

Council Meeting

Resolutions and proceedings of the Council Meeting held at the Citadel, York on Thursday, 6 November 2025, starting at 6.30 pm.

Present: The Lord Mayor (Councillor Martin Rowley BEM) in the Chair, and the following Councillors:

Acomb Ward

Lomas
Rose

Bishopthorpe Ward

Nicholls

Clifton Ward

Myers
Wells

Copmanthorpe Ward

Steward

Dringhouses and Woodthorpe
Ward

Fenton
Mason
Widdowson

Fishergate Ward

Whitcroft
Wilson

Fulford and Heslington Ward

Ravilius

Guildhall Ward

Clarke
Melly
Merrett

Haxby and Wigginton Ward

Cuthbertson
Hollyer
Watson

Heworth Ward

B Burton
Douglas
Webb

Heworth Without Ward

Ayre

Holgate Ward

Kent
Steels-Walshaw
Taylor

Hull Road Ward

Huntington and New Earswick
Ward

Baxter
Moroney
Pavlovic

Cullwick
Orrell
Runciman

Micklegate Ward

Osbaldwick and Derwent Ward

J Burton
Crawshaw
Kilbane

Rowley

Rawcliffe and Clifton Without Ward

Rural West York Ward

Hook
Knight

Strensall Ward

Westfield Ward

Fisher
Healey

Coles
Nelson
Waller

Wheldrake Ward

Vassie

48. Lord Mayor's Opening Remarks

The Lord Mayor welcomed all in attendance to the November Council meeting.

It was advised that there was to be a minor change to the agenda running order. Agenda item 13, Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report was to be brought forward and considered after agenda item 5, Public Participation.

49. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Smalley, Wann, Warters and Waudby.

50. Declarations of Interest

A declaration of interest was made at a later point in the meeting. (Minute No. 62 refers)

51. Minutes

Councillor Steward, reported that at the September Council meeting a motion in relation to the S106 process had been submitted by the Conservative Group, amended by the Labour Group and approved by Council. The Conservative Group objected to the removal of consultation with members, which it was reported had reflected officer advice. It was understood that there had since been some clarification on this advice, and it was hoped that this key aspect in relation to consulting with members could be reintroduced.

The Executive Member, Councillor Pavlovic, advised that having sought advice, members could be consulted on S106 proposals where there was discretion on how funding could be allocated. Whilst not wishing to amend past motions and amendments, the Executive Member was happy to ensure a suitable way forward that enabled consultation with members to take place.

Resolved: That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 18 September 2025 and the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 16 October 2025 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

52. Civic Announcements including Lord Mayor for the 2026/27 Municipal Year

The Lord Mayor reported that following consideration of the points allocation at the Executive meeting on 4 November 2025, the Lord Mayor for the 2026/27 municipal year had been allocated to the Labour Group. The Leader of the Labour Group, Councillor Douglas, reported that Councillor Wells had been nominated to serve as Lord Mayor in 2026/27. Councillor Wells was invited to comment and stated that it was a huge honour. She looked forward to championing and highlighting the work of all the unsung heroes as well as celebrating the work of the many volunteers in York.

The Lord Mayor highlighted the positive difference made by volunteers and residents who did extraordinary things for their communities. Linked to this, a Lord Mayor's Commendation Scheme was to be introduced to recognise the very best of ordinary and extraordinary individuals and groups in local communities. Further information was to follow in due course.

53. Public Participation

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

Gwen Swinburn spoke in relation to general governance matters within the remit of the Council. She expressed concern about having been denied a public speaking opportunity at the Extraordinary Council Meeting to appoint a new City of York Council (CYC) Chief Executive. It was stated that the Statutory Officer had altered the public participation protocol in the Council's Constitution without liaison with the Audit and Governance Committee or consultation with Council group leaders. She welcomed the appointment of the new CYC Chief Executive from North Yorkshire Council. That North Yorkshire Council was a beacon of good governance in many ways. She expressed the view that in contrast, fewer decisions at CYC were taken in public, with minimal recording of delegated decisions, which had resulted in Councillors lacking the information and influence that was required of them. She hoped that the new Chief Executive was able to address these issues.

