

Meeting:	Combined Executive Member Decision Session – Executive Member for Policy, Strategy and Partnerships
Meeting date:	3 February 2026
Report of:	Garry Taylor, Director of City Development
Portfolio of:	Cllr Claire Douglas, Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Policy, Strategy and Partnerships

Decision Report: The York Prospectus – Economic and Social Value Analysis Report

Subject of Report

1. On 4 November 2025, Executive approved *York's Prospectus – Going for Good Growth with Innovation, Culture and Heritage at Our Heart* (the prospectus).
2. The prospectus sets out York's response to the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority's (YNYCA) Local Growth Plan, detailing opportunities that are designed to have a significant local and regional benefit, improving opportunity for York's residents and businesses.
3. The prospectus signals a clear commitment that in collaboration with YNYCA, public, private and community partners, we can deliver multiple benefits for residents and businesses, attracting additional investment into economic and housing growth, clean energy, improved environment, digital and transport infrastructure.
4. To ensure the projects identified within the prospectus provide long-term value to the city, City of York Council commissioned Sewells Advisory [Who are we - Sewell Group](#), an independent consultancy, to conduct an assessment of economic and social value analysis.

5. The Executive report of 4 November 2025 committed Officers to bring a report to an Executive Member Decision Session once this analysis had been completed.
6. **Annex A** is the independent analysis of the economic and social value of each project. It identifies significant economic and social value across the projects in the prospectus (£12.1bn combined social, economic and environmental impact) noting duplication has been removed in the overall figures.
7. This report invites the Leader to review the analysis and approve it as a key part of the prospectus, to inform future business cases and prioritisation.

Benefits and Challenges

8. The economic and social value analysis provides a clear review of the broad value of each project listed in the prospectus. It provides confidence that the projects included in the prospectus deliver both economic opportunity to York's residents and businesses and also ensure wider societal benefit is secured.
9. This analysis will be instrumental in making the case for investment to YNYCA, the Government and other potential investors. For example, the analysis can be used to make the case that the projects identified in the prospectus align with the YNYCA's Growth Plan ambition to be driven by inclusive growth.
10. A challenge of adopting this analysis is there will be a requirement to keep it regularly updated. Due to the embryonic stage of some of the projects identified in the prospectus, a range of assumptions have been used where required. Consequently, as these projects move further toward delivery and assumptions are validated with evidence, the analysis may change. This will alter the economic and social return on investment identified.
11. Further, the prospectus is a 'live' document. As projects are completed, they will move out of the prospectus and replaced with other opportunities in the city. Analysis will be required for the new projects.
12. The proposed cost of the projects will change, and likely increase, due to inflationary and supply chain costs. This analysis

represents a moment in time, and more in-depth and evidenced analysis will be required to complete HM Treasury ready business cases. It does however help provide confidence that the council and partners are focused on the right areas and provides a basis for prioritisation.

13. The assessment has been based on assumptions derived from similar projects with sources listed. This means it is not yet possible to completely verify the analysis with further work through the business case to test assumptions and confirm the analysis. It does however provide a strong starting position and sets out a clear benefit to the projects included in the prospectus.

Policy Basis for Decision

14. York's Prospectus has been designed to steer delivery over decades. It embeds the vision articulated in York 2032, which is the 10-Year City plan, and acts as a strategic delivery plan to meet the ambitions described in York 2032.
15. It is informed by the city's 10-year strategies (Joint Health and Wellbeing 2022-2032, Economic Growth 2022-2032, Climate Change 2022-2032), the Council Plan 2023-2027, and is aligned to national policy such as the Industrial Strategy, Get Britain Working, and 10 Year NHS Plan, together with aligning to regional policy set out in the YNYCA Local Growth Plan.
16. York 2032, York's 10-Year City Plan vision, was co-designed with city partners and states that York will be "a vibrant, prosperous, welcoming and sustainable city, where everyone can share and take pride in its success."
17. The Council Plan 2023-2027 takes a step towards the 10-Year Plan, by setting out a vision and series of actions that would "establish the conditions to make the city of York a healthier, fairer, more affordable, more sustainable and more accessible place, where everyone feels valued, creating more regional opportunities to help today's residents and benefit future generations."
18. The prospectus focuses on delivering EACH, the four core commitments:
 - Equalities: the proposals provide opportunity for all, with many targeting areas of deprivation

- **Affordability:** More affordable housing will be delivered both by Unlocking the Local Plan and developing a new pipeline of the next Housing Delivery Programme. Active travel and bus projects will help people afford to travel to work or education, and more well-paid jobs in the city will contribute to higher disposable household incomes.

In addition, investment secured by the prospectus will set an expectation that the Social Value Outcome framework is activated through procurement, meaning the investment will benefit the city's most deprived communities.

