

Annex 2

Clean Up York's Rivers

"This Council notes that:

- 'York's Rivers are a vital part of the city's environment and that the confluence of The Foss and The Ouse at this location is the very reason York was established as a settlement.
- The My Castle Gateway and My City Centre consultations have made clear that York residents wish to make more of the city's rivers.
- Close and effective work is ongoing with the Environment Agency and Yorkshire Water on a wide range of river management issues.
- Environment Agency data gathered to evidence the performance of England's rivers under the Water Framework Directive has indicated that only 14% of rivers were of good ecological status in 2019. According to The Rivers Trust, in 2020 water company's dumped raw sewage 2,392 times into the rivers in York, for a total of 14,838 hours.
- Government funding to the Environment Agency to monitor river quality, and regulate farms and water companies has dropped by almost two thirds in the last decade. In 2020 just 3.6% of pollution complaints made to the Agency resulted in penalties.
- In 2016 Yorkshire Water Services was fined £1.1m for discharging sewage into the River Ouse.
- The Government has failed to include any meaningful targets or a clear action plan to end the regular dumping of sewage into rivers as part of the recently approved Environment Bill, ignoring millions of people who demanded action as part of one of the boldest and more inspiring environmental campaigns in recent years.
- The MP for York Outer and other Conservative MPs failed to support amendments which would have ensured urgent action to clean up the country's rivers.
- The Liberal Democrats have proposed a "Sewage Tax", which would tax the profits of water companies. The proposal would be a 16% tax on pre-tax profits, providing a £340 million fund to fix the sewage system.

Council believes that:

- The city's rivers are a huge and under-appreciated asset to the city.
- Many York residents are not aware of the significance of the confluence of York's two rivers to the city's history and that more could be done to enhance this area of York.
- Any discussion about York's rivers must also acknowledge the importance of river-safety and recognise the unacceptable number of fatalities that have occurred in York's rivers in recent times.
- Government must urgently restore Environment Agency budgets to deliver the necessary oversight.

- Inspection regularity of water companies and farms should be increased and offenders rigorously prosecuted through the Environmental Audit Committee and Ofwat.
- Comprehensive funding must be provided to local and highways authorities to introduce systems to prevent road pollutants from entering our water courses.

Council resolves to request the Chief Operating Officer to:

- Consider what further enhancements to the city's riverside offer can be made
- Confirm that all available measures are being taken to ensure that any development which takes place in proximity to York's rivers is sympathetic to the significance and historic context of its setting, in particular ensuring that where the Council is the developer itself, all opportunities are taken to maximise enjoyment of the rivers and riverside areas.
- Consider whether through working in partnership with all relevant stakeholders more can be done to enhance river safety, including the introduction grab-chains, CCTV and other such safety measures as well as enhanced and improved ongoing river-safety advertising campaigns.
- Write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs calling for the Government to commit to granting the necessary funding, regulatory powers and policy changes to restore the health of Britain's rivers.
- Write to The Chief Executive of Yorkshire Water calling for urgent action to address the impact of waste-water discharges on our local rivers and to consider the implications of the work of the Storm Overflows Taskforce, the recently published Storm Overflow Evidence Project report and their implications in York, particularly relating to the use of real time data releases on overflow spills.
- Write to the Regional Director of the Environment Agency to request an update on the current testing regime in the Ouse and Foss to understand if improvements could be made. As well as to request that consideration is made to house the data on the CYC York Open Data platform and explore if the tests undertaken and information on their findings can be publicised on the Council website and social media channels.
- Write to the charities River Action and The Rivers Trust expressing this Council's support for their campaign to restore the health of Britain's rivers.

Council also resolves:

- In the light of the above, to request that Executive commission an update report on the actions that the council is able to take, along with the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water, the Canals and Rivers Trust and other local and regional partners to prevent incidents and protect the health and cleanliness of York's rivers;
- To request that this report cover current local powers that are available to control and limit fly-tipping in water courses, control other discharges and require water courses to be kept free from pollution, as well as exploring the options for producing an overarching Strategy for York's Rivers and Becks. This strategy would bring together a single overview of work on flood

management, climate change adaptation, water course related biodiversity and land management and pollution control.”