Flick Williams spoke remotely in relation to agenda item 7, Report of the Leader of the Council, and agenda item 14.1, Motions on Notice – Access to Transport for All. In relation to Dial-a-Ride, it was considered a travesty that there were continued delays after 22 months. That since its demise, changes to eligibility for hospital patient transport meant that people were declining medical appointments because they had no means of getting to them.

In relation to concessionary bus passes for disabled people there was agreement with the issues identified by the Liberal Democrat motion. That the cost was relatively low as it affected less than 10% of concessionary passes and did not affect holders of blind persons passes as these were already valid at any time of day. That bus operators should properly train their drivers because many were not aware, and visually impaired people were regularly challenged if they tried to use their pass before 9.00 a.m.

Another local anomaly was that concessionary passholders who boarded a bus at a park and ride site did not enjoy free travel between the specified times, merely a discounted ticket. There was disappointment that this was missing from the motion. That with the demise of the Bus Enhanced Partnership, individuals had lost the ability to raise issues such as these affecting disabled bus users and the promise of monthly reports on the tracker created by the Bus Accessibility Task and Finish Group was also lost.

Ben French spoke in relation to agenda item 14.2, Motions on Notice – Tackling Pollution in York's Rivers. He spoke as a representative of York Green Party in support of the Labour Group motion proposed by Councillor Kent. He highlighted the need for a modern and fit for-purpose drainage system and proper pollution reduction. He also highlighted support for the Conservative Group amendment proposed by Councillor Steward in relation to locally driven action on pollution in rivers. That it was right to listen to partners and officers for direct practical solutions. There was a need for York's leaders and wider regional leaders to keep holding corporate bosses to account because ultimately taxpayers paid the price with the water system when things went wrong.

Christopher Copland spoke in relation to agenda item 14.2, Motions on Notice – Tackling Pollution in York's Rivers. He spoke as a representative of York Friends of the Earth Group. That this motion was not only about sewage as the main issue with the poor state of rivers, water bodies and coastal waters related to a complex mix of chemicals and substances often masked by

sewage. Run off from roads, engine oil, brake dust, fluids, tire particles. Run off from pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides from farmed fields. The spreading of sewage on farmland passed off as fertiliser. And the breakdown of litter, packaging, and other consumer items.

The fact that rivers remained in a heavily engineered state was also considered an issue. Concrete channels and infrastructure prevented rivers from being resilient to pollution as well as to the swings between flooding and drought, which had become more frequent, and resulted in rivers playing less of a part in natural flood management.

Michael Gray spoke in relation to agenda item 14.2, Motions on Notice – Tackling Pollution in York's Rivers. He spoke as a representative of The River Society. It was highlighted that the Foss was not a healthy river. Water quality had been monitored, particularly organic pollution, by measuring nitrate, phosphate, and dissolved oxygen levels along the river. The river had always suffered from low flows which compounded the effect of pollution. The intensively drained farmland through which it flowed, and the extensive hard surfaces of its suburban areas all led to rapid run off so that water levels rise and fall rapidly. Monitoring had shown that both nitrate and phosphate levels caused problems in the Foss. According to University of York's published research, many other chemical pollutants were present in the river. There were long-term detrimental effects of dredging which destroyed the biological communities that mitigated pollution. It was agreed that phosphate loadings need to be reduced significantly, but it was nitrate that was the principal problem. Reducing nitrate concentrations would go a long way to improving water quality.

Heather Disley spoke in relation to York unity and safety. That York had always been one of the happiest and most welcoming cities in the country. But there was some concern that in recent months, certain groups had sought to intimidate. That their actions had coincided with a rise in hate crimes, leaving international students, visitors, and lifelong residents feeling unsafe to walk through the city at night. There was concern that too often actions had gone unchecked. That silence emboldened these types of groups and sent out the wrong message that intimidation was tolerated. After undoubtedly costing City of York Council more than the initially quoted £250,000 in removals and repairs, groups had changed their approach. They were now misusing the image of the remembrance poppy and placing cheap plastic poppies on lamp

posts without permission from the Royal British Legion. The poppy was not a weapon of intimidation. It was a symbol of remembrance and unity, honouring all those who gave their lives, not just white British servicemen, but the millions of soldiers from every background and corner of the Commonwealth who stood together in defence of freedom. That we must remember, reclaim, and defend the poppy's true meaning of respect, solidarity, and the hope for a peaceful world.

