

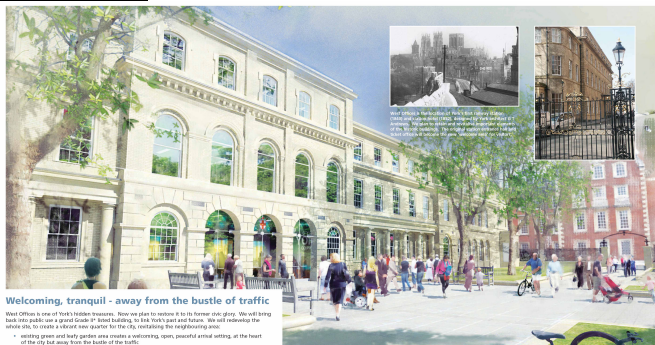
Leader's Report to Full Council 9th July 2009

Since the last Full Council report the Executive has considered a large amount of business with some key points drawn out in this report.

Council Headquarters.

The Executive received an update on the HQ project on 14th April and approved the public consultation process for two proposals: for Yorkshire House, and West Offices. A tremendous effort was put in by both teams to develop designs and visual representations of the draft proposals. I was particularly impressed by the amount of effort that had gone into examination of the sustainability features of the buildings.

West Offices



Welcoming, tranquil - away from the bustle of traffic
West Offices is one of York's finest residences. Now we plan to restore it to its former glory. We will bring back into public use a grand Grade II listed building, to link York's past and future. We will redevelop the whole site to create a vibrant new quarter for the city, combining the engineering area.

- adding green and leafy garden area creates a refreshing, open, peaceful arrival setting, at the heart of the city and away from the bustle of the traffic
- simple parking for cycles and the disabled, right at the front door
- completely level access, to create the welcome centre in one go
- a fine new building, making things sustainable headquarters for our historic city

Around 1,000 people came to visit the exhibition in the Mansion House on 26th 27th and 28th May

Yorkshire House



Yorkshire House was built in the 1920s and looks out to the City Walls and across to the Minster. The new extension will replace an existing parking and car park which is now redundant.

The new extension will incorporate a significant new public entrance that is easy to access and also provides impressive meeting views across York.

As part of the scheme the pavement and pedestrian crossings to Station Road and Bridge Street will be improved, making them safer to use. Secure parking for disabled visitors will be provided in the site.

Over 8000 of the household surveys asking residents to comment on the two proposals have been received back.

The bidders have been constantly reminded of the requirement to remain within the agreed budget set by Executive in mid 2008.

The next stage will be for detailed solutions to be worked up with final submission in September. Further public consultation will take place after Christmas when the preferred bidder is selected.

Community Engagement Strategy

The drawing together of public bodies like the council, police, NHS, and voluntary organisations, business community and other key components of the city under the 'Without Walls' partnership has huge potential to deliver improvements for York by

making sure that we all work together in a joined up way. Therefore it is important that the council has a Community Engagement Strategy to ensure that it is clear about what it wants to achieve in informing and consulting the public, and in turn that the public know what actions the council will take to inform, engage, and involve them at different stages in decision making.

There is already considerable opportunity for the public to engage with the council. In the recent Budget and Cycle City Consultation the over 8,000 households completed the consultation document, and the council showed in a insert to the recent edition of "Your City" how the views of the public fed into the Budget process and what actions were taken. The results of the Cycling Consultation have also been covered in reports to Executive. Ward Committees have a wide range of public participation, and until recently there was considerable public participation in many EMAP meetings.

The development of the Community Engagement Strategy is yet another example of the application of the Improvement Plan which is making a coordinated improvement on the way the council operates. There does need to be a specific response to the way in which the council engages with young people many of whom will not attend ward committees, but whom through the many school councils in the city, are developing interest in some of the key decisions which affect their lives.

Barbican

I am pleased to report that we have been able to work with local partners to find suitable alternative venues for the important community events which historically took place at the Barbican. I am also pleased that maintenance work has been initiated in line with the decisions of Executive and this will be completed over the summer period. We continue to work with our specialist advisers Drivers Jonas to progress options and avenues for the redevelopment and reopening of the building - we can expect, as planned, a detailed update at Executive on the 8th September.

