



Full Council 4th March – Town Clerk Report

1 INTRODUCTION

I have just completed 5 months in post. It has been a hectic, challenging and fulfilling start to my time at the Council.

In my October 2024 report, I set out some key initial priorities for the first few months of my post, and in January 2025 I reported to Full Council on progress against those priorities.

In this report, I cover the main current work of the Council and also set out some of the most important work coming up.

2 RECRUITMENT

Following on from the news of the Deputy Town Clerk's retirement, I have worked with the HR Cttee on confirming the best post for the Council to recruit next.

In doing this, the Cttee and I have been following the Terms of Reference of the HR Cttee, which state:

'To employ and remunerate officers, except the Town Clerk and RFO, on such terms and conditions of employment as it considers appropriate provided the Council has first approved a budget to meet the recruitment and first year employment costs of any such officer and such costs will be contained by the offer of employment made.'

I'm grateful to the Cttee members for all of their input.

The post being advertised is that of an Assistant Town Clerk. The work undertaken has included ensuring that ALL the duties in the current DTC and Town Clerk Job Descriptions are covered in the new arrangement.

One key advantage of this new arrangement is that it means the new person can work for 4 days per week – more hours to undertake all of the work and better office cover for Cllr and public communication. It also enables an improved division of work between the TC and the new ATC post.

The post has been advertised with a closing date of the 17th of March.

In the meantime, the DTC is working on a comprehensive Handover Report to ensure as smooth a transition as possible.

3 CO OPTION

As Cllrs will be aware, there are still 2 vacancies on the Council. Following advice from the Elections Officer at North Yorkshire Council, and in light of previous decisions by Council, these vacancies can be re-advertised for Co-Option.

This will happen week beginning the 3rd of March.

Following the closing date, Full Council will be convened to consider any nominations received.

4 XMAS LIGHTS

The most recent contract arrangement was for the 3 years 2022-24.

A new tender is therefore needed.

The steps being taken is as follows:

- Work to understand which locations – lampposts, buildings etc – are available for lights.
- Preparing the tender document being mindful of the budget set by Council and in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the Council.
- Convening the Christmas Lights Sub Cttee to review the tender proposals and make recommendations to Council to appoint.

5 TOILETS AND TOILET CONTRACTOR

5.1 Contractor

The Following update was circulated to all Cllrs in early February:

Cllrs will be aware of the discussions that took place with the contractor in December and the information that was shared with all Cllrs about this.

Further discussions have taken place, and the following can be confirmed.

1. The contractor will send through the complete income position for each toilet for all of 2024. The figures will arrive soon but they report that income in 2024 is higher than in 2023.
2. The contractor are preparing more complete proposals for the entry systems for each of the 6 toilets operated by the Council.

3. The contractor are sending the Council more information about the financial controls they operate in regards to income collection, recording and security.
4. One of the key matters reducing current income is at New Quay because of periodic leaks coming from the property above the toilets. The contractor and WTC will now work together to formally raise this with the owners of this building.
5. Changes will be made to enable the card readers to capture 'deferred income' for periods when there is no signal so that less income is lost.
6. Both the contractor and WTC can work on possible changes to the current agreement they would like to see in any future agreement. The Council may wish to issue a new tender later in 2025 to enable a new agreement to be drawn up. This will enable a more consistent improvement to be possible from later this year, rather than having to wait until 2027. More detailed proposals about this can come to Council in due course.

So, we still have a long way to go, but these steps set out a path where we are receiving more information, there is a more pro-active approach to the problems encountered, and a more satisfactory arrangement can be agreed in the months ahead.

5.2 Working Group

In the meantime, the first meeting of the Public Conveniences Working Group has taken place, with the group following the Terms of Reference agreed by Council. A report to Council will follow in due course.

5.3 West Cliff

As was reported to Cllrs, there was some storm damage to West Cliff toilets. An inspection has taken place, and the toilets can remain open. Quotes on any necessary works will come to Council in due course.

5.4 North Yorkshire Council

NYC have confirmed that they will soon be publishing a Tender for cleaning and maintenance for the toilets they operate.

In addition, they are also interested in exploring possible changes to management arrangements and WTC can expect to be asked about whether we would like to take on any more of the toilets in the town.

6 STAFFING MATTERS

A clear priority is to give the DTC an amazing send off after all her years of service to this Council. In the meantime, the Allotments and Events Sub Cttees have both met and confirmed plans for the months ahead.

The Curator is giving a report to this meeting on key work in the gallery.

The maintenance area has remained very busy including:

- Support for new café installation
- New door codes
- Winter maintenance programme
- Key repairs
- Oversee lift servicing, heating servicing, air conditioning maintenance, alarm servicing etc

A full report of this work was shared with the Joint Management Committee at its most recent meeting.

Reception have been busy with the winter cleaning and maintenance programme during the regular winter closure and then preparation for the re-opening in February. At the same time, they are now carrying out website entries for both the WTC and Pannett sites – a good use of their time and one that should help improve communications over time.

7 TOWN ASSEMBLY

The original date for the Town Assembly was the 19th of March. However, this is being re-scheduled to April.

This will allow this meeting to include a presentation on the work of the Council for the year 2024/25. It's important to share with our residents the work we are doing and also what will happen in the months ahead.

8 LOOKING AHEAD

My formal probation review is scheduled for the 25th of March.

Following work to strengthen reserves and re organise the staffing, future priorities include:

- a. Preparation for year end.
- b. Cllr training programme in summer 2025.
- c. Agreeing with Cllrs the priorities for the next two years of the Council. Individual Cllrs have put forward a number of ideas, but what is needed is an agreed list signed off by Council. This will give us a clearer direction of travel, help with

decision-making and also give residents a better idea of the work we expect to achieve.

- d. Old Town Hall – the refurbishment has started. WTC expect to be part of a Working Group to look at uses of the space in the future and also its future management.
- e. Toilets – as described above.
- f. Double Devolution– confirm with Council the final WTC proposals for NYC and see how these will be taken forward.