

North Yorkshire Councillors report February 2024

Have your say on the future of food in North Yorkshire

Hundreds of thousands of residents across North Yorkshire are being urged to help to shape access to healthy foods and cut down on the amount of food that is wasted.

Responses from the 'Let's Talk Food' survey will help to develop ideas to support people to plan healthy and affordable meals and will offer tips on how to minimise the impact of food on the environment.

Choosing healthy food options is key to reducing people's risk of a number of health conditions. According to the NHS, in the UK it is estimated that about one in every four adults and about one in every five children aged 10 to 11 are living with obesity.

The climate action non-governmental organisation, WRAP, has said that food waste costs a four-person household about £1,000 per year in food bought, but not eaten.

North Yorkshire Council is leading the way in partnership with the University of York's 'Fix Our Food' team to provide healthy affordable food from sustainable sources, working with a range of businesses and community groups. The county's 615,000 residents are being asked to contribute their views.

There are many initiatives supporting fair access to food across North Yorkshire. Local groups are already creating thriving food spaces for communities across the county and people are benefiting from social supermarkets, community fridges and food-growing projects. North Yorkshire has strong farming links that help to provide the nation's food supplies. It is important to make sure the food produced continues to be affordable and nutritious.

The vice-chair for the Fix Our Food Commission, Jan Thornton MBE, said: "Having the right food available for our residents, and supplied by our local, sustainable food businesses is very important for our future health, economy and the environment. Transforming the food system cannot be achieved by one sector alone - it requires action, knowledge, ideas, a collaborative spirit, and motivation from us all.

"All communities across North Yorkshire, including our rural communities, must have access to healthy food choices and I am really looking forward to being part of this next step in our food transformation journey. It is vital that we keep the food conversation going and the Let's Talk Food survey, is enabling us to achieve this."

The director of public health at North Yorkshire Council, Louise Wallace, said: "We want to understand people's thoughts about eating healthily and what household food gets thrown away, so that we can look at how to reduce the amount of food we

waste and make healthy food more accessible. Please do fill in our survey to tell us your experiences as part of the wider conversation about food.”

The local food plan will tie in very closely with the priorities of the North Yorkshire climate change strategy from 2023 to 2030, the joint local health and wellbeing strategy, the economic growth strategy, and the Government’s own national food strategy.

People can take part in Let’s Talk Food here www.northyorks.gov.uk/LetsTalk

More than 15,000 Let’s Talk surveys have been completed since 2022 as part of our ‘Let’s Talk’ campaign on a variety of topics including the council’s budget, devolution and ensuring we serve local communities. This latest survey on food is the next chapter in our ongoing conversation with the public to help inform council decisions and policies about the things that matter to us.

Transformation of the whole food system is needed maintain and improve the health of residents as the cost-of-living crisis and global events, such as climate change and regional conflicts, are impacting the amount and type of food we are able to access.

Feedback can also be provided in the following ways:

Pick up a paper copy of the survey from a local library or main local office and return it in the envelope provided.

Contact North Yorkshire Council to request a Let’s Talk survey.

Email LetsTalk@northyorks.gov.uk

Accessible formats of the survey are available on request.

The Let’s Talk Food survey closes on April 1.

North Yorkshire unites to reduce alcohol and drug use harm

Partners across North Yorkshire are working together to cut harm caused by drugs and alcohol in their ongoing efforts to ensure many more people live longer and healthier lives.

A draft all-age North Yorkshire Substance Use Strategy consultation has been launched today (February 2) enabling residents and professionals to have their say about the ongoing and planned work to reduce the harms associated with alcohol and drugs use

National statistics reveal that the social and economic costs of alcohol-related harms amount to £21.5 billion annually. Harms from illicit drug use costs the nation an estimated £20 billion. Huge geographical and socioeconomic inequalities exist in terms of substance-related harms. For example, more people access specialist treatment services for support with opiates in the Scarborough and Selby areas, while more people access support for alcohol in Harrogate, the former Craven district and Northallerton.

North Yorkshire has seen higher rates of drug poisoning deaths in adults than nationally with official figures showing a 142 per cent increase from 19 in 2011 to 46 in 2021. Meanwhile, a fifth of adults in North Yorkshire drink more than 14 units of alcohol each week and it is estimated that more than 5,500 people are alcohol dependent and could benefit from specialist support.

The wide-reaching aim of the two-year strategy is to work alongside people who use substances, our communities, our businesses and our services to reduce harms associated with substance use across North Yorkshire.

The three main priorities set out in the strategy, which is being developed by the North Yorkshire Drug and Alcohol Partnership Board, are:

Prevention – We will ensure that people can avoid use of substances, including alcohol.

Harm reduction – We will reduce harms and deaths.

Recovery – We will support people to achieve their goals and live lives free from harmful patterns of substance use.

A number of actions have been identified for the council, police, probation service, health and voluntary services' partners to achieve the three priorities, including supporting people to access the right help, and supporting children and young people to be able to make healthy choices regarding substances as a priority.

The partnership also sets out plans to tackle supply of illicit drugs and encourage retailers, businesses and licensed premises across the county to play their part in responsibly promoting, advertising and selling alcohol.

The council's director of public health, Louise Wallace, added: "Through collaboration with our partners, we can continue to reduce drug and alcohol-related harm across the county and foster thriving and resilient communities."

