
Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Economy and Culture
Date	25 March 2025
Present	Councillor Kilbane (Executive Member)
Officers in Attendance	Liam Dennis – Ancient Monuments Manager James Gilchrist - Director of Environment, Transport and Planning

13. Apologies for Absence (11:00am)

There were no apologies.

14. Declarations of Interest (11:00am)

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

15. Minutes (11:01am)

Resolved: That the minutes of the Decision Session held on 27 January 2025 be approved and signed by the Executive Member as a correct record.

16. Public Participation (11:01am)

It was reported that there were no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

17. Creation of infrastructure to be able to support the collection of donations to support the conservation of the City Walls (11:02am)

The Director of Transport, Environment and Planning introduced the proposal to collect donations to support the upkeep of the City Walls, which was presented by The Ancient Monuments Manager.

The Ancient Monuments Manager explained that the proposed scheme would be trialled initially at Bootham Bar, allowing tourists to make donations for the upkeep of the City Walls via QR code. The money raised from this could be spent on areas such as York Library and the St Leonards Hospital area.

He acknowledged that a similar scheme had been trialled about 10 years ago, but that trial was not particularly well communicated, and people today are much more used to paying and donating via QR code/phone.

The Executive Member thanked the Ancient Monuments Manager for his and other officers work, noting that York's City Walls were an asset not just to the city but to the country.

He noted that if the trial was successful, the issue of accessibility around the walls should be further explored. He also agreed that it would be appropriate to direct funds to the area around the library and possibly also the area around Baile Hill (at the junction of Baile Hill Terrace and Cromwell Road).

The Executive Member noted that the council were at a £30,000 deficit per annum to provide services that residents expect, so were acting under severe financial restraint. The City Walls cost £500-600k per year for basic maintenance (such as pointing and paving), and the Ancient Monuments team makes use of specialist stonemasons.

He further noted that York City Walls provide an experience for 2.5 million people per year, so this maintenance breaks down to a nominal cost of 24p per person using the walls, and if just 5% of people were generous enough to donate £5, then these costs would be covered.

The Executive Member cited recent BBC vox pop interviews which had received very favourable responses to this scheme, and universally affirmative responses from the public; according to this source many people had been surprised that there was not already a method for residents and tourists to contribute in this manner.

This being said, the Executive Member

Resolved: To approve Option 1, namely:

- a) The creation of donation points, "tap" and QR code (for in person events) based for the Bar Walls, and associated payments handling systems.

- b) The creation of an interpretation space within Bootham Bar for the purpose of educating visitors as to the conservation of the bar walls.
- c) Delegation of authority to the Director of Transport, Environment and Planning, in consultation with the Head of Procurement and the Director of Governance, to take such steps as are necessary to determine the provisions of, award and enter into the required contractual arrangements to accept donations, including contracts with tap donation providers and merchant facilities to handle transactions.
- d) Noted that merchant and processing fees will apply as a percentage of donations received.
- e) Undertaking of a 6-month trial period for devices, after which a review will be undertaken to determine whether to roll the scheme out permanently.

Reasons: The trial will explore whether this project will result in income generated for the authority that will allow it to improve its heritage assets, realise their education potential while reducing the burden on the CYC capital budgets.

Cllr P Kilbane, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 11.00 am and finished at 11.14 am].