

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

18 MARCH 2026

STATEMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR MANAGING OUR ENVIRONMENT

Climate Change Update

The Council continues to implement approaches to energy use reduction across our own operations and supporting communities and businesses to also act.

In the last few weeks over £1million in Shared Prosperity Fund grant support has been processed through our Business Sustainability Programme to farms and businesses in the region, enabling energy efficiency, solar and wind generated energy and investing in local supply chains. We've also been successful in securing Mayoral Renewable Fund investment for our leisure provision and a regeneration project, which will also improve renewable energy generation across our estate.

The Climate Risk and Vulnerability project, in collaboration with York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA), City of York and the protected landscapes, is nearing conclusion and the implications and recommendations for our area will be shared with NYC services, likely to be impacted by the changing climate.

We are also reviewing the outcome of a piece of research into how to decarbonise the Council's fleet of vehicles. This will help officers to prioritise services where electric vehicles can be used to support service delivery and produce long term improvements to air quality, carbon emissions and also financial savings.

I would like to update you on our Carbon Disclosure Project score that was recently announced. This has improved from a grade B to an A minus, showing our continued commitment and progress across the sustainability agenda.

Natural Capital Service

The North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) was published on 18 February, and we are now working on the governance for the transition to delivery. North Yorkshire Council will remain the Responsible Authority (RA) accountable to Defra and we expect to work closely with the North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Partnership (LNP) in the coordination of the delivery of nature recovery.

Following a recent Secretary of State review of all proposed designations, the Yorkshire Wolds Area of Natural Beauty, has been given approval to continue the process of formal designation, including governance processes and agreement over the future host authority remit and management of the proposed designation.

For our existing National Landscapes, both Nidderdale and Howardian Hills National Landscape have been attending their respective Area Committees to give an update and overview of the next steps for the refresh of the Management Plans. These are prepared on behalf of North Yorkshire Council and will be brought forward for formal adoption by December 2025.

Waste

The Council is progressing the outsourcing the cleaning of our public conveniences, this should harmonise standards and generate long-term savings, while a Member Task and Finish Group has concluded to help shape a new Public Convenience Strategy that will guide

future investment and service models, I am very grateful for the time invested by Members of the group on this important topic.

The 2026 garden waste collection service has once again proved popular with subscribers, and we look forward to providing another year of reliable collections throughout North Yorkshire. In addition, the Street Cleansing Service is about to undergo a full reset to deliver a consistent countywide approach, clearer cleansing frequencies and enhanced performance monitoring to ensure cleaner and more resilient local spaces.

Transformational work to modernise and harmonise the waste service continues to progress at pace. In 2025, we successfully implemented standardised working practices, ensuring that all domestic waste collections now take place between Tuesday and Friday, with consistent start and finish times across the service. In 2026, our focus turns to the optimisation of collection rounds. This will improve the efficient and consistent deployment of staff and vehicles, supporting both service reliability and value for money. Alongside this, we will begin the rollout of the new twin-bin recycling service across Richmondshire, marking an important step in enhancing our recycling offer for residents and improving environmental outcomes.

Regulatory Services

Licensing

Taxis – The proposed revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and the proposed new Inclusive Service Plan is progressing towards approval at Executive on 17 March 2026.

Pavement Licensing – The proposed new Pavement Licensing Policy will be presented to the Executive for approval on 17 March 2026.

Review of Licence fees – Changes to general licence fees have been agreed for 2026/27. Changes to taxi fees are currently being consulted upon.

National consultations – The Licensing Team is currently working with the City of York and the Mayors Transport Authority team to make agreed responses to the Governments current consultation to move taxi licensing to Transport Authorities.

Incidents at licensed premises – Incident rates have been low.

National Trading Standards eCrime Team and NYtech

Operation Bess – A major investigation has uncovered a £2 million fraud scheme in which elderly and vulnerable consumers were duped into believing they were speaking with legitimate customer service representatives from Microsoft, Epson, HP and other household IT companies. The fraudsters falsely claimed the consumers had issues with their devices – problems that were either fabricated or very trivial – and then charged the consumers up to £4,000 for unnecessary work. Seven defendants have now been convicted, receiving a combined total of 13 years imprisonment.

Farming, Food and Health

Bird Flu - On 6 February, the Grassington Captive Bird (Monitoring) Control Zone was revoked by the government following a successful period of disease control monitoring. As such there are currently no bird flu infected premises in North Yorkshire, albeit the national mandatory housing requirements remain for the time being.

Registration, Coroners and Bereavement Services

The Registration Service has begun rolling out a new national Digital Registration System. By Autumn this year all death registrations will take place using this new system, with births and marriages being moved across from 2027.

The Coroner's Service has recently appointed a new Area Coroner to replace the previous postholder who has moved to a tribunal judge post. Plans for the management of mass fatalities are being updated in conjunction with the Resilience and Emergencies Team and City of York Council.

Capital plans for replacement cremators at Woodlands Crematorium will go for approval before the end of the financial year. Following this further capital funds approval will be requested for cemetery expansion in Harrogate, Scarborough and Whitby. Alongside this the service is working with other departments in the Council and relevant Dioceses regarding closed churchyard maintenance responsibilities

COUNCILLOR RICHARD FOSTER