

## **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL**

**18 MARCH 2026**

### **STATEMENT OF THE CHAIR OF TRANSPORT, ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The latest meeting of the Transport, Economy, Environment & Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee took place on Thursday 28 January 2026. The reports covered at that meeting were as follows:

#### **Allerton Waste Recovery Park (AWRP) – 2024/25 Performance**

The Committee received the annual performance update for AWRP and heard directly from Paco Hevia, the Chief Executive of the operating contractor. This enabled Members to directly examine the reasons behind a challenging period for the facility. The report explained that during 2024/25 the availability of the Energy from Waste (EfW) facility reduced to 77%, due to a combination of planned and unplanned downtime. This resulted in a short-term increase in landfill diversion, but despite these events, operator still managed to divert 87.3% of the contract waste from landfill, well in excess of contractual targets. It was also noted that EfW performance from the first half of the current year (from April to November 2025), has been similar to the previous year.

Mechanical Treatment throughput was reduced, despite improved availability, due largely to the need to carefully manage bunker levels. The Anaerobic Digestion plant also experienced its lowest throughput to date, attributed both to mechanical issues and to reduced food waste content in the residual stream.

We examined in depth the causes of these operational difficulties, including boiler fouling, ash-handling issues, plant blockages and the impact of non-compliant materials such as vapes, gas canisters and lithium batteries entering the waste stream. An action plan to improve performance was also discussed, with engineering upgrades, capital works in the Mechanical Treatment Plant, new artificial vision technology in the bunkers and the replacement of the superheaters, which is a major investment to stabilise performance and has led to reported improvements since it was completed. Environmental exceedances were also reviewed and explained, with almost all classed as having no impact, and one minor dioxin exceedance requiring no further action following external assessment.

The Committee also explored the implications of the forthcoming UK Emissions Trading Scheme and emphasised the need for continued resident education around correct waste disposal.

It was requested that the 2025/26 annual performance report be sent to committee members as soon as it is finalised, to avoid any unnecessary delays prior to the committee considering the report later in 2026.

#### **NY Highways – Annual Performance Report**

The Committee considered a new style, consolidated Annual Performance Report for NY Highways. Performance highlights included: £31m of capital works delivered (88% of programme), 12,179 maintenance orders completed with £2.45m efficiency savings

returned to the Council, full completion of the gully programme (97%), and significant winter service delivery.

Members acknowledged the strong delivery across routine maintenance, capital works, fleet services and winter operations, but also highlighted several areas requiring continued attention, such as improved asset data and LGR integration, where Members expressed concern about inherited inconsistencies in street-lighting, drainage and gullies asset information from legacy councils, leading to missed or unclear asset records. Officers confirmed ongoing work to validate and correct the asset register, which was supported by operational teams increasingly reporting missing assets during onsite work.

While Members praised high-quality work on major schemes such as Ripon Market Place, concerns were raised about the quality and longevity of some smaller patching works. Members emphasised the need for consistent use of inlay over temporary cold-lay repairs wherever practicable and for stronger onsite inspections.

Members noted improvements in gully performance but stressed the need for robust follow-up where access restrictions or stuck lids prevent cleaning. Members also commented on the increasing prevalence of water pooling and vegetation growth, particularly in Ripon and other urban centres.

On highway verges, committee members raised concerns about leaf accumulation, weeds and debris in gutters, particularly following the transition to the unitary authority. Officers advised that additional funding had been secured to target the worst-affected areas during the remainder of the year.

Committee members also highlighted the difficulties caused when road space or parking suspensions are advertised for several days but works occur on only one of them. The need for clearer forward planning and communication was stressed, especially in densely parked streets.

The recent severe winter weather event was also raised, particularly on the response to this in the east of the county. Questions were asked about resource allocation, potential for cross-area deployment, footway gritting options and continuing to highlight the community involvement opportunities through notifying the council of grit bins requiring replenishing and the benefits to local communities of setting up community gritting partnerships.

It was a productive session that both officers and members took away information on. We look forward to receiving the 2025/26 annual report in due course.

### **Harbours Strategy**

Members discussed the draft Harbours Strategy as part of the consultation process with stakeholders and the public. The Committee noted the strategic importance of the Council's harbours to local economies and tourism. Members emphasised the need for clarity around future investment planning, dredging requirements, the condition of assets, revenue sustainability and ensuring effective engagement with harbour users. Concerns were expressed regarding the need for transparency around fees, charges and long-term capital planning.

The feedback from committee members will be taken into account when finalising the Harbours Strategy document over the coming months.

**Public Conveniences Working Group – Final Report**

The Committee considered the final report of the Public Conveniences Working Group. Members reiterated the importance of maintaining high-quality public conveniences, particularly in areas with high visitor numbers. The Committee discussed the financial pressures associated with operating these facilities, the varying conditions of inherited assets, and the need for a consistent countywide standard while retaining flexibility for local partnership models. Members raised questions about the proposed charging policy, alternative delivery models, and the opportunities for community or town council involvement. Whilst there was support for the contents of the report and the work undertaken, a number of amendments to the initial recommendations put forward by the working group were agreed at the meeting, and these are planned to go to the Executive for consideration in April.

Due to time constraints, unfortunately other non-urgent items on the agenda were deferred and will be considered initially at our next Mid-Cycle Briefing later this month to decide on next steps.

The next meeting of the committee will take place on Wednesday 29 April 2026 at County Hall, starting at 10am.

COUNCILLOR DAVID STAVELEY