

## AGENDA SUPPLEMENT

### Executive

**To:** Councillors Douglas (Chair), Kilbane (Vice-Chair), Kent, Lomas, Pavlovic, Ravilious, Steels-Walshaw and Webb

**Date:** Tuesday, 12 May 2026

**Time:** 4.30 pm

**Venue:** West Offices - Station Rise, York YO1 6GA

The agenda for the above meeting was published on **Friday, 1 May 2026**. The attached additional documents are now available for the following agenda item:

### 3. **Public Participation** (Pages 3 - 26)

Ten written representations have been received in relation to agenda item 6, York Christmas Market Operating Hours and Economic Impact.

This agenda supplement was published on **Monday, 11 May 2026**

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To the Executive Members of the City of York Council

**Subject: Formal Objection to the Proposed Weekly Closure of the York Christmas Market**

I am writing to formally express my concerns regarding the proposal to close the York Christmas Market for one day each week. While I understand the Council may be seeking to balance various operational or logistical pressures, this strategy is fundamentally flawed and poses a significant risk to the city's economic health and reputation.

**1. Economic Impact and the "Cumulative Burden"**

The York retail sector is already navigating a difficult economic climate. Recent increases in car parking charges have already led to a noticeable decline in footfall and trade for local shops. By removing one day of the market per week, the Council is effectively imposing a **14% (1/7th) reduction in trade** during the city's most critical fiscal period. For many local businesses, the Christmas season provides the surplus required to survive the quieter months of Q1; cutting this capacity is a direct threat to their viability.

**2. Public Safety and Policing Advice**

It is my understanding that this proposal runs contrary to professional police advice. A staggered or intermittent closure does not necessarily simplify the security landscape. In fact, it creates inconsistency in crowd management patterns. Furthermore, if an unfortunate incident were to occur on a day the market was "closed," the national and international media would still report the event as an attack on the **"York Christmas Market."** The reputational damage would be identical, rendering the closure a redundant security measure that offers no actual protection to the city's brand.

**3. Accessibility and the Secure Zone**

York's city centre is uniquely compact. While its small size is part of its charm, it necessitates a more thoughtful approach to accessibility. The current "secure zone" restrictions significantly hinder those with mobility issues. Rather than reducing market days, the Council should be focused on **increasing the provision of disabled parking** in immediate proximity to the secure zone. Accessibility should be improved to ensure the market remains inclusive, rather than reducing the opportunity for all residents to attend.

**4. Operational Inefficiency**

Closing the market for one day a week does not remove the infrastructure; the chalets and equipment remain in situ, occupying public space without providing any economic return or festive atmosphere. It creates a "dead zone" in the heart of the city, which is detrimental to the aesthetic and commercial appeal of York.

I urge the Executive to reconsider this proposal and instead work with local businesses and security partners to ensure the market remains open for its full duration, supported by better accessibility and a fair parking strategy.

Yours sincerely,

Phil Pinder  
Leader, York High Street Forum

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FAO CYC Executive Team  
City of York Council  
West Offices  
Station Rise  
York  
YO1 6GA

7<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Dear Members,

### **York Christmas Market Operating Hours and Economic Impact**

I am writing further to my previous submissions to Executive in March and April 2026 regarding the York Christmas Market and the wider approach to city centre events, accessibility and security. Having reviewed the latest report on York Christmas Market Operating Hours and Economic Impact, I wish to reiterate several continuing concerns on behalf of York BID and our levy-paying businesses.

York BID supports ongoing dialogue with the Council and partners to improve accessibility and inclusivity in the city centre, and we recognise the complexity of balancing this with economic vitality and public safety. We have welcomed engagement through task and finish work and remain committed to constructive partnership working. Our core concerns regarding the Christmas Market remain unchanged.

The Christmas Market is a cornerstone of York's winter economy. It supports not only market traders, but a much wider network of independent retailers, hospitality businesses, accommodation providers and attractions that rely on increased footfall during this period. These businesses are already operating under significant pressure from rising costs and fragile consumer confidence – this was noted by business speakers at the last Exec. Against this backdrop, reducing the Market to six operating days introduces a material risk to business viability during the most important trading period of the year.

The report itself acknowledges that the Christmas Market drives substantial footfall and spend, with November and December accounting for a significant proportion of annual city centre trade. Even under cautious assumptions, a weekly market closure could lead to several million pounds of lost spend over the event period. While some displacement may occur, for many businesses lost trade on a closed day cannot simply be recovered elsewhere, particularly for those with fixed staffing and supply commitments.

