

Leader and Executive Report to Full Council, March 2026

Leader of the Council, Councillor Claire Douglas

Farewell to Ian Floyd, Chief Operating Officer

Our Council is going through a significant period of change over the coming month. We say goodbye and farewell to Ian Floyd who has been the Chief Operating Officer and Head of Paid Service for the Council since 2020 and has been a senior member of staff in the authority for the past 17 years. This is a tremendous term of public service to our city. Ian has steered the organisation and city through notable challenges and achievements over that period including the COVID pandemic, adoption of a Local Plan for York, significant progress with the York Central development and the arrival of devolution and a Mayoral Combined Authority for York and North Yorkshire. His calm and constant leadership will be missed. We thank him for his unwavering service and wish him all the very best for a long and happy retirement. This also therefore means that we will welcome the arrival of the new Chief Executive at the Council on 30th March 2026 when Richard Webb starts in this role.

Our City, Our Community

I begin by saying a sad farewell to past Sheriff of York (2016-17), Jonathan Tyler who passed away in early March. Our thanks to him for his service to our city and its communities and I send our condolences to his loved ones at this difficult time.

Our city and our communities continue to support, consider and celebrate each other over the period since I last reported to you in November 2025. The worldwide conditions for our communities to come together in a spirit of understanding and consideration continue to be very challenging and I thank everyone in our city who provides the environments for discussion, debate and consideration. Since November we have collectively celebrated a highly successful Interfaith Week, that saw a range of events across our city including our Rabbi and Imam in conversation. I was also honoured to attend the highly successful open day at York Mosque and the first public celebration of Chanukah and Menora Lighting in our city for 800 years. The highly important annual celebration of Christmas at York Minster with 9 Lessons and Carols. Holocaust Memorial Day at the end of January. In March the celebration of Ramadan with York's Muslim community at the Unity Iftar, and the

commemoration of the 1190 Massacre of York's Jewish Community at Clifford's Tower.

York is in the enviable position of having two highly successful and nationally recognised Universities. York St. John's University's (YSJ) Graduation Dinner was a fantastic celebration of highly gifted and socially committed graduates as a follow up to this memorable event I also paid a visit to the London Campus of YSJ. It is a highly successful example of a portfolio approach to delivering high quality and diverse learning experiences for young people in Higher Education and graduate studies. It was a pleasure to meet the staff and students at the campus and see the name of York St. John's promoted across our country and internationally. YSJ continues to deliver strong access to opportunity for young people and later career learners building an organisation of remarkable resilience and insight.

It is with great sadness that I many people in our city will have noted and commemorated the fourth anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia earlier this month. York continues to be a safe and welcome home for Ukrainian nationals displaced by the war. The anniversary was commemorated by the Ukrainian Society, University of York with a thought provoking and humbling event that I attended alongside the civic party at the Mansion House, CYC is also hosted an exhibition showing the impact of the war on the people and communities of Ukraine in the foyer at West Offices. The York Bridge Group continues to bring together people and organisations from our city who are carrying out extraordinary acts of humanitarian support in Ukraine. It is important that we remember and note conflicts across the globe and continue to show that York is a city with open doors for those who need refuge.

I finish on an optimistic note having attended the York Tourism Awards 2026 hosted by Make it York. It was a joyous and celebratory event showing the absolute best of the hospitality and tourism industry across York. I send my congratulations to all the winners in a highly competitive, strong sector in our city. York continues to attract over 9 million visitors to our city a year and businesses continue to go from strength to strength offering exemplary experiences for families and individuals from food, museums, venues, experiences and accommodation. We really have so much to be collectively proud of in our city and I thank everyone for the expertise, dedication and entrepreneurship.

York Central Development Update

It's great to see the York Central development continue to progress at pace. The developers and Network Rail submitted planning applications for both Phase 1 of the development and also the replacement of Wilton Rise Bridge. Both are currently under consideration by the Planning Authority.

The developers, McLaren Arlington and landowners Homes England and Network Rail continue to host public and community engagement events in surrounding communities and the city centre. The developers have agreed to put significant investment into Back Park to improve play facilities for the benefit of children, young people and families living in the area. This is fantastic news.

I continue, alongside officers and other city stakeholders to work with relevant government departments to assert our city's drive for a development that works for residents across all generations. Delivering the good quality jobs, affordable housing, community and health facilities, green space and transport links that are so desperately needed. The development is a fantastic opportunity for our city.

