

Meeting	Executive
Date	11 March 2025
Present	Councillors Douglas (Chair), Kilbane (Vice-Chair), Lomas, Pavlovic, Ravilious, Steels-Walshaw and Webb
Officers in Attendance	Debbie Mitchell – Director of Finance Frances Harrison – Head of Legal Martin Kelly - Director of Children, Families and Education Michael Cavan - Head of Children's Resources Michael Jones – Assistant Director of Housing Pauline Stuchfield – Director of Housing and Communities Lindsay Tomlinson - Head of Democratic Governance
In Attendance	Councillor Fenton
Apologies	Councillors Kent

Part A Minute

81. Apologies for Absence (16:32)

Apologies were received from Cllr Kent.

Apologies was also received from Cllr Ayre who attends Executive as a non-voting member and was substituted by Cllr Fenton.

82. Declarations of Interest (16:33)

Members were asked to declare at this point in the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest or other registerable interest they might have in respect of business on the agenda, if they had not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests. None were declared.

83. Minutes (16:33)

Resolved: That the minutes of the Executive meeting held on 21 January 2025 be approved and then signed by the Chair as a correct record.

84. Public Participation (16:34)

It was reported that there had been 5 registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Alison Semmence from York CVS outlined the history of the work undertaken in developing the York Poverty Truth Commission's charter and asked that the Council adopt the charter.

Gwen Swinburn spoke on the proposed changes to the Council's scrutiny functions following the scrutiny review. She welcomed the proposal from scrutiny for three committees and suggested that the new structure start with reviewing a full forward plan, departmental plans and strategies, and forward plans for major procurement.

Kate Parkin stated that the York Poverty Truth Commission's charter would help make York a healthier and safer place. By embedding the charter, she noted that it would build kindness into the Council's work and support the health of those in poverty.

Jamie McPherson spoke about his work as a Poverty Truth Commissioner and the challenges of homelessness. He stated that the York Poverty Truth Commission's charter would help people get the right support.

Flick Williams raised concerns regarding central governments plans to change access to Personal Independent Payments which she said would make some of the poorest people in society poorer, it would make it harder for people who are disabled to get into work, and could lead to 700,000 premature deaths. She asked what the Council's response would be to these proposed changes.

The Executive Leader confirmed she would write to Flick Williams regarding her concerns.

85. Forward Plan (16:51)

Members received and noted details of the items that were on the Forward Plan for the next two Executive meetings at the time the agenda was published.

86. Fostering Framework (16:51)

The Director of Children, Families and Education introduced the report as officers outlined the proposals for a new Fostering Fees Framework. It was confirmed that the proposed changes would make the Council competitive in the foster care market and improve recruitment and retention of foster carers. It was also confirmed that the new framework would better reflect the different level of care provided, as currently 90% of foster carers in York are set at the highest level.

The Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education thanked foster carers for all their work and asked that anyone interested in foster care to get in touch with the Council. He explained that the Council was seeking to improve services for young people and noted that these changes with the additional investment that would be putting into foster care would provide a long term improvement for foster care in York.

Resolved:

- i. To introduce the proposed new skills and fee levels for Foster Carers in York.

Reason: To deliver a framework that is fair and equitable across all foster carers and support children and young people in care.

87. Residential Retrofit – grant funding opportunities to accelerate delivery (17:09)

The Assistant Director for Housing introduced the report, noting the Council's objectives to reducing carbon emissions, reduce poverty, and improve the health of residents in the city. He confirmed that the Council had received two grants to support retrofit work, one of £2 million pound for support in private sector housing and £1.4 million for work on Council housing

which the Council was proposing to include an additional £1 million of funding.

The Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Safer Communities welcomed these successful bids for funding and stated that this was an endorsement of the work the Council was undertaking on retrofitting homes. He noted the importance for retrofit work in supporting people out of poverty, addressing climate change, and developing construction skills in the city.

Resolved:

- i. Delegated authority to the Director of Housing and Communities in consultation with the Director of Finance, and Director of Governance, to accept funding offered by the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero for the Warm Homes: Local Grant programme and to sign the memorandum of understanding to enable delivery of the works;
- ii. Delegated authority to the Director of Housing and Communities in consultation with the Director of Finance, and the Director of Governance, to procure a partner to deliver the Warm Home: Local Grant programme, including entering into the delivery contract with the successfully procured new partner for April 2025 to March 2028 or March 2030 if funding is provided beyond 31 March 2028;
- iii. Delegated authority to the Director of Housing and Communities in consultation with the Director of Finance, and the Director of Governance, to accept funding offered by the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero for the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund programme and to sign the memorandum of understanding to enable delivery of the works;
- iv. Delegated authority to the Director of Housing and Communities in consultation with the Director of Finance, and the Director of Governance, to procure a partner to deliver the Warm Home: Social Housing Fund project, including entering into the delivery contract with the successfully procured new partner for April 2025 to March 2028.

