

Place Scrutiny Committee

16 June 2026

Independent review of City of York Council community Car Park and on-street charges, in response to petitions

Summary

1. This report invites Place Scrutiny Committee to review the independent review of car parking charges produced by Arup. This review was initiated following petitions submitted by traders and residents under the Traffic Management Act 2004 (right to challenge).
2. The independent review is designed to test whether the increase in car parking charges aligns to existing council policy, and what the impact of the increase is to the residents and businesses in different areas.
3. Feedback from Scrutiny Committee Members will inform an Executive decision later in 2026 – to consider whether the car parking charges in local community areas should be amended.

Background

Petitions and Right to Review Parking Policy

4. In June and July 2025, petitions were received about the changes in parking prices at Bishopthorpe Road, Micklegate, Heworth and The Groves - calling for an independent review of parking charges under the Statutory Guidance - Right to challenge parking policies, Traffic Management Act 2004: Network Management Duty Guidance.
5. Residents, and traders, had identified several challenges following the increased parking charges which, petitioners believed was aligned to a decrease footfall or reduction of spend in community shopping areas.
6. Petitions received by the council were:
 - Bishopthorpe Road Traders wrote to the Executive Member referencing an 8,000-signature petition.

- Micklegate Traders raised concerns and submitted a petition about changes in parking prices. There were over 375 signatories.
- Traders and residents at The Groves challenged parking charges and submitted a petition with a request for a complete TRO review. There were over 745 signatories.
- A petition from Heworth for East Parade Carpark was received with 409 signatories.

7. The petitions requested a review of parking prices under the Traffic Management Act 2004 and in accordance with the Network Management Duty Guidance (2022) specifically the section relating to the Right to Challenge Parking Policy. The Statutory Guidance can be found here:
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7514cc40f0b6397f35d851/150305 - Guidance on Parking Reviews FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7514cc40f0b6397f35d851/150305_-_Guidance_on_Parking_Reviews_FINAL.pdf).

8. Key elements are:

The Traffic Management Act 2004 imposes an explicit duty on local authorities to manage their network so as to reduce congestion and disruption, and provides additional powers to do with parking. As a part of this Network Management Duty, local authorities need to develop parking strategies (covering on- and off-street parking) that are linked to local objectives and circumstances. Strategies need to take account of planning policies and transport powers as well as consider the needs of all road users in the area, the appropriate scale and type of provision, the balance between short and long term provision and the level of charges. However, parking strategies cannot simply be about restricting parking. They need to meet the best interests of road users, communities and businesses. Inappropriate parking rules, over-zealous enforcement and high parking charges drive people out of town centres, push up the cost of living, harm local shops and make it harder for people to park responsibly and go about their everyday lives.

9. As a result of these petitions, and in line with the statutory process described above, the City of York Council commissioned independent consultants Arup to conduct a review to determine the impact on residents and traders in the four shopping areas of the petitions.
10. Initially the council had planned to review both the impact of the car park and on-street charging in the petitioned areas (in line with the statutory guidance), and in tandem, the interventions that could mitigate

the impact whilst still meeting the policies set out in the Local Transport Strategy. However, it became clear during the process to commission an independent consultant to conduct the review, that the priority was statutory process first, and any follow-up consultation to explore interventions to prompt modal shift would need to follow, if appropriate to do so.

11. An explanation setting out how the review and process around it complies with the Traffic Management Act 2004 is in **Annex A**.
12. Proposals to mitigate the impact of car park and on-street charging increases presented by traders and residents are listed in **Annex B**. This is collated from the independent review conducted by Arup set out in the area's specific reports prepared by Arup (**Annexes C1 to C4**).
13. **Annex C** sets out the recommendations of the independent review into York's car parking charging policy and the extent to which it supports or detracts from York's strategies and policies, described below.

The review

14. Following the Executive meeting on 3 June 2025, a consultation and engagement plan was prepared to meet the statutory requirements of the Traffic Management Act right to challenge, combined with the opportunity to explore possible transport interventions in the city centre and each of the community shopping areas – aiming to mitigate any potential negative impacts arising from the increased parking charges.
15. In July 2025, petitioners requested an independent review, and an invitation to Scrutiny to review feedback and recommendations. This was taken forward through both the commissioning of Arup to conduct the independent review, and this report to Scrutiny.
16. Car parking transaction and income data is published quarterly within the council's finance Monitor report. An up-to-date revenue report is in **Annex D**.
17. The feedback from the review, together with the data, are presented for Scrutiny in this report. This will then inform the recommendations to be considered by the Executive.
18. During the commissioning process to identify and brief an independent consultant, it became apparent that a wide consultation exercise would

reduce the focus on the statutory process. As a result, the consultation plan was pared back to only focus on the petitioned areas and the requirements set out in the Traffic Management Act and associated guidance, with any further consultation taking place at a later date, should the recommendations of the independent review suggest it.