York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA)

Progress and growth within the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority continues at a pace. It is most keenly exemplified with the recent decision of the Combined Authority (CA) to progress to the application stage for Established Status with the government. This will be the next hugely important step for devolution in our York and North Yorkshire footprint. Established Status will enable us to accelerate our housing delivery, development of our innovation driven economic growth opportunities and further developing our local transport links.

Mayor David Skaith and I were pleased to attend the announcement of York as a key part of Northern Powerhouse Rail and the Northern Growth Corridor at the event hosted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in Leeds in February. This is a level of recognition of the potential for York's part in stimulating good growth across the north that we haven't seen before. The allocation of £40million over 4 years to deliver our Local Growth Plan exemplified by the potential of the York Central development, our two universities, strong rail tech and creative industries growth potential and the Bio Industrial Cluster North partnership with Teesside all show governments commitment to our city.

We will continue to push hard for investment in our city, our people and our communities, driving York forward into a prosperous and optimistic future for generations to come.

Delivering for our City

The level of interest and engagement by government Ministers and senior civil servants from multiple government departments over the past months has been tremendously heartening and solidifies York's place as a city working in strong partnership and collaboration to deliver innovative services, initiatives and programmes for the benefit of our people and our communities. We've recently welcomed visits and engagement from Ministers Josh MacAlister, Stephanie Peacock and Kate Dearden with more to come over the coming months. This visibility brings us all great opportunity for sharing our good practice and expertise into other parts of the country but also to bring investment and funding into our communities across health, children's services, housing and infrastructure, innovation and economic activity.

We cannot achieve this without the strong partnership work so many businesses, organisations and individuals participate in York on a daily basis. The collaborative work between the Council and city partners has led to the development of our City Prospectus, the Combined Authority's Local Growth Plan, Local Innovation Partnerships Fund application to UKRI, Our Place programme under One Public Estate, and a range of significant funding and investment opportunities and achievements across partner organisations in our city.

The exemplary work of City of York Council's Children's Services Directors and associated team is being celebrated across the country with invitations to share their best practice including supporting the government's Sector Led Improvement programmes. Recent invitations for Corporate Director Martin Kelly and Director Danielle Johnson to speak at All Party Parliamentary Groups and the visit to learn more about York's approach to the Rights of the Child by the cross party, Joint committee for Human Rights from both the Houses of Commons and Lords, and my input into the national Aspirant Director of Children's Services programme all show recognition of the progress and continued drive for excellence that York brings to its approach to Children's Services.

The following reports from the Executive Members will outline further achievements of the Labour administration for the people of York. Life in

local government and authorities we all know is filled with challenges for the future but York has a lot to be optimistic about and to celebrate. We are a city that pulls together during times of challenge and we continue to show our unerring commitment to our city, our people and our communities each and every day.

Executive Member for Economy and Culture, Councillor Pete Kilbane

Following last year's Executive approval of The York Prospectus, an ambitious long-term plan for York's future, the council commissioned Sewells Advisory, an independent consultancy, to assess its full economic and social value. It shows that The York Prospectus creates the potential for £12.1bn social value and over 40,000 construction and 2,700 operational jobs.

Other independent experts agree that York is the top-performing UK city for good growth and one of the country's most dynamic business locations. No wonder then that when in February I attended the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA) Labour Mayor's Growth Summit York - Ambition 2035, business analysts informed us that York had the most Small and Medium Sized Enterprises primed for growth in the UK. And of course, we remain top of the Demos-PwC Good Growth for Cities Index.

This does not happen by chance but through the hard work of businesses and organisations in the city and beyond, the support and dedication of City of York Council (CYC) and YNYCA Officers and, of course, committed political leadership.

Everyone needs to benefit from our economic success so The York Prospectus includes a plan to ensure that prosperity can be shared, with wealth reaching deep into our communities. For example, by making sure growth locks in truly affordable homes, more well-paid jobs, better public spaces and tackling inequality. Improving pathways to employment remains one of our core commitments and in February it was a pleasure to launch our National Apprenticeship Week. This provided a great opportunity to celebrate the benefits that apprenticeships bring both to individuals and businesses and better still, highlighted the fantastic work of our hard-working apprentices across York.

Delivering good growth will require significant private and public sector investment and we continue to work with partners across the city and beyond to explore all options available to us. For example, at the beginning of March I, along with the Council Leader and Directors, met with senior civil servants from the Dept for Transport, Cabinet Office, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Dept for

Business and Trade, Office for Investment, Homes England and the University of York to ensure that public sector bodies fully understand the ambition and scope for investment offered by The York Prospectus. When we look around York Central and the Station Frontage we can all see huge investment already underway in York, and with Northern Powerhouse Rail putting us back at the heart of the rail network, we are the place to be and the place to invest in.

