

North Yorkshire Council

Executive

12 May 2026

North Yorkshire Council Harbours Strategy

Report of the Corporate Director – Environment

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Executive and adoption of the proposed North Yorkshire Council Harbours Strategy.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 North Yorkshire Council is the statutory harbour authority for Scarborough and Whitby Harbours. Former strategies, prepared by Scarborough Borough Council have long expired and this strategy presents the first opportunity for North Yorkshire Council to set out its visions for Scarborough Harbour, Whitby Harbour, and Filey Coble Landing.

3.0 NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL HARBOURS STRATEGY

- 3.1 A full copy of the proposed North Yorkshire Council Harbours Strategy is included (Appendix A).
- 3.2 The strategy is not a statutory document required by any harbour legislation. It is a high-level document which provides the framework for the development and future direction of management for Scarborough and Whitby Harbours and Filey Coble Landing, and how each of these unique assets will develop over ten years from 2026 to 2036. It is an ongoing and active document which will need to respond to economic, social and environmental changes as well as new policies.
- 3.4 The Executive Summary is reproduced below:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

North Yorkshire Council's Harbours Strategy outlines a 10-year plan to revitalise Scarborough Harbour, Whitby Harbour, and Filey Coble Landing. Following the 2023 local government reorganisation, the Council became the statutory harbour authority, aiming to ensure safe, sustainable, and economically viable harbours.

Vision & Mission

- **Vision:** To fulfil the potential of Scarborough and Whitby Harbours and Filey Coble Landing, by providing safe, and sustainable facilities, which celebrate their rich maritime heritage and embrace innovation and economic growth. Our harbours will be environmentally responsible, resilient to future challenges, open and welcoming to all offering accessible, and engaging spaces for users, residents, visitors and businesses alike. Through collaboration and investment, we will ensure that our Harbours remain cherished and dynamic destinations for generations to come.
- **Mission:** Manage harbours to benefit current and future communities while preserving their historic value.

Strategic Objectives

1. Ensure safety and high service standards.
2. Strengthen stakeholder relationships.
3. Improve operational efficiency and resilience.
4. Maintain and upgrade infrastructure.
5. Invest in new facilities to attract growth sectors.
6. Develop markets in fishing, leisure, tourism, aquaculture and renewables.
7. Ensure robust financial management.
8. Support environmental sustainability and net zero goals.

Challenges & Opportunities

- **Challenges:** Ageing infrastructure, fishing industry decline, climate change, and funding gaps.
- **Opportunities:** Offshore wind supply chain, tourism, maritime training, and improved harbour facilities.

Strategic Actions

- Infrastructure upgrades (e.g., West Pier, Eskside Wharf).
- New developments (e.g., Whitby Maritime Hub, boat lift).
- Environmental initiatives (e.g., shoreside power, biodiversity).
- Enhanced stakeholder engagement and financial planning.

Conclusion

This strategy provides a clear roadmap to secure the long-term future of North Yorkshire's harbours through investment, innovation, and collaboration.

4.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSES

4.1 The document has been subject to a comprehensive consultation. The consultation has included:

- Prior to writing the strategy the Council set up three specific Harbours Development Strategy Working Groups which consisted of Councillors, harbour users and other interested parties. Meetings in Scarborough, Filey and Whitby were held on 24 July 2023, 28 July 2023, and 31 July 2023 respectively.
- The draft strategy was uploaded to the Consultations section of the Council's Website for public consultation from 8 January 2026 to 22 March 2026.
- The draft strategy was reported to the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 28 January 2026.
- The draft strategy was reported to the Scarborough and Whitby Area Committee at its meeting on 2 March 2026.
- The draft strategy was sent to all Ward members on 19 January 2026.
- The draft strategy was sent to the Member of Parliament on 19 January 2026.
- The draft strategy was sent to Scarborough Town Council, Whitby Town Council and Filey Town Council on 19 January 2026.
- The draft strategy was sent to the harbour user groups for Scarborough, Whitby and Filey on 19 January 2026.
- The draft strategy was sent to the Chair of the Scarborough Harbour Advisory Board on 19 January 2026.
- The link to the strategy was included by the Ward member in her monthly newsletter to all residents of Castle Ward.
- The proposals for the strategy were discussed at a Scarborough Business Ambassadors Marine & Renewables networking event on 26 February 2026.
- The strategy received wide media coverage locally.
- Whitby Town Council considered the draft strategy at their meeting on 3 March 2026.