Community Stadium

Officers have presented two reports on the proposals for a community stadium on 28th April and 23rd June. The latter report included the draft business plan for the venture with a series of different scaled solutions. The use of the stadium undercroft for health and Higher Education activities are interesting options, while incorporation of sustainability and renewable energy features are worth pursuing to create a stadium with a difference, and to develop the business case. Council will be asked to approve the additional funding for the project to take it onto the next phase. This will involve the undertaking of a feasibility study for a full business case, site selection and feasibility (to align with the LDF process) and production of final findings by July 2010.

Transport improvements

The Executive approved the preferred option for the Clifton Moor Park and Ride site, and the outline design for the A59 roundabout with the Outer Ring Road for consultation.

Local Area Agreement Delivery Fund

Funding applications to the Local Area Agreement Delivery Fund were approved covering a wide range of applications including a pilot for hundreds of households in the city to develop more sustainability in their everyday life which will provide helpful information for the rest of the city, support for volunteering, tackling fuel poverty, fitness and healthy eating across age groups, and helping some of the most vulnerable members of the York community through the downturn. These schemes had been submitted by the Without Walls Delivery Board following a consultation process inviting groups and organisations in the city to make applications. The LSP staff are working to follow up unsuccessful bids, and where possible assist with the application to other sources of funding.



Cultural Quarter Scrutiny

The Executive considered the recommendations from the Cultural Quarter Scrutiny report and agreed that those items which fit with the City Centre Area Action Plan, and the York North West Area Action Plan should be dealt with through the LDF process, that Yorkshire Forward would be asked to consider the Cultural Quarter in the 'Geographic Programme' for York, and has passed on to "York at Large" the items that were specifically requested to be sent to that organisation for consideration.

One proposal approved by the Executive was for the Lord Mayor to become the Honorary Keeper of the Archive during their term of office, and I am pleased to see that the new Lord Mayor has taken up that role with enthusiasm. The Executive made £30,000 investment in the creation of a Development Trust for the Archives.

Sustainable Communities Act

The Executive received a report on the application of York's sign up to the Sustainable Communities Act. Officers worked to ensure that all ward committees were covered in the public consultation, and there was opportunity to input via the council website. This led to 327 suggestions, which was much higher than many council areas, and these were sifted to 46 which were covered by the Act. These have been taken on to a Citizens Panel for the next stage of sifting before the selection of the limited number that officers will work up into substantial application to the Local Government Association.

Council homes rents

The Executive approved a council house rent increase of 2.86% following the 'U-turn' by central government on council house rents. This was known by government in the last calendar year, but action was taken too late and it is regrettable that the costs to this authority of rebilling will not be refunded.

'One City' Update

On 12th May the council received an update on the "One City" campaign, and allocated LAGBI (Local Authority Business Growth Incentive) funds to specific projects within the city to support the local economy. One part of this was to support the "Spotlight on Skills" Campaign in conjunction with Yorkshire Forward, and Higher York (University of York, York St John University, York College and Askham Bryan College). The events were coordinated by Learning City York, with a huge input coming from Julia Massey. Over 100 employers and 290 individuals took advantage of the activities.

Events for businesses took place in the Hospitium on 4th June, and on 6th June there was a "Support for You" event at which residents were able to meet local employers with vacancies, advisors offering job search and training support, as well as programmes for those interested in starting up their own business. Over 30 different free personal and professional development workshops were available across the city during the month.

Business Initiatives in new sectors in the city

I attended the York St John University awards for art and design excellence on 22nd May where the links between education and business were very apparent and putting into practice those views from the Future York report that young people need to be equipped for commerce and business before they enter the world of work. Shops in the city will be showcasing some of the students work during Freshers Week. The previous week I attended the launch of the business incubator "Phoenix Centre" at St John University which is an initiative led by Science City York and Yorkshire Forward to develop the growth of a new generation of creative and digital businesses in the city. These illustrate the work that is going into creating new job opportunities in York in new upcoming areas of the economy.



Start4Art awards which build on links between the Faculty of Art and business, creative projects and partnerships in the city



Launch of the Phoenix Centre, business incubator based on the York St.John campus.

Kerbside Recycling Expansion

The Executive considered the report outlining how we are going to meet the Government target of offering all households a doorstep collection of at least two recyclates by Dec 2010. It built on the Waste Strategy approved in Sept 08 and on

the work being currently carried out in the Groves area of the city. Currently 7520 properties do not have any recycling service and we only collect one material from a further 3990 properties. In addition 12,250 properties currently have a full recycling service and a weekly residual waste collection and they will migrate on to alternate weekly collections (AWC).

