

City of York Council

Resolutions and proceedings of the Meeting of the City of York Council held in the Guildhall, York on Thursday, 17 July 2025, starting at 6.30 pm

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

Acomb Ward

Lomas
Rose

Bishopthorpe Ward

Nicholls

Clifton Ward

D Myers
Wells

Copmanthorpe Ward

Steward

Dringhouses & Woodthorpe Ward

Fenton
Mason
Widdowson

Fishergate Ward

Whitcroft
Wilson

Fulford and Heslington Ward

Ravilious

Guildhall Ward

Clarke
Melly

Haxby & Wigginton Ward

Cuthbertson
Hollyer
Watson

Heworth Ward

B Burton
Douglas
Webb

Heworth Without Ward

Ayre

Holgate Ward

Kent
Steels-Walshaw
K Taylor

Hull Road Ward

Baxter
Moroney
Pavlovic

Huntington and New Earswick Ward

Cullwick
Orrell
Runciman

Micklegate Ward

J Burton
Crawshaw
Kilbane

Osballdwike and Derwent Ward

Warters

Rawcliffe and Clifton Without Ward

Wann
Waudby

Rural West York Ward

Hook
Knight

Strensall Ward

Fisher
Healey

Westfield Ward

Coles
Nelson
Waller

Wheldrake Ward

Vassie

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Merrett and Smalley.

13. Apologies for Absence (6.37 pm)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Merrett and Smalley.

14. Declarations of Interest (6.37 pm)

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.

In respect of Agenda item 14 (Motions on Notice), specifically the motion titled 'Supporting York's small businesses', Cllr Kilbane declared a pecuniary interest in a business trading on Bishopthorpe Road, noting that having sought advice from the Monitoring Officer, he had clearance to participate in debate on the motion. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that as the item under debate was a general point about 30-minute parking restrictions across wherever they may have been, rather than specifically relating to Bishopthorpe Road only, there was not a direct impact on Cllr Kilbane's interest.

In respect of Agenda item 14 (Motions on Notice), specifically the motion titled 'Non-proliferation of fossil fuels', Cllr Knight declared a pecuniary interest as an employee of Northern Gas Networks.

15. Minutes (6.40 pm)

Resolved: That the minutes of the Council meetings held on 27 March 2025 and 22 May 2025 be approved and then signed by the Chair as a correct record.

16. Civic Announcements (6.40 pm)

The Lord Mayor provided Council with an update on the activities of the Civic Party over his first eight weeks of office. He noted that 110 engagements had been undertaken, thanking Cllr Wells for undertaking a number of these as Deputy Lord Mayor. He noted that highlights included meeting people of all ages, ethnicities and backgrounds across a range of events that demonstrated York's

traditions, diversity, links with the armed forces, and the city's sporting achievements.

With reference to his commitment to visit every school and college in the city, the Lord Mayor confirmed he had visited 20 so far and had been touched by the reception and questions from schoolchildren. He thanked officers, especially the Civic Party's PA, for their support and guidance in the discharging of civic duties.

17. Public Participation (6.46 pm)

It was reported that eight members of the public had registered to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation scheme.

Flick Williams spoke on Agenda item 8 (Questions to the Leader or Executive Members) in relation to the impact of the government's legislative agenda on disabled citizens of York. Noting the fears felt by many, she questioned the absence of the Disability Pride flag from the Mansion House and highlighted a rise in disability hate crime.

Gwen Swinburn spoke in relation to governance matters, highlighting the support of businesses in the Groves for a statutory challenge to increases in parking charges. Noting increased parking pressures in the area, she suggested that the charges were unlawful and presented a parking review request to the Lord Mayor.

Phil Pinder, participating remotely, spoke in relation to increased car parking charges. Expressing concern over the impact of increases on city centre residents and businesses, he noted a fall in retail sales and customer numbers, especially among York residents, warning that a city centre solely for tourists was neither sustainable nor desirable.

Emma Hardy spoke regarding the implications for Council services of the Supreme Court's recent ruling on biological sex under Equality Act. Highlighting the safeguarding of single-sex spaces, she criticised the Council Leader's comments at a protest against the ruling and called on Members to hold the Council to account in this area.

Virginia Shaw spoke in relation to the motion on fossil fuel non-proliferation at Agenda item 14 (Motions on Notice). Urging support for the Non-Proliferation Treaty, she highlighted the importance of a just and equitable transition away from fossil fuel use, noting that York would be the first council in Yorkshire to endorse the Treaty.

Charlotte Freeman spoke regarding the same motion at Agenda item 14 on behalf of the Parents for Future York group. Emphasising that climate change was a global emergency of which fossil fuel use was the primary driver, she highlighted the importance of setting an example, and children's right to a safe and liveable planet.

Sarah Perkin of Parents for Future York also spoke in relation to the motion on fossil fuel non-proliferation, noting that climate change was becoming more extreme and unpredictable. Highlighting the need for systemic change, she noted the relevance of York's Human Rights City status, urging Council to support the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Sean Hagan spoke in support of the motion and amendment on improving equality of access to elections, also at Agenda item 14. Drawing attention to the issue of voter disengagement and the erosion of trust in democracy, he called on Members to support the proposal to introduce a proportional voting system for both national and local elections.