As raised previously, there is also concern about who ultimately benefits from a one-day closure model. Will a one day weekly closure substantially benefit residents or blue badge holders? It will not deliver the consistent, long-term accessibility improvements many disabled residents have sought, while creating disproportionate economic harm.

There are also reputational risks. Visitors plan trips to York well in advance, often including overnight stays. Experience has shown that even changes to opening hours have caused confusion and frustration. A full closure day heightens this risk, despite planned communications activity.

Finally, I would reiterate a concern I raised at March Executive regarding the late involvement of police and counter-terrorism specialists in earlier stages of this work. The subsequent deferral of decisions following late advice underscores the importance of embedding all key partners from the outset.

York BID supports continued work on long-term, sustainable access solutions that operate consistently throughout the year. We do not believe removing a trading day from one of the city's most significant events represents the right balance.

I trust Executive will give careful consideration to the economic, operational and reputational impacts before reaching a final decision. Most importantly, I hope it recognises the limited partner working that has led to late decisions and looks to address this going forward.

Yours Sincerely ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Lowson', enclosed within a hand-drawn, irregular oval shape.

Andrew Lowson  
Executive Director

**Executive meeting on Tuesday, 12 May 2026**

**Written representation in relation to agenda item 6, York Christmas Market Operating Hours and Economic Impact**

Dear Executive Members,

I have traded at the Christmas market for the last 5 years and it has always been successful. As a small business the Christmas market makes up a large majority of my takings for the year with the focus for the year being Christmas time and the York Christmas market. I appreciate that access is needed for blue badge holders but I feel closing the market for a day a week isn't in the best interests of either the market traders or the other local businesses in York.

A lost day's trade, which in effect 5 or 6 days across the whole market, is crippling for a small business like myself and with that kind of loss I may have to look at trading elsewhere in 2027 which would be a real shame as I love being part of the York market for both the success it brings my business and the atmosphere it creates.

From my point of view, and from many of the other traders and local businesses I have spoken with, it doesn't seem to be in the best interests of local business or trade to shut the Christmas market for a day a week and would definitely be detrimental to my business. I think there are other avenues to explore to accommodate the needs of the blue badge holders that would serve both the blue badge holders and local businesses.

Yours sincerely,

Lee Clayton  
Nutty's Emporium

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**Executive meeting on Tuesday, 12 May 2026**

**Written representation in relation to agenda item 6, York Christmas Market Operating Hours and Economic Impact**

Dear Executive Members and Statutory Officers,

This administration once again is going against the very specific advice of the police and their specialist units. Reading between the lines of the report, the police are making it very clear if the Executive goes against this advice the responsibility of related incidents caused by allowing vehicles gained their advice, falls on the Council entirely.

My concern is that (as I said previously) any negative impacts of a terrorist attack whether on businesses, individuals or any security/police personnel could fall on the Council, via Corporate Manslaughter or other legal action.

Please can the statutory officers address at the meeting:

1. What CYC insurance coverage is costing to mitigate against this likelihood, if it is indeed available?
2. What legal risk assessment has been undertaken by the Monitoring Officer to address the legal risks, including, but not limited to, corporate manslaughter?
3. In view of the request to lodge a key Corporate Risk in the register, with a responsible named officer, can that person, as well as the two statutory officers state clearly what their advice on the market closure, and opening Goodramgate (of course it is always Goodramgate) to vehicles was?
4. What evidence was considered that convinced the administration, that the lives of people in Goodramgate and King's Square were less valued than those outside McDonalds and Betty's?

Thank you,

Gwen Swinburn

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**Executive meeting on Tuesday, 12 May 2026**

**Written representation in relation to agenda item 6, York Christmas Market Operating Hours and Economic Impact**

Dear Executive Members,

Made in Yorkshire has for over 20 years taken part in the York Christmas Market, in various locations. We have occupied marquees on St Sampson's Square, in turn, taking chalets once these were introduced on Parliament Street, creating our own Yorkshire Yuletide Village in the shambles market area and now taking that same "Yorkshire Yuletide Village" to the Guildhall, off St Helens Square. We have formed a key part of the York Christmas market offering.

The York Christmas Market is an integral part of our show season and offers over 50 of our local businesses who trade at the Yorkshire Yuletide Village show, under the Made in Yorkshire banner, a critical and sustaining part of their annual trade. The Christmas show is for most of our businesses a show that provides a crucial opportunity to trade over a period that is a profitable one, income that allows them to survive in the post-Christmas slump, before shows recommence in the spring. The Christmas Market provides opportunity to trade over several continuous weeks and is vital for many businesses to survive.