Combining business with sport and leisure it was an honour to celebrate the successful installation of the solar panels at Yearsley Swimming Pool. When I visited in early March the 182kWh solar array was already delivering half the energy being used by the building and they are set to save an estimated £23,000-a-year and 29 tonnes of CO2 emissions. The project, which was made possible via a grant from the YNYCA Labour Mayoral Renewables Fund, will enable the longer-term survival of the facility with all the health and wellbeing benefits that it brings. While many Councils have been forced to close their swimming pools, we have managed to keep ours open thanks to close partnership working with the operator, GLL, and the dedication of our officer corp.

Also, in early March it was my great privilege to confirm that we will formally adopt the York Cultural Strategy. This builds upon the good work of the previous strategy and, though overseen by City of York Council, it was developed independently by arts, heritage and cultural organisations across the city. It lays out a clear direction for York's cultural development with six key priorities designed to ensure culture is accessible to all, helping people connect with their identity, heritage and community. It was previewed to over 250 local, regional and national organisations at Reignite XII at the Yorkshire Museum in January 2026.

Our shared culture is created by the people of York, and it is one of our city's greatest strengths. It defines who we are, enriches our communities and is the backbone to a sustainable creative economy. It allows us to understand the world from a variety of perspectives and is a positive force for bringing people together, at a time when powerful forces are seeking to divide us. The strategy sets out a bold and collaborative vision for culture in York, one that puts inclusivity, creativity and opportunity at the centre.

A key ambition within the strategy is for York to become the first city in the country to achieve cultural entitlement for all children and young people, with a particular focus on those from disadvantaged

backgrounds and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Finally, in my role as Executive for Economy and Culture and as Deputy Mayor York and North Yorkshire with the Transport portfolio, it was a great honour to accept an invitation to visit the Tech.Land Xperience Cross Border Innovation Festival in Munster, one of our twin cities. Hosted by the Mayor of Munster, and with travel covered by YNYCA, it was an excellent opportunity to investigate the latest innovations in Med-tech and Circular economy and establish important international connections.

During the visit I took the opportunity to meet with the Mobility Team at Munster Municipality and get a thorough understanding of their transport policy and practice. It was also the greatest of pleasures to spend several hours with our twinning partners to share initiatives and talk about potential future collaborations. I extend heartfelt thanks to the both the Mayors of Munster and York and North Yorkshire for enabling a rich two days of ideas and information exchange that will enrich our thinking about future economy, culture and transport.

Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care, Councillor Lucy Steels-Walshaw

Adult Social Care in York is entering a crucial phase of improvement and renewal. Following the recent Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessment, we have reaffirmed a central principle that guides all our work, by focussing on doing the right thing for people first time. This is a necessary part of prioritising those residents being assessed for or receiving services, and in reducing our operating costs.

This means delivering services that are safe, effective and efficient, but also fundamentally enabling and supporting residents to live well, maintain independence and access care that is least restrictive and rooted in early intervention and prevention. When we achieve this, we not only help people with social care needs in our city to live their best lives, but we also meet our statutory duties and build a service that is financially resilient and which delivers best value.

Adult Social Care in York is at a pivotal moment. The challenges are significant, but so is our determination to address them. By focusing on doing the right thing for people, investing in essential improvements and strengthening the voice of residents and communities, we can build a system that is compassionate, sustainable and fit for the future. Our commitment remains unwavering: to ensure every resident can live their best life, with dignity, independence and the right support at the right time.

Responding to the CQC Assessment

The CQC inspection made clear the scale of the challenges we face, but it also recognised the commitment of senior officers and political leaders to address them. Inspectors saw a system determined to improve, and this determination is now being matched with additional investment to support the improvement programme.

We have been clear in our response that investment is not optional. It is essential. This is not about acting because we are instructed to do so, it is about acting because it leads to better outcomes for residents. When people are supported to stay connected to their communities, they remain well for longer, live more independently and ultimately require less intensive support. This approach is both morally right and financially responsible.

While the financial context remains challenging, however, it is important to recognise that Adult Social Care faces significant and unavoidable growth. Demand is rising, needs are becoming more complex and the cost of care continues to increase.

The additional funding now being allocated will help stabilise the system and ensure that essential improvements can be delivered. Our focus is firmly on prioritising people, strengthening early intervention and prevention, and ensuring resources are aligned to the areas of greatest need and greatest impact.