Progress on action to resolve the specific issues raised in the motion are detailed in the below table:

16/12/2021	Clean Up York's Rivers	<p>Council resolves to request the Chief Operating Officer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider what further enhancements to the city's riverside offer can be made 	<p>Cllr Paula Widdowson Ian Floyd/Steve Wragg</p>	<p>The motion details have been shared widely with CYC regeneration managers to reinforce the desire to enhance the cities riverside and, where possible, incorporate this into ongoing or future projects.</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm that all available measures are being taken to ensure that any development which takes place in proximity to York's rivers is sympathetic to the significance and historic context of its setting, in particular ensuring that where the Council is the developer itself, all opportunities are taken to maximise enjoyment of the rivers and riverside areas. 	<p>Cllr Paula Widdowson Ian Floyd/Steve Wragg</p>	<p>The motion details have been shared widely with CYC regeneration managers to reinforce the desire to enhance the cities riverside and, where possible, incorporate this into ongoing or future projects.</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider whether through working in partnership with all relevant stakeholders more can be done to enhance river safety, including the introduction grab-chains, CCTV and other such safety measures as well as enhanced and improved ongoing river-safety advertising campaigns. 	<p>Cllr Paula Widdowson Ian Floyd/Steve Wragg</p>	<p>RoSPA periodically review York's River safety measures, the last review was carried out in May 2022. The review involved stakeholders and reported into the York Water safety Forum (chaired by NY Fire and Rescue).</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs calling for the Government to commit to granting the necessary funding, regulatory powers and policy changes to restore the health of Britain's rivers. 	<p>Cllr Paula Widdowson Ian Floyd/Steve Wragg</p>	<p>Letter sent 25.01.22</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write to The Chief Executive of Yorkshire Water calling for urgent action to address the impact of waste-water discharges on our local rivers and to consider the implications of the work of the Storm Overflows Taskforce, the recently published Storm Overflow Evidence Project report and their implications in York, particularly relating to the use of real time data releases on overflow spills 	<p>Cllr Paula Widdowson Ian Floyd/Steve Wragg</p>	<p>Letter sent 25.01.22.</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write to the Regional Director of the Environment Agency to request an update on the current testing regime in the Ouse 	<p>Cllr Paula Widdowson</p>	<p>Letter sent 25.01.22</p>

		and Foss to understand if improvements could be made. As well as to request that consideration is made to house the data on the CYC York Open Data platform and explore if the tests undertaken and information on their findings can be publicised on the Council website and social media channels.	Ian Floyd/ Steve Wragg	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write to the charities River Action and The Rivers Trust expressing this Council's support for their campaign to restore the health of Britain's rivers 	Cllr Paula Widdowson Ian Floyd/ Steve Wragg	Letter sent 25.01.22
		Council also resolves: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the light of the above, to request that Executive commission an update report on the actions that the council is able to take, along with the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water, the Canals and Rivers Trust and other local and regional partners to prevent incidents and protect the health and cleanliness of York's rivers; 	Cllr Paula Widdowson Ian Floyd/ Steve Wragg	CYC are working formally with Yorkshire Water in the development of their next financial settlement and the development of potential improvement works to combined sewer overflows following Governments Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan. An update report will be developed following the initial reviews and planning stages.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To request that this report cover current local powers that are available to control and limit fly-tipping in water courses, control other discharges and require water courses to be kept free from pollution, as well as exploring the options for producing an overarching Strategy for York's Rivers and Becks. This strategy would bring together a single overview of work on flood management, climate change adaptation, water course related biodiversity and land management and pollution control. 	Cllr Paula Widdowson Ian Floyd/ Steve Wragg	The Defra funded Innovative Flood Resilience Project is developed detailed environmental modelling to target improvements that flood risk and environmental outcomes. The project has formally linked to a University of York led Natural Environment Research Council funded project that will further review the water quality issues across the River Swale/Ure/Nidd/Ouse catchments.

				<p>Both project will provide an opportunity for water quality issues to be considered across a wider catchment area with all partners. An update report will be developed following the initial reviews and planning stages.</p>
--	--	--	--	--