Made in Yorkshire does not support the closing of the market on a Tuesday as we believe this would have very damaging effects on the success of the show. Whilst we appreciate this would not mean that the show in The Guildhall would be forced to close, we do anticipate a huge drop in visitor numbers to the city on those days. Over the course of the show, this will have a massive impact on trade for both exhibitors within Made in Yorkshire as well as across the city. We have seen firsthand the positive effect the Christmas market and its Christmas visitors have on the hospitality, leisure and retail industry within the city including those 100+ traders within the market itself. Whilst the closing of the Christmas Market every Tuesday might be perceived to be a solution for those needing access to the city, the negative effects this will have on our local

businesses are far reaching. Local businesses, hoteliers, restaurant owners, parking providers, and transport providers are only a few who will suffer.

In a time when business is tough anyway, with an onslaught of global and regional issues affecting businesses, we fear that any downturn in trade at that time of year might have an impact on many businesses, many who rely heavily on trade at that time of year, many whose businesses might not recover. Businesses are going through a rough time at the moment with increasing taxes, the slowing down of public spending, and the increase in costs in running a business. For many, they will be just "surviving" this year, and we fear how this extra factor might affect their businesses.

I wonder whether an authorised shuttle service for those who need access to the centre would be more suitable. Could there be a dedicated space just outside the pedestrian zone where those affected could park and be brought in by electric carts (or any form of transport deemed safe and secure enough) to avoid having closed the whole market.

I am aware that there are many factors to consider but we wanted to express our thoughts before a final decision was made.

Thank you once again for the opportunity.

Kind regards,

Tracie Jarvis-Post  
Made in Yorkshire Director

**Executive meeting on Tuesday, 12 May 2026**

**Written representation in relation to agenda item 6, York Christmas Market Operating Hours and Economic Impact**

Dear Executive Members,

As the owner and operator of a business that looks after tourists and visitors to York, it seems nonsensical to have a Christmas Market that is only open sometimes. To expect visitors to know, understand and plan around a market that isn't open on every day of the week, is unreasonable and foolhardy. To ask a hotel and hospitality trade to explain to their guests that York is partially closed every Tuesday, so they should plan to visit on other dates, is utter madness. Hospitality is already struggling; why are you determined to make it so much harder and to punish these businesses, for completely intangible benefits?

The benefits of the Christmas Market are felt by businesses right across York, not just by traders at the market. Throughout the festive period, York is known as a great place to come for a visit due to a wide range of factors, of which the Christmas Market is a big, but not singularly defining part. However, York is well-known for its Christmas Market. Closing the market one day per week, without an enormous, continuous and costly public-awareness campaign to make sure people know it is closed on Tuesdays, will forever diminish the reputation of the city and the Christmas Market.

The hours of operation of the Christmas Market are already strangely short, with everything at the market, including its famous (on social media at least) food and drink stalls, closing at 7pm sharp. It is hard not to wonder why York is the only Christmas Market that can't cope with evening visitors and a later closing time. Fancy visiting the market after work, or after a day enjoying the museums in York, or after a day enjoying a tour in the countryside or out to Castle Howard? Well, you better be quick, because we can't possibly stay open past 7pm or a handful of market traders will be unhappy. Are we really unable to work it so that the Shambles Market traders use Church Street as their exit

point at 5pm? Who within the Shambles Market trading group has so much influence over the council that there is no possible solution other than to close Parliament Street and all the chalets that trade on it.

One day closed each week might not seem like much to some, but in reality it is a great big signal from York Council, on behalf of all York businesses, that York is only a part-time city – “DON'T COME ON TUESDAYS!”.

I am firmly opposed to any plan that closes the market one day per week.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Magee,  
Grand Yorkshire Ltd.

**Executive meeting on Tuesday, 12 May 2026**

**Written representation in relation to agenda item 6, York Christmas Market Operating Hours and Economic Impact**

Dear Executive Members,

I am writing as a resident of York City Centre to formally object to the proposed closure of the York Christmas Market on Tuesdays throughout the six-week duration of the event.

I work every weekend without exception, which means that midweek is the only opportunity I have to visit the Christmas market. A guaranteed Tuesday closure for the entire six-week period effectively means I would be unable to attend the market at all this year. As someone who lives in York city centre, I find it deeply frustrating that an event held on my doorstep would be inaccessible to me due to my working pattern.

I am not alone in this. A significant proportion of people who work in hospitality, retail, healthcare, and other weekend-dependent industries face exactly the same situation. These are often the very people who contribute most to making York a vibrant city throughout the year, and yet this proposal would exclude us entirely from one of the city's most valued seasonal events. Not to mention, the negative effect it would have on the atmosphere and aesthetics of the City.