Learning Disability Partnership Board

I have recently had the privilege of attending the newly established Learning Disability Partnership Board. This Board now benefits from much stronger support for self-advocates, reflecting our commitment to ensuring that people's voices are at the heart of everything we do. Members of the board have been clear and confident in expressing what they want to change and how services can be improved to better support them.

I have reaffirmed my commitment to listening to experiences and acting on what is fed back. Lived experience and insight is invaluable, and it is essential that it shapes our work. I look forward to the Board feeding back their reflections and priorities into the Health and Wellbeing Board, strengthening the connection between lived experience, strategic planning and service delivery.

Inclusive Recovery Cities

York's ambition to become an Inclusive Recovery City is an important part of our wider commitment to public health, community wellbeing and social justice. Inclusive Recovery Cities take deliberate action to reduce the shame and stigma surrounding substance dependence, increase understanding and support, and expand opportunities for recovery. The core principle is that recovery is strengthened when stigma and social exclusion are reduced.

I am looking forward to the Inclusive Recovery City event on 29th April, which will highlight York's commitment to inclusive, compassionate and recovery-focused practice. This work places a spotlight on the city as a whole, encouraging organisations, communities and services to embed

inclusive policies and practices that ensure everyone can access fair opportunities. Supporting communities to challenge stigma and celebrate recovery is central to our ambitions for York, and it reflects our belief that everyone should be able to access the support they need to achieve and thrive.

Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency, Councillor Jenny Kent

Warm, healthy homes, Lower energy bills and energy security

I was pleased to represent Mayor David Skaith at a Mayoral Roundtable at the department for Net Zero and Energy Security in January and talk to Ed Miliband MP about the great work going on here in York and North Yorkshire supporting Warm Homes, lower energy bills, community energy, and affordability. The recent events in the middle east have proved yet again, if anyone needed more evidence, that we need to be energy independent. Most of the major recessions in the UK since the 1970s have been largely caused by price shocks due to events in the middle east and oil or gas restrictions by foreign powers. Thanks to Government and Mayoral funding, since November we have increased energy security across the city and installed solar energy at:

- Jo Ro School
- Yearsley Swimming Pool
- Pine Trees Day Centre
- Elvington Primary School
- St Mary's Primary School
- Knavesmire Pavillion.

Yearsley Swimming pool recorded 4 MgW energy in rainy February and is looking forward to a summer of zero energy bills.

We continue to work on a mature and diverse pipeline of projects including estate decarbonisation, Harewood Whin Green Energy Park, solar car ports and a City Centre Heat Network.

This is vital both for affordability for residents now, and a liveable future for our children.

Cleaner Air for York

Having attended the Clean Air Summit at the University of York in November, which highlighted the increased understanding of the impact on health of indoor pollution and how we heat our homes and cook, I was really proud that Executive approved the expansion of a Smoke

Controlled Area to encompass the whole of the City of York on 3rd March.

This ends the previous postcode lottery which meant different rules for houses on opposite sides of a street and makes it clearer and simpler for everyone to understand, including stove and fuel suppliers. 1 in 23 people still die from air quality related diseases each year at York Hospital, and the UK has too many children suffering and still, sadly dying, from asthma.

In York twice as much of the highly damaging small particulates (PM2.5) are now produced from domestic wood burning than from transport and many people have no idea of the health impacts – both indoors for their families, and outdoors for the friends and neighbours.

Thank you to the Consultants and Doctors at York Hospital who worked alongside our Air Quality and Public Health Officers to support this measure, and who work to treat all those suffering from respiratory problems and other air quality related health conditions including COPD and dementia.

This isn't a ban on wood burning, it is ensuring that a) people understand the impacts on health of the pollutants produced, and b) that if wood is burned, it is done in the healthiest way by using a Defra approved stove, and/or burning seasoned or smokeless wood/fuel.

Restoring Nature in York and North Yorkshire

I welcomed the publication of the YNY Local Nature Recovery Strategy at the Executive Decision Session on 3rd March; the culmination of extensive partnership work and consultation with residents, landowners, farmers, ecologists, universities and the National Parks to map out the key priority habitats and species that we need to protect and improve across our region. This strategy supports climate adaptation, flood mitigation and public health – strengthening the case for nature-based solutions in urban and rural settings. Success will depend on funding for delivery and landowner engagement, large and small. Here in York a third of our green spaces are in private gardens, and we can all help support nature by planting for pollinators, native hedgerows and trees to support birds and wildlife, creating ponds and removing hard paving to improve surface water absorption. The Yorkshire Wildlife Trusts, RSPB and RHS all have user friendly guides and even a window ledge can be an important stepping stone to re-connecting nature.