- **Climate:** enhancing the environment and delivering greater sustainability measures, including an ambition to be the UK's first net exporter of renewable energy are included in the prospectus. Regeneration, transport and housing schemes will embed sustainability principles from the outset.
- **Health:** All the proposals contribute to reducing health inequalities through providing more and better jobs, more affordable safe housing and greater social connections, with Health in All Policies included in the design principles. Reducing dependency on secondary care and preventing people from living in poor health is a key outcome of the prospectus.

19. The economic and social value analysis for the prospectus reinforces the benefits of the projects contained within the prospectus. In line with HM Treasury's Green Book Guidance, the methodology draws on a recognisable social value evaluation model, LOOP, to quantify the social, environmental and economic return on investment generated by the projects, together with the National TOM Framework (Theme, Outcomes, Measures).
20. The analysis also aligns to the ambition of the Council to consider social value more broadly in its interaction with the city. The Council recognises that extractive economic policies do not provide long-term benefit to the city. Social value analysis can support this position by identifying how Council and partner projects provide societal return on investment, prioritising resource to deliver more for the city.

Financial Strategy Implications

21. Delivering York's Growth Ambitions set out in the prospectus will be funded through investment from bodies external to CYC (for example YNYCA, government departments, private and public sector partners, etc.). This means delivery is predicated on identifying and securing this external investment. Should this investment not be secured, then the proposals outlined in the York Prospectus will not be delivered.
22. All figures are indicative and as yet none of the figures are committed. The total ask (indicative capital requirement) included in the report is the ask from the council to deliver the project, so the additionality the council will attract to progress the project. In some cases, this will be distributed on to partners to deliver (for example the Cordukes Centre is led by York St John University). It might not in all cases represent the totality of the capital ask which will be secured through investment discussions with the private sector.
23. The benefits shown are the return on the council funding ask, with the full business case then exploring the totality of the capital required and the benefits to both the council, any additional public funded grants, and private sector investors. This means the full business case is anticipated to show a different return for the whole city, dependent on the totality of capital ask once better understood. For the purposes of the report, it has not always been possible to include the total capital ask due to the embryonic nature of some of the projects, however it is a mixed picture and the report makes clear where information is assumptive (shown in red) or based on existing business cases or profiling (shown in green).
24. From the independent assessment it is clear there is untapped potential across the city. By working collectively with city partners, there is an incredible opportunity to drive up economic growth, increase the number of affordable homes, and establish the conditions to create a healthier, more accessible, and sustainable city.
25. There are no additional financial implications arising from the additional economic and social value analysis that has been conducted.

Recommendation and Reasons

26. *To approve the economic and social value analysis of the York prospectus projects for inclusion as an accompanying document to the prospectus*

Reason: To provide a detailed overview of the economic and social value that the projects will bring to York's residents and businesses, highlighting their broad value to potential investors (YNYCA, Government, private investors).

Background

27. York's Prospectus aims to deliver approximately 3,000 more homes and over 750 more jobs, together with enhanced health and community services, world-class innovation, culture and heritage and accessible and inclusive adult skills pathways inspired by the research and innovation taking place across the city.
28. York's Prospectus is a continuation of the Mayoral Pipeline of Proposals, approved by the Leader in July 2024. It has been developed to respond to the Local Growth Plan, recently approved by YNYCA, which is in response to the national Industrial Strategy.
29. The Corporate Scrutiny Committee discussed York's Prospectus in September 2025, suggesting several amendments now contained within the prospectus whilst also reflecting the need for clarity around economic and social value of the projects identified in the prospectus to enable prioritisation to take place.
30. The projects within the prospectus are the economic, skills, transport, housing, and environmental projects that will collectively make the biggest impact to the quality of life for residents, improving health and reducing inequalities.
31. The economic and social value analysis (**Annex A**) of the prospectus follows the approval of the York Prospectus at the meeting of Executive on 4 November 2025.
32. The analysis has been conducted by Sewells Advisory, [Who are we - Sewell Group](#), an independent consultancy, commissioned by

the council to conduct an assessment of economic and social value analysis.