Geoff Beacon spoke in relation to agenda item 11, Recommendations of Executive. He reported on the effect of housing costs on poverty. That one solution to this was the development of eco-park homes, which given the level of biogenic carbon stored in them, could be carbon negative and provide an affordable alternative. This would help poor people in York who were paying a significant proportion of their income on housing costs.

Dr John Wilkinson spoke in relation to agenda item 14.2, Motions on Notice – Tackling Pollution in York's Rivers. Dr John Wilkinson informed Council that he was a research scientist and studied chemical pollution in rivers around the world at the University of York. It was reported that research at the University of York had shown that the River Foss was amongst the most polluted for pharmaceutical contaminants across Europe. As part of his role he led the Aqua Project, Action for Quality Aquatic Environments. It brought together over 1,700 members of the public along with local charities, businesses, community groups, all to better understand and to reduce chemical and microbial pollution that threatened York's rivers. There was a shared mission as part of the Aqua Project towards a non-toxic aquatic environment. That just as the beauty of our city reflected the generations who cared for it, the pollution in our rivers reflected the many pressures of modern life. The motion to tackle pollution in York's rivers, was a vital step in changing that reflection. It's one that acknowledged the science, empowered communities, and looked towards a future non-toxic aquatic environment. This was not an issue that should be divided by politics. Clean water united us all and was essential to our health, to our environment, and to our city's identity.

54. Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2024-25

The Corporate Director of Children and Education submitted a report which presented the Corporate Parenting Annual Report for 2024/25.

Having been moved by Councillor Webb and seconded by Councillor Steels-Walshaw, Councillor Webb, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education then introduced the report. Members were reminded that November was Care Leavers month. That over the course of the last year sub-groups had been introduced in relation to housing, health and education. These were attended by children, young people and care leavers as well as relevant officers.

Care was now treated as a protected characteristic. Work had been undertaken with care leavers to co-produce what the key areas of focus should be. And there was now an improved offer for foster carers in York. In addition, an employment and opportunities broker had been employed to support care leavers into jobs.

Lauren, Co-Chair of Corporate Parenting Board was then invited to present her update to Council. Lauren was keen to emphasise the importance of the relationship and collaboration between young people and corporate parents.

Lauren explained that as a care experienced young person and Co-Chair of Corporate Parenting Board, it was about how the city cared for children and young people when they needed it the most. Over the past year work had been undertaken to ensure that young people's voices were not just heard but truly listened to. The Board was now co-chaired by care experienced young people alongside Councillor Webb, Executive Member for Children Young People and Education, which had made decisions grounded in real experience and lived insight.

In total, more than 50 young people had shared their views this year and their feedback had influenced key areas such as foster carer recruitment and training, mental health support, housing, and a new leaving care offer. The 'mind your language' campaign had also been launched because how people talked about care experienced young people really mattered. The words that were used shaped attitudes and the attitudes shaped opportunities.

The shift in awareness had encouraged professionals across the city to think differently, to see potential not pity, strength and not stigma. The partnership between young people and the Council had become more than consultation. It was collaboration. Together, services had been redesigned to reflect what young people needed. From creating new fostering recruitment videos to

co-producing housing pathways and mental health initiatives, work was rooted in shared purpose and accountability. It was also about aspirations. Every child in care deserved to dream big. To believe that university, apprenticeships, stable homes, and strong relationships were within reach.

Corporate parenting was one of the most important responsibilities the council held. When a child came into care, the council became their corporate parents. This meant shared responsibility for well-being, education, housing, health, and the future. It was not just a role for social workers or children services. Every decision had the power to open doors, create opportunities, and change lives.

November was Care Leaver's month, a time to recognise the achievements of care experienced young people across the city. To show every young person that no matter where you start, your goals and dreams were possible. That's what being a good corporate parent was about. Helping children and young people believe in themselves, aim high, and know that they were valued, supported, and capable of achieving great things.