Trees

I joined Mayors Skaith and Brabin on 13th January at the launch of the White Rose Forest 25 year Strategy. 10 million trees have already been planted of the 50,000 million target for the Northern Forest, which includes street and garden trees across our region. We need to increase our overall tree canopy to bring shade, cooler air, and improved air quality in hotter summers, and will work with the WRF and Mayoral Combined Authority. CYC doesn't own enough land to achieve our target - we need all landowners to plant the 'right tree', in the 'right place' across their estates, and welcome a city-wide partnership approach to this.

We are also reviewing our own CYC tree management to ensure it is fit for purpose in a changing climate.

Improving our Parks

Local consultation and engagement are taking place across the selected investment sites and procurement is in hand for the first stages. I look forward to sharing more as each scheme is delivered.

Volunteer annual event

Thank you to the many volunteers and friends of groups who give their time and energy so generously throughout the year. It was great to see representatives from over 20 different groups at the annual meeting in January and to hear about the huge improvements they make to our city. By the time we hold Full Council we will nearly have finished the Great British Spring Clean, when I know groups across every Ward will have stepped up to make our streets shine.

We need to turn the tide on litter, which harms our wildlife and blights our neighbourhoods, but although we still have people who drop litter carelessly and need behaviour change, we have many more people who, rather than complain, get out and pick it up to improve their communities - Thank you.

Public Protection

Our public protection team remain busy. They continue to deal with fly tipping and noise pollution, including taking cases to Court where necessary including:

- Two prosecutions and fines for fly-tipping/dumped waste of £1,170 and £1,020 – January 2026
- Stereo Seized from noisy tenant on breach of Noise Abatement Notice – February 2026 – now pending prosecution
- Noise Nuisance Case Affecting Elderly Resident - NEOs and 54 North Homes worked together resulting in a prosecution and fine of £890 - This case highlights the importance of targeted enforcement alongside continued support for vulnerable individuals.
- Criminal Behaviour Order for Persistent Dog Control Issues resulting in fine of £1,098.

We are looking at strengthening our options for dealing with sales of illegal vapes and a report will be coming to the Executive Member Decision Session in April at the same time as a report on adopting powers to deal with legislation protecting renters' rights. Working with the BID, Police and businesses in the city we have re-submitted the city's application for Purple Flag, and it was great to join the judges for a couple of hours during the recent evening inspection. The partnership of CYC, York BID and the Police should be proud of the thriving evening entertainment and safe management of the city that they could showcase. We are waiting for the results but are optimistic about retaining the award.

Student Waste pilot scheme

The Neighbourhood Enforcement Team has just launched a student waste pilot scheme in Willis and Eldon Streets working with landlords, students, York residents and local Residents' Associations to advise them around waste disposal and avoid rubbish being dumped when students leave their properties. Temporary street signs have gone up and educational postcards have been sent. Before, during and after satisfaction surveys are also planned to assess the impact.

As there is no clear date when all students leave York at the same time anymore, this can occur throughout the year.



When you move out all housemates are responsible for making sure all the rubbish from your home is disposed of lawfully.

Leaving any rubbish or unwanted items in the street or rear lanes is fly tipping and could land you with a **£1000 fine** or **criminal record**.

If you want help getting rid of bulky items, or more information on what we can or can't collect, we're here to help!

Find more information on what to do when you move out -



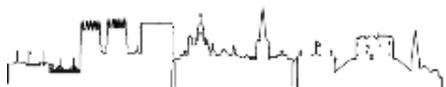
www.york.gov.uk/StudentWaste



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Hazel Court Booking System trial

York is a fantastic city – frequently voted as one of the best places to live in the UK. This means that we attract new residents and businesses and are growing and thriving. Since Hazel Court Household Waste Recycling Centre moved to James Street in 2006, many businesses have moved into the area, including Cemex, Jewsons, a gym and supermarkets, all of whom attract their own customers and deliveries to the area.

This has caused a long standing and increasing problem of congestion, queues and poor air quality in James and Lawrence Street, with safety concerns for pedestrians and cyclists, and we must find a way to manage our historic city in a way that works best for everyone. The introduction of a booking system aims to make visits to the tip faster, safer and more predictable. We have enough capacity to meet demand, just not all at the same time, and although there is a small inconvenience

to book, this should be more than outweighed by the benefits of not having to queue for up to an hour at busy times.