18. Petitions (7.11 pm)

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

- a) Cllr Warters regarding the maintenance of Fulford Cemetery.¹
- b) Cllr Warters regarding capping the numbers of university students in the city.²
- c) Cllr Mason regarding parking charges.³
- d) Cllr Hook regarding a 20mph speed limit in Poppleton.⁴
- e) Cllr Fenton regarding replacing the zebra crossing on Beckfield Lane in Acomb with a push button crossing.⁵

- f) Cllr Clarke, on behalf of Cllr Merrett, regarding parking charges and Traffic Regulation Orders in relation to parking in the Groves.⁶
- g) Cllr Hollyer regarding dualling York's Outer Ring Road.⁷

Action Required

- | | |
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| 1. Keep updated the petitions log in relation to the maintenance of Fulford Cemetery. | CL |
| 2. Keep updated the petitions log in relation to capping the numbers of university students in the city. | CL |
| 3. Keep updated the petitions log in relation to parking charges | LC |
| 4. Keep updated the petitions log in relation to a 20mph speed limit in Poppleton | LC |
| 5. Keep updated the petitions log in relation to replacing the zebra crossing on Beckfield Lane in Acomb with a push button crossing | LC |
| 6. Keep updated the petitions log in relation to parking charges and Traffic Regulation Orders in relation to parking in the Groves. | LC |
| 7. Keep updated the petitions log in relation to dualling York's Outer Ring Road. | LC |

[The meeting adjourned between 7.19 pm and 7.30 pm].

19. Report of the Leader and Executive (7.30 pm)

A written report was received from Cllr Douglas, Leader of the Council, on the work of the Executive.

Cllr Douglas was joined by the other Group Leaders in welcoming the Lord Mayor to his first ordinary Council meeting in the Chair, and in paying tribute to the Chief Operating Officer, Ian Floyd, who was due to retire in 2026 after 17 years' service to the Council.

It was also noted that the recent Ofsted inspection had rated the Council's Children's Services as Outstanding in all areas, and congratulations were offered to the Director and officers.

Following a point of order being raised by Cllr Nelson pursuant to Rule B19 (1) (b) in relation to the language used by Cllr Steward, Cllr Steward withdrew a comment in relation to paternity leave.

20. Questions to the Leader or Executive Members (7.42 pm)

Members were invited to question the Leader or Executive Members. Questions were received from the floor from the following Members, and replied to as indicated:

Questions to Cllr Douglas, Leader of the Council

Armed Forces Day

From Cllr Healey: It was reported in the *Independent* that the Peace Pledge Union threatened to protest the Armed Forces Day if military equipment was displayed. Will the Council Leader condemn these threats and ensure that in future years we properly honour our Armed Forces?

Response: I'm afraid I can't really give you a full answer as quite frankly it is just fake news. So much of what was printed was absolutely, totally and utterly not the case at all, and I would say to Cllr Steward as well on that note, the fact that you said there was a ban on military vehicles is just absolutely not the case. So, what can I say – fake news, nothing to answer.

Supplementary from Cllr Healey: A surprising answer, I must say. Could the Council Leader please elaborate then on whether there were residents' concerns, and who those residents were, particularly if they were part of an organisation, and whether any directive, advice, conversations therefore happened with the military organisations about equipment as certainly one of the cadet forces have relayed on to myself that they were asked by the media not to bring equipment?

Response: I can say to you that of course there were resident concerns made about the presence of military vehicles and also decommissioned arms on Council land, yes there were, but they weren't from any organisations, they were from individuals who wrote to me, just as I'm sure they wrote to many people across the chamber about concerns that they have. And what I did was I decided to take a balanced approach and thought about the potential for any protest for people with concerns about that, no particular organisation, and on balance with discussion with our military partners we decided that it was the best thing to ask the Queen's Own Yeomanry to see if they would be consenting of not bringing that equipment. And so that is the conversation that was had, it was a reasonable conversation, it was balanced, and unfortunately what we have at this point in time is a press that once they think that there is a wedge issue that can drive division in our communities and they see this issue as one of those, then

they started to print fake news, and that's where we ended up. So I think we all need to think about the language that we use. There was no ban on anything, I must have said this numerous times; it was a reasonable conversation between participants, there was a decision made, unfortunately the Queen's Own Yeomanry therefore decided not to attend. They were more than welcome to, and that is all I can tell you. There is nothing more to it.

Supplementary from Cllr Mason: Will the Leader commit to a cross-party review for next year's Armed Forces Day to make sure we can get an appropriate location, get it on the date that everyone else is celebrating it, a plan something that we feel is appropriate for a city with such a military history and with so many veterans living here?

Response: Yes. On that, I don't know whether others were aware, but the plan was to have a similar day as happened in 2024, the football game at the Community Stadium which was really well attended. Unfortunately because of the Women's Rugby World Cup coming to York this year, the stadium had to raise the pitch and reseed earlier than they would do in an average year, hence that event couldn't take place. So the officers and the team have already booked that date in for a similar time period, it will be in early July I believe, and everybody is thoroughly looking forward to getting back to that. I also must mention to everybody that our military partners – the garrison, the Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer from Imphal Barracks – there was a joint decision made a couple of years ago now that Armed Forces Day in York should be about a day that people who are armed forces and their families can come together and have a day that gives them a day off from their work, so anything that requires them to bring equipment or participate in a parade was actively decided against in order to have a more informal, fun day to allow people to celebrate and enjoy with their families. We're looking forward to getting on with that next year and the arrangements are in place already.

