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| Meeting                | Economy, Place, Access and Transport Scrutiny Committee                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Date                   | 28 January 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Present                | Councillors K Taylor (Chair), J Burton, Fenton, Healey (Vice-Chair), Hook, Whitcroft, Steward, Vassie, Merrett and Melly (Substitute)                                                                                       |
| In Attendance          | Councillor Kent – Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency                                                                                                                                                    |
| Officers in Attendance | James Gilchrist - Director of Environment, Transport and Planning<br>Pauline Stuchfield - Director of Housing and Communities<br>Ben Grabham - Head of Environmental Services<br>Ian Houlton - Head of Fleet and Operations |
| Apologies              | Councillor B Burton                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

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### **37. Apologies for Absence (17:30)**

Apologies were received from Cllr Ben Burton, Cllr Rachel Melly was attending as his substitute.

### **38. Declarations of Interest (17:32)**

Members were 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 interest that they might have in respect of the business on the agenda.

Several members of the Committee confirmed while not a prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interest that they were subscribers to the garden waste collections service in relation to minute 41, Cllr Melly also noted that she had a non-prejudicial interest in relation to minute 41 as she was currently a Corporate Director of Yorwaste. Several Committee members also confirmed they were snow wardens in relation to minute 42.

### **39. Minutes (17:34)**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meetings of the committee held on 26 November 2024 and 10 December 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed.

### **40. Public Participation (17:34)**

It was reported that there had been 2 registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Tracy Ostle spoke in relation to Neighbourhood Caretakers as a member of the Groves Association. She stated that there was currently insufficient support from the Council and hoped to see more collaborative work and walk arounds.

Flick Williams stated that she believed the Council lacked sufficient design training in relation to planning. She raised concerns regarding York Central and York Station Gateway and didn't believe the Council would catch and address access issues in these kinds of projects.

### **41. Garden Waste Collections: Review of Implementation of Charging Arrangements (17:42)**

The Head of Environmental Services introduced the report and outlined that the positive take up of Garden Waste Subscriptions. He also confirmed that concerns regarding an increase in household waste and fly tipping had not shown up in the Council's data, with both household waste and fly tipping being down in 2024 on 2023's data. It was confirmed that with any new service the Council would review its roll out and as a result had already increased the number of staff answering questions in customer services on the scheme and had expanded the criteria for those receiving a discounted subscription.

The Committee enquired about the possibility of expanding the service to households who were unable to get garden waste collections pre or post subscription. Officers confirmed that they had expanded the service to more areas including two new housing developments. They also confirmed that the Council was rolling out the bags to bins collections in six wards during 2025 and the intention was for properties to be able to participate in the garden waste subscription scheme in the future. It was noted that the Council would consider surveys to gauge demand in areas that currently couldn't access garden waste collections. Officers confirmed that there

would likely be some capacity in the system, but this would be clearer once it was the Council was aware of how many repeat subscriptions it would have from the previous year.

Officers confirmed that the testing phase had been vital in rollout and the ability to delay by two weeks in July 2024 had allowed the Council to ensure online system worked correctly. It was noted that the online form was the first on a new Granicus CRM system for the Council, there had been initial plans to have the discounted offer for those on Council tax support to be integrated automatically however, this was not possible. Members enquired about how the collection crews had found the rollout and it was confirmed while there were some concerns leading up to the start of the new subscription service, the team had been provided with support including information to provide to resident queries which worked effectively.

It was confirmed that the current cost of running the service was around £1.85 million when accounting for staff, vehicles, and fuel. The expected revenue from the subscription was between £1.5 and £1.6 million. The Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency confirmed to the Committee that the aim of the subscription was to reduce the cost on the Council budget without losing the service.

Members made several enquiries relating to the subscription service for residents, including cost, access for those in deprived areas, and the ability to share subscriptions. The data for subscriptions currently showed them by ward, the Council currently was unable to gauge how many were shared subscriptions but that this was promoted to residents. It was confirmed that the Council would examine the possibility, in communication to subscribers, whether these were shared. It was also confirmed that the Council was evaluating whether to retain the current subscription method or look at being able to move to a direct debit which would let residents have a rolling subscription. The possibility of monthly payments was discussed but officers noted that this would be very costly and direct debit scheme is likely to remain one payment. due to the cost of running a monthly direct debit.

Resolved:

- i. That the Committee asked that their thanks be passed to all officers and collection crews involved in the rollout of the service.
- ii. To request that the Council review whether the Subscription could be moved to a direct debit model;

- iii. To request that the Council seek to expand access to the garden waste collections subscription service;
- iv. To add an update on garden waste collections to the Committees work plan for 2025/26.

Reason: To provide scrutiny on the rollout and performance of the garden waste collection service post the introduction of a subscription model.

## **42. Neighbourhood Caretakers: Proposal Development (18:48)**

The Director of Environment, Transport and Planning introduced the report and outlined that the Committee were being asked to consider, the desired outcomes outlined in the presentation and feed into the possible role of neighbourhood caretakers.

The Committee discussed the role of walk abouts with staff and community groups to identify issues and potential projects. Members noted the challenge of doing walk abouts that are meant to cover a whole ward due to how large especially rural wards can be. The Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency agreed and noted that she would envision more regular walk abouts that use local knowledge to identify areas in need of Council resources.

Members were asked to consider how Council resources might be allocated on a ward-by-ward basis. Discussion took place on whether this would be equally shared or targeted at the most deprived wards. It was also noted that mapping out where community capacity was in place and whether support could be needed to build capacity. Members agreed that it was important to ensure resources would support and work with community ambitions.

The Committee asked that the objectives include reference to creating a bio-diverse city. Members enquired about how the Council can use GIS mapping to support caretaking across the city. Officers confirmed that the public realm team was increasing its access to data to support its work and was partnering with organisations such as Natural England around weeding and grass cuttings.

Officer training and the challenges and how the time of year affects work in the public realm team was discussed by the Committee. Officers confirmed that the Council aims to support and develop staff to be multi skilled. It was confirmed that the only work that the team stopped doing in winter was assisted gardening.

The Committee enquired about how the Council would measure the success that neighbourhood caretakers could have. Officers noted that KPI's had not been agreed due to the early stage the project was at. It was confirmed that the Council would be able to measure some of its success on customer complaints, in areas such as housing the housing regulator will monitor, and there are things such as the resident satisfaction survey for Council tenants.

Resolved:

- i. To request that the desired outcomes include targets for addressing climate change and creating a bio-diverse city;
- ii. To request that a session for Councillors be arranged to see how the new Alloy computer system works.

Reason: To ensure neighbourhood caretakers provide value and support to communities across the city.

#### **43. Work Plan (19:55)**

The Committee considered its work plan and noting questions raised around planning in public participation discussed whether there was work in this area for the Committee to consider. The chair confirmed that he had written to the York Disability Rights Forum regarding the work of the Committee. Members discussed future items on the gender pay gap, assets of community value, and car parking which members asked to include an update regarding residential parking, blue badge parking, and parking enforcement.

Resolved:

- i. To request that Committees item on Car parking provision across the city include updates on regarding residential parking, blue badge parking, and parking enforcement.

Reason: To ensure the Committee maintains a programme of work.

Cllr Taylor, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 8.03 pm].