33. The methodology used in the analysis follows the below process:
 - a) Project review and data collection – a comprehensive review of the existing data and identifying any gaps
 - b) Evidence based assumptions – where data is unavailable assumptions are derived from comparable initiatives and presented as “red” assumptions which would need to be validated through more detailed business case development and for now, draw on comparable initiatives.
 - c) Mapping to strategic outcomes – outcomes are linked to the EACH framework to ensure the social economic and environmental impacts are understood in line with local and national priorities
 - d) Quantification of social value – LOOP translates inputs and outcomes into monetary and non-monetary social value metrics, including wider community benefits and employment benefits including construction and operational phases
 - e) Lifecycle assessment – analysis spans 25 years (October 2025 to October 2050) capturing the full lifecycle benefits of each investment.
 - f) Reporting – the report has been reviewed to ensure consistency and alignment with both LOOP and TOM.
34. The social value was assessed against the EACH commitments to see how well the project contributes to one or more of these priorities.
35. The analysis in Annex A will be a key tool for informing discussions with YNYCA, to demonstrate alignment to the Local Growth Plan and regional social and economic benefits. This will be critical to unlocking future investment in the city.
36. The York Prospectus will take decades to deliver and as a result, it is the Council Plan priorities of the day, which will inform the design principles of projects as following investment, they move from proposals through into delivery. The economic, social and environmental analysis in Annex A is an objective perspective on the potential value of each project. However, once the proposal moves into delivery there will be opportunity to rebalance different aspects, for example putting greater emphasis of the

environmental benefits, the social value or the economic opportunity to align with the Council Plan's priorities.

Consultation Analysis

37. The council commissioned the economic and social value analysis with information on each project provided where possible from partners or officers, providing an evidence base for analysis. However, the analysis was conducted independently of the council and partners and has been developed from a series of published assumptions and a supporting evidence base.
38. Relevant city partners were approached with the independent analysis to give opportunity for comment and reflection about the assumptions made to derive the value.
39. The prospectus itself was co-designed with officers from across the council. It was initially informed by the Mayoral Pipeline of Proposals which Scrutiny Committees were consulted on in 2024, together with discussion with key partners. The proposals were presented to the Mayoral Combined Authority in December 2024 for their consideration for inclusion in the Local Growth Plan as it developed. It was discussed with several partners who contributed their own aspirations, including during City Leader events in January, April and June 2025.

Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

40. The Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Policy, Strategy and Partnerships is invited to:

Approve the economic and social value analysis – this would provide an evidence base that can accompany the prospectus as it is presented to third parties, support investment discussions, inform prioritisation and support detailed business case development.

Or

Reject the economic and social value analysis – the prospectus would continue to be used by the City of York Council following its approval at Executive however it would lack a detailed evidential base that could be used to make both an economic and social case for investment in York, and provide the basis to further

explore the assumptions through detailed business case development.

Organisational Impact and Implications

Financial - This report outlines the ambition for the city, with a number of very complex, high value potential projects outlined in the annex to the report. There are no immediate financial implications for the Council because there is an assumption that external funding will be secured to deliver on this ambition. This external funding will therefore need to cover all the costs to the Council, including the finance, procurement and legal costs associated with what is a wide range of very significant projects. Should external funding not be secured, or if it was not able to fund delivery costs such as support services, then the scheme would not be able to progress. We are unable to accept funding that would ultimately increase the Council's running costs.

Human Resources (HR) - There are no HR implications contained within this report.

Legal - Any works, supplies of goods and/or services relevant to the projects within the Prospectus must be commissioned in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and (where applicable) the Procurement Act 2023. Any external grant funding for the projects detailed within the Prospectus must be compliant with the Subsidy Control Act 2022. All contracts and grant funding terms and conditions will require the advice and input of Legal Services.

Procurement- Whilst there are no direct procurement implications relating to report itself, procurement will be a main tool used to deliver some of the upcoming priorities through contracts. Should any priorities require procurement, all works and/or services must be procured via a compliant, open, transparent, and fair process in accordance with the council's Contract Procedure Rules and where applicable, the Procurement Act 2023. Further advice regarding the procurement process and development of procurement strategies must be sought from the Commercial Procurement team.

Health and Wellbeing - The wide range of schemes evaluated in this report demonstrate significant potential economic value for the city, and social value as measured by social and environmental metrics also shows positive net impacts which should benefit public health.

Environment and Climate - To meet our climate change ambitions and support sustainable growth, it is crucial that we decouple economic growth and greenhouse gas emissions. The prospectus proposes priority projects that support this aim and the wider climate change ambitions for the city.” The prospectus supports the ambitions of the York Climate Change Strategy, specifically objectives 2.3 Move away from fossil fuel heating systems, 3.2 Increase uptake of active travel and public transport, 5.3 Grow the green economy, 7.1 Increase renewable energy generation.”

Affordability - The prospectus reflects activity to improve affordability in the city for residents and is therefore a positive development for the city.

Equalities and Human Rights - The equalities impacts are assessed within the EIA published with the Executive report in November 2025.

Data Protection and Privacy - The data protection impact assessment (DPIAs) screening questions were completed for the recommendations and options in this report and as there is no personal, special categories or criminal offence data being processed to set these out, there is no requirement to complete a DPIA at this time. However, this will be reviewed following the approved recommendations and options from this report and a DPIA completed if required.