19. The consultation element of the independent review took place over seven weeks from December 2025 to February 2026. A targeted consultation initially launched for three areas: Bishopthorpe Road, Micklegate and The Groves as these areas had submitted formal Right to Challenge petitions on car park charges. The review was expanded to include Heworth in January 2026 to respond to the petition submitted by the local community here. The consultation only focuses on car park and on-street parking prices and the impact of these – at this stage it cannot bring in additional views or suggestions for other outcomes that would potentially increase footfall in these areas to mitigate any impacts.
20. A separate workshop, facilitated by York BID, involved only city centre businesses and was held as part of the budget consultation. This feedback is being used to inform the Movement and Place Plan for the city centre (known as Reimagining York) and is separate to the independent Arup review at this stage. Although many of the possible recommendations identified by city centre traders are similar to those put forward by traders and residents in Annex B.
21. The independent review by Arup is in line with the guidance on this type of statutory review and follows advice from the Director of Governance. A briefing was provided to Executive and the review was tested against the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) guidance to ensure the review was compliant (**Annex A**).
22. Officers are aware in one of the petitioned areas, Bishopthorpe Road, a separate independent survey was conducted. This does not form part of the independent review conducted by Arup - although it will invariably cover similar themes.
23. The independent review was delivered by independent consultants Arup, with the scope set out below: Arup is undertaking an independent review of car parking charges in four areas of the city. Traders and residents in Bishopthorpe Road, Micklegate, Heworth and The Groves have initiated a challenge to parking charges through The Right to Challenge Parking Policies Statutory Guidance under the Traffic

Management Act 2004. This follows the Council's decision to increase charges for the local, council owned, car parking and on street parking. On completion of the review, the Council will publish the independent review and details of when it will be considered. The outcome of the decision will be published via the council website.

24. The review by its nature has inbuilt limitations. It is in response to the Traffic Management Act right to challenge and only covers the petitioned areas. It doesn't explore typical transport choices or the impact of charging on different modal use (such as cyclists or frequent bus users). It doesn't test sample size against population size or demographics. Nor does it explore recommendations outside of the transport infrastructure. As a result, it should NOT be considered a city-wide carparking review and instead be recognised as constrained to representing the feedback of mainly car-users both within the petitioned areas and visiting the petitioned areas.

The policy position

25. The independent review had to determine whether increased car park charging is aligned to the policy position.
26. In 2022, residents and businesses were consulted on 10-year strategies designed to guide city development and future decisions. The 10-year strategies were adopted by Council in December 2022 and are focused on economy, the environment (climate change) and health and wellbeing. City partners drew on the ambitions set in the 10-year strategies to co-design a vision for the city - *by 2032, York will be a vibrant, prosperous, welcoming and sustainable city, where everyone can share and take pride in its success.*

Economic Strategy 2022-2032

27. The Economic Strategy sets an ambition that York will be among the top 25% of local economies in the UK by 2032, in terms of productivity, pay and skills.
28. It recognises there is much that York can do to guide and enable decisions that fit with our city's vision. The role of infrastructure – transport networks, the built environment, education and health systems, digital networks – support York and develop the economy.

29. The greener economy objective sets out a requirement to deliver a green transport network, described as Delivering a Green Transport Network:
- Establish the use of electric vehicles as commonplace, and provide an accessible, fit for purpose superfast charging network in the City
 - Improving public and active transport to employment sites through the Local Transport Plan
 - Increase cycling and active travel to work where appropriate as modes of commuting, along with increased safe cycle parking provision
30. In tandem, the thriving workforce objective sets an ambition to focus on helping small and micro businesses to thrive.

Climate change strategy 2022-2032

31. The Climate Change Strategy set an ambition for the city to be net zero carbon by 2030. Later, in 2024, that ambition was updated to include establishing the conditions to be climate resilient by 2030. Transport emissions targets set in the climate change strategy are to reduce driven miles by 20% by 2030, increase use of public transport by 50% by 2030 and double the amount of active travel by 2030.
32. At the time of publication, emissions from transport represented 27.9% of all emissions (a total of 261,000tCO₂ e a year. Of this, 88% of emissions come from car travel or public transport, with the remaining 12% from freight.)
33. As a result, five objectives were set in the Climate change strategy to address this:
- 3.1 Reduce distances travelled by motorised vehicles. Reduce the overall need for travel by non-sustainable methods
 - 3.2 Increase take-up of active travel. Reduce overall car usage through alternative modes of transport, public transport and car sharing.
 - 3.3 Switch to electric vehicles (EV). Increase the share of vehicles on the road that are electric or hybrid
 - 3.4 Reduce freight emissions. Decrease the overall distance and fuel usage of freight vehicles