Since the previous annual report, the progress that had been made together was clear. Care experience was now treated as if it was a protected characteristic, recognising and challenging the barriers that some people continued to face. New sub-groups had been piloted focusing on health, education, and housing to drive better outcomes. An enhanced offer for care leavers had been launched, ensuring that young people were supported as they moved into adulthood and independence. Decisions were no longer made for young people. They were made with young people. That was real progress.

Resolved (unanimously) – That the Corporate Parenting Annual Report for 2024/25, be noted.

Reason: So that members are updated on the work of the Corporate Parenting Board.

55. Petitions

There were no petitions to consider on this occasion.

56. Report of the Leader of the Council and Executive

A report from the Leader of the Council and Executive was submitted which provided an update on key activity since the last Council meeting.

(The meeting then adjourned for a short break at 7.35pm and reconvened at 7.45pm)

57. Questions to the Leader or Executive Members

The Lord Mayor invited members to ask questions of the Leader of the Council and Executive in relation to matters within their portfolio responsibility.

Details of questions and subsequent responses were provided as follows:

Councillor Whitcroft

Please could the Executive Member outline how changes to ResPark would help residents in my ward get the resident parking that they need and what the new process was going to do as an improvement to the old scheme?

Response

The Executive Member for Transport reported that the ResPark process had been somewhat unwieldy resulting in communities sometimes waiting years for their application to be processed. That there was a double consultation process, but residents felt as though they had been consulted twice and led to many residents not realising when they had to respond to the final consultation.

The changes streamlined the process and the way that ResPark was dealt with. Previously, officers would only recommend implementing ResPark if more than 50% of the residents in the area responded and more than 50% of the residents were in support. And in areas where there were large numbers of rental properties, then this often resulted in a very low response rate and that led to residents just being caught in a loop of being unable to process a ResPark application for their area. That threshold had been removed for officers to move things forward. There had also been a change to the first consultation stage so that communities were given the opportunity to shape how the public highway was

used. Residents were to be asked to estimate how many parking spaces they might need and to consider what other ways they might like to see the highway being used, such as cycle shelters, EV charging and more seating. This provided local communities the chance to reshape their streets for the ways that worked for them.

As part of the second stage residents and businesses had the opportunity to object. Any objections received were to be taken into consideration and mitigations put in place in the same way that other traffic restriction orders were dealt with, such as double yellow lines. It was aligning the process with other traffic restriction orders. It was felt that the new process would result in a swift progression of applications so that a resolution was reached for communities whilst providing opportunities for communities to shape their neighbourhoods in a way that worked best for their local community.

Councillor Cullwick

Clarification was sought from the Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects, Human Rights, Equality and Inclusion, that in the original papers for the Executive meeting earlier this week it was stated that the green bin tax would rise to £52 next year, which would be a 12% increase since the charge was introduced. That paper was later withdrawn and replaced with all reference to the increase removed. So please could the Executive Member confirm whether it has been decided not to increase the green bin tax for the next financial year?

Response

The Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects, Human Rights, Equality and Inclusion responded that the paper had been entered on the system in error and was withdrawn because it should not have been included in that format. The paper that was considered at Executive and voted on did not have any reference to charging for green waste collection for the future financial year. That was because no decision had yet been made on charging for green waste collection. A decision was to be made transparently in the proper way, in public.

Councillor Nicholls

Please could I ask the Leader of the Council of the 20 motions passed by Council from the Labour Group what specific measurable achievements have been made on these motions?

Response

The Leader of the Council responded that when Labour came into administration there was no process for monitoring how motions were taken forward. That a process had since been established to track the progress of motions. A report had been submitted to Corporate Scrutiny Committee last week where it was acknowledged that there were still motions where progress was needed. An update on those motions had been provided, noting that whilst some had been achieved there was still more work needed on others.

Councillor Ben Burton

The Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency was asked about the expansion of kerbside recycling, particularly the wider benefits for residents.

Response

The Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency responded that ideally there would be doorstep collections for all types of waste. Items such as toothpaste tubes and Tetra Pak cartons had been two very difficult items to recycle or find places to recycle. The changes meant that there was no longer a need to go to the tip or elsewhere to get rid of them. It reduced congestion, reduced emissions from transport, with fewer trips to the tip and increased the amount that was recycled, which was good for the circular economy.

