The transition to low carbon heating remains challenging for rural households. While heat pumps and other renewable technologies offer long term benefits, many older homes require substantial preparatory work such as improved insulation or electrical upgrades. Upfront installation costs and limited local contractor availability can present further barriers. Listed buildings and properties in conservation areas may also face restrictions on certain retrofit measures.
- 4.3 Local support services such as the Council's Choices4Energy programme, as well as national schemes play an important role in helping households manage high energy costs. However, lower levels of awareness, digital access challenges, and the complexities of grant eligibility can limit uptake in rural areas. Continued targeted engagement, outreach, and accessible guidance are key to ensure that rural households benefit fully from available support.

5.0 RURAL ENERGY POLICIES

- 5.1 The key rural energy policies that influence the Skipton and Ripon area at both county wide and regional levels are outlined below.
- 5.2 **York and North Yorkshire Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs)**
- [LAEPs](#) provide detailed rural energy policies, which cover the Skipton and Ripon constituency. Key priorities include:
 - Coordinated local energy system upgrades to support the transition to net zero.
 - Identification of suitable low carbon technologies (such as heat pumps) and priority development areas.
 - Detailed modelling to understand infrastructure needs in dispersed rural communities.
 - Funded by the UK Community Renewal Fund to help rural areas plan system transitions properly.
- 5.3 **Rural North Yorkshire Commission**
- The [Rural North Yorkshire: The way forward](#) report made several recommendations including:
 - The need for investment in rural energy infrastructure to support the shift to low carbon technologies and ensure rural areas can contribute fully to national net zero goals.
 - A strengthened role for the York and North Yorkshire LEP in driving rural energy transition.
 - Devolution for York and North Yorkshire to deliver effective local energy policies.
- 5.4 **Rural decarbonisation pilot for North Yorkshire farms**
- A fully funded decarbonisation pilot programme for farmers offering:
 - Free energy audits for farms in North Yorkshire.
 - Feasibility studies for renewable technologies such as solar panels.
 - Support for upgrading farm energy infrastructure.

- Contributing to the long term aim of achieving carbon-negative farming by 2040.
- The scheme is delivered through the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority and NFU Energy and is funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

5.5 Choices4Energy (C4E)

- The Council's [Choices4Energy](#) programme is a free, impartial energy advice service available to all North Yorkshire residents.
- Through C4E, residents can access support to reduce energy bills, improve home comfort and secure funding for energy efficiency improvements.
- Advice is delivered by telephone consultations, home visits and community events, ensuring accessibility across rural communities.
- The Council's Healthy and Sustainable Homes team has helped deliver the C4E programme, which helps tackle fuel poverty and contributes to carbon reduction targets.

6.0 FUEL PRICING DISPARITY ACROSS SKIPTON AND RIPON

- 6.1 Fuel prices across the Skipton and Ripon area vary considerably due to differing levels of local competition, transport costs and the commercial viability challenges faced by rural petrol stations. Concerns have previously been raised by Committee Members about petrol price variations across relatively short distances, and the impact of this on local residents.
- 6.2 Fuel price variations are often as a result of competitive markets as prices are likely to be higher at petrol stations where there are few competitors nearby, particularly where there is no local supermarket petrol station. Rural petrol stations often sell smaller volumes of fuel and set higher prices to remain viable. National and international market conditions also influence local pricing.
- 6.3 The table below provides a summary of fuel prices across selected locations in the Skipton and Ripon area as of 12 February 2026.

Location	Company	Unleaded petrol (E10) price per litre £	Diesel (standard) price per litre £
New Road, Ingleton	ASDA Express	131.0	141.9
Harrogate Road, Ripon	Morrisons	131.9	141.9
Harrogate Road, Ripon	Esso	133.9	143.9
North Street, Ripon	BP	131.9	141.9
Church St, Settle	ASDA	130.9	138.9
Broughton Rd, Skipton	Morrisons	125.9	135.9
Craven St, Skipton	Tesco	125.9	135.9
Kettlewell Rd, Threshfield	Shell	129.9	138.9

- 6.4 Skipton benefits from multiple supermarket forecourts which drive more competitive and stable pricing. Ripon, with fewer petrol station options and limited supermarket provision, tends to experience slightly higher average prices.
- 6.5 Fuel prices may differ between different petrol station locations of the same company. For instance, as of 12 February 2026 diesel at the ASDA Express in Ingleton is priced higher than diesel at the ASDA petrol station in Settle. This is often due to:
- Proximity to competing supermarket stations.

- Number of nearby petrol stations.
- Local market conditions and operational costs.

6.6 The implications of local fuel pricing disparity for Skipton and Ripon residents are:

- Increased transport costs for households, particularly those in remote rural communities with limited access to public transport.
- Local businesses in rural areas face higher logistics costs, reducing competitiveness.
- Greater cost of living pressures for residents in rural with consistently higher fuel prices.
- Increased fuel costs for farmers in rural areas.

6.7 On 2 February 2026, the Government launched a [Fuel Finder](#) scheme that provides live retail fuel prices and forecourt information in the UK to improve transparency and competition in the road fuel market. It makes fuel prices available to third party apps and websites so motorists can compare prices easily and find the best deals. The scheme forms part of wider Government efforts to strengthen competition and consumer protection in the fuel sector.

6.8 Some further issues relating to fuel pricing disparity in rural areas are:

- Electric vehicle (EV) usage in rural areas is not as feasible due to limited access to EV charging points.
- Limited competition among rural fuel retailers, where fewer petrol stations mean prices tend to be higher and change less frequently.
- Longer travel distances to access cheaper fuel, forcing rural drivers to use local stations even when prices are higher, reducing consumer choice.
- Higher transport costs for delivering fuel to remote or rural forecourts, contributing to higher prices.
- Greater reliance on private vehicles, as rural residents often have limited access to public transport.
- Slower adoption of alternative fuels, such as hydrogen or biofuels, due to lack of infrastructure investment.
- Inconsistent or outdated price information from smaller independent petrol stations not using real time reporting systems, making it harder for rural drivers to compare prices.
- Seasonal tourist pressure in some areas of Skipton and Ripon, which can temporarily drive up fuel prices due to increased demand in market towns or remote hotspots.

6.9 The combined effect of high household heating costs and higher than average vehicle fuel costs creates a double burden for rural households. With limited public transport options, many residents rely heavily on private vehicles. Rising costs for both household heating and transport fuel increase overall cost of living pressures.

7.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 As this report is for information only, no alternative options have been considered.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 As this report is for information only, there are no financial implications arising from the recommendation.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 As this report is for information only, there are no legal implications arising from the recommendation.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 As this report is for information only, there are no equalities implications arising from the recommendation.

11.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

11.1 As this report is for information only, there are no climate change implications arising from the recommendation.

12.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

12.1 The recommendation is to note the information provided in the report.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION

- i) That Members note the contents of this report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

- [National Energy Action - Fuel Poverty Statistics for Skipton and Ripon](#)
- [Fuel poverty energy efficiency rating](#)
- [York and North Yorkshire Local Area Energy Plans \(LAEPs\)](#)
- [Rural Commission - Rural North Yorkshire: The way forward](#)
- [North Yorkshire Rural Commission](#)
- [NFU Energy - York & North Yorkshire Pilot Paves the Way for Carbon-Negative Farming by 2040](#)
- [Choices4Energy](#)
- [Briefing Note: Healthy and Sustainable Homes Team](#)
- [UK Petrol Prices](#)
- [Government Fuel Finder](#)

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