

Leader and Executive Report to Full Council (November 2025)

Leader of the Council, Councillor Claire Douglas

Our City, Our Community

I would like to start my report by drawing your attention to the tremendously sad loss of one of the most committed City of York Officers I have had the honour of working alongside in my time as a city councillor. Cindy Benton, who sadly passed away in September was a much loved, supremely committed and highly valued member of our CYC Communities Team. Cindy worked for many years in communities across our city, driven by her belief that everyone in our city should have fantastic places to live and thrive and that everyone should have the best opportunities in life. She is and will always be sadly missed by so many colleagues, neighbours, friends and family. This leads me into reflecting on Cindy's legacy in places such as Foxwood, Chapelfields, Osbaldwick and Tang Hall. Cindy epitomised York's strong and unerring sense of pride in our city. Our civic pride, social justice, our people, communities and their resilience during times of challenge and adversity.

It has been a challenging few months in our city. We have seen agitators in our communities attempting to drive division and discord. I am proud to say that York is standing up to this, standing by our neighbours and our communities to say 'fly our flags with respect, pride and patriotism in the right way, on flag poles and not on lampposts'. The flags illegally erected are coming down and I would like to thank the myriad of people, and community groups across our city who have stood by those who have felt or been threatened and targeted by racist and divisive individuals. We have collectively said, these actions are not patriotism, they are not York, and we will not stand for it in our beloved city.

This collective view was epitomised by the We are York community gathering recently held in the city centre. With citizens, city leaders from York's faith groups, civic society, health and education systems, and cross party democratically elected representatives across local and national government, our Lord Mayor and Sheriff, community groups and organisations standing together, in unity against division, intimidation, racism and hate crime.

I was tremendously proud to attend the Two Signal Regiment's Freedom of York Parade and inspection in mid-October. I had the honour of inspecting the regiment alongside the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire and the Lord Mayor of York. Meeting the soldiers who serve our country, and our community was a valuable insight into the personal sacrifice and amazing opportunity that serving in the armed forces

brings. Proud mums, dads, spouses, children and other family members watched on. I thoroughly enjoyed learning about their experiences and challenges around being military families.

We now move into Remembrance month, in this year that marks the 80th Anniversary of the end of World War II. This starts in York with the Remembrance Festival hosted by the York branch of the Royal British Legion and moves through November with our cities Remembrance Sunday Parade and service on 9th November and York City Football Club's Remembrance Fixture against Rochdale FC on 11th November. All of which I will be attending.

I have also attended in the past couple of months the BBC Radio York Make a Difference Awards, Make it York's 10th Anniversary Celebration, Askham Bryan University Centre and College's summer graduation celebration, York Mosque's Open Day and spoken at the York Environment Week event hosted by Friends of the Earth an Audience with local, regional and national representatives and the New Era for Female Entrepreneurs, Insight to Impact Event hosted by the Federation of Small Business and the University of York.

York Central Development Update

We continue to see the York Central development move forward. A very visible element being the lifting of the new Water End foot and cycle bridge into place. The important planning applications for the new Wilton Rise Bridge and York Central Phase 1 will be arriving in the planning system over the coming few months. We are now moving into a pivotal period for the development. It has the opportunity to provide a seismic shift in the opportunity for good quality affordable housing, park, green space and well-paid, good quality jobs for current and future generations of young people in York. But we must work hard together to ensure the new development feels like York and delivers for our citizens. Effective and sustained community building is hugely important, and I urge you to get involved alongside your neighbours, local councillors, MPs and Mayor to make sure York Central reflects the values of our city.

York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority

The Combined Authority continues to move forward at pace with the Mayor's £4million Active Travel Fund approved at the most recent Combined Authority meeting. Both York and North Yorkshire local authorities, through to grass roots community groups will benefit from the fund. We all look forward to seeing it support us all to make walking, cycling and wheeling safer and more enjoyable across our region. We were also honoured to welcome Simon Lightwood MP, Minister for

Roads and Buses to York and North Yorkshire recently to visit York's hugely successful Park and Ride sites and start to work with Mayor David Skaith to investigate and devise a potential model for bus franchising in a rural and urban setting.

