
Meeting	Place Scrutiny Committee
Date	23 September 2025
Present	Councillors B Burton (Chair), Healey (Vice-Chair), Baxter, Fenton, Hook, D Myers, K Taylor, Vassie and Whitcroft
Officers in Attendance	Dave Atkinson - Director of Environmental and Regulatory Services Ian Hoults - Head of Environmental Services Dave Meigh - Operations Manager
In Attendance	Councillor Kent – Executive Member Environment and Climate Emergency

6. Apologies for Absence (17:31)

No apologies were received.

7. Declarations of Interest (17:31)

Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests which they may have in respect of business on the agenda.

Cllr Taylor noted that he was on the board of Yorwaste and had spoken to the Monitoring Officer who had confirmed this was not a prejudicial interest for any of the items on the agenda.

8. Minutes (17:32)

Resolved: That the minutes of the Place Scrutiny Committee on 24 June 2025 be signed as a correct record of the meeting.

9. Public Participation (17:32)

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

Flick Williams raised concerns that community advocacy groups were being left out of discussions on the York Central Development leading to decisions which were disadvantaging disabled people. She asked why new bus shelters were lacking buttons to read out instructions when existing bus stops were getting them installed. She also noted that East Yorkshire's new buses only had space for one wheelchair user.

Gwen Swinburn raised concerns about the weighting in the Parks Investment Fund scoring system. She highlighted King George's Field Park needing investment and its lack of accessibility due to step access. She asked whether the weighting for Green Flag status should be lowered due to its impact on what parks would receive funding.

10. Parks Investment Fund (17:40)

Officers introduced the report outlining the work undertaken on the Parks Investment Fund and its scoring system for identifying where to prioritise funding since it was last considered by the Committee. They confirmed that the programme was worth £750,000 and would have a new project manager appointed to ensure deliver of the fund within the 18-month outlined window for the projects.

The Committee enquired about other areas of funding which could support the Parks Investment Fund. It was confirmed that Section 106 monies from planning applications could come into play, and it was noted that there were some Section 106 monies which had been for the area of York and not specific green spaces which could be used. Members were also informed that Ward Councillors would have the opportunity to use Ward Funding to support schemes funded by with the Parks Investment Fund.

Members discussed the weighting system for determining which parks would receive investment. Members made specific enquires about the weighting given to parks with Green Flag status. Officers confirmed that the waiting given to Green Flag status had come from the Committee's previous consideration of the scoring system and that this could be changed. At the Committee's previous meeting and the Executive had both supported Green Flag status and the opportunity to receive additional external funding have the same weighting. The Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency noted that it was a Council ambition to increase the number of Green Flag accredited parks in the city.

Members asked whether the Council followed a specific design guide for its parks and fields. Officers confirmed that they did not have a specific design guide as a lot of work was undertaken to meet local community needs and

were therefore designed in consultation. The Committee raised questions about ensuring parks were a place where people could feel safe, and it was confirmed officers undertook work to things such as planting allowed for clear site lines throughout parks to make them feel like safe spaces.

The Committee enquired about whether projects would require specific maintenance funds to ensure upkeep. Officers explained that the main issue relating to increased upkeep cost was the addition of new parks and play spaces, they wouldn't expect any major changes to maintenance cost for parks that receive investment. It was also confirmed with the scoring criteria parks that receive investment should see lots of old play equipment replaced requiring less maintenance.

Resolved:

- i. The Committee supported the weighted approach detailed in Paragraphs 8 to 10 and the resulting priority schemes for the Parks Investment Fund.

Reason: To inform the Executives decision making

11. Household Waste Recycling Centre Operations (18:26)

The Committee considered the report outlining options for the Executive to consider regarding addressing an increasing build up of traffic outside of Hazel Court's Household Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC) on James Street. Officers outlined that James Street had seen an increase in businesses operating on the street since Hazel Court opened in 2006, the Council also had Towthorpe HWRC which both closed on Wednesdays in line with North Yorkshire sites. Officers confirmed that they were seeking the Committees opinion on the proposed options for addressing traffic issues on James Street to assist in informing the Executive's decision, of which the proposed option from Officers was to implement a booking system.

The Committee discussed the proposed booking system and agreed that an open booking system could assist in addressing congestion on James Street. They also acknowledged the success of a booking system at the HWRCs once early issues had been addressed during Covid.

Members considered the prospect of restricting bookings to York residents using car registration numbers. The Committee raised several concerns relating to administering this system such as for those without a car being

helped by someone outside of York, such as parents of university students, or family members for older residents without a car. Members also highlighted a potential impact on residents using company cars which could be registered outside of the city. Officers acknowledged these potential issues if access to the HWRC's were restricted to York residents only. Officers also noted that North Yorkshire Council were considering proposals to restrict access to their HWRC's be only for North Yorkshire residents. The Committee noted this potential change at North Yorkshire and hoped that discussions could ensure York residents access to North Yorkshire HWRC's where appropriate.

Members asked about whether the proposed community skip days, which were proposed as part of a move to a booking system, might be able to continue if successful. Officers confirmed that they did not have plans for community skip days to exist outside of the transition period but could be explored in the budget.

The Committee enquired whether reopening on a Wednesday might help address congestion on James Street and whether it would help to limit this to businesses. Officers noted that a lot of regular visiting business come multiple days a week meaning a specific day would likely not assist with this congestion. Officers also noted that the HWRCs were already open outside of their peak times of 10am to 2pm and therefore, do not believe opening an extra day would change congestion in those peak times. It was also confirmed that the Council already promoted people to use Towthorpe over Hazel Court. Members also asked whether the Council was exploring moving the Hazel Court site. Officers confirmed that moving the site was an option to explore but would not be a short to medium term solution to the congestion issues.

Resolved:

- i. The Committee supported the implementation of an online booking system for Hazel Court HWRC only, so that the Council can average out the number of visits to the Hazel Court HWRC throughout the operational days.

Reason: To reduce the traffic congestion on James Street and Hazel Court but not restrict the total number per day as the HWRC can meet the demand of materials being taken.

12. Place Scrutiny Work Plan (19:02)

The Committee discussed its current work plan, and the Chair asked Members to consider possible task and finish groups and engage in the proposal form process ahead of the Committee's 25 November 2025 meeting. An additional proposal to explore how to increase the Council's commercial activity was suggested for the Committee's work plan. The Council's Scrutiny Officer proposed that they explore whether increasing commercial activity at the Council might be something to explore as part of a task and finish group and suggested Members interested engage in the submitting a task and finish group proposal ahead of the Committee's November meeting.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the Committee work plan.

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

Cllr B Burton, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.31 pm and finished at 7.12 pm].

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