Reason: To deliver the council's ambitions for minimising the

energy bills of those residents facing financial challenges, supporting health and wellbeing, building the local green economy, and retrofit supply chains, and reducing carbon emissions in the city and to ensure the provisions of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 are complied with.

88. Adoption and implementation of the York Poverty Truth Commission's Charter for Organisation Standards (17:24)

The Director of Housing & Communities outlined the work undertaken by the York Poverty Truth Commission and outlined the Charter for Organisational Standards developed by the commission. She noted that these standards would seek to build kindness into the Council's work, policies, and decision making.

The Executive Leader noted that she had took part in the work of the commission as a civic commissioner. She stated that the work to develop the charter had been rewarding and welcomed the opportunity to adopt and embed the proposed standards.

The Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects, Human Rights, Equality and Inclusion explained that embedding empathy and kindness into everything the Council does was something to stive for. She noted that it was important to bring to light these sometimes hidden challenges faced by residents in the city and that when you deliver inclusive work, policies, and decision making it improves what the Council does for everyone.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the work of the York Poverty Truth Commission and the council to date in promoting and implementing the Organisational Standards;
- ii. Formally adopted the Charter for Organisational Standards developed by the York Poverty Truth Commission; and
- iii. Approved a published six-monthly monitoring report for the Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects, Human Rights, Equality and Inclusion.

Reason: To commit to and promote the work of the PTC and secure ongoing delivery and monitoring of the work into the future.

89. Review of the City of York Council Scrutiny Function (17:37)

The Head of Democratic Governance introduced the report and the 12 recommendations which had been considered by the Council's Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee.

The Chair of Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee welcomed the review of scrutiny functions at the Council. He noted that the survey of Councillors showed a need for improvements and that this offered the opportunity to get back to the basics of scrutiny. He welcomed the opportunity for a working group to develop the proposals in the recommendations, noting the need for this to be Councillor owned and Councillor lead. He confirmed that Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee supported the recommendations, outside of recommendation 8 which there was not a consensus on the number of Scrutiny Committees and recommendation 3, which the Committee did not support the move to having named substitutes for meetings.

The Executive Leader agreed with the Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee's suggestions to not adopt recommendation 3. In relation to Recommendation 8 she proposed the Council reduce the number of Councillors on Scrutiny Committees to 9 and to move to 3 Committees, an overarching Scrutiny Committee (including calling-in functions), a Place Committee, and a People Committee (to include Housing). It was proposed these changes take effect at the 2025 Annual General Meeting and be reviewed in 12 months. Finally, she noted that the working group to be established in accordance with recommendation 1 be a cross-party working group.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the work of the Scrutiny Review.

Reason: To seek Full Council's approval for changes to how Scrutiny operates at the Council.

Part B Minute – Recommendations to Council

90. Review of the City of York Council Scrutiny Function (17:37)

The Head of Democratic Governance introduced the report and the 12 recommendations which had been considered by the Council's Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee.

The Chair of Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee welcomed the review of scrutiny functions at the Council. He noted that the survey of Councillors showed a need for improvements and that this offered the opportunity to get back to the basics of scrutiny. He welcomed the opportunity for a working group to develop the proposals in the recommendations, noting the need for this to be Councillor owned and Councillor lead. He confirmed that Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee supported the recommendations, outside of recommendation 8 which there was not a consensus on the number of Scrutiny Committees and recommendation 3, which the Committee did not support the move to having named substitutes for meetings.

The Executive Leader agreed with the Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee's suggestions to not adopt recommendation 3. In relation to Recommendation 8 she proposed the Council reduce the number of Councillors on Scrutiny Committees to 9 and to move to 3 Committees, an overarching Scrutiny Committee (including calling-in functions), a Place Committee, and a People Committee (to include Housing). It was proposed these changes take effect at the 2025 Annual General Meeting and be reviewed in 12 months. Finally, she noted that the working group to be established in accordance with recommendation 1 be a cross-party working group.

Recommended:

- i. That Council endorse the proposed actions as set out in Annex B in respect of Scrutiny Review Report recommendations 1-2, 4-7 and 9-12, noting that a cross-party working group will be established to lead on and oversee the work;
- ii. To recommend that, in respect of recommendation 8 of the Scrutiny Review Report, Full Council resolves to implement a revised Scrutiny structure, comprising an overarching Scrutiny Committee (including calling-in functions) with nine seats, a Place Committee with nine seats, and a People Committee (to include Housing) with nine seats. These changes to take effect at the 2025 Annual General Meeting and will be reviewed in 12 months;
- iii. To recommend to Council that Recommendation 3 of the Scrutiny Review Report is not adopted.

Reason: To seek Full Council's approval for changes to how Scrutiny operates at the Council.

Cllr Douglas, Chair

[The meeting started at 4.32 pm and finished at 5.56 pm].