The York Christmas Market should be accessible to all residents, not just those who work a traditional Monday to Friday week. A Tuesday closure lasting six consecutive weeks is not a minor inconvenience — for workers like me, it is a complete barrier to attendance.

I strongly urge York City Council to reconsider this proposal. At the very minimum, I would ask that the council gives proper consideration to the significant number of residents whose only realistic opportunity to attend falls on a weekday, and that this group is not overlooked in the decision-making process.

Yours sincerely,

Georgia Marsden  
York City Centre Resident

**Executive meeting on Tuesday, 12 May 2026**

**Written representation in relation to agenda item 6, York Christmas Market Operating Hours and Economic Impact**

Dear Executive Members,

I am writing as a long-standing York business operator with significant involvement in the city centre economy, including the Christmas Market period, to express my strong opposition to the proposal to close the York Christmas Market for one day per week in order to permit unrestricted vehicle access into the pedestrianised city centre.

I fully recognise the importance of accessibility and understand the concerns raised regarding Blue Badge access. However, I do not believe that closing one of York's busiest and most economically important trading days is a proportionate or necessary solution.

York is not unique in operating a Christmas market within a pedestrianised historic city centre. Across the UK, there are dozens of major Christmas markets successfully operating in heavily pedestrianised environments with restricted vehicle access during trading hours and manage significant festive footfall while maintaining largely vehicle-free market environments.

Examples of UK towns and cities operating major Christmas markets within pedestrianised or heavily vehicle-restricted city centres include:

- Manchester Christmas Markets
- Birmingham Frankfurt Christmas Market
- Bath Christmas Market
- Lincoln Christmas Market
- Winchester Cathedral Christmas Market
- Edinburgh Christmas Market
- Nottingham Winter Wonderland
- Leeds Christmas Market
- Newcastle Christmas Market

- Cambridge Christmas Market
- Chester Christmas Market
- Durham Christmas Festival
- Exeter Christmas Market
- Salisbury Christmas Market
- Cardiff Christmas Market.

These events operate successfully within pedestrian-priority environments and do not routinely suspend trading for one day each week in order to restore general civilian vehicle access through the market footprint.

While access arrangements vary between cities, the wider national trend is clear: major Christmas markets are increasingly operated within managed pedestrianised zones due to crowd safety, visitor experience and security considerations.

These cities do not suspend their Christmas markets one day per week to reintroduce civilian vehicle access through the market footprint. Instead, they operate within the accepted reality that major festive events in historic city centres require temporary pedestrian priority, security measures and managed access arrangements.

This has increasingly become standard practice nationally for several reasons:

- Public safety and crowd management
- Counter-terror and hostile vehicle mitigation requirements
- The practical realities of operating high-footfall pedestrian events
- The protection of visitor experience and city centre trading.

York's Christmas Market is not simply a retail event. It is one of the city's largest tourism drivers and a major contributor to the wider hospitality, retail and visitor economy. Hotels, cafés, bars, restaurants, attractions, shops and market traders all rely heavily on the consistency and momentum generated during the Christmas period.

Closing the market for one full day every week would create several negative consequences:

- Confusion for visitors and tourists
- Reputational damage nationally and online
- Reduced visitor confidence and footfall
- Significant financial harm to independent businesses and traders
- Reduced staffing hours and seasonal employment opportunities
- Fragmentation of what is intended to be a continuous festive experience.

Importantly, this proposal risks creating the impression that York is unable to successfully operate a Christmas market under the same conditions already managed by many other UK cities.

The central question should therefore be:

Why does York need to close its Christmas Market one day per week when numerous comparable UK cities successfully operate theirs within pedestrianised zones without doing so?

I believe there is a risk that the proposed closure would cause disproportionate economic and reputational harm while failing to reflect established national practice for major Christmas events in historic city centres.

I would respectfully urge the council to instead explore alternative accessibility solutions that do not require the suspension of a major city-wide economic event. There are likely to be more balanced approaches available that support accessibility while preserving the continuity, safety and viability of York's Christmas Market.

York's Christmas Market has become one of the defining parts of the city's festive identity and visitor economy. Weakening it through weekly closures would, in my view, be a mistake with long-term consequences for businesses, tourism and public perception of the city centre.

York should be aspiring to match the successful operation of these nationally recognised markets, rather than weakening its own offer through regular closures.