The 12-week consultation, which runs until April 30, includes a survey and a video showcasing the key themes of the strategy. It can be found at

www.northyorks.gov.uk/SubstanceUseNY

An easy-read version of the survey and a survey specifically for young people aged 13-18 are also available online. Paper-based versions of the survey and strategy can be requested at North Yorkshire Council libraries.

Anyone requiring further information is asked to email nypublichealth@northyorks.gov.uk

Unified housing policy will give applicants countywide choice of homes

A policy to unify the allocation of North Yorkshire's 54,000 social housing properties has been approved. The decision brings together two schemes currently operated across the county and takes on board comments from residents and landlords following a three-month consultation exercise.

The countywide Home Choice Allocations Policy will be in place by April 2025.

In April last year when all eight councils in North Yorkshire became one unitary authority, North Yorkshire Council inherited a standalone scheme for the former Harrogate borough area, and the North Yorkshire Home Choice scheme covering the remainder of the county. But the council must have a single policy and allocations scheme for the county by 2025.

Members of the authority's executive this week (Tuesday, January 22) gave the go-ahead for the home choice system to be extended allowing applicants and tenants to bid for properties across the county.

It will give them greater choice and the registered providers, which includes housing associations such as Broadacres Housing Association, Yorkshire Housing and Beyond Housing, will be able to use a central hub for advertising available homes.

The council has 8,299 homes to let and manage with registered providers looking after another 45,623 properties.

This new social housing allocations policy gives a unified scheme which will be beneficial both tenants and applicants as the authority aims to help meet housing needs including the vulnerable and those with specific needs through the new policy, giving residents greater choice and helping registered providers minimise voids and hard to let homes and reduce costs.

Once software has been updated, the 8,000 applicants will be re-registered ready for the new scheme to be operational by April 2025 at the latest.

Council's adult education service making 'significant progress'

Significant improvements in education for adults have been recognised by independent inspectors with wide-ranging work helping to ensure the service is more effective for communities across North Yorkshire.

The focus of a recent monitoring visit by Ofsted was to evaluate the progress made in resolving four areas for improvement identified during a previous inspection in February last year.

Now, it has been recognised that North Yorkshire Council has made effective progress against the four themes outlined in last year's inspection:

- Ensuring processes are in place to maintain quality in adult education.
- Progressing and aligning the curriculum.
- Improving written communication in apprenticeships.
- Integration of fundamental British values into adult learning.

The Ofsted report from the monitoring visit in December 2023 highlighted that the council's actions are already having a beneficial impact on learners. The inspectors noted that the improvements are sustainable and based on thorough quality assurance procedures for adult learning and apprenticeship provision.

The report highlighted that career progression is a focus with education and training programmes having a clear pathway. The Ofsted report noted that tutors engage in rich discussions with learners and apprentices, facilitating comprehensive career planning which sets clear goals and successfully addresses identified skills gaps.

The adult learning curriculum has also been praised for deepening the understanding of fundamental British values. The Ofsted report noted the fact tutors effectively utilise real-world events to integrate democratic principles into various subjects.

While progress has been made in improving apprentices' written communication skills, North Yorkshire Council recognises the need for further training. Apprenticeship assessors have completed valuable training, particularly in correcting spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Apprentices now demonstrate increased proficiency in internal and external written communications.

The council's assistant director for education and skills, Amanda Newbold, said: "I'm delighted to see that Ofsted inspectors recognise that our strategy for improvement is paying off. When the initial visit was taken, we were at the start of a journey of transition.

"The strategy and subsequent work we had already started to implement is well under way now. The commitment to continuous improvement is evident in the positive progress observed during the recent monitoring visit, which highlights too that the strategy is working."

She added: “We will remain focused on our mission to provide high-quality education for adults, aligning with the evolving needs of our residents and communities.”

Libraries offer free access to 60 years of screen history

A new streaming service showcasing six decades of rich film and television history is now on offer to library-goers across North Yorkshire.

The British Film Institute (BFI) Replay service is available to public libraries, showcasing about 100,000 digitised videos and television programmes.

The footage includes soap operas such as Coronation Street, Brookside and Crossroads, as well as Albion Market, General Hospital and Family Pride, the first British-Asian soap opera. The collection includes children’s TV with episodes of Metal Mickey and Animal Kwackers.

Filmmakers and actors explain their craft in a series of vintage interviews with the likes of Robin Williams and Ben Kingsley.

Ground-breaking multicultural TV from the 1970s onwards is explored through a number of magazine shows intended to address diverse audiences. This includes Central TV’s Midlands multicultural arts review series Here and Now, featuring a young Benjamin Zephaniah, the renowned poet who died in December.

BFI Replay also celebrates the heyday of regional television, including popular figures such as Richard Whiteley in Yorkshire TV’s Calendar People interviewing famous names from the region.

The clips cover screen history from the 1960s to the 2010s, offering a glimpse into Britain’s past, people and places. They record and reveal an era of rapid social, industrial, political and technological change.

Drawn from the collections of the BFI National Archive and partner UK Regions and Nations Film Archives, they also include material from ITV and Channel 4, revealing a picture of public life in the video era.

Anybody who signs into a library computer using their library card can access the streaming service.

North Yorkshire’s library service offers an array of free research websites, including Ancestry, Find My Past, the British Newspaper Archive, GreenFile and the 1921 Census. For more details, please visit North Yorkshire Council’s website at

www.northyorks.gov.uk/libraries