Point of order from Cllr Steward: That was in no way the question that was asked, the question that was asked was would there be a cross-party working group set up, not can the Council Leader list lots of potential events that may occur.

Response: It's already organised. Unfortunately, the horse has bolted on this one.

Fair Funding Review

From Cllr Fenton: The government's fair funding review is currently taking place. Can the Leader tell us what representations she has made to the government on this, and if, in the event that

we are not successful in lobbying for York's interests, she will be in a position where she has to raise council tax above the current maximum threshold?

Response: I imagine from that question that you likely have been briefed by officers on the work that they are carrying out at the moment around the likely impact of the fair funding review on York. That is still under assessment as I think you likely know. At this point it is really hard to see exactly where we can lobby in order to have a positive impact for the benefit of York but rest assured, that work is taking place and over the next week or so we will have a better view of that. As far as speaking to other authorities goes, I am speaking to partners, other leaders in other parts of the country, and also to the LGA just to try and understand as much as we possibly can about the fair funding review, and the impact on other authorities as well, if there are any. There will be some losers, and there will be some winners. I am talking to our MPs and our Mayor. We're just waiting for the final assessment as to how to best go about responding to the consultation, but also speaking to government where it's appropriate.

Supplementary from Cllr Ayre: The second part of that question – will you categorically, yes or no, if the government allows you, rule out raising council tax above the current 4.99%?

Response: I have absolutely no idea that that will be necessary, it's just not really a question that has any bearing on our calculations at the moment. But we cannot raise it more than 4.99%, and until we get the go-ahead I really don't see that we'll even be asking for it. Would we be able to do it? It's not really based in any sense of truth or reality at this point in time.

York Central

From Cllr Taylor: Obviously Leeman Road has been rerouted which is a massive and significant development, and probably the first thing that residents in the area can see about the area that's going to change for the rest of their lives. There's been a lot of history around that, there are still live views on it and there's still work to be done to address some of the issues around that, but looking ahead, what work is being done to keep bringing the overall development forward, and what next big things can residents expect to see, and when?

Response: It was absolutely great to see that the travel routes through York Central have now been opened, but of course we're all alert to the challenges that will continue for those communities that are immediately around the development to make sure that they feel that York Central is delivering for them and they are heard within that. I know that engagement from the York Central

Partnership has been taking place and I would really welcome hearing from residents as to how they think that's going. As far as the development goes, I hope that people have taken the opportunity to go and use those travel routes that are open now, there's fantastic cycle paths and footways, bus lanes and also the road, and I think you can see the scale of the project that is ahead for us. We had absolutely commitment from the government about the civil service building that is going to go on there and that is a key part of the development, it's a key anchor tenant and it will drive innovation and also investment into the site, so we should start to see that coming up out of the ground soonish because of course that already has planning permission. The other elements that are going forward are the NRM expansion, that has been given the funding that allows that to take place as well, so that should be starting before the end of the year, in November I think they are hoping to get the spades in the ground on the next stage of their work. And then also the developers on York Central are going to be bringing forward phase one planning applications towards the beginning of 2026, so that we can see up to a thousand homes, including affordable homes, commercial space, green space, so it really is moving ahead. There's always going to be tonnes of work to do, there will always be issues that we need to sort out together. We want to hear from residents as that progresses, so please do get in contact, but it's looking very rosy at the moment.

Supplementary from Cllr Taylor: Thanks for the answer, I suppose one of the big outstanding to-dos on the list is the riverside path upgrade which bumped up the priority list significantly as a result of York Central, so can yourself or maybe the Executive Member for Transport provide an update on where that project is to reassure residents that it's very much still at the top of the agenda and that it will be seen through by this administration?

Response: Absolutely, it is very much a priority, Cllr Ravilious will be better placed to give an update on that.

Additional response from Cllr Ravilious, Executive Member for Transport: Yes, I had a briefing from officers recently, and I'm very happy to talk to you further about that as I can only say a short amount now. We're progressing to detailed design by the end of this year, and in the meantime they're carrying out embankment stability, looking at reinforcing the concrete of the riverbank which needs to be done in parallel. That's getting started this summer, and they are also looking at removing some sort of underground storage with the Environment Agency, which is also taking place this summer. They are doing all the groundwork, and

moving forward with the Traffic Regulation Order as well, so that will come to a Decision Session soon. So it's all progressing, we've got the officers in place, and we are trying to bring that forward as fast as possible.

Supplementary from Cllr Widdowson: Just building on Cllr Douglas' answer, can you confirm that the civil service jobs that are being brought to the site are new civil service jobs, they're not being moved from one place to another?

Response: 2,600 jobs is the capacity of that building, we at this point are expecting that there will be a majority of new jobs in York, but there are already civil service jobs in York, particularly at King's Pool, and so we are waiting to see what's being moved over to York Central, but those plans haven't been finalised yet; it's still a good chunk of new jobs which is great.

Questions to Cllr Kent, Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency

Parks Investment

From Cllr Coles: I understand that this week, and it's in her report, that there has been some budget allocation to spend on parks in the city. I think it's up to a million pounds to invest in park improvements, and pride in place is a really big priority for my Westfield colleague Cllr Nelson and I, and we were at Chesney Fields Park at the weekend. We think there would be a very strong case for Chesney Fields to benefit from this new investment, but I wondered if the Executive Member could set out the types of investment that might be seen through the parks investment fund?

