City of York Council

Resolutions and proceedings of the Meeting of the City of York Council held in the Guildhall, York on Thursday, 26 March 2026, starting at 6.30 pm

Present: The Lord Mayor (Councillor Martin Rowley BEM) in the Chair, and the following Councillors:

Acomb Ward	Bishopthorpe Ward
Lomas Rose	Nicholls
Clifton Ward	Copmanthorpe Ward
Myers Wells	Steward
Dringhouses & Woodthorpe Ward	Fishergate Ward
Fenton Mason Widdowson	Whitcroft Wilson
Fulford and Heslington Ward	Guildhall Ward
Ravilious	Clarke Melly Merrett
Haxby & Wigginton Ward	Heworth Ward
Cuthbertson Hollyer Watson	Douglas Perrett Webb
Heworth Without Ward	Holgate Ward
Ayre	Kent Steels-Walshaw K Taylor

Hull Road Ward	Huntington and New Earswick Ward
Baxter	Cullwick
Moroney	Orrell
Pavlovic	Runciman
Micklegate Ward	**Osbaldwick and Derwent Ward**
Crawshaw	Rowley
Kilbane	Warters (until 8.50pm)
Rawcliffe and Clifton Without Ward	**Rural West York Ward**
Smalley	Hook
Wann	Knight
Strensall Ward	**Westfield Ward**
Fisher	Coles
Healey	Nelson
	Waller
Wheldrake Ward	

81. Apologies for Absence (6.45pm)

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Burton, Vassie and Waudby.

82. Declarations of Interest (6.45pm)

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests they might have in the business on the agenda.

The following interests were declared in relation to Item 14, Motions on Notice:

1) 'Protecting York's Independent Patient Voice – Healthwatch'

Cllrs Ayre and Fenton both declared a personal, pecuniary interests and therefore left the chamber during the consideration of that item, they took no part in the vote.

3) 'Impact of Business Rates Revaluation'

Cllr Kilbane noted, for transparency, his registered pecuniary interest in hospitality businesses in the City.

The Monitoring Officer subsequently advised that, due to the generality of the Motion, all Members with business interests in the City could take part in the consideration of the motion.

83. Public Participation (7.03pm)

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

Daniel Staples spoke in relation to agenda item 14, Motions on Notice - Fair Votes for All. He was in support of the motion, arguing that first-past-the-post no longer reflects a multi-party political system. He stated that proportional representation (PR) would reduce wasted votes, end safe seats and tactical voting, and

encourage more collaborative politics. He cited higher voter turnout in countries using PR.

Flick Williams spoke remotely, in relation to agenda item 7 – Report of the Leader and Executive, raising concerns about welfare reforms and the impact on disabled people. She questioned the lack of progress and transparency regarding a previously agreed task and finish group on changes to disability and sickness benefits. She highlighted imminent benefit reductions, falling success rates for claims, increasing sanctions, and long delays in access-to-work support, urging the Council to act.

Ursula Lanvers spoke as Chair of the York–Münster Twinning Association, she noted the absence of any public place in York named after its twin city. With the forthcoming 70th anniversary of the twinning arrangement, she invited the Council to consider naming a bridge, square, park or similar to recognise Münster.

Sean Hagan spoke on behalf of Make Votes Matter York, in relation to agenda item 14, Motions on Notice - Fair Votes for All. He stated that first-past-the-post produces unrepresentative outcomes and undermines trust in democracy. He referenced Labour Party conference policy acknowledging flaws in the current system and supported the call for a national commission on electoral reform.

Ian Murphy also spoke on behalf of Make Votes Matter York, in relation to agenda item 14, Motions on Notice - Fair Votes for All. He supported the motion for fair votes, describing the 2024 General Election result as unfair and unrepresentative. He argued that PR would reduce negative campaigning, tactical voting and safe seats, and encourage cooperation between parties. He noted that PR is already used in devolved administrations and urged the Council to support reform.

Joe Nasson spoke on behalf of the Green Party, also in relation to agenda item 14, Motions on Notice - Fair Votes for All. He spoke in favour of proportional representation, linking unrepresentative election outcomes to public frustration, division and declining trust in politics. He highlighted international use of PR and suggested that fair representation would lead to more collaborative politics and better reflect the diversity of voters.

Celine Barry spoke on behalf of Compass York and North Yorkshire in relation to agenda item 14, Motions on Notice - Fair Votes for All. She stated that PR is essential to a fairer and more democratic society. She emphasised the need for cross-party cooperation to counter extremism and build public trust, encouraging councillors to work together and support electoral reform.