Communications - The delivery of the York prospectus will be supported by the proposed multi-agency joint communications approach, set out within the council’s draft communications strategy 2025-27. This seeks to focus the joint communications resource of key partners across the city to support the issues of highest priority citywide. The prospectus helps to inform this programme. The council’s communications team will continue to work alongside communications colleagues from the combined authority to ensure a coordinated approach to key projects, as appropriate.

Economy - The prospectus sets out a bold and ambitious pipeline of transformative projects and programmes for the City, that through collaborative action and investment with partners including the mayoral Combined Authority and government, will play a crucial role in helping York to grow and develop in a way that optimises benefits, minimises impacts and best meets the needs of our communities. The collegiate approach to the development of the prospectus is particularly welcomed, and its place in helping to shape our economic growth and support our most marginalised and deprived communities is warmly anticipated.

Risks and Mitigations

- **Timeliness:** if the analysis is not regularly updated to reflect the latest position of projects or inflationary pressures, it would no longer be a useful summary of social or economic benefits. Mitigation will be through regular review processes.
- **Robust delivery:** the economic and social return on investment identified in the analysis might not be realised. Whilst the base return will shift as projects are advanced, project outcomes will be defined and developed in accordance with analysis to provide a consistent and equitable approach to understanding benefits and opportunities.
- **Benefit inflation:** there is a risk that the value of the benefits identified in the analysis are inflated. This is partially as a result of the number of unverified assumptions, and partially due to missing or unknown information that will reduce the value. It is recognised that the analysis is an independent verification of the benefits, and that details may vary as more robust business cases, based on the Green Book, are developed. However, for the purposes of early discussions and investment negotiations, there is sufficient information to identify those projects that are of interest.
- **Financial/funding:** The potential economic and social value identified for each project should not be considered as an actual or verified value until further more detailed business case development has taken place. The council has made clear that investment decisions are not expected to be made on the basis of Annex A, rather it should be used to direct further discussions.
- **Assumptions:** have been used to assess the economic or social value as noted in Annex A. For some projects, the assumptions can outweigh the verified information and there is a risk decisions are made on an assumptive evidence base. The analysis has made clear where the assumptive evidence is used, and it is expected this information will be tested and verified through detailed business case development.
- **Expectations:** There is no suggestion that any of the projects will be delivered without further investment from the private or public sector.

With this in mind, the council will be clear that although there is significant untapped potential in the city, it will remain locked without considerable and sustained investment.

Wards Impacted

41. All Wards.

Contact details

For further information please contact the authors of this Decision Report.

Author

Name:	Claire Foale
Job Title:	Chief Strategy Officer
Service Area:	City Development
Report approved:	Yes
Date:	23/01/2026

Co-author

Name:	Samuel Blyth
Job Title:	Head of City Strategy and Corporate Programmes
Service Area:	Strategy
Report approved:	Yes
Date:	23/01/2026

Background papers

Executive approval of York's Prospectus – Going for Good Growth with Innovation, Culture and Heritage at Our Heart [Agenda for Executive on Tuesday, 4 November 2025, 4.30 pm](#), item 15

English Devolution White Paper : [English Devolution White Paper - GOV.UK](#)

The UK's Industrial Strategy [*Invest 2035: the UK's modern industrial strategy* - GOV.UK](#)

Regional Economic Framework: [Economic Framework: Guiding Prosperity in York & North Yorkshire](#)

Combined Authority approve Local Growth Priorities: [241002-YNYCA-Item-5-York-and-North-Yorkshire-Combined-Authority-Strategic-Growth-Priorities.pdf](#)

Combined Authority approve The Local Growth Plan [Agenda for York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority on Friday, 18th July, 2025, 3.00 pm - York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority > Mayoral Combined Authority](#) item 8

Council approves 10-Year Plan (York 2032) and Strategy and Policy Framework [Agenda for Council on Thursday, 15 December 2022, 6.30 pm \(york.gov.uk\)](#) item 36

Council approves the Council Plan 2023-2027 [Agenda for Council on Thursday, 21 September 2023, 6.30 pm \(york.gov.uk\)](#) item 6

Executive approves updated Strategy and Policy Framework and the Local Transport Strategy 2024-2040 [Agenda for Executive on Thursday, 18 July 2024, 4.30 pm](#) item 16:

Leader approves Mayoral Pipeline of Proposals: [Agenda for Decision Session - Executive Leader, Policy, Strategy and Partnerships on Wednesday, 17 July 2024, 10.00 am](#) item 5

Scrutiny reviews York's response to the Local Growth Plan [Agenda for Economy, Place, Access and Transport Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 10 December 2024, 5.30 pm](#) item 5

Scrutiny reviews York's Prospectus [Agenda for Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 8 September 2025, 5:30pm](#) item 6

Abbreviations

YNYCA – York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority

Annexes

Annex A: Economic and Social Value Analysis of the York Prospectus