3.5 Futureproof infrastructure. Ensure our transport infrastructure can withstand extreme weather events

34. Since 2022, transport emissions as a percentage of total emissions have increased as other areas reduce, while between 2021-2024 transport emissions remained static. Transport remains the second largest contributor to York's city-wide emissions, comprising 34% of total locally derived emissions in 2023. 95% of these emissions can be attributed to car-use. This is largely consistent with the national picture; in 2023, 32% of emissions assigned to local authority areas were attributed to the transport sector. There were no significant changes in emissions transport between 2021 and 2023.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022=2032

35. The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy sets an ambition for All York residents (young, old and future residents) to enjoy happier, healthier, longer lives, proud of their city and living in homes that meet their needs, able to actively participate in their communities, with access to the right support at the right time.
36. It recognises that York's gap in healthy life expectancy between the richest and poorest communities will have to significantly reduce, and proposes a series of ambitions and goals to achieve this
37. Key is the focus on becoming a health generating city, starting good health and wellbeing young and preventing now to avoid later harm. The Local Transport Strategy 2024-2040 recognises this with the focus on reducing car dependency and increase in active travel.
38. In the Local Transport Strategy, the Director of Public Health notes: "One of the greatest single public health interventions any city can make is to prioritise people above cars – very few other actions simultaneously benefit individual, community and planetary health."

Local Transport Strategy 2025-2040

39. The Local Transport Strategy is a key priority of the 10-Year City Plan. Following significant consultation with city partners and residents, it set the expectation that the council would work with the city to develop a

transport system that by 2032, will be inclusive and sustainable, connecting neighbourhoods and communities.

40. The Local Transport Strategy was adopted by Executive in July 2024. It sets out to transform how residents move around the city, leading to a more accessible, healthier and affordable transport network.
41. The Local Transport Strategy's strategic vision is that "*In 2030 York residents will benefit from an accessible, affordable, sustainable and resilient transport network that continues to actively improve health and support a thriving economy for decades to come*". The strategy states that this vision will be met by delivering 10 objectives:
 - support an inclusive, accessible, affordable city;
 - support delivery of the Climate Change Strategy;
 - support delivery of the Economic Strategy;
 - improve health and wellbeing through healthy place shaping;
 - enhance safety and personal security;
 - improve the local environment by reducing air pollution and noise;
 - enhance the reliability of the transport system;
 - protect the city's heritage and enhance public spaces;
 - accommodate the envisaged growth of the city in the most sustainable way; and
 - future-proof our city.
42. It was recognised that the journey to encourage a shift in travel choices is bold and ambitious. It sets us on a path that will potentially lead to some change and disruption, as it encourages residents to consider how they currently move in and around the city and join us on a journey that will improve the quality of life for all residents.

Sustainable travel interventions

43. In 2024, the council also agreed an Implementation Plan to guide delivering the policies within the Local Transport Strategy (<https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/10167/local-transport-strategy-implementation-plan>).
44. To support delivery of the Local Transport Strategy, the Council has invested in bus improvements, the Station Gateway scheme and improved sustainable travel routes. For example:

- £16.5m investment in highways maintenance, including cycle routes and pathways [Highways maintenance plan dedicates £16.5m across York](#)
- York Station improvements, including bus connections and active travel routes [Progress continues on project to transform York Station area](#)
- Consultation on the Rougier Route, aiming to improve bus service times and reliability [Rougier Route consultation launches – a better way through York](#)
- Overnight parking and improved links to transport routes with Park and Ride sites [Major improvements for York’s Park and Ride](#)
- Young people £1 bus fares [Young People’s bus fares reach million ticket milestone](#)
- Extended hours at the Park and Ride sites [Earlier starts, later finishes for York’s Park & Ride](#)

Car park charging

45. In February 2025, and following the Our Big Conversation Budget Consultation, Full Council approved the Budget for 2025/26 which set out increased charges for Council car parks and on-street parking . This was implemented in April 2025 and designed to deliver the policies described in the Local Transport Strategy, whilst supporting the economic, climate change and health and wellbeing strategies.
46. Executive made several recommendations to Full Council in February 2025 for the Budget to change charges for Council car parks and on-street parking, to reflect the public consultation on both the budget and Local Transport Strategy. These recommendations were informed by the extensive evidence base on parking charges as a tool to increase uptake of sustainable forms of transport and reduce traffic congestion. These can be summarised as follows:
- a) To set prices so that a stay of two hours in city centre car parks was more expensive than a family day bus ticket
 - b) To designate Bishopthorpe Road Car Park a City Centre Car Park.
 - c) To increase the discount for Minster Badge Holders for parking from circa 9% to 24%
 - d) To reduce the discount for Resident permit parking for low emission vehicles from circa 50% to 16%
 - e) Aligning Contract Parking with season ticket pricing