The Groves trial has proved successful so far with residents of the flats embracing recycling enthusiastically. Provision of high quality communal containers has helped and 99% of residents in flats claim to recycle now against 55% before. They have also found no problems in managing their waste even though they are now on AWC. 89% of residents in those terraced houses now on the scheme are recycling with 71% rating the service excellent or good and a general satisfaction with boxes and lids.



Although the aim will be to get everyone on to AWC with wheelie bins there will be instances where this is not possible for practical reasons. Where sacks are retained we are offering residents a wheelie bin to store the sacks in their back yard before carrying them through on collection day. Other options that will be explored include a collection point for wheelie bins, communal wheelie bin and sacks presented to a central collection point. Members will shortly receive details in their wards if they are involved in the roll out.

Local Development Framework

The Executive approved the process for the city wide household LDF consultation on preferred options in the light of the endorsement of the last council meeting of the view that the assumptions of the Regional Spatial Strategy are flawed as they take no account of the recession. The Executive supported the view of the LDF Working Group that the housing demand numbers which central government wishes to see incorporated into the LDF are flawed because of the recession, the view that actually windfall sites will continue to arise in the city and that that these will go some way to meeting demand over the next 20 years, and that the city cannot continue to expand at a rate of 850 homes indefinitely as this will fundamentally change the character and setting of York and the surrounding areas. Residents will have their opportunity to express their views on the RSS assumptions and their impact on the LDF in the consultation which has now commenced.

Staff Survey

The results of the sixth Staff Survey indicates that 71% of staff are satisfied with their present job, and that those who are very or fairly dissatisfied with their jobs has fallen

from 24% in March 2001 to 19% in the last two surveys. Given the uncertainties that have been created by the Pay and Grading review it is a tribute to the work that has been done in this area of the council that satisfaction levels have remained high. Looking across the years there has been a significant increase in staff saying that they have the resources to do their jobs up from 46% (2001) to 62% (2009).

The further analysis of the data broken down by department will be done as part of the follow up work, and is essential in order to progress actions in response to the comments from staff. It would be helpful if there was a common description of Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) across the council which could have been a factor in the figures of those who have had a PDR in the last year. The report detailed how the council will compare its figures with other councils and employees through ORC International

Improvement Plan

The Improvement Plan has been the active demonstration of the council's response to the Audit Commission's corporate assessment drawing together a number of improvements that are being worked upon. The elements that will receive attention in 2009/10 are :

1. Human Resources – taking up issues raised by the staff survey
2. Equalities – meeting the requirements of the new Equality Framework for Local Government
3. Health and Safety – building on the progress that has been achieved by reducing accidents and H&S issues, but also picking up matters raised in the staff survey
4. Member Training – putting into action the IdeA Charter
5. Project Management – corporate adoption of project and programme management, and standardising project review, and training
6. Code of Conduct Awareness – improving staff confidence in procedures
7. Partnership governance – building on the success of the LSP and other partnership working
8. Internal Communication – taking up matters raised in the staff survey
9. Risk Management – following specific request from the Executive for this area to be included

Improved Communication with residents

The Executive have agreed to improve regular communication with all residents with a revamp of the Your City publication which will come out more frequently than at the moment. The proposals took account of the impact of the recession, which has reduced the total amount of available advertising revenue in the city. Residents will see the new publication in the autumn.

Year End Performance and Financial Report

The 2008/09 corporate performance and financial outturn have recently been approved by the Executive. York has 43% of national indicators in the top quartile of councils compared to 30% of Best Value Performance Indicators in 2007/08. This is a tribute to the hard work of officers, and it should be noted that York remains the second lowest spending unitary authority per head.