Chief Executive Recruitment Update

It has been a tremendously intensive and rewarding couple of months since the recruitment process for the Council's new Chief Executive started in August. The final interviews were completed at the end of October. It was a highly competitive and thorough process with almost 40 initial applications. The final appointment will be considered for approval by Full Council in the Extraordinary Meeting that precedes the regular Full Council meeting on 6th November. Approval of the appointment will then allow the final HR checks and balances to begin, all allowing for the new Chief Executive to start in post at the same time as Ian Floyd, Chief Operating Officer retires.

I'd like to thank everyone; candidates, council officers, city partners, citizen panels, young people, Trade Unions and elected members who participated in the process and truly put the applicants through an extensive and searching interview schedule. This has resulted in a highly competitive, thorough, open and transparent process.

I very much look forward to working alongside the successful candidate as a team, Council Leader and Chief Executive, at this highly important and pivotal period for our city. Working hard for the people of York in our communities, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Delivering for our City

The Executive Member reports that follow are a deep source of pride for me. Showing the result of an awful lot of hard work over the past two and half years from members, officers, citizens and partner organisations. I'd like to thank everyone who has participated in making the programmes, investments, and projects possible. There is no sitting back, nothing is taken for granted, we collectively push our city forward at pace for the benefit of our citizens. Particular highlights of the last few months are:

The launch of the Neighbourhood Caretakers scheme, the opening of the SEND Central hub in Clifton, the launch of the All Age Autism and ADHD Strategy and the Inclusion and Belonging SEND Strategy, the opening of the 24/7 Community Mental Health Hub in Acomb, the ongoing development of the Housing Delivery Programme including Housing Estate Improvements across the city at Glen Lodge, Alex Lyons

House, Honeysuckle House, Bellfarm Flats and the completion of Passivhaus council housing at Duncombe Square on Burton Stone Lane. £4million investment in Park and Ride site improvements and £500k investment in our community parks and play spaces. Please read about all of these and far more below.

Executive Member for Economy and Culture, Councillor Pete Kilbane

Although it is a mere seven weeks since last we met, much has been happening in York.

Earlier today I met with all our fellow UK UNESCO Creative Cities at a roundtable and as we speak, over 150 leaders from the UK screen industries are enjoying the hospitality of our beautiful city having spent the day at the unique UK Film Production Summit.

These are the organisations that brought you the likes of Wallace and Gromit, Adolescence, Bridget Jones, Gladiator, Normal People and The Witcher. They are here as part of the hugely successful BAFTA qualifying Aesthetica International Film Festival which is bigger and better than ever. This is almost entirely down to the private enterprise and effort of our city's creative industries, especially Aesthetica and its founder Cherie Federico. These efforts, combined with a small amount of finance from the public sector and a huge amount of public support, bring fantastic benefits for the whole city.

On Sunday afternoon I look forward to seeing the seven films imagined, written, set, directed and acted by our state secondary schools which premiere as part of the festival. I would urge all Councillors to attend if it was not already sold out.

Since last we met residents across York have been delighted to hear that York is set to benefit from a £1 million investment in York Museums Trust, as part of the Labour Government's £20 million boost for local museums nationwide. This investment provides great reassurance for York Council taxpayers as we all underwrite the success of the Trust.

The £1 million will help York Museums Trust maintain and expand opening hours, strengthen education and outreach programmes, and support local jobs and skills, ensuring that York's unique heritage remains accessible and sustainable for generations to come.

The funding, delivered through the national Museum Renewal Fund, will also help York Museums Trust continue its vital work preserving and celebrating the city's world-renowned cultural heritage - from the Yorkshire Museum and York Castle Museum to York Art Gallery.

This period also saw the launch of the Labour Mayor for York and North Yorkshire's 10-year plan to enable York and North Yorkshire residents to thrive in high quality jobs.

This is a bold 10-year vision to address local employment challenges and seize emerging opportunities – helping people progress in their careers, creating high quality job opportunities and supporting more people into work.

The plan responds to the Labour Government's drive to reform employment support, with a joined-up approach bringing together skills and health to get more people into and able to progress in their work.