- f) To remove the Sunday parking charge exemption applied in Priory Street and on Micklegate
 - g) To remove the half hour payment option from some locations.
47. Following resident and trader representations, Executive approved a reduction in parking charges for community shopping areas in June 2025, pending a review to consider further changes. Executive approved the following adjustments to parking charges, which began coming into effect in late June and early July 2025: At the same time, Executive approved an adjustment to the contract parking permit charges.
- a) Charges in residential and community shopping areas outside the inner ring road were reduced to £3 per hour.
 - b) On-street charges in Micklegate and Priory Street were lowered to the "outside inner ring road" rate of £3 per hour to help local businesses adjust.
 - c) The council removed Friday, Saturday, and event-day premium uplifts for community car parks and on-street areas outside the inner ring road.
 - d) The discount for Minster Badge holders was increased from 24% to 30% of the standard charge.
 - e) The discount for low emission vehicle permits was increased from 16% to 20%.
 - f) Proposed charges for dedicated motorcycle bays were scrapped.
48. In February 2026, as part of the 26/27 budget decision, Full Council approved a further increase in parking charges and noted that through the Budget Consultation some concerns were raised about the cost of car parking and potential impact of footfall on the city centre.
49. As a result, the consultation about parking charges (see below) remained open until final budget decisions were made at full Council. The different pricing structure for community areas and city centre car parking continued, noting the petitions were submitted prior to this and focused on 'community' areas
50. 'Community' areas are used to differentiate the two-tier parking charge regime, with charging either in 'community' areas or in the city centre.
51. A workshop was facilitated by York BID with city centre businesses as part of this budget consultation to better understand any impact resulting from car park charge increases and possible steps to mitigate.

Councillors have committed to continue to engage with businesses on possible mitigations to continue to encourage footfall, whilst reducing car journeys and increasing use of sustainable modes of travel.

52. In February 2026, Council approved the increases to car park charging from April 2026 as part of the 26/27 budget. Increases were limited to a c3% rise for daytime charges across city centre car parks and on-street parking. This meant a Sunday to Thursday one hour charge increased by £0.15 from £4.85 to £5.00. A Friday /Saturday charge increased by £0.20 from £5.30 to £5.50. Evening charges, community car parks, 1st Resident Parking permits and on-street charges outside the inner ring road (including Micklegate) were frozen.
53. The income and expenditure for 2025/26 from car parking is in **Annex D**.
54. Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 requires local authorities to maintain a strict account of income and expenditure from on-street and car park parking, including penalties (PCNs). Any surplus funds must be applied to specific permitted transport and environment related uses, such as parking facilities, road improvements, or public transport.
55. The council spent £17m in 2025/26 on highways and transport services and is planning to spend £20.4m in 2026/27. Car parking income provides a contribution towards this actual and planned expenditure. The relatively high levels of car parking income have allowed the council to have a higher level of spend for Highways and Transport than would otherwise be possible. If car parking income was lower the council would have had to identify savings within highways and transport schemes. For example the council would likely have had to face difficult choices to make transport cuts, such as cutting key subsidised bus services that connect isolated rural communities or not provide evening and weekend, reduced the length of roads receiving winter treatment and reduced the number of non-statutory transport schemes we carry out. An overview of the highways and transport expenditure that parking revenue has supported are in **Annex D**.
56. In its Executive Summary (**Annex C**), Arup identified that “increases in parking charges are a demand-management tool to help achieve wider polity outcomes, helping to reduce congestion and emissions, help fund and encourage the use of sustainable transport, and helping create a city centre that remains accessible and economically resilient during the transition to net zero.”