Councillor Fenton

The Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency was asked to provide some assurance about the future continuation of the suburban recycling banks, for example at Askham Bar and elsewhere, which were well used particularly for cardboard and paper.

Response

The Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency responded that there was currently no indication either way. It was reported that Tetra Pak recycling banks were to be removed. These were outside of the Council's control and were to be removed, but there was to be doorstep recycling and therefore not a reduction.

Councillor Orrell

It was fantastic that York Knights were joining the Super League. It was a huge leap for the club and a brilliant opportunity to showcase the city. But with bigger crowds will come bigger traffic and parking challenges, particularly around Huntington. What steps had the Executive Member taken to manage this ahead of February? And would Ward Councillors be involved in the planning as they were before the Community Stadium first opened?

Response

The Leader of the Council acknowledged that on match days, there was heavy traffic around the Community Stadium. That during the Women's Rugby World Cup extra buses were provided, which were well used, and the traffic was well managed. By changing the approach to the area and providing different services, the traffic could be better managed in the Monks Cross area. Work was to be undertaken with York Knights and with any of the big events that were going on in that area to improve and enhance public transport. It would also form part of the work with the Mayor of York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority when bus responsibilities were transferred across to the Mayor.

Councillor Nelson

Please could the Executive Member explain so that Councillors are able to spread the word, how people are going to be able to access services at the new Community Well-being Hub at Acomb Garth and what types of support will be available?

Response

The Executive Member for Health, Well-being and Adult Social Care responded that this was the second Community Well-being

Hub that had opened in York. It provided a resource in the community where people were able to access help and support when and where they needed it. In terms of accessing the Community Well-being Hub the plan was for it to be open 24/7 with direct access. There was no need for a referral and multi-disciplinary teams were based there. What one person needed may be very different to what another person needed. There would be support from mental health services, community support services and advice services. This was not a timebound service. People would not be told there's a limit on the number of times they could attend.

Councillor Widdowson

At the Executive Member Decision Session on 22 April 2025, the Council approved plans to consult on a city centre sustainable transport corridor which included potential changes to traffic movement across the Ouse Bridge. Please could the Executive Member confirm when the consultation will begin and when the agreed scheme will be implemented? In addition, what co-ordination will take place with the planned works on Lendal Bridge to avoid overlapping disruption in the city centre?

Response

The Executive Member responded that consultation was starting next week. The expectation was for the consultation to run until early January. Following feedback received from the consultation, the aim was to start the scheme in the summer of next year with an 18-month experimental scheme. Throughout those 18 months, there was an opportunity for everyone to feedback on how the scheme was working and to make tweaks if needed. The plan was to make sure that Lendal Bridge works were completed prior to any implementation of the sustainable travel corridor with no overlapping. That was why works at Lendal Bridge had been scheduled to start as soon as the Easter holidays had finished. Lendal Bridge works were anticipated to take eight weeks and then move to implementing the sustainable travel corridor.

Councillor Crawshaw

Concerns were raised about community safety. That a public meeting had been held in the Micklegate Ward earlier in the week called by three Ward Councillors following a significant rise in the frequency and severity of anti-social behaviour. It was reported

that there had been a spate of arson attacks which were particularly concerning for the local community. That last week was the 13th shed that had been burnt down since September. Over 100 people attended the public meeting and one of the key messages was concern around communication between the different agencies that were involved, which included police and fire services, the council's community safety team, schools, youth services and the wider community. Clarification was sought about the role of the Council in ensuring good communication so that everyone was speaking from the same page.

Response

The Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Safer Communities responded that concern about the spate of arson attacks and anti-social behaviour was happening across the city and was a concern for council departments as well as other agencies. That work had been undertaken to establish processes through the Safer York Partnership. That there was a multi-agency meeting taking place tomorrow with a particular focus on youth crime. That efforts would be made to ensure agencies engaged with Ward Councillors, community groups and stakeholders. That there was a role for Councillors across the city to be disseminating information to identify those individuals that may be involved with this level of offending.