Lars Kramm spoke in relation to agenda item 14, Motions on Notice - Fair Votes for All and also addressed follow-up actions on council decisions. He highlighted proportional and run-off voting systems used in Münster and questioned the fairness of representatives being elected on minority vote shares. He encouraged the Council to take practical action and publicly report back on outcomes of agreed motions.

Gwen Swinburn raised governance and accountability issues, requesting a correction to previous minutes to clarify she had referred specifically to a potential equal pay liability. She expressed concern that a significant financial risk recorded in the Council's accounts and risk register had not been adequately explained to members, requesting a formal briefing and written response.

84. Minutes (7.32pm)

Resolved: That the minutes of the Budget Council meeting held on 12 February 2026 be approved and then signed by the Chair as a correct record.

85. Civic Announcements (6.48pm)

This item was considered after Item 2, Declarations of Interest, and the Lord Mayor started by inviting the Leader to pay tribute to the outgoing Chief Operating Officer, Ian Floyd, who was to retire at the end of March 2026.

The Leader thanked Ian Floyd for his service to the city, and praised his cool, calm and measured approach to leadership which

had been particularly evident during the period of COVID, enabling strong partnership working under extreme pressure. She highlighted the progression of York Central onto a clear delivery path, the adoption of the Local Plan after decades of delay and achieving an Outstanding rating for Children's Services as among his significant achievements. On behalf of members, she wished him a long, healthy and happy retirement.

The Lord Mayor added his personal thanks, noting that Ian had served seven civic parties during his time as Chief Operating Officer and had ensured the continued relevance and importance of the civic role as it evolved. He presented Ian with a commemorative gift: a photograph of Clifford's Tower surrounded by daffodil's marking the season and the occasion.

Ian thanked Members and reflected on his time with the Council, having joined in summer 2008. He expressed gratitude to all councillors he had worked with over the years, acknowledging the commitment required of elected members. He thanked the two Leaders he had worked with in the last seven years: Councillor Claire Douglas, Leader of the Council, for her support and ambition for the city and former Leader Councillor Keith Aspden, particularly for his leadership during the COVID-19 period.
He also thanked opposition leaders Councillor Nigel Ayre and Councillor Chris Steward for their constructive working relationships, including work on the Community Stadium project.
He recognised the work of Lord Mayors past and present, Democratic Services, the webcast team and the Civic Team for their support of Full Council meetings.

The Lord Mayor provided his civic announcements and thanked members for their support with the Lord Mayor's Commendation Awards, the ceremony for which would take place in May. He confirmed that the Lord Mayor elect had agreed to continue with the scheme. The following day, the Lord Mayor and spouse would undertake a civic visit to Münster, funded privately at no cost to the Council. He would be meeting the Mayor of Münster and the Twin City Committee to discuss anniversary celebrations of the twinning arrangement next year. The Lord Mayor had attended multiple Guild dinners, including the Guild of Freemen of the City and Members were advised that Democratic Services and the Guild of Freemen were close to agreement on reinstating Freedom Courts.

86. Petitions (7.33pm)

Under Rule B6, the following petitions were presented for consideration by the relevant decision maker, in accordance with the council's petition arrangements:

a) Councillor Warters regarding access for vehicles on Ouse Bridge and Rougier Street.
b) Councillor Waller regarding a road safety scheme on Cornlands Road.

Councillor Fisher presented two petitions,
c) regarding a decrease in the speed limit on Sheriff Hutton Road, Strensall and
d) regarding the installation of a footpath along Sheriff Hutton Road, Strensall.

[The meeting adjourned for a short break at 7.30pm and reconvened at 7.40pm. Councillor Nelson left the meeting during the break.]

87. Report of the Leader and Executive (7.41pm)

A report from the Leader of the Council and Executive was submitted which provided an update on key activity since the last Council meeting.

88. Questions to the Leader or Executive Members (7.53pm)

The Lord Mayor invited members to ask questions of the Leader of the Council and Executive in relation to matters within their portfolio responsibility.

Details of questions and subsequent responses were provided as follows:

Councillor Whitcroft asked about the expansion of the free school meals and breakfast programme to an additional ten schools under the York Hungry Minds initiative, including St Lawrence's Primary School, and asked why feeding children was beneficial.