Over 50% of councils use a booking system for their tips, to manage demand and improve efficiency. Their experience suggests no impact on fly tipping and in some cases improved recycling rates. The system is a trial and will be monitored throughout.

Recycling Review

One of the most frequent emails I have received since starting in post is around recycling boxes – both the difficulty of handling them, the difficulty of ripping cardboard up to fit in them, and the amount of street litter caused on recycling days when rubbish and lids are blown around our streets. We are holding a consultation on a proposal to switch the majority of York houses from recycling boxes to 2 wheelie bins.

The aim of this is to increase recycling, reduce street litter, improve the safety and handling of boxes for our residents and waste crews, and provide longer term value for residents. The change would mean collections on an alternating fortnightly basis of:

- Paper and card
- Glass, plastic, tins, foil, tetrapaks, toothpaste tubes – and *new addition* plastic plant pots.

I want to stress there will be no change in the frequency of collection of household waste, which will remain every fortnight.

The wheelie bins have a greater capacity than the average of 3 recycling boxes, even on a changed collection schedule, and can deal with larger items of cardboard which is an issue with the rise in online shopping.

We know that some of our smaller terraces don't have the space – the 7,000 properties that have recently switched from bags to bins are not part of this consultation.

Executive Member for Education, Children and Young People, Councillor Bob Webb

York City FC support Council to raise awareness about fostering in York

In February I had the pleasure of joining the council's Fostering Team at a York City FC match to raise awareness of Fostering, the difference it can make to a child's life and the role of Independent Visitors.

York City were playing Forest Green Rovers and council staff spoke to hundreds of fans. I had the experience of addressing the whole stadium at half time to continue to champion our foster carers and independent visitors and, of course, continue the important and ongoing work to recruit more. Thanks to York City for being so accommodating, and thankfully for also winning 2-1!

Expansion of York Hungry Minds

This administration has secured the expansion of York Hungry Minds, through incredibly welcome donations to a further 10 schools. These schools are:

- Haxby Road Primary
- Hob Moor Primary
- Tang Hall Primary
- New Earswick Primary
- St Lawrences Primary
- Poppleton Road Primary
- Woodthorpe Primary
- Osbaldwick Primary
- Stockton on Forest Primary
- Lakeside Primary.

This expansion will deliver an amazing 170,000 additional meals to children in York.

Through the work of the Steering Group we have been able to match schools to donors and available funds; supporting schools to develop delivery plans and in doing so support children and families across the city and beyond.

At the recent People Scrutiny Committee, it was highlighted by independent University studies the benefits this initiative is delivering to children and their families. Headteachers are getting behind it as they see the benefits in terms of behaviour, attendance and attainment.

As a council we should all be proud of how this measure is supporting families with the cost of living and improving children's health and wellbeing.

Josh MacAlister MP (Minister for Children and Families)

I recently met with Josh MacAlister MP alongside the Council Leader and council staff to discuss the transformative work that has taken place in Children's Services over the last couple of years; taking this council from an Ofsted judgement of 'Requires Improvement' to 'Outstanding'.

The Minister was full of praise for York's journey and urged us to continue at pace to embed the reforms introduced by the Government. This also gave us the opportunity to lobby for further funding and champion York's staff and children in care. This has led to further meetings between Council Officers and Dept for Education officials being arranged.

Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects, Human Rights, Equality and Inclusion, Councillor Katie Lomas

Budget Process

The Budget and MTFFS (Medium Term Financial Strategy) scrutiny task and Finish group have reported on their work done in 2025 and made some useful recommendations for the work to be done to ensure proper scrutiny of the budget process in the coming year. Having a scrutiny task and finish group means we work cross party throughout the entire budget process, working through the MTFFS calculations to looking at the proposals for the budget. The three-year settlement we were notified of in December 2025 means that we can get a head start on budget work for 2027/28 as we know more about the level of funding. This enables us to work at a more effective pace and look at all budget proposals as they come forward.

Financial Inclusion

The decision on the Crises and Resilience Funding scheme has been made and we will continue to support those who need us most through a largely cash first approach. Our support for people through this fund is multi-layered and includes work to directly identify those who might need it most. Our message to people living in York is clear, the Council is here to help, either directly or through our network of partners who form the city-wide Financial Inclusion Steering Group and regularly meet to work together to target poverty in our city. This fund is complemented by our YFAS (York Financial Assistance Scheme) Fund which also offers financial support to people who need it.