It places a strong emphasis on job quality, earnings, progression, support for employers, and prevention of disengagement from work. Several are already underway, such as:

- York and North Yorkshire's Get Britain Working Economic Inactivity Trailblazer;
- Adult Skills Fund – supporting adult learners to gain skills which will lead them to meaningful, sustained, and relevant employment, or enable them to progress to further learning;
- Skills Bootcamps – set to benefit more than 900 learners, the skills bootcamps offer key skills which employers in the region are looking for;
- Skills Innovation Fund - a £2,375,000 grant fund to support skills development in the York and North Yorkshire region over a timeframe of two years, ending in March 2027;
- York and North Yorkshire Careers Hub - bringing together schools, colleges, employers, and apprenticeship providers, making it easier for schools and colleges to improve how they prepare young people for their next steps.

Together, these initiatives form a joined up, ambitious agenda to ensure every resident across York and North Yorkshire can access good work and thrive. Millions of pounds of private investment have been announced in York over the past few weeks. At the same time this Labour administration is laying out an ambitious new Prospectus for growth, with innovation, culture and heritage at the heart of it. We aim to attract billions in private and public sector investment to deliver more affordable housing and more and better paid jobs.

A first of its kind for our city, our Prospectus builds on the 2032 City Plan and focuses on increasing opportunity for York's residents through realising the city's potential. It includes several ambitious projects including major brownfield housing developments that will deliver thousands of much needed affordable homes to the city and improvements to public spaces. It also includes proposals for innovation space and a world leading centre for culture and heritage which leans into the city's strengths.

Our high streets remain busier and more occupied than most across the country. With many exciting developments already underway, including York Central, there is a lot more to look forward to. Making sure all our residents feel the benefits of this growth is a key part of the Prospectus. By attracting investment, building more affordable homes, and improving infrastructure and public spaces, our aim is that residents and businesses will reap the benefits. Plus, with several environmental projects in the Prospectus, it will help us progress towards a sustainable, optimistic future.

Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care, Councillor Lucy Steels-Walshaw

Our focus remains firmly on embedding inclusive, person-centred approaches across York's health and social care landscape. As we continue to navigate challenges from workforce pressures due to rising demand, we retain our commitment to dignity, equity, and co-production.

Adult Social Care Transformation

We are progressing with the implementation of our strengths-based model, ensuring that support is tailored to what matters most to individuals. This includes expanding access to community-led solutions, improving digital inclusion, and refining assessment pathways to reduce delays and unnecessary interventions. Teams are working closely with partners to ensure that adjustments are made based on need, not diagnosis, so that neurodiverse, disabled, and older residents receive the right support at the right time.

This month we were proud to launch the 'York's All-Age Autism and ADHD Strategy 2025/2030', I want to extend a big thank you to everyone who took part to help create this strategy. We are proud that it's shaped by lived experience and sets out clear commitments. As a city we now need to embed this strategy and make it part of our identity.

Safeguarding and Mental Health

The Safeguarding Adults Board launched a new strategy in October, with an emphasis on prevention and multi-agency collaboration.

The second mental health hub opened at Acomb Garth in October - named 'Yor Community Hub'. The mental health hubs provide accessible, non-clinical spaces for early intervention and peer support. These hubs are co-designed with lived experience at their core and will play a vital role in reducing crisis presentations and improving wellbeing. Plans for the third hub are already underway, and I will continue to update on this.

Public Health and Prevention

Our public health team continues to lead on key priorities including smoking cessation, healthy weight, and suicide prevention. It is also working on the health impact of policies that sit outside Public Health, including the recent Smoke Control Area (SCA) consultation. This is a good example of the sort of cross departmental working we are

developing to take well informed decisions - ones that benefit all York residents.

Public Health Teams are working with schools, community groups, and primary care to embed prevention into everyday practice. The 'Live Well York' digital platform continues to offer residents a one-stop resource for local wellbeing services, events, and support networks.

The development of the Neighbourhood Model continues to develop and is very much at the heart of developing partnership working between City of York Council and our health partners, through the York Health and Care Partnership.

This will bring together our Integrated Neighbourhood Teams to move our goals of localised, person-centred support and care forward.

With issues identified early, people can get the support they need in their own communities either at home or closer to where they live, with the people who can offer care and support close to them.

Preparation for Winter

As winter approaches, we are preparing for seasonal pressures across health and care. Our winter wellbeing campaign will focus on flu and covid vaccinations, especially as the eligibility has changed this year. We also have communications prepared and in place around vulnerable residents being supported during adverse weather events.

Finally, I want to thank all staff, carers, volunteers, and residents who continue to shape our services. Your voices are central to our mission and together, we are building a city where everyone is valued and able to access the help and support they need.

