

REPORT JUNE 2026.

REGISTERING TO USE RE-CYCLING CENTRES.

I have had a number of comments from PCs and residents asking if this change will increase fly tipping? The change has been introduced to prevent people from outside the county using our 'skips'. At the moment 16% of visits to the likes of The Gatherley Road site are from outside the county. However, our residents invariably can't use the sites in other boroughs because they have the same registration scheme which we have introduced. There have been over 160,000 registrations to date and it is very straightforward to do.

The saving to our authority is estimated to be £400,000 per annum, which is a significant amount of money. But will this lead to more fly tipping which costs us an annoying amount of money? The answer is almost certainly no because fly tipping is done by a criminal element who would be very unlikely to go into a recycling site. They often come from outside the county, to the north in our case, and dump a large load of rubbish at a place easy to access.

We have been successful in a number of prosecutions, but this is an uphill struggle. What is required in my opinion is action by central government to make it easier for local authorities to prosecute coupled with a dramatic increase in penalties.

Over the channel in France they have a system which is virtually identical to our new system, but I have never seen a fly tipping incident over there, and virtually no litter either. It is a British problem, sadly.

RE-CYCLING.

In a county like North Yorkshire where 7 district councils have merged into one, there are numerous different systems for things like re-cycling. Some former districts have glass, cans and plastic together for collection, others like the former Richmondshire have cans and plastic together, with glass separate. This means that quite often the collection vehicles are different in different localities.

By streamlining the system so that we have one system across the county, we can save money on bulk purchases of vehicles and bins etc. So the system in Richmondshire is to change from 12th October this year. We are to be given one bin for all re-cyclates, be it glass, cans or plastic. We have had many complaints from residents about the boxes currently used. Many were saying, 'Why can't we have a bin?'

From October one bin for re-cycling per house will be the system. These will be the 240 litre bins as are used for household waste, but will be green. A smaller bin can be

requested which will accommodate households with perhaps only one resident. The only exception to this will be the sacks which are used for newspaper and magazines etc. These will continue as now. Every house will have a letter explaining the new system nearer the time.

Another alteration which is unique to Richmondshire and Ryedale are the 'brink banks'. Tesco car park at Catterick springs to mind, also Nunns Close car park in Richmond where there is a recycling service for bottles, cans and plastics. These are very expensive, costing £160,000 per annum to run, and cause immense annoyance to the likes of Tesco, where especially after the Christmas break, people either fly tip or leave huge amounts of bottles on the ground when the metal containers are full. These are to be withdrawn in due course. But again, worth noting, the likes of Hambleton never had them.

Collecting food waste to use in digestors for the generation of electricity is still a long way off, possibly until 2043, for a variety of reasons. I am hearing very mixed reports from residents in Darlington where it was introduced recently.

RICHMOND LEISURE

The leisure centre and swimming pool at Richmond is due to open towards the end of the year having benefitted from a spend of £1.65 million on it.

HOUSING.

I am frequently asked why there are NYC properties vacant, often having been in that position for a year or so. This happened only this week in Eppleby where there are 4 vacant properties and a resident in the village is looking for a house because their tenancy has been terminated by a private landlord.

We have across the county some 8,500 social houses and the void rate is currently just under 4.5%. This figure should be down to 2.5% by March. The reason for it being way above the 2.5% target is because we are carrying out an extensive upgrade program and this can only be done when the properties are vacant. An EPC of C is to be a government requirement by 2030 so where possible we are carrying out the necessary work now.

If a property has been empty for some time and the garden has become overgrown, please let me know and I can request that it is tidied up.

FORCETT TO A66 ROAD.

This road is scheduled to have money spent on it in September. It is a mess down the edges of the tarmac caused by HGVs probably destined for the Agricore Plant at Winston. The part from Forcett to the Durham boundary was done last year. There really is nothing that can be done about the articulated lorries heading for Agricore which

almost certainly cause the deep ruts down the sides of the road and are a great hazard to motorists. So we put the mess right whilst County Durham collect the business rates for the plant at Winston. Such is life.

PLANNING.

The department looking after Richmondshire and Hambleton continues to have difficulties, but I have noticed applications beginning to be determined in a more timely fashion. The number of cases outstanding after a year is certainly decreasing. Software updates are meaning that the former Hambleton staff will be able to work on Richmond cases and the same the other way round. The pre app service is also being introduced on a softly softly basis.

New applications are being validated in 14 working days on average, which is still a long way short of the target of 3 days, but is much improved from 20 plus days which was the case until recently.

However, an area of great concern to me is the new guidelines recently circulated by the government, which I feel are most unwelcome. These relate to Planning Committees which we have in Richmondshire and which I sit on. The government's aim is to dramatically reduce the number of cases that go to the Committee for determination, rather than being delegated to a Planning Officer. And the reason for this is quite simply to make Nimbyism much more difficult. Nimby being, 'Not in my back yard.' So when applications come forwards for 30 or 40 houses to be tagged onto a village, it will be much more difficult for residents to resist.

It would appear that the government intention is to effectively dispense with Planning Committees by starving them of the oxygen of work to do. This is not a healthy situation from any perspective, especially for residents of villages in my division. This will be one way to force the target through of 4,300 houses to have permission granted and built in North Yorkshire per annum.

HOPE MOOR WIND FARM.

There is to be a site visit in conjunction with the North Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority on Thursday this week. What is proposed will go within 400 meters of the National Park boundary. The NYC Planning Officers who will produce our response as statutory consultees, are in regular contact with the County Durham Planning Officers and should have their report ready towards the end of the year.

The officer's final report will go before the Strategic Planning Committee, whose members will vote on the report before it is submitted to the Planning Inspector.

We understand that Olsens are hoping to submit their full application by mid-2027.

A66 UPGRADE.

We were originally told by National Highways that it was their intention to carry out the upgrade of the A66 in terms of the six sections all at the same time. This does not now appear to be the case in that the 3 sections in Cumbria are at a more advanced stage than our one section in North Yorkshire. I spoke to Rishi only this morning about the timetable, but he didn't appear to know any more than we do regarding timing. He promised to keep pushing National Highways for a decision. And of course, we know nothing of the final plan for Scotch Corner roundabout.

We are told that the Designer Outlet is on target to open in 2027 but I think it is fair comment to say that there is a long way to go with this.

Angus Thompson.

30th June 2026.

E & OE.