The **Executive Member for Education, Children and Young People** confirmed the programme had expanded to multiple wards

and now included 13 schools. He outlined three key benefits: a positive soft start to the school day, improved attendance, and improved attainment. Evidence from pilot schemes and early academic evaluations from the University of York and University of Leeds had shown positive impacts. He expressed ambition to further expand the programme, subject to funding, and thanked donors for their support.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Healey asked whether pupils at Scarborough Primary School would receive free school meals by the end of the current administration.

The Executive Member stated that while further expansion was hoped for, no guarantee could be given at this stage.

Councillor Fisher raised concerns about traffic congestion and safety at Towthorpe Waste Disposal Site following reduced opening hours and the introduction of a booking system at Hazel Court. He asked whether the booking system and opening hours would be reviewed.

The **Executive Member for the Environment and Climate Emergency** stated that the booking system was a trial and had been running for approximately three and a half weeks. She acknowledged the concerns raised and confirmed these would be followed up with officers, particularly around traffic management. She advised that reopening Hazel Court on Wednesdays was not currently planned and noted that waste disposal arrangements across the region were being reviewed for safety, efficiency and financial reasons.

Supplementary Questions

Councillor Warters asked whether alternative sites for waste disposal were being considered, given Hazel Court’s location.

The Executive Member acknowledged Hazel Court was not an ideal location but advised that identifying and developing alternative sites would be complex, costly and time-consuming. She confirmed work was ongoing.

Councillor Nicholls asked how the success of the Hazel Court trial would be measured, including impacts on recycling rates, congestion, fly-tipping and booking no-shows.

The Executive Member confirmed that all these factors would be monitored. She provided early data on booking no-shows and advised that full four-week trial data would be published. She confirmed there were no plans to introduce charges for using household waste disposal sites.

Councillor Nicholls asked whether charges were planned for using waste disposal sites.

The Executive Member confirmed that there were no plans to charge to use the tip.

Councillor Waters questioned the sufficiency of the £12m highways budget, the accepted rate of deterioration of highway assets, and whether previous financial management of major highway schemes could affect future funding.

The **Executive Member for Transport** confirmed the £12m allocation was insufficient to clear the maintenance backlog but explained that funding was being prioritised towards preventative treatments, sustainable transport routes, and key highways. She advised that lobbying was underway to revise funding formulas to better reflect vehicle miles travelled in York, noting that highways underinvestment was a national issue.

Supplementary Questions

Councillor Waters asked whether the funding merely allowed the Council to “stand still” in addressing highway deterioration.

The Executive Member stated she would need to review the figures cited and respond further but emphasised that maintenance outcomes were affected by multiple factors including weather and traffic levels.

Councillor Fenton asked for an update on progress relating to a July 2023 council motion to review the Highway Safety Inspection Manual.

The Executive Member confirmed officers had begun work on aspects of the review, including pothole intervention thresholds,

but noted increased costs and the importance of preventative maintenance. A timetable for completion was not yet available.

Councillor Taylor asked about plans for affordable housing at York Central and how any increase beyond the agreed 20% would be funded without reducing contributions to local services.

The **Leader** confirmed the aspiration to increase affordable housing provision to 40%, subject to grant funding from Homes England. She advised that discussions were ongoing with partners to secure funding while ensuring infrastructure and services were provided.

Supplementary question from Councillor Taylor, he asked about wider partnership working and its role in shaping the Council's future vision.

The Leader highlighted strong partnership working across health, education, emergency services and universities, referencing neighbourhood-based service delivery and integrated health initiatives. She expressed optimism about the benefits of collaboration despite financial challenges.

Councillor Widdowson asked why the online consultation on recycling collection changes did not include a free-text option.

The **Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change** advised that the consultation was designed to gather logistical data and had already received a high number of responses. She stated that free-text responses were not included due to scale, but residents' views were being recorded through other channels.

Supplementary question from Councillor Widdowson, she asked whether flats and apartments with wheelie bins would move to four-weekly collections.

The Executive Member confirmed there would be no change for communal flats, apartments, or properties that had recently switched from bags to bins.

Councillor Fenton sought clarification on whether free breakfasts at Woodthorpe Primary School would be provided to all pupils or only targeted groups.

The **Executive Member for Education, Children and Young**

People explained that some schools were introducing provision in a phased or targeted way due to capacity and staffing considerations, with flexibility to expand. She advised she would confirm the specific arrangements for Woodthorpe Primary School separately.

