
Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency
Date	16 July 2024
Present	Councillor Kent
Officers in Attendance	Mike Southcombe, Environmental Protection Manager Lucie Watson, Contaminated Land Officer

1. Declarations of Interest (10:01 am)

The Executive Member was asked to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests she might have in respect of the business on the agenda. None were declared.

2. Minutes (10:02 am)

Resolved: That the minutes of the Decision Session held on 27 February 2024 be approved and signed by the Executive Member as a correct record.

3. Public Participation (10:02 am)

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the session under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

4. Contaminated Land Strategy 2024 (10:02 am)

The Executive Member considered a report seeking approval for the adoption and publication of the Council's updated Contaminated Land Strategy, dated May 2024.

The Environmental Protection Manager and the Contaminated Land Officer provided an overview, noting that:

- A consultation process on the strategy agreed in February had now concluded, incorporating feedback from the UK Health Security

Agency (UKHSA) and Historic England. This was York's fourth contaminated land strategy and the first since 2016.

- York's industrial history had left a legacy of potentially contaminated land which could impact upon human health and the environment. The Council had a statutory duty under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to identify contaminated land and secure the clean-up of sites where it was found. The Council also had a legal duty to produce a contaminated land strategy stating how this clean-up would be achieved.
- Since the withdrawal of central government grant funding for the proactive investigation of contaminated land in 2014, the Council had been reliant upon the planning process to fulfil its responsibilities. Hundreds of sites in York had been investigated and remediated in this way.
- The strategy took a proportionate approach to risk based on current and future land use and the cost of remediation. There were over 3,600 potentially contaminated sites in York; the 88 highest priority Category A sites had all been investigated and none posed an unacceptable risk to health or the environment; while many others had been cleaned-up through the planning process.
- There were several major development sites in York with previous industrial use, and if York was to achieve its housing and economic development targets, the safe remediation of contaminated land would be essential.

In response to the Executive Member's questions it was noted that:

- Severus Hill in Holgate was a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). While any issues in SINC's would be looked at they were not listed in the statutory guidance.
- Climate change, including flooding and extreme weather, was an important consideration in ensuring that remediation measures for sites being redeveloped were effective in future decades. All major sites would have a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to control pollution and carbon emissions.
- Many current industrial processes were regulated through Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control and inspected by the Environmental Protection team with the Environment Agency carrying out this work at larger sites.

The Executive Member thanked officers for their work in ensuring these sites were made safe for York residents now and in the future.

Resolved: That the Contaminated Land Strategy 2024 be approved.

Reason: To enable the council to fulfil its duty to formally adopt and publish a written contaminated land strategy and keep it under periodic review. The updated strategy incorporates recent changes in contaminated land guidance and provides an update on progress made to date.

Cllr Kent, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 10.01 am and finished at 10.09 am].