Executive Member for Education, Children and Young People,
Councillor Bob Webb

I was so pleased the Deputy Lord Mayor, Cllr. Wells, had the opportunity to open SEND Central in Clifton, her ward. This is our City of York SEND focussed Family Hub and the face of our SEND system to provide support for our children and their families. My thanks go to the Parent Carer Forum in particular for all their work in supporting the launch and running of this great feature of our city's caring offer. This is a great example of this administration's focus on Inclusion and Belonging for all our children.

Other examples include this council's new Inclusion and Belonging Strategy. This is a great piece of work that sets out our vision for supporting children and families with additional needs. Further to this, we've been using our convening power as a Local Authority to bring together representatives from across the school system in York to discuss, learn and plan for Inclusion in our school communities by recently hosting an Inclusion and Belonging Conference. This marries up with the Labour Government's agenda for change in our schools and proves once again that this council is at the forefront of these improvements.

I also attended our first Healthy Schools event in York where we met with several primary schools to support and show appreciation for the work that those schools, staff and children are putting in to improve health and wellbeing in their school settings.

Also helping with the health and learning of our children and young people is the successful rollout of auto-enrolment for those eligible for free school meals. Following the example of other forward looking local authorities, York has worked with the fantastic York-based [‘Fix our Food’](#) to implement a system of auto-enrolment. This has saved families over £21,000 and has led to an additional £60,000 in Pupil Premium funding for our schools. This is a small, but important step in maximising take-up and helping families on affordability.

I would also like to thank our children in care for their pivotal role in the development of a national foster care recruitment video. For a long time, children in care and care leavers have been crying out for an authentic advert that speaks to people about what foster caring is about; this video does this thanks to children's input.

Watch 'The Impact of Fostering' video by following this link:
<https://fostering.york.gov.uk/>

Finally, I want to celebrate the foster carers we have. For the first time I was pleased to join the Children's Services team and the Lord Mayor to welcome longstanding York foster carers to the Mansion House and thank them for their long service. This included people who had been caring for 20, 30 and even 40 years! Between them they had cared for and nurtured hundreds of our children and young people and have made such a positive difference to their lives. We are so proud of them and publicly thank them for their service.

Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency,
Councillor Jenny Kent

Neighbourhood Caretakers

I'm pleased to report two major achievements since September's Full Council – the introduction of our new team of Neighbourhood Caretakers and our once in a generation investment into York's parks.

Our Caretakers team began their work in earnest at the beginning of the month. Walkabouts in Hull Road, Holgate and Westfield have already taken place including ward councillors, public realm staff and representatives from the Communities and Housing teams to identify priority areas and respond to local concerns. They are working hard across the city and making a significant difference to the areas chosen.

I am sure this will increase the pride we feel in our neighbourhoods and encourage us all to look at ways we can build upon work done, to help maintain and improve them. I want to thank Ian Hoults and the public realm teams for their hard work in bringing this manifesto pledge to life. The before and after shots really highlight the difference this is making, and the joined-up work across departments is effective, efficient, and illustrative of genuine One Council working.

Parks Investment and Improvement

Our Parks are special places, and the need for welcoming outdoor space for all was highlighted during covid. Our ambition is to make all our green spaces beautiful, fun, and welcoming for all, and I'm really pleased to report that the Parks Investment Fund was approved at October's Executive Meeting. The main selection criteria were:

- Sites within communities which score higher on Indices of Multiple Deprivation;
- Age and condition of play equipment and projects which address long standing maintenance issues e.g. footpath rebuilding;
- equal lowest rating to support the expansion of Green Flag and where projects have or potential for 3rd party funding contributions.

Scrutiny agreed that the investment, whilst large, could easily be spread thinly across many areas without significant improvement, and schemes were therefore also selected to be of a smaller number but of a minimum spend of around £10,000 - £12,000.

Since budget approval in March, this has moved through two Scrutiny meetings, appraisal of existing equipment, application of scoring, Executive approval and appointment of a Project Manager, which is swift work. Huge thanks to Dave Meigh and congratulations to new Project Manager Kristina Davey, who knows our parks and green spaces well, having worked in the Environment and Communities Team for several years. We are really looking forward to seeing the projects progress, bringing more life to our parks.