Supplementary question from Councillor Fenton, asked how the local scheme linked with the Government's national breakfast programme and whether funding could be redirected to lunches.

The Executive Member explained that three-year funding agreements were in place with schools and donors, and that decisions about future focus would depend on the rollout of national provision.

[7.46-7.50pm, Cllr Coles left the meeting]

89. Recommendations of Executive (8.28pm)

Recommendations of Executive arising from its meeting on 3 March 2026 were presented and approved as follows:

Delivering More Affordable Housing in York – Castle Mills (Executive minute no. 211 refers)

Resolved:

a) the creation of the Castle Mills scheme within the HRA capital programme; the wider business case for which will come forward at a later date be approved.

b) A budget of £2.377m funded from HRA borrowing, to develop the proposals through RIBA stages 3 and 4 as described in the Executive minutes referred to above, be approved.

Reasons:

- To ensure any works and/or services are procured in compliance with the Finance Regs, the CPRs, and (where applicable) our statutory duties under the Procurement Act 2023 and the Public Contract Regulations 2015.
- To ensure any grant funding arrangements comply with the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

90. Report of the Chair of Corporate Scrutiny Committee (8.32pm)

An update on the latest scrutiny activity was provided by Councillor Fenton, Chair of Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

91. Constitutional Changes - Revised Joint Standards Committee Procedures and Associated Required Amendments (8.34pm)

Resolved (unanimously): that the constitutional changes, in relation to the revised Joint Standards Committee Procedures and Associated Required Amendments be approved.

[The meeting adjourned for a short break at 8.35pm and reconvened at 8.45pm. Cllr Melly left the meeting during the break.]

92. Delegation of Local Transport Functions from York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (8.47pm)

The Director of Governance submitted a report which recommended Council to enter into a section 101 agreement with York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority to allow City of York Council (CYC) to continue providing the public transport functions within CYC's Bus Service Improvement Plans.

Resolved-

That Council

i. Agrees to enter into a Section 101 Agreement with the CA to facilitate the continued delivery of BSIP-funded work and local passenger transport services;
ii. Delegates authority to the Director of Governance to sign the proposed Section 101 Agreement with the CA; and Page 88 c) Delegates authority to the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to enter into any Section 101 agreements, or any subsequent modifications, in the future.

Reasons: To allow CYC to continue to deliver local passenger transport services to residents within the City of York and to continue to lawfully deliver its BSIPs; and to allow officers to

address any further necessary agreements without impacting on the continuity of services.

93. Appointments to the Independent Remuneration Panel and Commencement of Review (8.48pm)

The Director of Governance submitted a report to seek Council's agreement to appoint Mark Fynn, Stuart Gibb and Matt Williams to the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), and the commencement of the 2026 IRP review.

Resolved:

That Council

a) Approves the appointment of Mark Fynn, Stuart Gibb, and Matt Williams as members of the City of York Council's Independent Remuneration Panel for an initial term of 24 months; and Page 92
b) Approves the commencement of the 2026 IRP Review into Members Allowances.

Reasons: To ensure that the Council has the requisite number of IRP Members, and to ensure that the 2026 IRP Review is conducted in good time to present to Council prior to the commencement of the 2027-2031 municipal term.

94. Motions on Notice (8.51pm)

14.1 Protecting York's Independent Patient Voice - Healthwatch

This motion was moved by Councillor Steels-Walshaw and seconded by Councillor Rose. It incorporated an amendment (as set out in the supplementary agenda pack), moved by Councillor Runciman and seconded by Councillor Cuthbertson.

Following a number of speakers, the motion, as amended and set out below was then put to a vote and carried unanimously.

Resolved – That with the addition and deletion of the appropriate words, the motion be amended to read as follows:

Council notes:

