

Meeting	Corporate Scrutiny Committee
Date	9 June 2025
Present	Councillors Fenton (Chair), Merrett (Vice-Chair), Ayre, Baxter, Coles, K Taylor, Wells, Widdowson and Healey (Substitute)
In Attendance	Councillor Lomas, Executive Member, Finance, Performance, Major Projects, Human Rights, Equality and Inclusion
Officers Present	Garry Taylor, Director, City Development Patricia Salami, Head of Regeneration Debbie Mitchell, Director of Finance Guy Close, Democratic Services Manager

1. Apologies for Absence (5.32 pm)

Apologies were received from Cllr Watson, he was substituted by Cllr Healey.

2. Declarations of Interest (5.32 pm)

Members were asked to declare at this point in the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interests or other registrable interests that they might have in the business on the agenda, if they had not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests.

None were declared.

3. Public Participation (5.32 pm)

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

4. Major Projects - York Station Gateway and York Outer Ring Road (5.33 pm)

Members considered a report from the Director of City Development, which provided an update on the York Station Gateway and York Outer Ring Road. They started with questions to officers (Director of City Development and the Interim Head of Regeneration) on the Station Gateway and these covered the reasons for the increase in costs, land acquisition, officer decision / reporting process, learning outcomes, accessibility, role of LNER, human resources and causes for concern relating to other major projects.

Officers explained that the work items contained within stages one to five of the scheme had moved around and it was not possible to fully track and compare the costs associated with each stage. Several unknowns had driven costs up, including inflation, delays and design changes. They confirmed that the costs, from package three onwards, were the actual costs at today's rates and stated that to understand the cost, the whole scheme should be considered. The land acquisition costs had been an estimate, and a lot of the costs relating to the acquisition had not been allowed for. Learning points included being clearer about the risks, less reliance on consultants, improving the pace and frequency of reporting, and developing internal processes to ensure earlier warnings.

The Executive Member stated that work was ongoing to improve the reporting processes, if there were cost or time changes these should be flagged to better assess the impact. Delegated responsibilities should be reported, and the Scheme of Delegation should reflect this.

Members concluded that further narrative was required in the report to explain the changing contract landscape and to include the learning points. The scheme of delegation should be referred to Audit and Governance if it had not been already.

On consideration of the York Outer Ring Road update which was contained in the second part of the report, Members asked questions on the cost review report, the cost differences in the original vs current scheme, costs associated with a phased approach and environment and climate action.

Officers reported that the original £66m published cost of the project had been provided by external consultants, various on-costs including delivery and contingency had not been included; the cost of planning permission and LTN 1/20 compliance had also not been included in the scheme. The current figure of £164m allowed for inflation and on-costs it was not possible to share all the financial information due to commercial sensitivities. The Director of City Development agreed to provide some

additional information to Members after the meeting. He also confirmed that the longer it takes to deliver the scheme the more costs expensive it would be. The changes to the scheme related to LTN 1/20 and required a greater land take, engineering solutions were also more intensive; while the Highways code was not mandatory there were risks to the Council in not delivering this.

The Executive Member confirmed the intention to ensure future funding bids consider the costs relating to phasing a project.

Members requested future reports be provided with a narrative to explain the differences in the original scheme and the current scheme in terms of cost. The revised cost of the scheme should show clearly what is included for the available funding. An explanation of the cost of the phasing approach should also be included as well as identifying the opportunity cost of delays to the project. The Environment and Climate Action section of the report should be made clearer and set out the benefits.

Resolved: That the above suggestions from Members for improvements to the report be included in the final report to Executive.

Reason: To ensure the Executive receive all the information needed for robust decision making.

[7.03 pm to 7.09 pm, meeting adjourned.]

5. Budget Setting Process (7.09 pm)

The Director of Finance presented her report on budget setting and the role scrutiny could play in the process. She suggested that this could largely be completed through a task and finish group to enable a more strategic overview.

Members were broadly in agreement with the proposals, noting the benefits of a timelier approach. The Chair stated that volunteers would be required for a task and finish group and expressed his aim for the group to develop specialist knowledge of the subject matter.

The Executive Member outlined her thoughts, explaining that the same task group members could work across the medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) and the monitoring reports at key times during the year.

Resolved: That a task and finish group be established in order to proceed with the budget scrutiny process.

Reason: To provide assurance that the Council is managing its budget effectively.

6. Work Plan (7.27 pm)

Members considered the draft work plan for the committee and the overview scrutiny work plan for all the scrutiny committees.

Resolved: That the work plan be noted.

Reason: To ensure an overview of the scrutiny work programme.

Cllr S Fenton, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.31 pm and finished at 7.34 pm].