58. Scrutiny - Report of the Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

An update on the latest scrutiny activity was provided by Councillor Fenton, Chair of Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

59. Appointments and Changes to Membership

Resolved – That Councillor Waller be appointed substitute representative for Councillor Knight on North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel.

60. Recommendations of Executive

Recommendations of Executive arising from its meetings on 2 September, 7 October and 4 November 2025 were presented to Council and approved as follows:

Capital Programme – Monitor One 2025/2026 (Executive minute no. 135 refers)

Resolved – That the adjustments resulting in a reduction in the 2025/26 budget of £412k as detailed in the report to Executive, be approved.

Reason: To enable the effective management and monitoring of the Council's capital programme.

Delivering More Affordable Housing in York – Update on the Housing Delivery Programme (Executive minute no. 149 refers)

Resolved – That a construction and delivery budget totalling £37.9m which includes HRA borrowing totalling up to £13.0m, be approved.

Reason: To ensure the continuation of a manageable pipeline of sites to deliver the Housing Delivery Programme whilst making best use of CYC assets to deliver capital receipts and social benefits.

Capital Programme – Monitor Two 2025/26 (Executive minute no. 163 refers)

Resolved – That the adjustments resulting in a decrease in the 2025/26 budget of £17.865m as detailed in the report to Executive, be approved.

Reason: To enable the effective management and monitoring of the Council's capital programme.

Tackling Poverty Today and Turning the Tide to Create Lasting Change – A Strategy and Strategic Action Plan for addressing Poverty in York 2025-2035 (Executive minute no. 170 refers)

Resolved – That the 10-year strategy and action plan be adopted by Full Council on behalf of the City of York.

Reason: In alignment with the Council Plan and 10-year strategies, the anti-poverty strategy and action plan, reflects the views of residents, communities, partners and Members, sets a direction of travel for the council and partners over the next 10

years to tackle poverty in York helping to support the most vulnerable in society.

61. **Community Infrastructure Levy**

The Director of City Development submitted a report which recommended adoption of the Community Infrastructure Levy, inclusive of the proposed modifications recommended by the Examiner.

The following annexes were included:

- Annex A – Submitted Community Infrastructure Levy Draft Charging Schedule (July 2025)
- Annex B – Examiner's report including Appendix with proposed modifications schedule
- Annex C – Equalities Impact Appraisal.

The Executive Member wished it to be placed on record her thanks to all those involved with the development and subsequent adoption of the Council's Local Plan through to a proposal for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The CIL would bring much needed investment into the city, ensuring essential infrastructure was in place as part of future developments.

Resolved –

That Council

- i) Accepts the outcomes of the independent Examiner's Report (Annex B to the report), including modifications proposed by the Examiner to ensure the Community Infrastructure Levy and proposed Charging Schedule can be soundly implemented.
- ii) Adopts the Community Infrastructure Levy (Annex A to the report), as proposed to be modified (Annex B to the report), for implementation on 1 February 2026.

Reason: To allow the CIL Schedule to be legally adopted and implemented effectively, in line with the recommendations of the independent Examiner and national planning guidance.

- iii) Delegates authority to the Director of City Development to

review the instalment policy and make any necessary further minor editorial changes to the Charging Schedule or a change to the implementation date, if necessary.

- iv) Delegates authority to the Director for Environment and Regulatory Services to agree publishing and necessary documentation for the introduction of CIL.

Reason: To enable timely and efficient progression of the CIL adoption process, ensuring operational readiness, sound implementation and regular monitoring.

- v) To note that a further report regarding the spending of CIL will be brought to a future Executive for consideration.

Reason: To allow Executive to consider how to spend the CIL monies received.

(The meeting then adjourned at 8.45pm and reconvened at 9.00pm.)

62. **Motions on Notice**

14.1 – Access to Transport for All

This motion was moved by Councillor Fenton and seconded by Councillor Runciman. It incorporated an amendment (as set out in the supplementary agenda pack), moved by Councillor Ravilious and seconded by Councillor Moroney.

Following a number of speakers, the motion, as amended and set out below was then put to the vote and carried.

