

Scrutiny report for the year ahead 2017

Executive Member for Environment

There are a number of projects which will be ongoing throughout the year ahead;

1. Flood Defence.

I will be working with officers to develop the response to the improvements to the City's flood defences with the Environment Agency. The "Five Year Plan" is currently also labelled with the figure £45 million, however, this is due to be succeeded by higher figures as the full scale of the costs become clearer. I will continue to lobby for increased funding to match the increased requirements as the plans are worked up across York.

Alongside this is the response to the Independent Flood Inquiry with its 90 recommendations. These will be coming to my decision sessions throughout the year, and at the July meeting there were representations from Fulford and Micklegate Wards. I anticipate as projects are further developed that this will become an opportunity for representations from ward councillors and the public into the local processes with the Board led by the Environment Agency, and I would appreciate members views on how this can be most productively achieved. It is important that communication is developed with the public and interested parties to make sure that funding is preserved for flood defence improvement and that early discussion can help to eliminate any factors which might cause funds to be wasted.

Whilst there has been considerable work to get the improvements to the Foss Barrier implemented this has been calculated to produce the potential at peak flood of the Ouse and the Foss for a further 8 cms on the Ouse if the pumps are used to their maximum 50 tonnes per second (or 50 cubic metres per second). Therefore I appreciate resident's concerns to speed up delivery of defences especially at Clementhorpe, and improvements to existing walls at Lower Ebor Street. This will involve joint commissioning with Yorkshire Water, which is itself developing evidence for submission to OFWAT for the 2019 pricing review (PR19) which sets out capital investments including new pumping capacity for sewers to support schemes for new areas of the city to receive flood fences.

Ensuring that all communities across the city who are at risk gain benefit from the funding will be a key part of my work along with officers, and the new posts which have been created including a project post to boost community resilience to flooding (as has successfully worked in other parts of the country). Updates will be provided on the work that has been done to tackle

problematic surface water drainage problems identified in previous Executive Member Decision Session for which there has been specific investment made by the council to overcome in partnership with other responsible bodies.

2. **iCASP Yorkshire project**

This is the Integrated Catchment Solutions Project for which more details can be obtained via <https://www.environment.leeds.ac.uk/research/yorkshire-icasp/> Data for the measurable impact of schemes such as “Slowing the flow” at Pickering is important for long term decisions about the benefits to hard flood defences in the region.

There has been considerable interest in how full river catchment plans working with natural flood management (NFM) can benefit flood protection downstream. I attended the recent launch of the Yorkshire iCASP (see photo with Prof Joseph Holden, Director for iCASP) which includes academics from Leeds, York, and Sheffield Universities (linked to other Universities in the North of England) and will bring together the measurement of the outcomes from a wide range of projects to bring NFM to the region.

The investment is being made to support economic development, and this is becoming a key

factor in application for funding. Together with the work by the Local Enterprise Partnerships (Leeds City Region, and York, North Yorkshire, East Riding LEP) with key awareness of the feeder rivers to our Ouse being in the latter LEP area.

Ensuring that York benefits from this



work, and that projects such as the Becks Project being run by St Nick's Field (which is linked to the work in Hull Road Park which recently received approval for this financial year) demonstrate that we are making our own contribution to the wider issue of NFM, rather than expecting other areas to work for us.

Implications of Brexit – whatever one's views on the June 2016 Referendum there are huge implications on the Environment of the city for which I will be maintaining a close interest. I have been discussing with the NFU the impact on plans for Natural Flood Management and how the changes to land use require the confidence in long term national policies and funding. I will therefore be working closely with the Yorkshire Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to ensure that the region is heard, and I have been involved with the lobbying for funding from the national £15 million funding pot for pilot schemes.

3. Air Quality – measurement and supporting sustainable transport

York was one of 30 councils to participate in the first national Clean Air Day. Having met with the national organisers for the DEFRA sponsored event earlier in the year I was keen that York showed that it was taking steps to spread the message about the need to switch engines off when idling, switch to sustainable forms of transport, and switch to electric vehicles.

- Our taxi incentive scheme and the recently agreed low emission taxi policy has contributed to over 100 low emission taxis (Euro 5+ hybrid or electric) in York (14% of all taxis in the city).
- There are currently 1500 charging sessions per month (and rising) of electric vehicles in York.
- Advising government, local authorities and other organisations on air quality



I supported officers on the day with the work at St George's Field Car Park and at Westfield Primary School to get the message across (the stickers are very popular!)



There will be the annual update report coming to my decision session in August which I am keen to ensure that all members of council are familiar with the information that is provided as York is seen nationally as a leading authority for measurement of data. There will in the autumn be the proposals for the Clean Air Zone which will be significant for the city in the delivery of our objectives with air quality.

4. Renewable Power, and batteries

As part of the promotion of clean renewable power I will be working with officers to develop more PVs at the council's Eco Depot, and proposals for utilisation of the transformation in battery technologies to maximise the impact of renewably generated electricity. In time this will make savings in the energy bill of the council as well as improving our local energy security.

Working with York Community Energy I will be supporting the proposals for Community power being generated on the roof of the eco Business Centre.



5. Recycling and Waste

The new Allerton Park Waste Recovery Park near Knaresborough will start to be 'hot' commissioned soon and this will involve waste from the city. Shown on the right is the Anaerobic Digestion Plant (which together with the Mechanical separation of recycling of input waste was a requirement from the near beginning of the project in 2005).



By avoiding the need to drag refuse trucks up the Harewood Whin landfill site this will reduce the damage to our vehicles and thus reducing downtime and maintenance costs.

