

North Yorkshire Councillor report October 2023

Medical equipment recycling scheme reaches five-tonne mark

A community-led initiative encouraging residents to drop-off unwanted medical equipment has been hailed a success after five tonnes of items have been donated in just 12 months.

In October last year, new recycling bins were installed at household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) across North Yorkshire and York in partnership with Medequip, which provides community equipment services to local authorities and the NHS across the UK.

Since then, five tonnes of equipment have been donated, the equivalent of almost 7,000 crutches.

All of the items are assessed, safety tested and either repaired and reused or stripped down for recycling.

The average hospital could save £46,000 a year if just two out of every five walking aids were returned for reuse. Faulty walking aids that are beyond repair can be recycled as scrap metal, generating income for the trust.

North Yorkshire operations manager at Medequip, Darren Clark, said: "We understand how crucial it is to inform the community about the importance of returning equipment.

"We're also committed to simplifying the process of arranging collections or returning equipment to accessible locations.

"Through our partnership with Yorwaste, we're making it more convenient and straightforward for everyone."

For more information on the Medequip bins, visit North Yorkshire Council's website at www.northyorks.gov.uk/bins-recycling-and-waste/household-waste-recycling-centres/medical-equipment

North Yorkshire to benefit from £22.3 million of prosperity funding

Communities and business across North Yorkshire are set to benefit from more than £22 million in funding through the next phase of a scheme aimed at tackling regional inequalities across the country.

The next round has been launched to provide money from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund for North Yorkshire with a host of ambitious opportunities available.

North Yorkshire Council has £16.9 million from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to award by March 31, 2025, to programmes and projects that will improve communities and place, develop skills and support local people and businesses to prosper.

A further £5.4 million from the Rural England Prosperity Fund is also available, aimed at boosting the economic prospects of the county's rural areas.

The funding and support programmes on offer range from large scale countywide project-led opportunities to small direct grants for local businesses and communities, all administered by North Yorkshire Council.

The first programmes open for applications are the community climate action and business sustainability programmes, which aim to support the decarbonisation of North Yorkshire. Interested parties can apply now for revenue and capital grants, support and sustainability audits.

A separate programme is available for older people's residential care homes to apply for a 'net zero' audit of their premises – up to 30 audits will be funded.

Additional decarbonisation-themed programmes will go live in the coming months as well as others aligned to the themes of communities, place, boosting productivity, and people and skills, in particular:

- Sports and active wellbeing.
- Village halls and community buildings.
- Small business grants.
- Community grants to reduce inequalities, including health and rural isolation.
- Grants to organisations who can support people seeking employment.
- Development of green skills.

Information about all programmes, including the support and funding available, eligibility criteria, when they will open and how to apply, is available online at www.northyorks.gov.uk/ukspf

The council is encouraging individuals, groups, businesses and organisations operating in all sectors to check the website regularly for updates on programme timescales.

Out of the £22.3 million funding pot, £1.5 million was distributed to communities in the 2022 to 2023 financial year and the council is on track to support programmes to the value of £5.5 million this year. This includes £850,000 on a project to bridge the digital divide, announced last week.

The positive difference Shared Prosperity funding has already made to the people of North Yorkshire across the rural, coastal and urban areas of the county, providing wide-ranging support and funding packages, will give those with innovation and ambition the opportunity to help residents, communities and businesses thrive and create a lasting legacy for North Yorkshire in the remaining 18 months of the programme.

Partnership to create more affordable housing to meet demand

More affordable homes are due to be built across North Yorkshire through a new partnership to help people get on the housing ladder.

Work on the first of a series of developments under the new scheme, which involves North Yorkshire Council's property company, Brierley Homes, and Broadacres Housing Association, has begun.

Brierley Homes is a private house-building company wholly owned by North Yorkshire Council, while Broadacres is a not-for-profit housing association based in Northallerton and operating across the North of England.

By pooling their knowledge, experience and resources, they hope to help meet the demand for affordable homes.

The initial scheme is at Kirkby Malzeard, near Ripon, and will be called Laverton Oaks.

Brierley Homes is delivering the scheme following an agreement to buy the land from Broadacres.

It will feature 33 houses, of which 13 will be affordable homes. They will be built to the highest specifications and feature energy-efficient construction techniques.

The scheme is scheduled to be completed within two years.

Details on further projects will be revealed in the coming months and this initiative forms just one aspect of the Councils drive to build or enable more affordable homes across the spectrum of affordable housing models available to the market. Be it through our own asset portfolio, partnership working and of course the formulation of our new housing strategy.

Public's views sought on ambitious five-year housing strategy

Residents in North Yorkshire are being urged to have their say on an ambitious new strategy which provides the framework for housing development in the county over the next five years.

The draft North Yorkshire Housing Strategy includes proposals to deliver almost 13,000 new homes based on existing Local Plan commitments – some of which will be council homes to add to the authority's existing 8,500 properties.

It follows three key themes – people, places and homes which focus on:

- Preventing and tackling homelessness.
- Meeting the needs of the ageing population.
- Meeting supported housing needs and the needs of specific groups.
- Growing the supply of affordable and available housing.
- Addressing the rural housing crisis.
- Supporting communities through neighbourhood renewal and regeneration.
- Decarbonising homes.
- Ensuring that new housing supply contributes to the council's net zero ambitions.
- Addressing stock condition issues.
- Ensuring that council stock remains of a decent standard and continues to improve.