- Scarborough Town Council considered the draft strategy at the meetings of their Harbours Committee on 4 February 2026 and 1 April 2026. A private briefing was also given to interested members by the Head of Harbours on 20 March 2026.

4.2 All consultees were encouraged to respond through the formal online consultations page to ensure consistency of responses and full detailed analysis of all consultation responses. Notwithstanding this, some consultees also responded by email. The consultation period ended on Sunday 22 March 2026.

4.3 An analysis of the consultation including all comments received is included in Appendix B.

5.0 UPDATES FOLLOWING CONSULTATION

5.1 The consultation on the draft strategy provided valuable feedback on the document and the Council has incorporated many of the changes that have been suggested by consultees.

5.2 The main changes (but not an exhaustive list) which were incorporated include

- An explanation of the reasoning for a 10 year strategy.
- Clarification on the open ports' duty.
- Adding text to the Whitby harbour plan prepared by Judge Sweeting to clarify the extent of the water-based responsibilities.
- Strengthening references and commitment to aquaculture and marine science.
- Clarification of the governance of the harbours, including removal of references to 'Harbours Executive' which is only an internal officer led management meeting with no decision-making powers.
- Several consultees suggest that the separate harbours should be governed by their own Harbour Management Committees comprising 50% local authority elected members and 50% external appointees. Further that the harbours strategy should not be adopted until these governance arrangements are put in place. Officers disagree with this assertion but do agree that a governance review of alternative models should be included as a strategic action with the findings presented to Executive for consideration.
- References to the Whitby Lobster Hatchery have been strengthened including providing recognition and support for marine conservation.
- Reference to bridge openings strengthened and a new strategic action to establish a working group to explore alternative arrangements.
- References to offshore renewables opportunities and the links to maritime education strengthened and included.
- A commitment to review opening arrangements for the Whitby Swing Bridge including the establishment of a working group.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 There are no other options. The only other option is not to have a harbour strategy.

6.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

6.1 The strategy aligns with the Council Plan 2025-2029, which sets out the council's vision, ambitions and priorities for the next four years, as well as the approach we will take to achieve them.

6.2 The Harbours Strategy seeks to recognise the role of the harbours within this strategic context and identifies how the harbours contribute to the Council's priorities. The strategy also aligns with other cross cutting themes such as carbon reduction, our Climate Change Strategy and our economic growth strategy.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from the adoption of the proposed strategy as funding for schemes already in construction is included in the approved capital plan.
- 7.2 The strategy recognises that whilst there are a number of ambitious redevelopment proposals, these will be subject to securing external grant aid or additional council funding and will be subject to the usual financial governance process at the appropriate time.
- 7.3 It should be noted that, following the judgment in relation to the Whitby Harbour court case, there are separate, ring-fenced reserves held for each of Whitby and Scarborough Harbours. All income and expenditure in relation to all activities carried out on 'harbour land', as set out in the relevant legislation, is ringfenced within separate Harbour accounts and any operating surpluses are held within earmarked reserves for each of the Harbours. All capital expenditure carried out on the Harbours is funded from the relevant Harbour reserve. Should a Harbour reserve contain insufficient funds to meet the costs of committed works, the works will initially be funded by the Council's Strategic Capacity Reserve, and this funding will then be repaid by the Harbour from future surpluses arising. External grant funding will be sought wherever possible to provide additional funding for works to the harbours. It should be noted that the Filey Coble Landing is accounted for within the Council's wider General Fund under its own cost code rather than being separately ringfenced.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from the proposed strategy.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 An equalities impact assessment screening has been completed and concludes that there is no adverse impact upon protected characteristics arising from the proposed policy (Appendix C).

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 A climate change impact screening assessment has been completed and concludes that there are no adverse impacts arising from the proposed policy (Appendix D).

11.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 The North Yorkshire Council Harbours Strategy presents the first opportunity for North Yorkshire Council to set out its visions for Scarborough Harbour, Whitby Harbour, and Filey Coble Landing.
- 11.2 The adoption of the strategy enables the Council to begin to fulfil its visions.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 That Executive approve the adoption of the proposed North Yorkshire Council Harbours Strategy.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Draft Harbours Strategy

Appendix B – Consultation responses

Appendix C – Equalities Impact Assessment Screening

Appendix D – Climate Change Impact Assessment Screening

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

Karl Battersby
Corporate Director – Environment
County Hall
Northallerton
16 April 2026

Report Author – Chris Bourne, Head of Harbours and Coastal Infrastructure
Presenter of Report – Callum McKeon, Assistant Director of Regulation and Harbours