Reducing Emissions

Electrification of our vehicle fleet continues apace – now 76% of our fleet under 3.5t, are low emission, with more vehicles awaiting delivery. We are confident that this will be over 90% by early 2026 - really good news for air quality and emissions.

Under our incentives schemes encouraging take up of electric vehicles, York licensed Taxis and Private hire are now 42.5% Ultra Low Emission Vehicles, up from 41.7% last quarter.

Public Protection

Our public protection teams continue to work hard inspecting food venues for health standards and tackling illegal sales of tobacco. Incidents include the seizure of 127 packets of tobacco (including 94 being hidden in the walls of the shop protected by an electromagnet – found by the valiant detection dog) and 23 rolling tobacco pouches in two shops in the last month. One of the shops sold a vape to a child, triggering an investigation by City of York Council (CYC) leading to the identification and seizure of illegal cigarettes afterwards.

Shops continue to sell tobacco products to children; people are asked to report this where they see it. As Bonfire Night approaches, Officers are pleased to report that to date they have not seen illegal fireworks on sale but ask people to also report this where they see it. Officers are continuing the really welcome joint work with the York Bid to renew our Purple Flag status, highlighting the safe and welcoming nighttime economy in York, early next year.

Reducing peak congestion at Hazel Court

Approval was given at October's Executive Meeting for reintroduction of a trial booking system at Hazel Court to smooth the flow of traffic and iron out the peaks that occur at busy times, sometimes causing road congestion and hold ups for residents and businesses. Towthorpe has

not suffered from congestion and will remain open without a booking system.

Expansion of kerb side recycling

CYC and Yorwaste have worked hard to bring in doorstep recycling of tetrapak cartons and toothpaste tubes 5 months ahead of government legislation, which will make life easier for everyone. They can go alongside plastic, tin, glass, foil and plastic food trays in residents' doorstep containers; only paper and card need separating out.

Clean Air

Our air quality team have been considering submissions to the consultation on expanding a Smoke Controlled Area to the whole of York as part of our Air Quality Action Plan 4; currently around 65% of York is already covered. It is important to understand that a Smoke Controlled Zone doesn't mean you can't burn wood, just that if you do burn wood indoors with smoke emitted via a chimney, either the wood needs to be seasoned properly and approved with the 'Burn Better' sign, or that you are burning the wood in a Defra approved appliance.

Wood burning without these safeguards has real implications for our children, especially those with asthma, and our elderly and more vulnerable people. A recent report estimates that 2,500 deaths a year are linked to indoor air pollution, which roughly equates 7 deaths every year in York.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/oct/23/wood-burners-linked-to-2500-deaths-a-year-in-the-uk-analysis-finds>

Flooding

A new Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is out for consultation until 11th January 2026. This hasn't been updated since 2014, and the new draft includes updates on flood alleviation schemes completed since 2015, future risk and management, and the role of CYC, the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water, and other partners, and also actions we can all take at home to help prevent the twin threats from a changing climate of increased flood risk and water scarcity, including de-paving where we can, planting trees and hedges, slowing the flow by installing smart water butts, and installing rainwater harvesting systems if possible. I encourage everyone to read the draft and share it widely; we have a local resilience forum which is vital in times of emergency, and we should share this widely in our wards so that we maintain and build

upon the community support and resilience needed in times of emergency.

<https://www.york.gov.uk/planning-building/local-flood-risk-strategy>

Ousewem

The Defra pilot study on natural flood management techniques upstream along the Swale, Nidd and York is progressing well, with detailed work with landowners and farmers on actions that can be taken such as tree planting, hedgerow repairs and planting and natural dams that can slow the flow downstream in York, reducing flooding. Part of the grant funding includes community input and education, and the team have been consulting widely with schools and community groups on ideas for a series of displays along our city river walk.

Warm healthy homes, lower bills

It was a real pleasure to meet Mrs Valerie Jones with Cllr Pavlovic. Mrs Jones lives in Alex Lyon House and welcomed us to look at the new radiators replacing old storage heaters. She told us that since the new heat pumps and solar pv have been installed, she has no longer needed to use her salbutamol asthma inhaler or asthma medication and is very comfortable. She was also full of praise for all the CYC staff who have worked on the project. Bringing clean energy to York residents is a win for health, a win for lower bills, a win for air quality and a win for reducing our emissions.