57. However, Arup also noted that “The consultation feedback shows that changes to parking are felt quickly and acutely by residents and traders, but it also underlines that there are no easy solutions that satisfy the needs of all users. In practice, decisions on parking charges sit within wider trade-offs about how the city manages movement, place and access in line with its prevailing policy.”
58. Based on the consultation feedback and when considering alignment to local policies, Arup made a series of recommendations in **Annex C**. These are in three categories covering fairness and equity, striking the right balance and securing buy-in to a long-term vision.
59. At this stage, for Scrutiny, Arup’s recommendations are presented in full. Prior to Executive decision, these will need to be assessed to further develop and assess possible options. The recommendations presented by Arup do not take into consideration the council’s available powers, relationship with York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (and different transport duties), the capacity for delivery nor the operability of the recommendations.
60. When Executive are presented with the council’s response to this independent review, more information about deliverability will be included to inform an Executive decision. Once the decision is made, it will be several weeks, at least a month, to progress through the necessary statutory processes before the recommendation can be enacted. This could potentially be longer dependent on the approved changes.

Wider economic considerations

61. Since June 2025, consumer confidence globally and nationally—has been significantly impacted by a combination of inflation, geopolitical conflicts, and post-budget fiscal policies. While confidence saw a slight uptick in early summer 2025, it deteriorated in the latter half of the year and into early 2026, leading to reduced discretionary spending.
62. Consumer confidence has a significant impact on hospitality, retail and tourism sectors which typically do best when consumer confidence is high.
63. The monthly Business Intelligence meetings with local business representatives confirmed the below issues affected York’s local

economy at the same time as the rises in carparking charge increases. Disaggregating the impact of increased carparking charges is therefore very difficult given the overall changing and changeable economic picture:

- **Global changes:** The *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development*¹ reports rising trade barriers, specifically US tariff increases, have been a major driver of global economic uncertainty, increasing costs for goods which has reduced confidence. In addition, since 2022 with the conflict in Ukraine and, more recently, conflict in the Middle East, have caused volatility in oil and gas prices, leading to widespread consumer concern regarding inflation, fuel costs, and potential for a, slowed economic growth.
- **National changes:** National Insurance and Living Wage Changes (UK): Increased Employer National Insurance contributions and National Living Wage changes following the 2025 Budget raised business costs, leading to fears of reduced hiring and impacting consumer confidence regarding job security. While the Bank of England² (BoE) maintained rates at 4.25% in June 2025 to manage inflation, high borrowing costs for a prolonged period, paired with falling employment in certain sectors, have contributed to a, "bottleneck" in confidence.
- **Consumer habits:** *The Deloitte Consumer Confidence Tracker*³ reports that the cost of living—particularly in food and essential services— caused consumers to shift towards a change in spending habits such as using discounts and choosing cheaper brands, with a rise in "trading down" to cope with higher costs. By late 2025 and early 2026, discretionary spending on items such as prepared foods, and big-ticket items fell as consumers felt less well-off, despite improvements in some areas like personal finance security. Survey data from early 2026 shows a majority of consumers, particularly in the UK, feel pessimistic about the broader economy, with many planning to reduce discretionary spend in the first quarter of 2026.

¹ [Global economic outlook shifts as trade policy uncertainty weakens growth](#)

² [Bank Rate maintained at 4.25% - June 2025 | Bank of England](#)

³ [The Deloitte Consumer Tracker | Deloitte UK](#)

Local economic data

64. Working with York BID, spend and transaction data from Beauclair has been collated for the city centre. This information is published monthly against three of the petitioned areas and is available via York BID⁴ and the council's Movement and Place data⁵. It shows that overall spend is down, although average transaction data is slightly up. This is likely telling us that less people in the city are on average spending slightly more.
65. The council has complemented spend data with monthly footfall data sourced from BT Active and published this in the monthly Movement and Place data. BT Active use GSI data from mobile phones (anonymised) which is more accurate than the MRI Software cameras, with the cameras often obscured or not operational. (MRI Software is a company specialising in real-time footfall data. MRI Software is used by many local authorities allowing for comparative data: [About - MRI Software | UK](#))
66. BT Active covers the four petitioned areas of Bishopthorpe Road, The Groves, Micklegate and Heworth to provide a different perspective, together with the city centre as the main shopping and destination area for the city.
67. Through 2025 footfall declined slightly in the city centre area, in line with national trends. Footfall at Bishopthorpe Road has been falling throughout the period of data collection, since October 2024, a number of months before the introduction of increased parking charges. In Micklegate, the Groves and Heworth footfall declined slightly at the start of 2025 and has since remained broadly steady. There are also different patterns of visitors to the areas, for example, returning university students create more footfall at different times of the year.
68. The footfall data is from October 2024 and show that on average the decline in footfall has been steadily decreasing since the data was first available. This is consistent with the wider economic considerations above.
69. The aim of this data was to identify the similarities or uniqueness of each area, and whether the two-tier approach of city centre charging and outer ring charging was appropriate. This data is shared with city

