
Meeting	Decision Session - Combined Executive Member Decision Session
Date	3 March 2026
Present	Councillors Kilbane, Webb, Kent and Lomas
Officers in attendance	Paul Sanderson – Revenues and Benefits Manager Susan Wood – Welfare Benefits and Strategic Partnership Manager Alison Cooke – Head of Strategic Policy Planning Guy Hanson – Design and Conservation Manager Claire Foale – Chief Strategy Officer

72. Appointing a Chair (10:01am)

Resolved: That the arrangements for chairing the meeting would be as follows:

Councillor Lomas, Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects, Human Rights, Equality and Inclusion – Agenda items 1-6.

Councillor Kent, Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency – Agenda item 7.

Councillor Kilbane, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economy and Culture – Agenda items 8-9.

73. Apologies for Absence (10:01am)

There were no apologies for absence.

74. Declarations of Interest (10:01am)

The Executive Members were invited to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests, or any disclosable pecuniary interests that they might have in respect of business on the agenda. None were declared.

75. Minutes (10:01am)

An incorrectly recorded date was amended at paragraph 57 of the 27 January minutes, to be updated on the electronic record. It was then

Resolved: That the minutes of the Combined Executive Member Decision Sessions held on Tuesday, 27 January 2026 and Tuesday, 3 February 2026 be approved as a correct record.

76. Public Participation (10:02am)

It was noted that there had been one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Councillor Waller spoke in relation to agenda item 6, noting that the proposed scheme was an important resource for the city, and would particularly benefit areas of deprivation in York, including within his own ward. He noted that the funding had in fact been reduced in real terms and asked what lobbying had been attempted in response to this.

He discussed the other means of support for residents, beyond this scheme, and expressed his hope that working with these impartial groups might be included in future reports. He also suggested that since this scheme would be reported as part of the annual report to Executive and as part of a welfare benefits update report, that the Executive Members consider making this a public document so that ward councillors could refer to it.

77. Crises & Resilience Fund Scheme (10:06am)

The Revenues and Benefits Manager, assisted by the Welfare Benefits Manager, presented the item on the Crises and Resilience Fund provided by the National Government to York. He explained that this funding had been made available to local authorities across England, both to support low-income households encountering financial shock and to support activities that build individual and community resilience. He noted that the funding covered the period 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029 inclusive. He stated that the fund included a housing element and was not intended to replace existing local welfare assistance schemes.

He acknowledged that in comparison with the preceding Household Support Fund Scheme, in real terms there was a million-pound reduction in the funding provided across the next three years, but that this funding would now be guaranteed for that period and annual renewal would not need to be sought, making forward planning easier.

He noted that the scheme was not open to those with no recourse to public funds, but otherwise it was open to everyone who needed support, whether they happened to be receiving benefits. He explained that the scheme provided funding to be delivered by the authority or external providers to improve financial resilience across the area. Additionally it provided community coordination to drive investment in activities connecting and enhancing the local support landscape.

The Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects, Human Rights, Equality and Inclusion thanked all officers who had worked on this scheme. Addressing points raised in public participation, she agreed that the totality of funding for this scheme was less than that for the previous scheme. She advised that both she and the Council Leader had extensively lobbied government ministers about the need for funding, focus and support for York.

The Executive Member also noted the point raised in public participation regarding a “joined up approach” with community partners. She agreed that this was a core and essential part of the work here and she was working closely with the Financial Inclusion steering group to achieve better outcomes.

She highlighted the council’s team working to assist people experiencing difficulties and signposting them to partner organisations who can assist in the longer term; responding to what people need now, then looking at what help they might need to get out of the situation they are experiencing.

Noting Cllr Waller’s query about reports being made public the Executive Member explained that these reports would be presented to the Executive Member Decision Session, which is a public meeting, and therefore they would be publicly available.

She also highlighted that in the past few years, the council had used data from the Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) to proactively approach qualifying people who may otherwise be reluctant to come forward and ask for council assistance. This had been particularly successful.

The Executive Member for Children and Education commented that he had been working with Councillor Lomas on this scheme, thanking her and

officers for their work. He acknowledged the cost-of-living crisis alluded to in public participation, and highlighted schemes the council was running to mitigate this.

He agreed that LIFT had generated huge amounts of income for the individuals identified and encouraged the public to reach out to their ward councillors, or at West Offices.

He noted that because this scheme had guaranteed three-year funding, this allowed the council to plan further ahead which would make a big difference.

Resolved: That the Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects, Human Rights, Equality and Inclusion

- i. Approve the Council's Crises and Resilience Fund Scheme.
- ii. Delegate to the Head of Customer Finance, Risk and Insurance in consultation with the councils Section 151 the power to award or amend any financial support changes and awards in line with the Government's three outcomes and four strands, as set out in the scheme and Government guidance.

Reason: The scheme helps to alleviate the ongoing cost of living pressures for financially vulnerable residents.

78. North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) - adoption of evidence (10:26am)

This item was Introduced by the Head of Strategic Policy Planning who explained that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy was a spatial strategy that sought to map nature recovery actions and deliver the government's England-wide nature targets, as a statutory requirement outlined in the Environment Act 2021. She explained that the Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) had appointed North Yorkshire Council as the responsible authority for delivery, and they had approved it in January 2026. Since York had acted as supporting authority, and following endorsement of the draft publication version by the Council Executive last November, it was coming to this session for Executive Member approval in order to proceed.

The Design and Conservation Manager presented the item and outlined how DEFRA intended delivery to work. He noted that the responsible

authority role may move from North Yorkshire Council to the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority, as part of devolution developments and to channel funding.

He advised that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy was intended to be embedded into local decision making. Strategic projects could be identified and project development facilitated, using the LNRS as a filter. Monitoring and reporting on strategic priorities would be undertaken via an embedded report phase.

The Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency welcomed this scheme, stating that unsurprisingly, residents supported the restoration of nature and having the LNRS as a formal strategy was particularly helpful. She said that she looked forward to hearing about the next steps from DEFRA.

With this said it was

Resolved: That the Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency

- i. Note the decision by North Yorkshire Council to publish the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).
- ii. Accept the LNRS, as approved, as a statutory evidence base to inform planning decisions and plan-making.

Reason: To ensure compliance with the Environment Act 2021.

79. York Cultural Strategy (10:34am)

The Chief Strategy Officer presented the report, which concerned the adoption of York's Cultural Strategy. She invited the Executive Member to approve the Strategy on behalf of the city, noting that it had been developed in association with cultural and heritage organisations, and considered how to strengthen community engagement, create an inclusive environment to enable participation for all. She highlighted York's unique, globally recognised heritage and culture as a source of pride.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Economy and Culture thanked officers and partners including North Yorkshire for their work on this strategy. He stressed that this strategy highlighted that culture was an inherent, evolving and organic concept, which made the people of York who they were. He praised the positivity of the strategy for encouraging

civic pride and stridently contrasted this with enforcement and politicisation of culture evident elsewhere.

Resolved: That the Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economy and Culture commit the council to adopt the York Cultural Strategy.

Reason:

- i. York continues to be internationally recognised for its exceptional heritage and unique arts offer.
- ii. Residents and businesses in York benefit from York's unique cultural offer, improving life outcomes and health and wellbeing.
- iii. The cultural offer fuels our economy, supporting growth and regeneration.
- iv. All residents will be able to participate and engage in culture, with a focus on inclusive and relevant activities.

Cllrs Lomas, Kent and Kilbane, Chairs

[The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 10.44 am].