- That Healthwatch York has for over a decade provided an independent and trusted route for residents to share their experiences of health and social care, particularly for people who feel unable to raise concerns directly with service providers;
- That this independence enables and supports transparency, learning and improvement across the health and social care system;
- National proposals within the NHS 10-Year Plan and the Penny Dash Review would bring statutory Healthwatch functions into a new Patient Experience Directorate within the Department of Health and Social Care, with local voice functions embedded within NHS bodies and local authorities;
- That these proposals require primary legislation, and local Healthwatch services will continue to operate until any such legislation is enacted;
- A wide range of national organisations, including respected health policy bodies, have highlighted the importance of maintaining strong, independent mechanisms for the service user's voice to be heard.
- That the King's Fund has warned that the decision to abolish Healthwatch was taken "without a comprehensive review" of the patient feedback landscape, and that the implications for the wider system of patient voice and experience were "not fully explored";
- That the King's Fund has noted "Recent high-profile failures where people's voices were ignored or marginalised, including maternity care scandals (Department of Health and Social Care 2025c), underline that the conditions that led to the creation of Healthwatch have not disappeared."
- That the Health Secretary is incorrect to state that "we don't need ventriloquists to speak for patients, patients can speak for ourselves if we're given the opportunity to do it." Such views risk excluding some of the more marginalised voices that Healthwatch work so hard to engage and fail to acknowledge what happens when voices are ignored.
- Concerns expressed nationally that absorbing patient voice functions into NHS bodies and local authorities risks undermining the independence necessary for patients to speak freely and without fear or favour;

Council recognises:

- The value of an independent voice in supporting residents to speak openly about their experiences, including those in vulnerable circumstances;
- The contribution Healthwatch York makes to local insight, system learning, and partnership working across health and social care in the city;
- The importance of ensuring that any future arrangements continue to provide a clear, accessible and independent mechanism for people to share their views and experiences.

Council resolves:

- to express its strong support and appreciation for Healthwatch York for representing the views of service users locally for over a decade, and for the work of York's Health and Care Partnership Executive Committee in continuing to promote the importance of Healthwatch's work, including keeping this independent function within the York health system.

Council further resolves to:

- Request the Council Leader writes to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care requesting a review of the proposed legislative changes, to ensure that any future model continues to provide a robust, truly independent and trusted mechanism for representing patient and public voices; and
- Request the Executive Member for Health and Adult Social Care, including as Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, works constructively with local partners, including the Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, local MPs and voluntary and community sector organisations, as well as York's Health and Care Partnership, to promote and protect independent advocacy for York residents.
- Commit that any future arrangements to replace or replicate the functions of Healthwatch must be delivered by an independent body, separate from the Council, NHS providers, and commissioners.

14.2 Fair Votes For All

This motion was moved by Councillor Hook and seconded by Councillor Knight.

Following a number of speakers, the motion set out below was voted on and carried.

Resolved – That with the addition and deletion of the appropriate words, the motion be amended to read as follows:

Council notes:

- The First Past the Post (FPTP) voting system originated when parliament was dominated by land-owning aristocrats and the vote restricted to property-owning men.
- In Europe, only the UK and authoritarian Belarus still use single-round FPTP for general elections. By contrast, more than 80 countries worldwide use forms of Proportional Representation (PR).
- The 2024 General Election delivered the most disproportional and unrepresentative Parliament in British electoral history. The winning party was elected with 63.2% of MPs (411 out of 650) on a UK vote share of just 33.7% - this was the lowest ever vote share for any government with an overall House of Commons majority.
- PR ensures all votes count, have equal value, and that seats won match votes cast. Under PR, parliaments and local authorities more accurately reflect both local communities and the nation as a whole.
- PR already operates successfully for elections to the devolved parliaments and assemblies of Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, as well as for the London Assembly and local authorities in Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- The Government recently published the Representation of the People Bill.

Council believes:

- When MPs and councillors better reflect the communities they represent, decision-making improves, participation widens, and trust in politics increases.
- The Representation of the People Bill is a step in the right direction. For example, it proposes votes for 16- and 17- year-olds, automatic voter registration, measures to prevent foreign donors from buying their way into UK politics and a strengthening of the law to protect candidates and campaigners from harassment and intimidation.
- It is disappointing that the Bill contains nothing on electoral reform.
- FPTP is not fit for purpose in a modern democracy, and PR is the fairest way to elect MPs and local councillors.
- There is now broad cross-party support for PR, including from the Liberal Democrats, Green Party, SNP, Plaid Cymru, Reform

UK and the Labour Party at its national conference, alongside many trade unions and prodemocracy organisations.

Council resolves to:

- Ask Group Leaders to individually write to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Minister for Building Safety, Fire and Democracy attaching a full copy of this motion and specifically calling for the Government to urgently establish a National Commission on Electoral Reform with clear terms of reference, as proposed by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Fair Elections, which should report in time for any recommendations to be implemented before the next General Election, and to provide copies of these letters to the MPs for York Outer and York Central and the Mayor of York and North Yorkshire.
- Publicly affirm this Council's support for PR as an essential element of a modern and democratic United Kingdom.