⁴ www.theyorkbid.com/york-economic-data-hub/

⁵ [City Centre Movement and Place Pack – From Q2 2025/26 - Dataset - York Open Data](#)

partners, and published monthly: [City Centre Movement and Place Pack – From Q2 2025/26 - Dataset - York Open Data](#)

Sustainable travel data

70. The Council Plan performance framework has several supporting indicators that show how transport choices are changing, including an increase in Park and Ride (P&R) passenger journeys.
71. The latest data for the Transport ‘city-related’ indicators is shown below, noting the impact of different circumstances will affect data (for example, changes to the station are altering transport choices):

Indicator	Previous Years Data	Latest Years Data	DoT 3 Year	DoT 1 Year	Frequency	Data Next Available
P&R Passenger Journeys	3.78m (2024/25)	3.88m (2025/26)	↑	↑	Quarterly	2026/27 data available in June 2027
Local bus passenger journeys originating in the authority area (excluding P&R)	10.05m (2023/24)	10.16m (2024/25)	↑	↑	Quarterly	2025/26 data available in June 2026
Area Wide Traffic Levels (07:00 -19:00) (Excluding A64) from 2009/10 baseline (2.09m)	2.03m (2023/24)	2.03m (2024/25)	→	→	Annual	2025/26 data available in July 2026
Area-Wide Cycle Flow(12 hour) indexed to 2010 Baseline (9,897) (Calendar Year)	97% (2024)	103% (2025)	→	↑	Annual	2026 data available in February 2027
Index of pedestrians walking to and from the City Centre (12 hour in and out combined) from 2009 Baseline (37,278)	101% (2024)	130% (2025)	→	↑	Annual	2026 data available in February 2027
% of customers arriving at York Station by sustainable modes of transport (cycling, walking, taxi or bus - excluding cars, Lift, Motorcycle, Train)	78.7% (2024)	60.8% (2025)	→	↓	Annual	2026 data available in February 2027
Passenger journeys on local bus services per head of population - (DfT measure BUS01f)	70.6 (2023/24)	71.4 (2024/25)	→	↑	Annual	2025/26 data available in February 2027
York Station Usage Estimates (Office of Rail and Road Station Usage Report - Table 1410) (LI 4c)	9.2m (2023/24)	10.5m (2024/25)	↑	↑	Annual	2025/26 data available in February 2027
% of tenants who say car parking is not a problem in their neighbourhood	32% (2024/25)	36% (2025/26)	→	↑	Annual	2026/27 data available in February 2027
% of tenants who say car parking is a major problem in their neighbourhood	35% (2024/25)	32% (2025/26)	→	↓	Annual	2026/27 data available in February 2027
% of tenants who say car parking is a minor problem in their neighbourhood	34% (2024/25)	33% (2025/26)	→	↓	Annual	2026/27 data available in February 2027

The DoT (Direction of Travel) 3 years is calculated on the latest three data points whether they are annual or quarterly. All historic data is available via the Open Data Platform

Feedback from the independent consultation

72. Acting as an independent voice, Arup’s role was to lead a consultation exercise (which ran from 17 December 2025 to 27 February 2026) and provide CYC with unbiased findings, reflecting the needs and concerns of local residents, traders, and the wider community. The survey questions are in **Annex E**. Feedback during the consultation was obtained from the following:
- An online survey
 - Drop-in sessions for members of the public and traders
73. The individual petitioned area’s findings presented in the report (**Annex C1,2,3,4**) are designed to support the council consider a decision on the issue.
74. Sample sizes and engagement in the consultation varied between areas. To promote the consultation, traders were provided with communications materials to engage visitors, information was published online and promoted through social media and printed easy-read version were available.

	Micklegate	Bishopthorpe Road	Heworth	The Groves
Sample size	103 (30 traders / 73 residents)	804 (61 traders / 743 residents/visitors)	53 (6 traders / 47 residents)	56 (10 traders / 46 residents)

75. The feedback from both residents and traders is a recommendation to reduce parking charges, followed by investment in public transport. Active travel was noted as an alternative but by a minority of participants. More frequent bus services such as early morning or late evenings would support shift workers as well as offer greater flexibility for residents.
76. Traders reported a belief that the impact of increased parking charges had resulted in fewer customers who were spending less. The Movement and Place data shows varying degrees of a decline in footfall for the community areas. However, it isn’t possible to disaggregate any impact resulting from increased car park charges from the wider global and national economic challenges. Although spend data is not available for the community areas, the city centre is showing fewer people and fewer transactions through 2025. There was also a concern

that operating businesses was more challenging, with car park charging influencing the businesses workforce and availability of deliveries affected.