Response: I'm delighted to do so. First of all, if I could just clarify, the investment fund is £500,000, but because officers have done a lot of work on looking at section 106 and third party funding that we can put towards this, it increases it by at least another £200,000, and I'm hoping it will amount to around a million or just under a million in the end, but that last part has still got to be worked through. The criteria that we've set out to use it are fivefold, they're based mainly on areas of indices of multiple deprivation, so areas which have most need, as you'd expect. We are also looking at age since last investment, so areas which haven't had any funding for many years. Some of our playgrounds and parks have not had anything spent on them for over twenty years, some items of equipment are over twenty years old, and you can tell, they are uninspiring to say the least. We need to address some key infrastructure. Because one of our criteria is accessibility for any project that we are able to undertake, we want to make it as accessible to as many people as possible, and part of that is key

infrastructure, things like footpaths. It doesn't sound exciting but it really is exciting if it means you can get into and out of a park safely and easily. It may include removing structures which block sightlines or which make people feel unsafe in the park, and we'll talk to communities about that and also work on the great work that Make Space for Girls has done in looking at how areas are laid out can make people feel that it's inhospitable or that they might feel trapped in corners, so if we can open spaces up or make them feel more friendly and usable we'll focus on that. We also have a priority to try and increase the number of Green Flags in our city, that was a manifesto promise. It was great that we saw Rowntree Park regaining its Flag this week; it missed out last year because of the extended flooding when planting couldn't get done in time. We're now back up to four and I very much hope we'll add to that in the next couple of years with the assistance of this fund. As for Westfield, I myself was out at Chesney Fields with one of the council officers looking at various bits of equipment. Westfield scores quite highly on all of those criteria, so I'd be surprised if there isn't some love and attention paid there which it thoroughly deserves, and I look forward to talking to the communities about that.

Supplementary from Cllr Baxter: Following Cllr Coles' question you won't be surprised that I'm going to ask about Hull Road Park. It's a brilliant park and thanks to the Friends of Hull Road group, they've got a real chance of doing the improvements there that they want, so I wondered if Cllr Kent could highlight what benefits that could bring to my park, and especially in terms of accessibility; we have a great accessible rail which is fantastic for the park, it'd be great to see some more of that throughout the city.

Response: I know your and Cllrs Pavlovic and Moroney, your ward colleagues' love of the park. I've gone along to a Friends of Hull Road Park meeting to meet you there and talk to residents, and I've been there on other occasions where it's so fantastic to see the tennis courts full of people of all ages playing and a thriving community, not least the TCV volunteers who do huge amounts of work there, and I'd really like to offer my thanks to them. I can't definitively say because no projects have been chosen yet what exactly will happen, but again Hull Road Park does score highly on those criteria. The accessibility trail there is great, but you might know that one of the footpaths there actually has a gap in the middle of it, which means you can get so far but not beyond it, and various bits of fencing in Hull Road Park are also needing attention; I think some of the play equipment is also rather old, to put it mildly, so I hope that all those sorts of things can be looked at. As we all know, all these things are expensive

and although this is a once in a generation investment of £500,000 it won't cover everything, but I'm really sure we're going to make significant improvements to make as many parks as we can fun, beautiful and accessible to all.

Questions to Cllr Pavlovic, Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Safer Communities

Neighbourhood Policing

From Cllr Warters: Under community safety I note the Executive Member referring to an extra twelve police officers and nine PCSOs shortly to join York and Selby Neighbourhood Policing teams. An increase in officers all well and good you may think, but it's 21 extra officers across a huge, enormous, ridiculously sized geographical area. Can the Executive member indicate what this actually translates to in terms of neighbourhood policing officers on the ground in York? For example, using York Outer East – that's a police designation – as a good demonstration, a mere five officers cover from Tang Hall to Gate Helmsley, Kexby, Elvington, Wheldrake, Escrick, Acaster Malbis and all places in between. The constant theme from residents is lack of visible policing. It is a physical impossibility for five officers to cover an area like this properly. So how many to York, and how many on the ground in any particular shift please? I appreciate the Executive Member will take some time to answer but at least he is taking the responsibility to answer when the Monitoring Officer amazingly states that such matters are nothing to do with the City of York Council any longer.

Response: I'm a bit non-plussed not being the Chief Constable, but I'll give it my best shot. Over the York and Selby Division, as I put in my report, there will be an extra twelve PCs and nine PCSOs. There will be a significant uplift; as you know, there's a new neighbourhood policing Inspector. Neighbourhood policing forms the basis of much of my discussions with the Divisional Commander, with the Deputy Mayor for Policing; it comes up regularly at the Police and Fire Panel where we hold the Deputy Mayor to account, so although the Monitoring Officer is right in that I don't influence the operational deployment of either PCSOs or PCs, it is incredibly important. I get the point he is trying to make, we need to see more neighbourhood policing. The government have put an extra £2million into additional neighbourhood policing in North Yorkshire; that money is being spent, officers are being recruited, they will be operational. I will endeavour to find out exactly what number it is that will be deployed within the York element of the York and Selby Division, but the point is well made

that we want to see neighbourhood policing in those areas where crime and antisocial behaviour is at its highest.

Supplementary from Cllr Warters: My brief supplementary question, thanking the Executive Member for trying to answer, is: is he content that five police officers in a geographical area like York Outer East is at all consistent with neighbourhood policing and will the addition of these officers make any measurable difference to that situation?