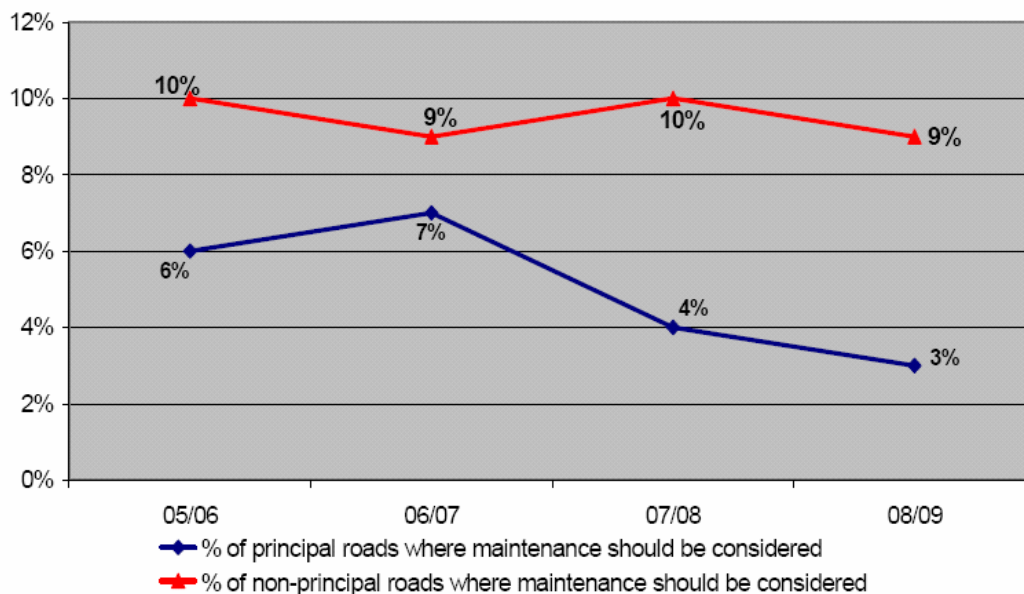
The level of reserves are at a prudent level to achieve the agreed capital programme and cope with the impacts of the recession over the next three years. Treasury management contributed just over £1 million towards the outturn of an underspend of approximately £1.5 million (with an agreed carry forward of £472,000 to complete activities and programmes that had been started in 2008/09).

Good progress has been made in the number of affordable homes available in York, with 151 homes being delivered in 2008/09, which makes up 30% of the total additional housing completed in York.

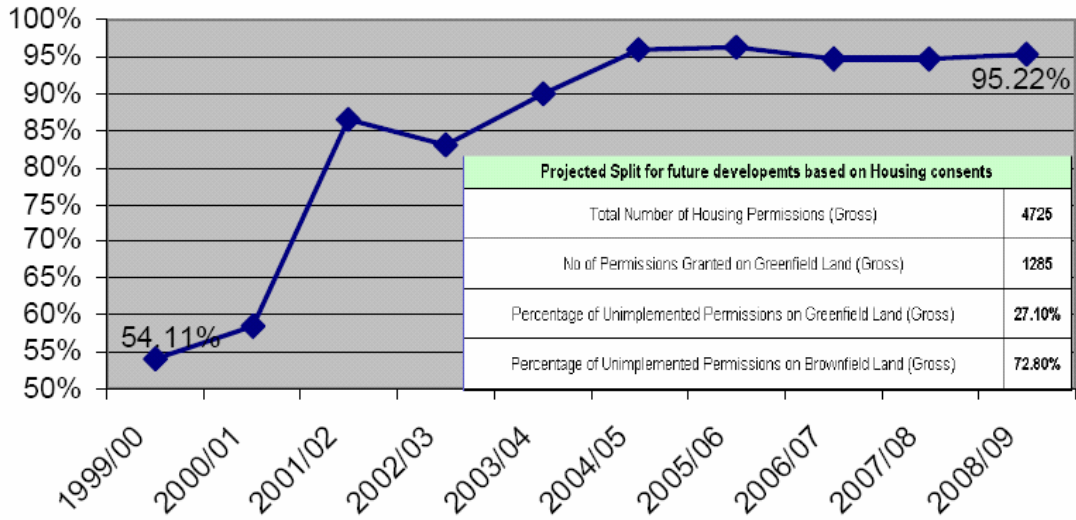
Education performance continues to be strong and in top quartile performance nationally.

Road Maintenance

The % of principle roads where maintenance should be considered has reduced since 2007/08 to 9% for principle roads and 3% for non principle roads (lower is better).