Yours faithfully,

Emily Nicholls  
Senior Manger  
Woody's of York

**Executive meeting on Tuesday, 12 May 2026**

**Written representation in relation to agenda item 6, York Christmas Market Operating Hours and Economic Impact**

Dear Executive Members,

I would like to express my disappointment regarding the proposal for a six-day Christmas Market trading week. While I completely understand the desire to make the market enjoyable and manageable for everyone, I do not feel this proposal represents a balanced solution and instead risks being unnecessarily damaging to the many businesses that rely on the increased footfall generated during the Christmas season.

For many independent traders and city centre businesses, Christmas is by far the most important trading period of the year. Reduced trading days will inevitably have a significant impact on turnover, staffing hours, and business viability during the busiest season for local commerce.

Although Street Traders may technically still be able to operate when the market itself is closed, the reality is that our businesses rely heavily on visibility. During the Christmas Market period, our stalls are already significantly obscured by the huts, structures and infrastructure associated with the event. This loss of visibility is only offset by the increased footfall and activity generated when the market is open and operating fully. Closing for a day would therefore inflict significant economic damage.

The festive period is what allows many small independent businesses, including my own, to survive the traditionally very poor trading months from January through to March. Any reduction in trade during this period therefore carries consequences far beyond Christmas itself.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this point of view.

Many thanks,  
Tom Jackson, Local Street Trader

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**Executive meeting on Tuesday, 12 May 2026**

**Written representation in relation to agenda item 6, York Christmas Market Operating Hours and Economic Impact**

Dear Executive Members,

I am writing to formally object to the proposed closure of York Christmas Market on Tuesdays during the 2026 season. As a freelance marketing professional with experience in destination marketing, visitor engagement and event promotion, I have serious concerns about the reputational and commercial impact this decision could have, particularly as a number of my clients are based in York city centre and are directly affected by the Christmas Markets.

**Visitor Expectation and Reputation**

York Christmas Market has built a strong reputation as a reliable festive destination operating throughout its advertised dates. Most visitors do not closely check operational schedules before travelling; they reasonably assume that a major Christmas market runs daily.

Introducing a weekly closure creates unnecessary uncertainty around the visitor experience. Once people begin questioning whether the market is operating on certain days, confidence weakens, particularly among day visitors, short-break tourists and those travelling from outside the region.

No communications strategy, however comprehensive, can guarantee full awareness of a mid-week closure. Visitors who arrive on a Tuesday to find the market shut are likely to post about it. Negative press coverage, reviews and social media content can spread quickly and remain visible for years.

A single season of “we came all this way and it was closed” content could undermine years of positive reputation building and affect visitor confidence for future seasons. In tourism marketing, perception becomes reality very quickly.

### **The Marketing Challenge**

From a marketing perspective, communicating a weekly closure effectively would be extremely difficult. Visitors discover Christmas markets through a wide mix of sources including search engines, social media, tourism websites, hotel recommendations, travel guides, third-party listings and older online content from previous years.

Historic content from earlier seasons will continue circulating throughout 2026, reinforcing the expectation that the market operates daily. Once information is reshared across social media and external tourism websites, it becomes very difficult to control.

To minimise confusion and reputational damage, a significant communications campaign would likely be needed throughout the season. This could involve paid advertising, repeated social media messaging, updated signage and print materials, tourism partner coordination, PR activity and active online reputation management.

A genuinely effective awareness campaign to support weekly closures could realistically cost £25,000–£50,000 once paid advertising, updated signage and print materials, tourism partner coordination, PR activity and ongoing online reputation management are taken into account. Even with substantial marketing investment, there would still be no guarantee that all visitors receive or retain the message.

The fact that such a large and costly campaign would be needed simply to explain the closure highlights the reputational risk created by the proposal itself.

### **Tuesdays Remain Commercially Valuable**

The assumption that Tuesdays are commercially insignificant during the Christmas market season does not necessarily hold. December weekdays attract office parties, retired visitors, school groups and short-break tourists, many of whom deliberately choose weekdays to avoid weekend crowds.

Visitors who arrive on a closed Tuesday are also unlikely simply to return another day. Many will have planned specific travel dates, overnight stays or day trips around their visit. Once that opportunity is lost, the wider commercial benefit to the city is often lost as well.

### **Long-Term Impact**

Reducing trading days sets a precedent that may prove difficult to reverse. York Christmas Market has spent years building a reputation as a consistent and accessible festive destination. Introducing weekly closures risks weakening public confidence in the reliability of the experience being promoted.

### **Recommendation**

I strongly recommend that Make It York maintains the market's full trading schedule throughout the 2026 season. If operational pressures or cost concerns are driving this proposal, I would encourage consultation with traders, hospitality businesses and marketing professionals to explore alternatives that do not involve closing the market on any advertised trading day.

Many thanks,

Charlotte Bodman

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