Response: I can't answer the first part of the question because I can't confirm or deny that there are five neighbourhood officers; I'll take his word for it until I've got definitive figures. The point of the question is, is neighbourhood policing important? Yes, it is. Is there going to be additional resource to it? Yes, there is. Will it make a difference? It will, I firmly believe that, but there are challenging situations, from a policing perspective, from a council perspective, and we will do everything we can to work together with our colleagues in the police to develop joint problem-solving approaches, because whilst we can't do everything ourselves, we are always better when we work together. I hope that you will also support that intention, because I know that this is a matter of significant concern to you; you copy me in to all of the emails that you send to the Chief Constable which are many and varied.

Questions to Cllr Steels-Walshaw, Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care

Healthwatch

From Cllr Cullwick: Scrapping local Healthwatch, Wes Streeting said 'patients do not need ventriloquists'. Will the Council Leader and Executive Member condemn this and recognise Healthwatch's vital role in this city and elsewhere amplifying patient voices, including those who can't speak up or write to the government urging a rethink?

Response: When I saw the NHS 10 Year Plan, like everyone else, I was really, really shocked how it spoke about Healthwatch, and I would like to say, before I go into this any further, that we really are mindful that there are staff and volunteers at Healthwatch at the moment who are going through a really difficult, uncertain time. I will try and be really mindful of them, and say that everyone in York truly, truly does value Healthwatch; they provide a huge contribution to our community. When I first came into this role, I found that I valued their reports, I still really value them; they were able to show a way of understanding and hearing people's voices and people's voices were so clear, they were done in a respectful, accurate picture throughout. These relationships with our charities

and organisations in York cannot be underestimated, they are so valuable and they also provide a fantastic service. They are not just the reports; they are signposting, and I want to be really clear that we want to continue to engage and identify issues. Our Health and Care Partnership in York is a brilliant example of success and everyone on this board goes above and beyond in providing for York and reducing health inequalities, working for the people of York. We have been in discussions with the ICB and they have been very clear that what we are doing at our Health and Care Partnership is fantastic and shows really effective examples of joined-up working. They have been really clear with us that as long as we are meeting our statutory duties, we can design our pathways and services, and we would love to see Healthwatch be maintained. We recognise the new structures are needed but we will do our very utmost to maintain that independent voice for our residents. It's too early to say exactly how this is going to look, but as a Health and Care Partnership we will do our very best to continue listening and innovating for people.

Supplementary from Cllr Cullwick: I'm very pleased to hear the Executive Member taking the stand that she is, and I'm pleased that she disagrees so strongly with Wes Streeting; I'm sure you'll communicate that to him. Do you agree also that pushing people to provide feedback through an app and only through an app will only serve to widen health inequalities and disenfranchise millions of patients?

Response: Of course I am concerned about digital exclusion of people, and this is also something that's very clear in the 10 Year NHS Plan, that yes, absolutely there will be more going towards digital, but also my hope through reading it is that will free up extra support to be available for those people who absolutely are unable to use digital. I will continue to advocate to people that digital is not the only way, that people do need to have access in alternative ways.

Questions to Cllr Webb, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education

Children's Services Ofsted inspection

From Cllr Clarke: There has been much made in recent months of the Council's Outstanding in all areas Ofsted judgment for Children's Services. It's been mentioned a few times, I'll mention it again – Outstanding in all areas. While this is fantastic and very welcome news can the Executive Member outline some of the areas that needed addressing to ensure our services matched what we expect for our children and young people?

Response: I'm obviously very, very happy to talk about our Outstanding Ofsted result. I was gutted that I couldn't talk to you about it at the last Council meeting – I know that all councillors at that point did know about it but we weren't allowed to for timing reasons. It's important to remember that the last inspection under the Liberal Democrats and the Greens was a Requires Improvement judgment. We're the only authority in nine years to move from Requires Improvement to Outstanding. The key thing, the key change that took place that's really important for members is around corporate parenting, and that's something that is important to mention here. I have mentioned corporate parenting before, that we should all take it incredibly seriously. In the inspection, it stated that political leaders and the Chief Operating Officer are well informed about priorities and challenges that come through our Corporate Parenting Board. In the previous inspection the voice of the child was clearly not where it needed to be, and I'm so glad that we've transformed the Corporate Parenting Board so that I have two young people co-chairing with me, and they lead on most of the items, it's a much more inclusive meeting now and that's really, really positive from our point of view. I'll just finish with responding to Cllr Ayre and Cllr Steward – thank you for acknowledging that this happened, I think it's really positive. Cllr Ayre, I knew you'd claim it; it was inevitable that you would claim it, but that seems to be what you do. Thank you Cllr Steward for just praising, I thought that was very kind, thank you.

Supplementary from Cllr Crawshaw: You mentioned corporate parenting and I just thought that it's an opportunity to reiterate some of the work that's going on around foster placements and placement sufficiency, and in particular what we're doing to help support fostering in the city?

Response: What I would say on that is that since this Labour administration came into power – we committed in our manifesto to reviewing fostering services and supporting those who are most vulnerable – one of the things that we've changed is basically the pay of our foster carers firstly, so now if you're on the lowest rate of foster carer pay you're actually paid more, and now it's become competitive with other areas in the region. That is a big step forward in an expensive city like York. We've moved to four bands which are based around the needs of the children presenting into those foster carers, and we've increased the support for those foster carers in times of hardship, which inevitably they will face. I think it's a great opportunity to finish with celebrating Sue and Martin Hill who recently you might have seen in the press. They have been fostering children in this city for forty years; they've been fostering for longer than I've been alive. I know that's a

surprise to a lot of you, but no, they've been fostering for forty years. That is amazing, and I want to put on record and personally thank them for what they do. Thank you very much.