Our work on poverty has expanded and building on the poverty truth commission which was previously reported on the Human Rights and Equalities Board launched a task and Finish group on child poverty. As a result of that we are now working with partners to support a child poverty truth commission.

I recently attended (alongside our Welfare Benefits and Strategic Partnership Manager) a virtual scrutiny meeting with Islington Council colleagues to share best practice. Edinburgh Council were also in attendance. It is important to share best practice and although we were

there to showcase the excellent work being done in York we also learned lots from the other councils.

Human Rights and Equalities Board (HREB)

Apart from the task and finish group on child poverty mentioned earlier in this report HREB have been considering the Indicator Report and recommendations. We have been particularly looking at engagement with organisations across the city in relation to the recommendations. HREB are also supporting the implementation of the Council's Human Rights and Equity Analysis (HREA) tool. This has been developed in collaboration with the Centre for Applied Human Rights and replaces the former Equality Impact Assessment tool. The tool is now in use and champions have been trained in each Council department to support implementation of this different approach. A sample of the completed tools will be scrutinised by HREB members to support further development of the approach and give oversight to those using it.

Holocaust Memorial Steering Group

Thanks go to the Holocaust Memorial Day Steering Group and the council staff who support it for arranging the Civic Event to mark the day. The event went well and we have received positive feedback. Planning now begins for next year's event. The group also support the Civic Event at Clifford's Tower to commemorate the 1190 massacre of York's Jewish population. This event takes place the week before our Council meeting and will be kindly hosted by the Castle Museum.

Marking and remembering these events is important and ultimately a necessarily difficult part of our civic life in the city. We must never forget what has happened before and I am ever grateful to the members of the steering group for the work they do to help us in that endeavour.

Disability Equity Training

Following our commitment in a previous budget to use some funds for professional disability training we have now delivered Disability Equity Training to over 450 managers in the Council and around half of our elected Councillors. The training has been delivered by Phab through their ACTS (Access, Consulting and Training Services).

The aim of this training is to ensure that managers throughout the organisation (and elected Councillors) have a base level of

understanding of disability Equity. The training also covered the Equality Act and the Public Sector Equality Duty. Feedback from the training has been excellent with managers discussing how they will use it in their role managing staff as well as delivering services to the public.

Phab have been great partners in this work and we look forward to working with them to tell other organisations how useful this training has been. Phab believe that we are the first council to offer such training so widely.

Executive Member for Transport, Councillor Kate Ravilious

Highway Maintenance Programme

November 2025 through to February 2026 was one of the wettest on record for the region, and the volume of water has taken its toll on our highway network. Teams have been out working flat out to attend to pothole repairs and I'd like to thank them for being out in all weathers and putting in the extra hours to keep our roads and pavements safe.

This year's council budget includes over £12M investment in our highways – more than ever before. However, with an estimated £100M required to bring our roads up to scratch, we recognise that £12M will only go so far. That's why we are continuing to lobby for more funding for highways, and why we continue to prioritise preventative treatments such as surface dressing, which maintain our roads and pavements for longer and reduce future spend up to fivefold. And it's not just roads that we're repairing. We're also investing in pavement repairs and maintaining our key off-road walking and cycling routes which have been neglected for decades.

Rougier Route

We received huge interest in the Rougier Route bus priority plans, with nearly 1200 responses to our online consultation, 150 emails received and over 300 conversations had at our drop-in sessions. The majority of respondents were in favour of the scheme, with the highest levels of support coming from young people (aged 16 to 24). Valid concerns were raised by some residents, businesses and stakeholders and this feedback has been valuable in reshaping some elements of the scheme to make it perform even better once it's launched. We'll be bringing the revised plans to an Executive Decision Session in May, and if approved we'll aim to start an 18-month trial in the autumn.

Parking Review

Our online review of community parking closed at the end of February. Over 1000 people shared their views, with 80% of responses focusing on the Bishopthorpe Road community car park. Several drop-in sessions are happening throughout March, after which the findings will be written up and an options report brought for a public decision in the summer.

York's policy of aligning parking charges with bus fares has generated wider interest and in February I gave the keynote speech at a British Parking Association conference. Together with our Head of Transport Strategy – Tom Horner – I also joined a panel discussion on the future of parking and urban mobility. There was a lot of interest in our approach and some thought-provoking discussion and learning around gathering the right data, integrating EV charging and avoiding digital exclusion.

Cycling successes

The latest figures for cycling across York show that 6.5% more journeys were made on cycles in 2025. Higher parking charges likely encouraged more people onto their bikes, but the increase also reflects the success of our ongoing barrier removal programme with 16 barriers removed to date and scores more scheduled to be removed over the next 12 months.