More information on the facility is available via the link

<https://wasteservices.amey.co.uk/where-we-work/north-yorkshire/>



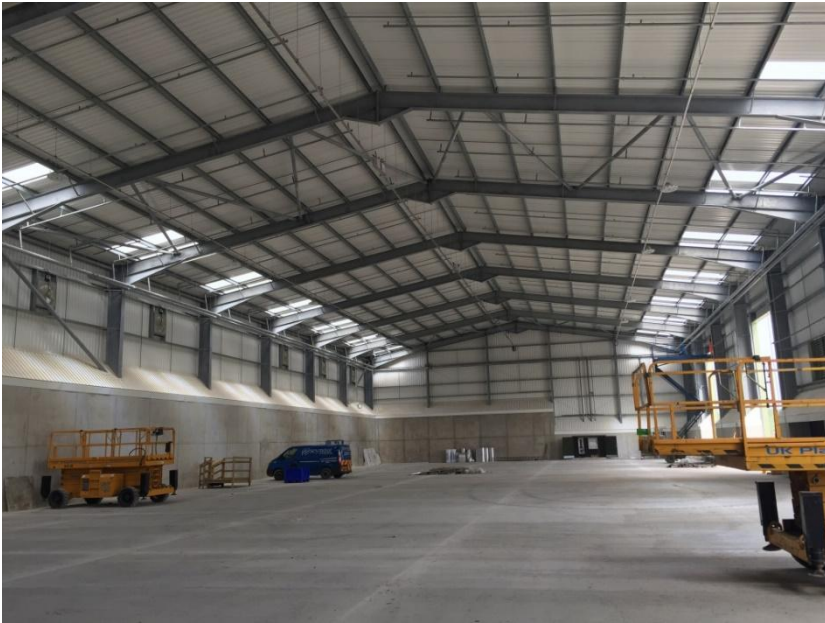
This will lead to more black sack/grey bin waste being recycled, however, I will be working with officers to work with the city, community groups and ward committees to promote the recycling message across York to continue improvement to the separation of recycling. There are still strong messages about recycling to save waste, provide materials for new products, saving raw materials being used and assisting with the One Planet objective which is running through our work.



I will be working with officers to drive down the tonnage of comingling of recyclables, which is becoming ever more important as the quality of recyclates is being driven up by enforcement from end users. However, no comingled recyclables end up in landfill and are separated. New vehicles will be arriving later this summer to help with the

situation.

PAS 100 accreditation has occurred for compost from Yorwaste and this is now on sale. Nevertheless I appreciate that some residents are keen to see the reintroduction of the “Compost Giveaways” and I am pressing for these to be resumed now that building work at the transfer station (due to be opened on 20th July – see photos to the left) has come to an end.



I am reviewing reporting systems for Street Environment, and working to bring more data on environmental enforcement to Ward Committees so that local decision making can assist with the improvement of the local environment.

Bring banks upgrade

Our bring banks are looking old, and there is public consultation ongoing about how we can improve these, and not just the appearance, but to respond to demands for more materials. I will be reviewing the outcomes from this consultation.



6. Green Economy Panel

I will continue to work to link York with the other parts of the region through the Leeds City Region Green Economy Panel. There are strong links on the Green and Blue Infrastructure Report to York and the need to maintain Sustainable Urban Drainage systems in the years ahead after they have been constructed. I will be working to ensure that York benefits from the EU funds for low carbon schemes.

7. Community Recycling Fund

(below the Planet South Bank Repair Café 23rd April which has been followed up with the June 14th “Sew Easy, Clothes mending workshop”)



There are a wide range of projects which the Community Recycling Fund has supported throughout the year, and a number of repair cafes have emerged from these, which groups are looking to sustain into the future. I will be looking at how these can help to spread the message about reducing waste through repairing items across the city (there is also a photo of a solar cooker below at the St Nick's Fix It Café).

I will be working with groups to see how this can be developed in future years, and as York now gets the direct value of its recycling via Yorwaste there is even more incentive to encourage residents to separate more of their waste.



8. Carbon Footprint

York has its own role to play in the delivery of the Paris Agreement in seeking a worldwide attempt to limit climate change, and holding the increase in global temperatures to less than 2 °C above pre-industrial levels. Of particular relevance to the city is the consequence of more severe weather patterns leading to increased pressures on flood defences, and likelihood of localised surface water flooding in areas of other areas of the city. I will be working with officers to develop a new Carbon Management Plan, and progress has been made with benchmarking the current performance of the council.

9. One Planet York

Following the successful second Conference for One Planet York I will be following up with council officers the next steps, and involving partners to progress the city's standing in the Grant Thornton Index measurements to rank the performance of cities against each other. This year we were fortunate to have as the key speaker Oberbürgermeister Markus Lewe from our twin city of Münster. We were able to see the Electric double decker bus from Optare (see below) which First York will be using on some routes, and following the progress with electric buses in Münster there will now be an exchange of experiences between the two cities which I will be maintaining as a way to help deliver cleaner air and maintain strong links between our two cities going forward. I will be supporting bids for funding to make sure that as many of the Park and Ride Fleet can be electric.



10. Health and Safety

Implications of the merged service with North Yorkshire and how this will provide a more resilient service across the two authorities. Regular reports will demonstrate the work that is being done and that the city is getting a return on the funds that it is providing. There will be updates on the work of the team, and any specific work which needs to be followed up on fire safety following the Grenfell Tower fire in Kensington.

11. Council owned Community Centres

I will continue to work with officers to develop community centres with the volunteer groups who run them, and this is especially important with the various schemes for financial inclusion that the council is now running. The programme for the replacement of the Burton Stone Lane Community Centre with a modern sustainable facility has been progressing in consultation with user groups and the local community. During the year ahead, these will result in specific proposals for a future development. I will continue to work with officers and the local ward councillors.

Cllr Andrew Waller