[Cllr Vassie arrived at 7.58 pm during this item].

21. Audit and Governance Committee - Chair's Annual Report 2023/24 and 2024/25 (8.20 pm)

A written report was received from Cllr Hollyer, Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee, on the work of the Committee.

22. Scrutiny - Report of the Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee (8.21 pm)

A written report was received from Cllr Fenton, Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, on the work of the Committee.

23. Annual Report of the Joint Standards Committee 2024/25 (8.22 pm)

A written report was received from Cllr Runciman, Chair of the Joint Standards Committee, on the work of the Committee.

24. Recommendations of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee: Primate Licensing (8.22 pm)

Council received a report which presented the recommendations of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee at its meeting held on 10 April 2025, as contained in the reports set out in the Council agenda from page 85. Cllr Melly moved, and Cllr Cuthbertson seconded, the following recommendation contained in the report:

“That in accordance with Option 1, Council approves the new fee as recommended by Members of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee.”

Reason: To meet the legislative requirements of the Animal Welfare (Primate Licences) (England) Regulations 2024.

On being put to the vote, the recommendation was declared CARRIED and it was

Resolved: That the above recommendation be approved.¹

Action Required:

1. Note approval of the recommendation and take any action required. LC

25. Appointments and Changes to Membership (8.24 pm)

Resolved: That the appointments and changes to membership set out the agenda papers at page 93 and supplementary papers at page 3, subject to the correction reported verbally by the Lord Mayor, be noted.

Action Required:

1. To note approval of the appointments list, make the changes on the system and inform organisations as required. JP

[The meeting adjourned from 8.25 pm to 8.37 pm. Cllr Warters left the meeting during the adjournment].

26. Motions on Notice (8.37 pm)

i. Improving equality of access to elections

Moved by Cllr Rose and seconded by Cllr Coles:

“Council notes:

- its approved council motions in recent years on voter engagement and participation, including the December 2022 motion opposing new rules imposed on electors, including the new photo ID requirement, in March 2024 backing the ‘My Vote My Voice’ campaign on equal access to voting, and in July 2024 highlighting disenfranchisement problems resulting from a flawed postal vote system;
- Elections Act 2022 nationality requirements resulting in a lottery of who can vote in different elections, with different treatment of different EU and other citizens in different domestic elections;

- that groups that are more likely to be disenfranchised than others include those with physical mobility challenges, mental health challenges, learning disabilities and neurodivergence; younger people; people from poorer backgrounds; people with fewer educational qualifications; ethnic minorities; residents with other nationalities and primary languages; and private tenants in high-turnover-rate areas (such as high rent or high short-term-lets rates areas);
- that according to 2021 census data York has many people in more highly disenfranchised groups, with a population that are approximately 20% private renters, 17% disabled people, 16% with bad or middling health, 14% 18-24 year olds, 14% social renters, 11% born overseas, 6% widowed, 4% single parents, 4% non-white British, 4% non-white non-British, 3% white non-British, and 0.3% Gypsy, Roma or Traveller;
- the January 2025 IPPR report: Modernising Elections: How To Get Voters Back that recommended many changes including automatic voter registration, removal of Photo ID requirements, non-working day elections, voting rights for permanent residents, compulsory voting, £100k limits for political donors, votes for 16-17 year olds, and sortition for poll workers;
- That Scotland and Wales have implemented residence-based voting rights that give equal rights to vote to all residents, with Manchester, Cambridgeshire, several London boroughs, Liverpool, Sheffield and others all supporting the same rights for England.

Council believes all residents should have equal rights and access to voting, and that the creation of new barriers to voting through the Elections Act 2022 was wrong. Complex voting eligibility and voter ID requirements have since disenfranchised voters.

Council further believes that the government and local authorities should fully engage with the IPPR recommendations and maximise support and encouragement for engaging with democratic processes, and that partners including educational institutions and landlords should do more to encourage voter registration and participation.

Council resolves:

- to request the Council Leader writes to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Deputy Prime Minister, making the case that local election franchising

- be applied equally to all residents in England, in line with Scotland and Wales;
- to request the Council Leader writes to letting agencies and landlords with significant numbers of properties in York, the University of York and York St John University, seeking greater support in registering more residents to vote, including consideration of automatic registration;
 - to request the Council, through the appropriate committee, considers those recommendations of the IPPR in which there is local discretion, and any other viable opportunities to increase voter participation, before making recommendations to the Returning Officer for their consideration, prior to the Local Elections in 2027.”

Cllr Hollyer then moved, and Cllr Knight seconded, an amendment to the above motion, as follows:

“Under ‘Council notes’, add four additional bullet points after the sixth bullet point:

- ‘That Scotland, Wales and the London Assembly all adopted Proportional voting systems.
- That in 2022 the Electoral Reform Society published research that showed on average that countries that use PR have significantly higher turnout than those that use First-Past-the-Post, with 77% for PR countries vs 67% for non-PR countries.
- That Labour in the 2024 General Election received the lowest vote share of any majority government post-World War Two.
- That the government has recently published the English Devolution and Communities Empowerment Bill that seeks to re-introduce the supplementary vote system for Mayors. This comes after the 2025 Mayoral Elections where no Mayor received majority support and the WECA Mayor was elected on just 25% of the vote.’