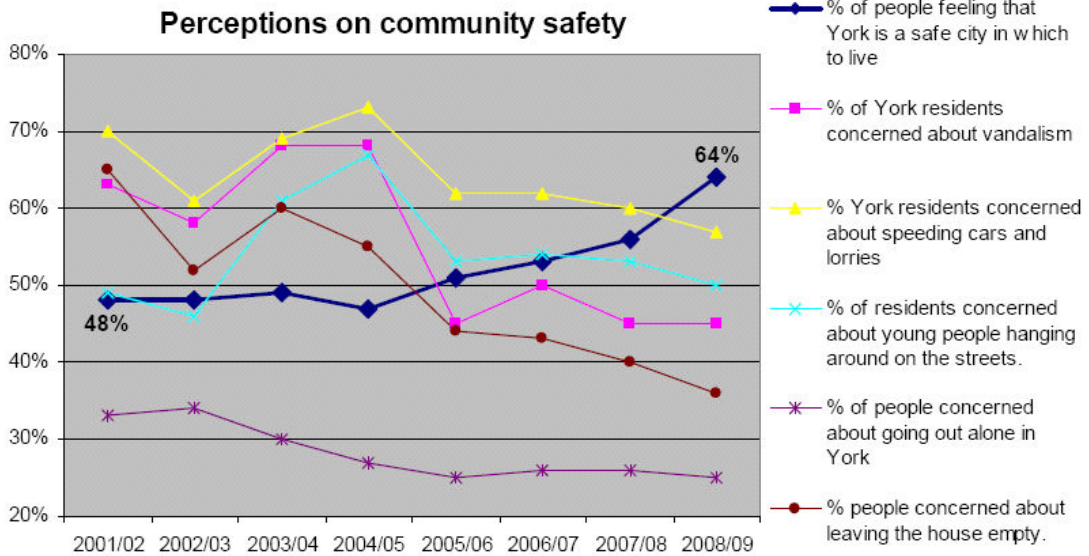


Brownfield - % of new homes built on previously developed land



Community Safety

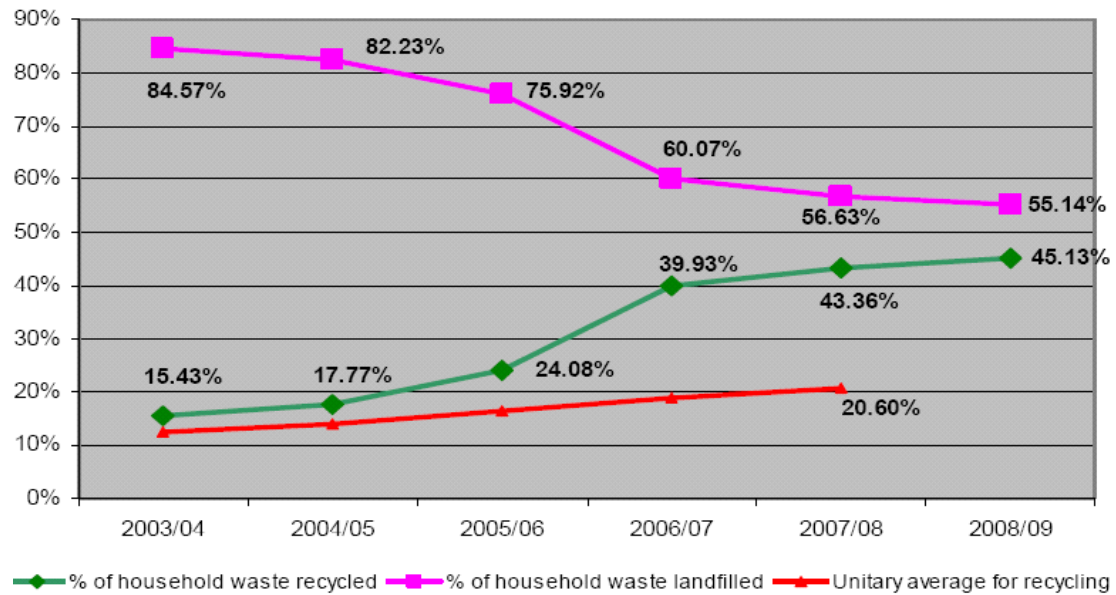
The perceptions of anti social behaviour and crime have fallen in the city over recent years while the number of people who feel York is a safe city to live has increased.



Waste collection and recycling

The amount of waste sent to landfill has continued to fall and the amount of household waste sent for recycling has continued to increase. Over the past 5 years excellent improvement in both recycling and landfill levels have been achieved and the council is now one of the best performing unitary councils in the country for recycling.

Graph to show recycling and waste landfill levels



Councillor Andrew Waller