Resolved – That with the addition and deletion of the appropriate words, the motion be amended to read as follows:

Council notes:

- That under the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme, disabled residents are entitled to free bus travel on local buses, but this is usually restricted to journeys made between 9:30am and 11:00pm on weekdays, unless local councils choose to extend the hours.
- That City of York Council currently allows disabled people's bus passes to be used from 9:00am, half an hour earlier than

the national minimum, but that many essential appointments, employment opportunities, and educational commitments require travel to take place before this time.

- That Liberal Democrat MP Tom Gordon has led a national campaign calling on the Government to remove time restrictions entirely, to allow disabled people to use their bus passes at any time of day, reflecting the principle that disability does not only occur between 9:00am and 11:00pm.
- That York's Dial & Ride community transport service – used by many older and disabled people – ceased operating at the end of December 2023 and that a cross-party Task & Finish Group made a number of recommendations which were approved by the Economy, Place, Access & Transport Scrutiny Committee in June 2024.
- That the Executive Member for Transport chaired a Task & Finish group on Bus Accessibility earlier this year, with valuable input from members of the disabled community, and that the outputs from this Task & Finish group are recorded and regularly updated in a bus accessibility tracker, with reports on progress being shared with the Access Forum.

Council believes:

- That the current time limits create unnecessary barriers for disabled residents, particularly for those needing to attend early morning medical appointments, commute to work or education.
- That local flexibility should not mean a postcode lottery, where disabled people in some areas have full access to public transport and others do not.
- That improving access to bus travel for disabled people supports the Council's wider commitments to equality, inclusion, and sustainable transport.
- That the quality of life of many older and disabled people has been adversely impacted by the absence of a replacement Dial & Ride service for the past 22 months, many of whom do not have access to a car and are unable to get to their nearest bus stop.

Council therefore resolves to:

1. Support Tom Gordon MP's campaign to lift national time restrictions on the use of disabled bus passes.

2. Ask the Group Leaders to write to the Secretary of State for Transport urging the Government to amend the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme to make disabled bus passes valid 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and for the additional cost of this to be reflected in council settlements so other financial support for bus services is not impacted;
3. Ask for officers to work with the Access Forum prior to bringing a report to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee within 6 months, outlining cost implications, benefits and risks and potential partnerships with local bus operators of amending the start time for use of disabled bus passes, prior to making recommendations to the Mayoral Combined Authority, which now holds this specific responsibility;
4. Following an update due to be provided at Place Scrutiny this month, to ask the Executive Member for Transport to meet with the Dial & Ride Task & Finish Group members as soon as possible to discuss the progress made with identifying options for a replacement service.

14.2 – Tackling pollution in York’s Rivers

This motion was moved by Councillor Kent and seconded by Councillor Moroney.

In accordance with the Council’s Standing Orders an amendment (as set out in the supplementary agenda pack) was moved by Councillor Steward and seconded by Councillor Nicholls.

Following a number of speakers, the amendment was put to the vote and lost.

The original motion as set out below was then voted on and carried.

Resolved –

This Council notes:

- that in 2023, storm overflows discharged wastewater, including untreated sewage, into the River Ouse in and around York for a total of 16,357 hours, and into the Foss for 3,254 hours;
- that in England, serious pollution incidents by water companies rose by 60% in 2024, with almost 20% attributable to Yorkshire Water, and overall pollution

incidents climbed 29%, resulting in significant water company fines;

- that recent scientific monitoring by the Ecomix project at the University of York shows that rivers and freshwater waterways are becomingly increasingly polluted by a toxic mix of thousands of chemicals from agriculture, pharmaceuticals, household cleaning and personal care products and tyre additives, with only 14% of rivers meeting a good level of ecological status;
- that recent sampling for the 'forever' chemical Trifluoroacetic acid (TFA) across 19 locations in Yorkshire over one year detected the chemical in 99.3% of samples. Many locations had levels exceeding the safe concentration proposed for TFA by the Dutch Institute for Public Health;
- that while the EU's revised Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive came into force on 1 January 2025, the UK continues to operate under the outdated 1991 framework, leading to a regulatory gap and lag in pollution control regulation, meaning our waterways and drinking water remain open to contamination from multiple sources.