This has opened up routes to people using trikes, family cycles and wheelchair cycles and is part of our commitment to making York a more welcoming and accessible place.

It's also hugely encouraging to hear that cycle theft in York has dropped by over 20% in the last year. Credit goes to the strong partnership work of the SecureCycle York group, with co-ordinated action between North Yorkshire Police, the Minster Police, the council, York Cycle Campaign, cycle retailers and key stakeholders such as the University of York.

Regular bike registering events have helped to increase the number of stolen bikes that are recovered, while a police GPS tagged tracker bike has helped police to catch some of the most prolific bike thieves in York.

York Independent Living and Transport Skills

Thanks to funding from Mayor Skaith and our Bus Service Improvement Plan we've been able to expand our team of travel trainers on the council's York Independent Living and Transport Skills (YILTS) programme. This dedicated team of officers provide travel training for young people aged 11 to 25 with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs), to support them in travelling independently between home and school or college.

The scheme is a great example of collaborative working across council departments and is helping to reduce the dependence on taxi travel and

deliver significant savings of up to £6,500 per pupil per year. It's been a delight to join some of the training sessions and see so many young people gain confidence and learn to travel by bus and cycle, giving them access to opportunities, independence and skills for life.

Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Safer Communities, Councillor Michael Pavlovic

Housing Delivery Programme

Following the decision to invest significant funding into housing schemes at Budget Council and Executive, officers are working on delivery plans to bring to Scrutiny in the coming weeks. Many of our plans are progressing well, while the nature of being subject to market forces, particularly in the construction sector, is presenting challenges with others. We will be bringing forward a report to Executive next month to address these challenges and ensure we continue on a pathway to delivering 100% affordable homes on council owned land.

Having been awarded significant grant contributions from the Mayoral Combined Authority, not only through the Brownfield Housing Fund, but also through the Mayor's High Street Fund, we are now able to progress not only the plans to deliver on our Housing Delivery Programme (HDP), but also the major regeneration project of the south Walmgate area, which will run alongside the building of 40 shared ownership and council houses on the old Willow House site.

Alongside agreement to progress with applying for a new planning permission for the Castle Mills site, and work already undertaken to clear the Ordnance Lane site in preparation for development, the partnership with Adult Social Care to provide several Supported Homes on the Lowfield site will see the next few years providing the biggest amount of new social housing for at least a generation. A Labour Council delivering on the priorities of the people of York.

Housing Services

The investment of an additional £1m to improve the communal areas of our council estates will see huge benefits and will involve ward councillors and residents in identifying projects.

This will build on the excellent start the city's Neighbourhood Caretaker Team has made and it has been very positive to see both the improvement and the feedback from residents and councillors who have engaged with the area walkabouts. This has played an important part in identifying the work that needs undertaking on our council estates, which is then undertaken over the following week or so, helping achieve our

goal of building pride across our wards. This has been a real success and will only grow and progress as it becomes embedded into business as usual.

Whilst at the time of writing, we still await the formal announcement from the Regulator of Social Housing Inspection which took place in February, I would like to place on record thanks to those members of the Tenants Panel who met with them, as well as all the officers who spent months preparing the huge amount of documentation they required.

We are already acting on the feedback we have received whilst we wait for the formal announcement and are implementing a new tenant engagement process, the first meeting of which was last week and was acknowledged as being a significant improvement.

Local Plan and upcoming refresh

Of course, it is not only the amount of council-built housing that we will be seeing changing the face of York. The adoption of the Local Plan last year approved the principle of building thousands of new homes over the next fifteen years and more.

A number of these schemes are already being considered by planning and other council officers throughout the council and will be coming forward for consideration by the Planning Committee in due course, including phase one of the York Central site. It's satisfying to me to know that the delivery of volume housing units, including affordable homes, is not far away, offering hope to current and future generations of York residents.

Developers are currently arranging a number of public consultations on various sites in the coming weeks and we hope residents will input their ideas that can be incorporated in the final designs, especially around the importance of community facilities.

The process of refreshing the Local Plan in line with the Government's new planning framework and NPPF update will be getting underway imminently. This comes with funding from Government to support the process so it's essential we get moving on it and ensure our development plan is up to date and fit for the future. This will involve a role for Members through the Planning Policy Working Group where I look forward to engaging with all parties on progressing this important

priority for the council and for the city. I'm optimistic this refresh won't take as long as getting our decades-long Local Plan adopted!