Delete the words ‘Council further believes’ and reorder “Council believes” section as two bullet points. In first new bullet point, delete after ‘Complex voting eligibility’ and replace with ‘, First Past the Post and voter ID requirements have disenfranchised voters.’

Add third bullet point under ‘Council Believes’:

- ‘All votes should count equally, therefore the council should support the introduction of a proportional voting system ahead of the next set of local and national elections.’

Under 'Council resolves', first bullet point, delete ';' and replace with ' , as well as requesting that the voting system used in local and national elections be changed to a proportional system;”.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared LOST.

Following debate, a vote was taken on the substantive motion, which was declared CARRIED and it was

Resolved: That the above motion be approved.¹

ii. Supporting York's small businesses

Under Rule B15 (2) Cllr Mason sought Council's consent to alter his motion to update the final bullet point under 'Council notes' to delete 'of 30,000 people from May 2024 to May 2025' and replace with 'of 90,000 people from May and June 2024 to May and June 2025' after the word 'footfall'. Council did not consent to the alteration.

Moved by Cllr Mason and seconded by Cllr Fenton:

“Council notes:

- The Labour Government's increase to employer's contribution to National Insurance from 13.8% to 15%, and a reduction in the threshold of which they start to pay it from £9,100 to £5,000 per year.
- The Liberal Democrat campaign to urge Britons to buy locally made products to support businesses in the wake of Donald Trump's tariffs
- The adoption in November 2024 of the City of York Council Local Transport Strategy Implementation Plan which included commitments to:
 - review parking capacity within a 2km radius of the city centre on an off street, within the Council's ownership and managed by the private sector, the demand for that parking and the charges for that parking; and
 - then specify the parking provision which is needed and the charges which should be levied
- Feedback from the 2025/26 council budget-setting consultation which indicated a preference among respondents for a balanced

- approach which included revenue-raising, efficiency improvements, and making cuts only as a last resort
- The adoption through the 2025/26 council budget of significantly increased parking charges
 - The subsequent Executive decision to amend some of these charges at some locations and to increase the discount for the Minster Badge to 30 per cent of the standard parking charge, at an estimated cost of £115,000
 - The petition signed by over 8,000 people prompted by the Bishopthorpe Road parking charge increase which calls on the council to engage meaningfully with local residents, traders and community groups to find a fairer, balanced solution that supports sustainable travel without punishing people
 - The campaigns that have been established in response to concerns about the impact on local businesses of higher parking charges in areas such as Micklegate, East Parade and The Groves
 - The reduction in city centre footfall of 30,000 people from May 2024 to May 2025

Council believes:

- That efforts to reduce car dependency, tackle congestion and improve public transport reliability in and around York are to be welcomed
- That key to the success of these efforts will be the availability of affordable, reliable, accessible and safe alternatives to private car use
- That it was a mistake to have significantly increased parking charges without first having undertaken the promised review of parking provision and demand for that provision
- That businesses were not adequately consulted prior to the detail of the parking charge increases being agreed
- That the triple hit of National Insurance increases, Donald Trump's tariffs and increased parking charges have put serious strain on local businesses

Council resolves:

- To request the Executive to instruct officers to undertake an urgent piece of work to estimate the cost of restoring a lower cost 30-minute stay option at on-street parking sites where this had been available prior to April 2025

- To request that Executive (or an Executive Member Decision Session) seeks a decision paper within 3 months, setting out options for the reinstatement of a lower cost 30-minute stay at these locations
- To ask that the Executive works with local business groups and representative organisations, such as the York Business Improvement District and the Federation of Small Businesses, to understand the impact of recent National Insurance changes in order to be able to lobby Government for mitigation measures.”

Cllr B Burton then moved, and Cllr Webb seconded, an amendment to the above motion, as follows:

“Under ‘Council notes’:

- After bullet point 3, at the second sub-bullet point add after the word ‘levied’: ‘to ensure demand does not exceed capacity;’ and add a third sub-bullet point:
 - ‘ensure that parking charges reflect and match the cost of travel by other means – particularly fares for Park and Ride and other local bus services;’
- At the seventh bullet point, delete ‘calls’ and replace with ‘called’, and after the word ‘people’ add: ‘- engagement the Executive and council officers have subsequently undertaken before approving adjustments to charges in response to public concerns;’
- At the ninth bullet point, delete the word ‘reduction’ and replace with ‘increase’; after ‘footfall,’ add ‘based on the council’s own city centre CCTV monitoring,’ delete ‘30,000’ and replace with ‘almost 18,000’; after ‘people,’ add ‘when comparing the months of’; delete ‘from’ before the words ‘May 2024’, delete ‘to’ from before the words ‘May 2025’ and replace with ‘and’;
- After the ninth bullet point, add three additional bullet points:
 - An evidence review, carried out by Sustrans for the Dept for Transport, found that retailers overestimate how many of their customers travel by car by a factor of 100%;
 - latest [Centre for Cities](#) data showing York’s estimated unit vacancy rates are the fourth lowest in the UK at 9.2%, while the council’s own data shows York’s city centre vacancy rate is even lower, at just 5.9%;
 - analysis within the same report that states: *“those places with strong high streets have risen to the challenge of out-of-town shopping and online retail by pivoting from retail towards food, swapping redundant shops for cafés and restaurants”*.