Council welcomes and supports:

- the AQuA citizen science project at UoY inviting the public to help collect data from York waterways for both chemical and bacterial pollution with the aim to improve Yorkshire's aquatic environments for biodiversity and people;
- the Independent Water Commission review by Sir John Cunliffe and the Labour Government's response marking a pivotal moment for the UK water sector, including the government pledge to halve sewage pollution by 2030;
- The People's Commission recommendations on the water sector;
- the EU Directive's strengthened mandates, not limited to but including:
 - the Polluter-pays principle, energy-neutral operation for wastewater treatment plants and real-time public health monitoring.

This Council resolves to request the Leader to write to the Mayor of York and North Yorkshire and York's MPs to ask them to join the Leader and Executive Member for the Environment in calling on the Government to:

- adopt legislation mirroring the EU's revised Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, to prevent chronic pollution threatening public and environmental health;
- ban the use of recognised dangerous 'forever' chemicals as quickly as possible;
- Urge a national investment programme to modernise sewage and highway drainage infrastructure - including storage, treatment, and overflow controls - with priority given to areas serving York and the Rivers Ouse and Foss;
- Request implementation of local pollution reduction measures, such as installing upstream buffer zones, "first-flush" stormwater capture, and retrofitting sewage systems to reduce raw discharge events, while monitoring improvements through better reporting;
- Support and require the Environment Agency to more effectively monitor, understand and prevent water pollution and respond to incidents quickly;
- Develop a fit-for purpose chemical assessment and management system.
- Council further resolves to support AQuA and Ecomix in publicising their local efforts to increase public awareness of the water pollution challenge, and to share guidance on how residents can take small decisions to positively contribute to reducing pollution of our waterways.

14.3 – Enhancing the Benefits of Devolution for York

This motion was moved by Councillor Baxter and seconded by Councillor Whitcroft.

In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders an amendment (as set out in the supplementary agenda pack) was moved by Councillor Hollyer and seconded by Councillor Hook.

Following a number of speakers, the amendment was put to the vote and lost.

The original motion as set out below was then voted on and carried.

Resolved –

Council notes:

- the establishment of York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority in 2023, marking the long-awaited start of meaningful devolution of funding and powers to our region;
- after years of lagging behind devolution deals in other parts of the country, new funding of over £23m has already been approved for York, including:
 - £4.5m through the Brownfield Housing Fund to progress schemes delivering affordable housing, including at Ordnance Lane and Lowfield Green;
 - Almost £3m through the Net Zero Fund for renewable energy schemes such as those at Alex Lyon House and Honeysuckle House;
 - £9.57m to schemes and initiatives, including affordable housing delivered by businesses and other organisations in the city;
- the York and North Yorkshire Mayoral Investment Fund, worth £540m over 30 years, was unlocked through devolution, bringing lasting investment certainty to the region.

Council further notes the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, brought forward by the Labour Government, paves the way for the biggest devolution of powers and funding in a generation through the creation of Strategic Authorities;

The Bill sets out a clear, long-term pipeline for regional investment, ending the region-by-region deal-making of the past and unlocking further opportunities for York and North Yorkshire.

Council believes:

- the Government's renewed focus on devolution represents a real shift of power and investment from Westminster that will help rebuild local economies and strengthen communities;
- local leaders know best what their regions need, and that bringing decision-making closer to York will help deliver better, faster outcomes for residents and businesses.

Council resolves to:

- Give its endorsement to greater devolution for York and North Yorkshire in the form of Strategic Authorities;

- Request the Council Leader joins Mayor Skaith and the Leader of North Yorkshire Council in writing to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, backing the Government's plans for greater devolution in England and making the case for expanded powers and investment for our Combined Authority area under future arrangements, such as the ability to raise a tourist levy and to introduce a registration and management scheme for short term holiday lets in constituent parts of the Combined Authority's area;
- Support the Mayor's and Council Leaders' shared ambition to progress to Established Mayoral Strategic Authority status at pace, to unlock further devolved decision making and funding to benefit York; and
- Request an all councillor briefing on Strategic Authorities so Members are fully informed on the opportunities the new authorities will bring.

(Councillor Baxter declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item on the basis that her partner was employed by York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority.)

63. Urgent Business

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

Councillor Martin Rowley BEM
LORD MAYOR OF YORK

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and concluded at 9.53 pm)