

Meeting	Place Scrutiny Committee
Date	26 January 2026
Present	Councillors Healey (Vice-Chair), Baxter, Fenton, Hook, D Myers, K Taylor, Whitcroft and Waller (Substitute)
In Attendance	Councillor Lomas – Executive Member Finance, Performance, Major Projects, Human Rights, Equality and Inclusion Councillor Kent – Executive Member Environment and Climate Emergency Debbie Mitchell – Director of Finance Nick Collins - Head of Property Services Shaun Gibbons – Head of Carbon Reduction Dave Meigh - Operations Manager (Strategy and Contracts) Public Realm
Apologies	Councillors Vassie

20. Apologies for Absence (5.30 pm)

The Committee noted apologies from Cllr Vassie who was substituted by Cllr Waller.

Due to the position of Chair currently being vacant, Cllr Healey the Committees Vice Chair was confirmed as chairing the meeting and Cllr Myers was voted Vice Chair for the meeting.

21. Declarations of Interest (5.31 pm)

Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests which they may have in respect of business on the agenda.

Cllr Taylor confirmed that he had a non-prejudicial interest as he is a Trustee of the York Railway Bowls and Social Club referred to in the paper as a council owned property that is listed in the report.

Cllr Fenton confirmed that he had a non-prejudicial interest as he is a trustee of Foxwood Community Centre which is a Council owned property but not listed in the report.

22. Exemption of Press and Public (5.31 pm)

Resolved: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of 2 confidential annexes to Agenda Item 6 on the grounds that it contains Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). This information was classed as exempt under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as revised by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006).

23. Minutes (5.32 pm)

Resolved: That the minutes of the Place Scrutiny Committee on 25 November 2025 be signed as a correct record of the meeting.

24. Public Participation (5.32 pm)

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

Gwen Swinburn raised concerns that the Council did not have an asset disposal strategy and believed not enough information was provided for Members to assess the performance of Council assets. She stated that there should be more publicly available information relating to off market sales of public assets. She also stated that she felt the Committee should meet more regularly to ensure sufficient scrutiny of issues across its portfolio, for example on city-wide parking issues.

25. Asset Management Strategy - 2026 to 2031 (5.36 pm)

Officers introduced the report which was seeking the Committee's input on the proposed Asset Management Strategy - 2026 to 2031 which would be considered by the Executive on 3 March 2026. Key principals of the strategy were outlined including details of the progress made against the 2020 to 2025 strategy. Officers also provided an update to the report regarding a deal for a data centre at the York Community Stadium which

would no longer be going ahead, Officers would continue to explore new opportunities for the space. It was also noted that there had been a typo at paragraph 111 of the Executive report at that it should read that 200,000 trees had been planted not 2000.

The Committee raised a number of assets in their wards which were not specifically listed within the strategy and whether plans were set out for these assets. Officers noted that the strategy could not list every asset the Council had but would guide decision's relating to assets, alongside, the Council's governance arrangements relating to decisions on assets, with many assets particularly those valued over £500,000 or where a decision could be contentious requiring Executive approval for decisions relating to the asset. Members enquired whether it was possible for a breakdown of all Council assets and the Ward they were in could be shared with Members, Officers agreed to look into this and reminded Members of the York Map which could be used identify assets.

Members noted that the Council generated most of its property income from office space and enquired whether changes in working patterns could negatively effect this and what was identified to address any changes. Officers acknowledged the changes in working patterns with more home and hybrid working since the pandemic. Officers noted that the Council was doing very well in this period at renting out office space including increasing revenue from renting out space in the Council's West Offices building and were doing well at renting out office space across the city. They noted that should changes affect the viability of these spaces then the Council would seek to consider its strategy to identify how to use an asset, noting the focus on economic development and wellbeing of the city including generating income. Offices confirmed that this could include changes of use for assets and disposal.

The Committee discussed the use of Council assets for community uses and it was confirmed by Officers that the Council had a range of considerations for its property portfolio including the role of an asset in the community. Members asked if the Council had a high value asset being used as a community asset would it consider the sale of said asset and relocating community activities to an appropriate new location. Officers confirmed that these were always things worth considering and if the Council had a valuable property any decision would likely require an Executive decision to change the use of disposal of the asset due to its value or considered a contentious decision. Members also enquired

whether the Council provided support and legal advice to community groups which were looking to purchase properties for community use. Officers outlined that the Council wouldn't provide legal advice to others and that they needed to seek their own legal advice but that the Council did support community groups where it was possible and appropriate to do so.

Members discussed the use of Peppercorn rents and when the Council might use these for commercial rents, as well as, how the Council sought to ensure maximum value from their assets. Officers confirmed that in cases where the Council considering the disposal of an asset it would be valued and put out to the market, in cases where it made sense such as a disposal to a developer seeking a wider regeneration of an area then the Council might deal directly with one potential buyer but the asset would still be independently valued to ensure best value. Officers also noted that the Council were required to seek best value with its commercial assets, in cases where Peppercorn rents might be applied to a commercial lease could be in the case of receiving an upfront payment ahead of a new development, in these cases the Council would still seek best value but the rent on the finished property might be lower than its market rate.

[Cllr Lomas was in attendance from 5.52 pm to 7.16 pm.

The meeting adjourned between 6.29 pm and 6.35 pm; Cllr Kent left the meeting during the adjournment.

Between 6.35 pm and 7.25 pm the press and public were excluded from the meeting during consideration the two confidential annexes to the report].

Resolved:

- i. Noted the Strategy.
- ii. Requested that ward Councillors be provided privately with details of Council assets in their wards, in conjunction with ward maps.
- iii. Recommended that the Strategy develop recognition of volunteer contribution into the assets.
- iv. Recommended that work be done with the communications team to look at options for increasing the visibility of the Council's logo on Council assets.

Reasons: This will be used to inform the Executive decision-making process of the views of the Place Scrutiny Committee in relation to the Asset Management Strategy - 2026 to 2031.

26. Work Plan (7.34 pm)

Members considered the committee's work plan for the current municipal year.

It was noted that Members remained interested in pursuing a Task and Finish Group around on-street EV charging, and the vice-chair would undertake to draft a scoping proposal. Members agreed to request more further details around the Local Transport Plan and Rougier Route items which had been suggested for the Committee's March meeting.

Attention was drawn to the government consultation on pavement parking, and it was agreed to add this to the Committee's list of unallocated items for future discussion.

Members considered a request from Cllr Kent to include an item on Water Scrutiny on the Committee's work plan for July 2026. This followed the agreement of a Motion in relation to tackling pollution in York's Rivers at the November 2025 meeting of Council. The proposed item would include participation from the Council and partners including Yorkshire Water and the Internal Drainage Boards. Members agreed to the proposed item, and requested that water-focused campaign groups locally also be invited to participate.

Cllr Myers noted that he was to be his Group's nominee for Chair of the Committee. This would subject to approval at the next meeting of Council, and should his nomination be approved, he would meet with the Vice-Chair at an early opportunity.

Resolved: To agree the Committee's work plan, subject to the suggested changes.

Reason: To ensure the Committee maintains an appropriate programme of work.

Cllr Healey, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.40 pm].

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