14.3 Impact of Business Rates Revaluation

This motion was moved by Councillor Healey and seconded by Councillor Waller. It incorporated an amendment (as set out in the supplementary agenda pack), moved by Councillor Whitcroft and seconded by Councillor Baxter.

Following a number of speakers, the motion, as amended and set out below was then voted on and carried.

Resolved – That with the addition and deletion of the appropriate words, the motion be amended to read as follows:

Council notes:

- The revaluation of commercial properties for business rates due to take effect on 1 April 2026.
- Early draft valuations indicate a range of falls and increases in rateable values for many businesses across York.
- Analysis by industry bodies suggests hospitality businesses could face average increases of over £32,000 in business rates over the next three years, a figure estimated before the Government made amendments in January to the new business rates system launching in April.

- Changes to the business rates system are in part due to the ending of temporary Covid-era support.
- Small hospitality businesses alone were estimated to face £318 million in additional business rate costs nationally over a three-year period, until the Government listened to feedback and announced an additional 15% in relief for pubs and live music venues, on top of other relief, to reduce their liabilities over the same three-year period.
- These increases come at a time when many businesses in York are already facing rising costs from National Insurance increases, higher energy bills and supply chain pressures.
- Businesses that form the backbone of York's local communities, including pubs, cafés, pharmacies, childcare providers, veterinary practices and independent retailers are particularly exposed.
- The Government's forthcoming High Streets Strategy, and the positive contribution to York's High Streets through the Mayor's Vibrant and Sustainable High Street Fund, which is providing important investment in York, including in Stonegate, Haxby and Wigginton and Walmgate.
- Some businesses in York may lose eligibility for Small Business Rates Relief, creating sudden increases in liabilities, however the replacement Supporting Small Business Relief will provide relief on bills for eligible businesses, capping increases at no more than £800 per year.
- The Labour Government's recognition of the financial challenges facing the economy after 14 years of austerity, led by Liberal Democrats and Conservatives in Government, and following international economic shocks, as well as its efforts to rebuild our high streets through its High Street Review, alongside addressing funding challenges in the hospitality sector.
- The work of the Labour MP for York Central with York BID, Indie York, York High Street Forum as well as businesses throughout the city with the aim of ensuring the success of York's high street is maintained, and through the Treasury and in Parliament in making the case for support for York businesses.

Council believes:

- The current business rates system places a disproportionate burden on bricks-and-mortar businesses.

- Property-based taxation risks penalising businesses in York which provide local jobs and community services and help create vibrant local high streets, while online competitors face far lower costs.
- Sudden increases in rate liabilities, if not cushioned through the Government's transitional support, are likely to have an adverse impact on York's well performing high streets and increase the risk of business closures.

Council resolves:

- To ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Government to request that it reconsider the implementation of the 2026 business rates revaluation where it results in sudden and significant increases in liabilities for SME businesses.
- To request that officers consider what advice and support the council, working with partners in the business community, can offer to York businesses losing Small Business Rates Relief or facing sudden and significant increases, should there be cases where those businesses won't be in receipt of the replacement Supporting Small Business Relief, or transitional relief to cushion this change.
- To ask the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive Officer to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer expressing York's concerns about the impact of sudden and significant business rate increases on SME local businesses and high streets, and to include local examples in its forthcoming High Streets Strategy to highlight York's success.
- To ask the Executive to work with the Combined Authority Mayor to make Government aware of the problem faced by many small businesses who would like to expand but face challenges doing so due to the VAT threshold acting as a disincentive.
- To call on the Government, through the requested Council Leader letter above, to review the entire business rates system to level the playing field between large multinational corporations and small businesses, and between online and bricks and mortar businesses.

[Councillors Ayre and Fenton left the meeting during consideration of 14.1 Protecting York's Independent Patient Voice-Healthwatch. Cllr Warters left the meeting at the start of the item.]

95. Calendar of Meetings 2026-2027 (9.47pm)

The Director of Governance submitted a report which recommended approval of the calendar of meetings for 2026/27.

Resolved:

That Council approve the calendar of meetings for 2026/27.

Reasons:

i. To provide a framework for the democratic and decisionmaking functions which will underpin delivery of the Council's corporate priorities.
ii. To ensure that the calendar of meetings is implemented to assist with the forward planning and better management of meetings.

Councillor Martin Rowley BEM
LORD MAYOR OF YORK
[The meeting started at 6.41 pm and concluded at 9.47 pm]