A 10-week consultation exercise which opened today (Tuesday, October 3) will include face-to-face meetings and forums with partner organisations and key stakeholders in the housing, community and voluntary sector. Local people can have their say by completing a survey online at northyorks.gov.uk/consultations

The consultation will run until December 11.

Anyone wanting a printed copy of the survey and strategy document should call the council on 0300 131 2 131 and say 'housing consultation strategy' when prompted.

Fly-tipping case results in £1,500 fine as crackdown continues

A man who employed people to remove waste that was later found illegally dumped has been convicted, further demonstrating North Yorkshire's continued effort to tackle fly-tipping.

At York Magistrates Court on Friday (September 29), Jimmy Nicholson, 32, of Lyneburn Cottage caravan site in Northumberland, was prosecuted for failing in his duty of care for waste under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

He pleaded guilty to the charges with regards to waste his business created at a property outside of North Yorkshire.

The defendant was required to pay a fine of £461, a victim surcharge of £184 and a contribution to North Yorkshire Council's costs of £850.

Nicholson was convicted after failing to check if the people he transferred the waste to had an upper tier waste carrier's licence, or a scrap metal collectors' licence, and he did not obtain a waste transfer document to show what waste had been taken and by whom, contrary to Section 34(1)(c) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

The council's environmental protection team launched an investigation into Nicholson in January this year after they were notified by a traffic sergeant from North Yorkshire Police of a large amount of waste fly-tipped on Ox Moor Lane in Cattal.

The tip comprised of broken and dismantled furniture, black leather sofas, plasterboard, dining chairs and other household waste. Within the waste was documentation in the name of Nicholson and a name and address of where the waste had come from.

On the same day, the council's street cleansing team attended a fly-tip on Springs Lane, Hutton Wandesley, which included plasterboard, broken wood, and within that tip was documentation with the same address as that found within the Ox Moor Lane tip.

It was discovered that Nicholson had been employed to clear the property of waste and carry out renovation work. He had used skips for some of the waste but had stored a large amount on the driveway of the property.

An unknown scrapman had approached Nicholson and offered to remove it for £170.

Anybody who witnesses fly-tipped waste or is offered waste or scrap collection services from unlicensed individuals is encouraged to report the case on North Yorkshire Council's website at www.northyorks.gov.uk/environment-and-neighbourhoods/fly-tipping

Powerful message shared by councils to recruit foster carers

A powerful new film has been released to recruit more foster carers in the biggest collaboration of its kind nationally to show that anyone can potentially care for a child or young person in need.

The Any Of Us project will be the largest public sector fostering film collaboration yet, with North Yorkshire Council joining more than 80 participants from Northumberland to Brighton and Liverpool to Kent.

The film – the sixth produced by this growing partnership of councils and children’s trusts to promote local authority fostering – was launched on Tuesday (September 26) and can be viewed via www.northyorks.gov.uk/fostering-north-yorkshire

Any Of Us looks at three very different people who all show some of the attributes needed to be a foster carer in incidents from their daily lives – Ayesha going to the aid of a pedestrian after a minor road accident, Neil calming down an aggressive situation in a snooker club, and Marsha identifying a young person showing signs of distress and intervening with them at school. These are different individuals in very different scenarios, but each in their own way shows the caring instinct that is fundamental to being a foster carer.

The film develops so that it becomes clear that one of these three everyday people will become the foster carer to Chloe. The main characters’ stories are all interwoven with Chloe’s, as we see her journey into fostering.

Fostering North Yorkshire is the council’s not-for-profit fostering service. Until December 31, newly approved foster carers are being offered a golden hello of £500. Anyone interested in fostering for Fostering North Yorkshire can visit www.northyorks.gov.uk/fostering

The Any Of Us film has been produced by Reel TwentyFive and project managed by CAN Digital.

Project director Rachel Brown:

“Whilst there is always a core message about the difference fostering makes within our films, Any Of Us has been more ambitious in telling three different stories from diverse foster carers, based around them sharing their experiences with people considering fostering.

“We hope that this will mean that the film and its messaging will appeal to as wide an audience as possible and encourage people to foster for their local authority.

“Fostering directly with your council or children’s trust means that you can support your local community by working with a fostering service that is dedicated to supporting local children and young people who need a nurturing, safe fostering home.”

The chief executive of the Fostering Network, Sarah Thomas:

“The Fostering Network has supported this project since the first collaborative film, Giants, in 2017. It’s fantastic to see the fostering services work together to amplify their message to recruit much-needed foster carers. There’s currently a shortage of 6,000 fostering households in England, so films like this have a vital role to play in encouraging more people to become foster carers.

“A lot of people – rightly – praised the John Lewis fostering advert at Christmas time, as poignant and socially responsible. All Of Us is right up there alongside it. Now, it’s our job to have it seen as widely as possible, so more people to take the first step and become the foster carers we need, right across England.”

Any Of Us is the latest in a series of film collaborations that started in 2017 with Giants, which was supported by a small number of local authorities in the Midlands and has now grown to a national project across England, reflecting the need to recruit more foster carers.

The Fostering Network is the UK’s leading fostering charity and membership organisation. <https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/>