77. Traders were asked to provide insight about spend and visits since the parking charges had increased:

	Micklegate	Bishopthorpe Road	Heworth	The Groves
More customers /greater spend	7%	2%	-	-
Fewer customers / greater spend	7%	N/A	17%	-
Fewer customers / lower spend	57%	56%	67%	40%
Don't know / unsure	13%	3%	17%	10%
No change	10%	15%	-	40%
Other	7%	23%	-	10%
Not answered	-	2%	-	-

78. Residents noted that although they use car parks relatively infrequently, the reason for using a car was practicality.

79. Residents shared when they used the car parks to help provide an indication for the demand for parking in that area, demonstrating the difference in community area parking habits. The majority of participants had reduced the frequency of their visits:

	Micklegate	Bishopthorpe Road	Heworth	The Groves
Visited carpark more than once a week	15%	18%	26%	39%
Visited carpark monthly	32%	26%	21%	9%
Visits decreased	79%	79%	70%	57%

80. Free text responses were analysed to understand resident's views on what the council could do to meet the policy position set out in the Local Transport Strategy, to reduce car journeys and improve health and wellbeing:

	Micklegate	Bishopthorpe Road	Heworth	The Groves
Lower prices generally	40%	61%	50%	43%
Cheap or free for short periods	36%	23%	29%	17%
Discounts for residents / business / customers	19%	10%	14%	37%
More frequent buses	22%	45%	44%	13%
More reliable buses	28%	14%	11%	13%
Cheaper bus fayres	28%	12%	N/A	38%

81. Proposals developed by residents and traders, based on their lived experience, have been collated during the independent consultation and are presented in **Annex B**.

Recommendations

82. Following the consultation and feedback from participants, Arup recommended potential mitigations to address the issues identified (Annex C). These mitigations are designed to retain the ambitions set out in the local policies, whilst recognising the issues raised in the consultation.
83. These proposed mitigations are in **Annex C** and are subject to funding being available, together with assessing the deliverability and feasibility of each of the recommendations. The recommendations presented by Arup do not take into consideration the council's available powers, relationship with York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (and different transport duties), the capacity for delivery nor the operability of the recommendations.

Consultation

84. The Council listened to concerns from businesses and residents to inform the approved changes at June 2025's Executive. Representations were also made on the day.

85. Following submission of the four petitions, an independent review of parking charges was launched by the consulting firm Arup in December 2025. Arup were commissioned to conduct an independent survey, inviting residents and traders to consider how the increase in charges had affected their parking habits, to determine whether the policy intention was delivered through the increased charging. The review included a survey (both online and printed) together with focus groups.
86. Although any business or resident in the city could respond to the review, it specifically covered Bishopthorpe Road, Micklegate, Heworth and The Groves. Printed surveys and packs were delivered to trading locations in each of the petition areas.
87. The survey closed on 27 February with 1030 responses (924 residents and 108 business owners). Four workshops were held in each of the areas of the petitions to further explore the issues raised.
88. A separate workshop was held with city centre businesses (and facilitated by York BID) to better understand the impact of the budget recommendations to further increase carpark charging, as part of the 26/27 budget consultation.
89. Scrutiny are invited to review the feedback, data and recommendations – set out in the Independent Review (**Annex C, C1-4**) – to consider any additional recommendations or preferred way forward. This was at the request of the Bishopthorpe Road petitioners. Scrutiny's recommendations will be considered for presentation to Executive for consideration.

Options

90. Members are invited to note the proposals put forward by respondents to the independent review and provide feedback on the independent recommendations (**Annex C**) together with reviewing the individual area reviews (**Annex C1,2,3,4**),

Analysis

91. Feedback from scrutiny is an integral part of the consultation process to inform the Executive report due later in 2026 including whether to recommend amendments to the parking charges, ensuring representation from across the city is included.

Implications

- **Financial** - A summary of the annual (25/26) car parking income and transactions is provided in Annex D. The council monitors and reports parking revenues across the whole estate rather than for individual car parks or streets. Reducing parking charges will have an impact on the council's ability to discharge its statutory duties, financial resilience, and ability to provide a balanced budget (as more funding will need to be allocated to transport and highways from different sources or transport and highway expenditure will have to be reduced). In addition, excluding officer time, the independent review cost £120k (ie. £30k x 4 areas).
- **Human Resources (HR)** There are no HR Implications with the recommendations.
- **Equalities** This report is providing an update on the recommendations from Arup for Scrutiny review, the EIA has not been updated as there are no proposals to change the policy recommended in this report. The EquIA will be updated to support the recommendations to be presented to Executive later in 2026.
- **Legal** - The requirements of the Traffic Management Act 2004 are set out in the body of the report and Annex A sets out how the review and process around it complies with the Act. It is noted that the recommendations presented by Arup do not take into consideration the council's available powers or the position relating to transport duties due to the relationship with York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority. These elements will need to be considered, when producing recommendations for the future Executive report, to ensure compliance with the Council's statutory powers and duties.
- **Property** – No impact
- **Health and Wellbeing** - Reducing the overall number of cars on York's roads reduces traffic congestion and makes the roads safer for pedestrians and cyclists, with a positive impact on reducing air pollution and improving health and wellbeing. Enabling more people to choose to walk, use mobility aids and cycle helps to improve the health of the city's population.
- **Climate** - A council ambition, set out in the Climate Change Strategy, is to reduce driven miles and increase use of sustainable modes of travel. Increased parking charges can contribute to a reduction in driven miles and increase the use of sustainable modes of travel.