This sits across the Housing and Environmental portfolios, and Cllr Pavlovic and I are delighted to continue progress in making our social housing warm, healthy and affordable.

The Retrofit One Stop Shop project – YorEnergy – continues to see good interest in advice on measures to improve energy efficiency and reduce emissions, and connect people with trusted suppliers. They are taking bookings for free tours of the now completed retrofit demonstrator homes and are seeing a steady flow of people interested in taking action in their own homes. <https://www.yorenergy.co.uk/demonstrator-home-tours>

York Environment Festival (YEF)

The Festival will have just drawn to a close by the time this Full council meeting takes place. What a fantastic celebration it has been. YEF has grown from 1 week a few years ago to 6 weeks of events across the city, involving both Universities and the many brilliant people, organisations

and community groups who are working in so many different ways to protect our planet, restore nature and ensure a just transition.

I really enjoyed taking part in the Friends of the Earth panel with Cllrs Douglas and Kilbane, and Rachael Maskell MP; there were some great questions, and I met several young people who were keen to talk afterwards about greater involvement in climate action in our city. I will continue these conversations with the York Climate Commission, which has been a new and welcome part of the festival in many sessions.

If you didn't get a chance to come along, do take a look at what you missed, and come along next year:

<https://yorkenvironmentfestival.org.uk/>.

York is full of creative, caring people and businesses, who work and volunteer to mitigate and adapt to climate change in many different ways, and who are in no doubt that our whole Council commitment to this is absolutely essential, not just for our health and wellbeing now, but for our children's future.

Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects, Human Rights, Equality and Inclusion, Councillor Katie Lomas

Budget Process

Thanks must go to the Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group who have provided useful insights into this year's budget process. Having the input of this group means we can test ideas, generate new ideas and focus on issues that are of particular concern cross party.

This year's budget consultation is starting, and we are keen to hear from businesses and voluntary sector organisations about their views. Our communications team are preparing an engagement series to help everyone understand the budget process, and importantly what the council is and is not responsible for funding.

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which sets out the four years ahead is being reviewed in light of the Government's Fair Funding Review. However, it is unlikely we will have any certainty over our future income until the final settlement in December because the Government is yet to respond to the consultation.

Despite the uncertainty about the final funding settlement, we have a MTFS that's consistent with the Government's consultation. We are now working hard to model how the council's transformation programme will affect our costs and what impact that will have on our Financial Strategy.

Quarter 2 Monitor

The Quarter 2 monitor shows that we continue to project an overspend. Specific work is ongoing in Adult Social Care Services to address overspends. In other departments, some savings have been delayed and these are being worked on to ensure we can bring the budget back in line.

Despite financial challenges, the Performance Monitor shows positive or stable trends, and our Council Plan progress remains positive. This shows the determination and resilience of our council operations despite continuing financial challenges.

Financial Inclusion

The last meeting of the Financial Inclusion Steering Group included a special session with colleagues from Scrutiny for a discussion on the coming changes to benefits. This was a really great discussion, with

input from partners across the city who raised their concerns about impacts and discussed what we can do together to address these.

Household Support Fund 7 has launched and eligible residents will have received a letter to encourage them to claim payments. A communications campaign has also been launched to catch those who have not yet responded and teams across the council are supporting residents to claim.

Anti-Poverty Strategy

Following great engagement with the consultation the city's Anti-Poverty Strategy has been refined, ready for approval. This is an important step for our whole city, bringing together work across the city to address poverty that people are facing here and now. It addresses the impact of poverty in the medium term and works to prevent it in the longer term. Addressing poverty is complex and will require a whole city approach and it is our role as a council to lead and convene partners to work together on it.

The impact of poverty is enormous, for individuals and for society. York is often perceived to be an affluent city, but the reality is very different, with deep inequality that means life expectancy drops by over 10 years between Copmanthorpe and Westfield. Having an overarching strategy to guide work in this important area will enable us to make a real difference now and give direction to the longer-term aim of preventing poverty too.

Human Rights and Equalities Board (HREB)

By the time we meet at Full Council the public meeting of the Board will have happened. This is an important step for us in promoting the work of the Board but also in considering the recommendations coming from the Human Rights City Network Indicator report. Holding a public meeting enables members of the Board to showcase their work and gives a greater profile to Human Rights and Equalities issues across the city.