Under 'Council believes':

- At the first bullet point, after 'welcomed,' add 'but could be significantly undermined by stimulating short, frequent trips through the reintroduction of a 30 mins parking charge option;'
- At the second bullet point, after 'will be' add 'incentivising people to use sustainable travel through';
- At a new third bullet point:
 - 'that York should take inspiration from strategies elsewhere that consider parking alongside other priorities for public highways use such as climate resilience measures, outdoor space for businesses and improved active travel opportunities;'
- At the original third (now fourth) bullet point, delete 'That it was a mistake to have' and add 'that moving to'; after 'parking charges delete 'without first having undertaken the promised review of parking provision and demand for that provision' and replace with 'in some areas has felt too much, too soon for many traders and their customers;'
- At the original fourth (now fifth) bullet point, after 'That' add 'while the council undertook its most comprehensive and biggest budget consultation ever, some'; and after 'businesses' add 'felt they';
- At the original fifth (now sixth) bullet point, delete 'the triple hit of'; after 'have' delete 'put serious strain on' and replace with 'caused concerns for some'; and after 'businesses' add 'but economic data shows York remains a vibrant, high performing and competitive local economy.'

Under 'Council resolves:'

- At the first bullet point, after 'officers' delete 'to undertake an urgent piece of work'; and after 'April 2025,' add 'and to assess whether this supports the objectives of the council's approved Local Transport and Climate Strategies;'
- At the second bullet point, after 'Executive' delete '(or an Executive Member Decision Session) seeks a decision paper within 3 months,' and add 'considers'; after 'locations,' add 'following the conclusion and findings from its trader-instigated Review of Parking Charges (under Traffic Management Act 2004 powers);'."

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared CARRIED.

Following debate, on being put to the vote, the amended motion was declared CARRIED and it was

Resolved: That the above motion, as amended, be approved.²

In relation to a point of order raised by Cllr Ayre pursuant to Rule B19 (1) (e), the Monitoring Officer confirmed that he had provided advice, rather than a dispensation, to Cllr Kilbane regarding the interest he had declared in relation to the above motion.

iii. Non-proliferation of Fossil Fuels

As the guillotine had fallen, the below motion submitted by Cllr B Burton on behalf of Cllr Merrett was deemed moved and seconded:

“Council notes its 2019 approved motion declaring a Climate Emergency, supported at that time by each of the council’s main political parties. Much good work has taken place here in York since that time, across multiple council administrations, in the transition towards becoming a net zero city.

Council notes York’s position as one of only 112 cities globally with an A rating from the independent Carbon Data Programme, for the third year running this year.

Council further notes:

- that the impacts of climate change affect everyone everywhere, including York, through hotter summers, longer periods without rain and more flood events;
- improvements made nationally in UK energy consumption, with a trend away from fossil fuels towards renewables and low carbon energy sources;
- and welcomes the ambition for energy security and renewables embodied in Great British Energy;
- the UK’s still significant reliance on gas and oil, which represent around 75% of the UK’s total energy consumption;
- the role advanced economies should play in the transition towards cleaner energy generation and consumption;
- the ongoing Non-Proliferation Treaty on Fossil Fuels campaign, as part of national and international efforts to achieve a just transition to net zero, and to ensure global warming does not

- exceed 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels (COP21 Paris Agreement);
- The campaign's three key fossil fuel aims of non-proliferation, a fair phase out and a just transition.

Council:

- believes all Local and Combined Authorities should do all they can to progress this transition;
- welcomes the Government's position on stopping new licensing of fossil fuel extraction;
- believes use of fossil fuels needs to be phased out and therefore opposes any new extraction of fossil fuels, including the 'proppant squeeze' gas extraction method currently proposed in North Yorkshire.

Council resolves to request the Council Leader:

- give York's written support to the Non-Proliferation Treaty on Fossil Fuels campaign, confirming York's position to the Secretary of State for Energy and Net Zero;
- write to the Mayor of York and North Yorkshire and the city's two MPs confirming the council's position on non-proliferation of fossil fuels, and seeking their support in achieving this goal, through both regional decision-making, national energy policy and support for the MP for York Central's Early Day Motion 111 in support of the above Treaty."

A point of order was raised by Cllr Widdowson pursuant to Rule B19 (1) (e), highlighting that Cllr Knight, who had earlier declared an interest in relation to the above motion, had left the meeting while the motion was under consideration.

The below amendment to the above motion, submitted by Cllr Steward, was deemed moved and seconded:

"Under 'Council;', at the third bullet point, delete the words 'opposes any' and replace with 'seeks to limit'.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared LOST.

A vote was then taken, without debate, on the substantive motion. This was declared CARRIED and it was

Resolved: That the above motion be approved.³

Action Required:

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. To note approval of the motion on improving equality of access to elections and take the appropriate action. | CD/NW/BR |
| 2. To note approval of the motion (as amended) on supporting York's small businesses and take the appropriate action. | CD/NW/GT |
| 3. To note approval of the motion on non-proliferation of fossil fuels and take the appropriate action. | CD/NW/CF |

Cllr Martin Rowley BEM
LORD MAYOR OF YORK

[The meeting started at 6.31 pm and concluded at 9.51 pm]