Risk Management

92. **Policy** The increase in parking charges has been introduced to support the ambitions set out in the Local Transport Strategy, and to align with the ambitions in the 10-year strategies. This means any changes will need to balance both local policy intention, together with the requirements set out in the Equalities Act, with additional transport interventions designed to support those residents most at risk.
93. **Data** Additional data has been commissioned from BT Active to better understand footfall in the four areas, and the city centre. This data conflicts with the MRI camera data and so is not comparative when looking at national trends. The lack of single source of clear and consistent data risks undermining recommendations, and as a result the council will continue working with the BID and partners to resolve.
94. **Parking charges** Further change to parking charges risks confusion, therefore it is proposed that any changes in price are clearly advertised and communicated with key stakeholders in advance. Advertising will be across targeted social media and in car parks, together with the local media as per the statutory requirement.
95. **Economic impact** There are a wide range of international issues and national policies affecting how much disposable income residents and visitors now have available to spend in the local economy (see above). Declining consumer confidence risks undermining York's many independent high streets with retail and hospitality most at risk. Carpark charging should not be seen as a deterrent to consumer spend, and the council should support local businesses by working with them to identify new ways of attracting businesses to the local offer.

Recommendations

Members are asked to consider

- 1) Providing feedback on the independent parking charges review and recommendations. Reason: to ensure Member feedback is considered as part of the development of the Executive report

Contact Details

Author:

Claire Foale
Chief Strategy Officer

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Garry Taylor
Director of City Development

Report Approved

Date

Wards Affected: Petitions are from the below areas with **All** recommendations likely to cover all areas within the “community” catchment:

Bishopthorpe Road
Micklegate
The Groves
Heworth

For further information please contact the author of the report

Specialist Officers

Patrick Looker, AD Finance
Dave Atkinson, Director of Highways and Regulatory Services
Mike James, Head of Communications and Engagement
Helene Vergereau, Head of Highway Access and Development

Background papers

- Budget Executive [Agenda for Executive on Tuesday, 27 January 2026, 5.30 pm](#) item 193
- Budget Executive [Agenda for Executive on Tuesday, 21 January 2025, 4.30 pm](#) item 77
- Executive approve Economic Growth Strategy 2022-2032 and Climate Change Strategy 2022-2032 [Agenda for Executive on Tuesday, 22 November 2022, 5.30 pm \(york.gov.uk\)](#) item 46
- Executive approve the Local Transport Strategy 2024-2040 [Agenda for Executive on Thursday, 18 July 2024, 4.30 pm](#) item 16

- Local Transport Strategy Implementation Plan
www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/10167/local-transport-strategy-implementation-plan
- Executive approve review of carparking charging [Agenda for Executive on Tuesday, 3 June 2025, 4.30 pm](#) item 108
- Latest carbon emissions report [Agenda for Decision Session - Combined Executive Member Decision Session on Tuesday, 4 November 2025, 10.00 am](#) item 44 (council) item 45 (city)

Statutory Guidance on Right to Challenge Parking Policies

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7514cc40f0b6397f35d851/150305 - Guidance on Parking Reviews FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7514cc40f0b6397f35d851/150305_-_Guidance_on_Parking_Reviews_FINAL.pdf)

Annexes

A - Car park review – compliance to the TMA 2008

B - Resident and Traders proposals to mitigate increased car park charging

C - Arup: Executive Summary: York Right to Challenge car parking price consultation

C.1. - Arup: Micklegate: Right to Challenge car parking price consultation

C.2 - Arup: Bishopthorpe Road: Right to Challenge car parking price consultation

C.3 - Arup: Heworth: Right to Challenge car parking price consultation

C.4. -The Groves: Right to Challenge car parking price consultation

D - Carpark income and transport and highways expenditure

E – Car park review questions