Recently, we were contacted by researchers from Mahidol University in Bangkok who are developing a model for Human Rights Cities in Thailand. The Council Leader, Deputy Leader and I met with them along with council officers and the Executive of York Human Rights City Network to share with them our experience of working together as a Human Rights City.

Executive Member for Transport, Councillor Kate Ravilious

Park and Ride improvements and Ministerial visit

Park and Ride Plus is on the way!

In October, Executive approved £4.25m of upgrades to our Park and Ride sites, funded from Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding and the Mayoral Combined Authority. The work will include overnight parking provision at Askham Bar and Rawcliffe Park and Rides, opening up Park and Ride as an option for visitors enjoying overnight stays in the city and people using the train for multi-day trips away.

It will also include upgrades of waiting facilities, Changing Places toilets, more EV charging, and opportunity to link to other forms of transport such as car-club cars, e-cycle hire, and onward bus travel to locations outside of York. The changes will open up the Park and Ride offer to a wider range of people and create a more seamless travel experience. With nearly 5,000 parking spaces at six different locations, York's Park and Ride is already the largest and one of the most successful in the UK, and the improvements will continue that successful trajectory, providing people with convenient and affordable transport options and further reducing traffic congestion in the city centre.

We were delighted to show off our Park and Ride service and discuss opportunities for further growth with Simon Lightwood MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Local Transport, when he visited York in October to promote the Bus Services Bill. The new Bill will give local leaders the power to shape the bus services their communities rely on, and in York and North Yorkshire's case will allow us to progress towards a bus franchising model more swiftly, giving us the potential to go further and faster in delivering a reliable, affordable and comprehensive bus service for the city and beyond.

ResPark reforms

At my Decision Session in October, I approved several changes to the ResPark process to help streamline applications and provide opportunity for other uses of public highway. We removed the requirement for more than 50% of residents to respond and more than 50% of residents to be in support, in recognition that this was hampering ResPark applications in areas of the city with high numbers of rental properties where response rates are often low.

And we are adapting the initial public consultation to gain greater understanding of how many parking spaces are likely needed, and to gauge interest in other facilities such as cycle hangers, EV charge points, more street trees and car club cars for example. The new system will enable residents to better shape their community and use public highway in the way that best works for them, and will also reduce the time it takes to process applications.

Lendal Bridge repairs

Lendal Bridge is a key link in York's transport network, but the 150-year-old bridge is now in urgent need of repairs. We're doing the responsible thing and have given the go-ahead for contractors to be engaged and the £1.9m repair programme to start next April, after the Easter holidays. Putting off these works would risk us facing far more costly emergency works at a time not of our choosing. The bridge will need to be closed to vehicle traffic for eight weeks whilst structural repairs, re-waterproofing and resurfacing of the carriageway and footways is carried out.

Pedestrians will continue to have full access and we will work with contractors to try and facilitate cycle access. We are minimising disruption by ensuring it doesn't coincide with other major roadworks in the city, and we'll be communicating widely prior to the works starting, to enable people to adapt their travel plans and ensure that the city remains open for business. We're now working with businesses and local residents in the vicinity to understand their needs and provide as much mitigation as possible.

Water End Road pedestrian/cycle bridge

During the wee hours of Sunday 19th October two 600-tonne cranes lifted a wide new pedestrian and cycle bridge into place, over the railway lines adjacent to Water End. This fantastic facility is part of the York Central development and will create a key active travel link between the development and the west of the city. There are still significant works to be done in the area and the bridge won't open to users until 2027.

Station Gateway update

The last remaining works for package two are moving apace. New bus stands have been opened on both sides of the road and the footpath underneath the city walls and leading up to Blossom Street is anticipated to be fully open in November. The new public realm looks fantastic and

I'm excited to see how it will look once all the benches and planting go in and the cycle lanes are completed. Much of the work is now focused on the Tea Room Square area, plus enabling works for Network Rail's new multi-storey car park. And whilst the busy Christmas Market is on, we are looking to widen the pedestrian routes and create a more comfortable experience for all users.

We are currently collaborating and agreeing with all stakeholders, a revised and practical phasing and delivery strategy for the next phases, including LNER's package 3 works, the loop road (package 4) and the multi-storey car park (package 5).

Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Safer Communities,
Councillor Michael Pavlovic

The introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is covered elsewhere on today's agenda but suffice to say, although the Inspector did not accept all our evidence as submitted and considered at the public hearing, the fact he concluded the principle of the charge is sound is still a considerable win. This principle is one that all the council's political groups supported when proposed during the Local Plan hearings. The opportunity to bring many millions into delivering vital infrastructure around the whole city will, I'm sure, be welcomed within the council and across our communities as the benefits are felt.

I want to take this opportunity to focus mainly on the work of our often unsung heroes in our Communities teams, who do so much work behind the scenes. Their work makes such a positive contribution in improving the health and wellbeing of our residents. The Community Safety Hub, a collaborative approach between different council services and North Yorkshire Police, responded to around 1,500 complaints from 1st July to 30th September as follows:

712 noise; 370 fly tipping and dumped waste; 147 anti-social behaviour (ASB) in public spaces; 45 pest related; 55 unauthorised encampments including individual tents; 57 dog related; 37 noxious odours; and 50 relating to the condition of properties. Other complaints included graffiti, working at the racecourse and patrolling the streets during the evenings.

They issued 118 ASB related Community Protection Notices, 111 Noise warning letters, 3 Noise Abatement Notices and installed 18 pieces of noise monitoring equipment, 224 household waste notices, Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for fly tipping, waste disposal licence offences and prepared cases for court which saw two successful prosecutions, including one for fly tipping by a roofing business and one relating to an unlicensed scrap metal business resulting in significant fines. A further successful prosecution for breaches of a noise abatement notice led to fines and costs of over £3,000 to the offender. Truly a small department that delivers a vital service and I'm sure we'd all like to thank them for their dedication.

A number of colleagues, members and officers were honoured to attend the funeral of Cindy Benton recently, a longstanding and much-loved member of the Communities team. What struck me in the eulogies from

her family, was how dedicated and committed she was to the communities she worked with, the volunteer groups, the improvements she delivered for the areas in which she worked and, as we mourn her loss, we will build on her and her colleagues' commitment as we introduce the Neighbourhood Model of working.

Over the past year as Members involved in the Scrutiny sessions, we have been working to create a new model of working – one that puts people and place at the centre of everything we do. It will bring together council services and health partners, police, housing and community groups as part of one local team in an area. It will mean residents can get help earlier, closer to home and in ways that are more joined up and personal.

We will move away from residents being passed from service to service, often within the council itself, to being supported by one team who know their community and understand their needs.

This will epitomise our 'One City, For All' vision, building strong, connected neighbourhoods where everyone feels heard, supported and valued.

We're confident the future will bring stronger communities and a city that's safer, fairer and prouder of who we are, something that Cindy worked so hard to achieve.

The need to make sure residents are adequately housed, in homes that meet their needs, has never been more important. Our Housing Delivery Programme (HDP) has now for the first time set an actual pipeline for council housebuilding for the next decade. The scheme at Duncombe Square has created the first Passivhaus development in York and the first social rent homes are currently being offered to those suffering with significant health conditions, such as respiratory problems. We know from the evidence of other developments, such as the refurbishment of the Independent Living Complexes at Alex Lyon House, that clean, warm air with low fuel bills has really improved quality of life for those with asthma and COPD.

We are also ensuring that many of the homes are adapted for people with disabilities and will really be homes for life. Burnholme is approaching completion and will be followed by our next phases of building on other sites. We're working in preparation at different stages on a variety of sites including Ordnance Lane and Willow House.

Lowfield Green has two plots, one for supported living for people with learning disabilities and autism and the other will be an over 55s complex.

Council land at Askham Bar is the subject of negotiation to become a mixed health hub and housing development. The former Manor School is set to be the subject of a future bid to the Mayoral Combined Authority Brownfield Housing Fund, to get new homes developed on the site. Another part of this site will become a park for the residents of Acomb; great news for a ward in desperate need of more green space. External funding bids have been submitted to develop the Castle Mills site after the previous Administration's decision to essentially mothball the site.

This Administration has shown through its decisions that we've listened to the many voices in our city telling us that a home of their own is out of reach. That it's a can-do administration doing everything it possibly can to maximise delivery of affordable homes. For those families who've had to move out of York or who think they may have to, further away from extended family, we hope through both the council's own affordable homes plans and through the adopted Local Plan's affordable homes proposals, that hope is on the horizon as York starts to get building once again.