
Place Scrutiny Committee**21 July 2026**

Report of the Director of City Development

**York Central Mayoral Development Zone: Scrutiny Consideration
Summary**

1. This report presents, at Annex A, the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (“CA”) paper which proposed the creation of Mayoral Development Zones (“MDZs”), including a York Central MDZ.
2. The CA agreed to the creation of three MDZs across York and North Yorkshire, which will jointly benefit from a £10m MDZ Regeneration Fund and £500k of revenue capacity funding across the MDZ programme.
3. Place Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the CA’s paper on MDZs, and to seek such clarification in relation to the process to be followed as the Committee considers appropriate.
4. Subsequent to this report, discussions will take place between officers of City of York Council (“CYC”) and the CA, to allow for a report will be taken to Executive for the Leader (with Executive) to approve the red line boundary of the York Central MDZ.

Background

5. The CA paper proposed the designation, in principle, of Scarborough, the Selby Growth Corridor, and York Central as MDZs. The purpose of these MDZs is to accelerate regeneration in key locations across York and North Yorkshire.
6. An MDZ is described as a flexible, non-statutory Mayoral designation for an area where regeneration is a priority. This differs from a Mayoral Development Corporation (“MDC”), which is a statutory delivery body with wider powers and higher set-up and running costs.
7. For York Central, the paper described a nationally significant brownfield regeneration opportunity on former railway land west of York Railway

Station, with outline planning consent, a joint venture partner appointed and major unlocking infrastructure nearing completion.

8. The CA paper stated that an MDC is not required for York Central because land ownership and planning are not considered to be the main barriers. It suggested that an MDZ would help signal York Central as a Mayoral and regional priority, align government and funding commitments, and give confidence to investors and partners.
9. The MDZ designation is new to CYC, and it is therefore considered important that Members have the opportunity to understand both the designation and the benefits of such a zone. This includes how any boundary will be defined, how MDZ governance would interact with the current review of York Central governance arrangements, how future or additional York opportunities could be considered by the CA, and how the Council can maximise the opportunities afforded by an MDZ.

Previous Discussions

10. York Central has been a long-standing strategic regeneration priority for CYC. The site is a critical element in the delivery of the City's Local Plan and offers significant opportunities to generate inward investment and improve social outcomes. Previously, the Council has supported the site through policy, funding, land, infrastructure and partnership decisions, while also acting as the local planning authority.
11. In November 2015, York Central was named as an Enterprise Zone following a joint bid by CYC and the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership. Enterprise Zone status, which runs until 2052, allows for the local retention of a proportion of business rates generated on the site to help fund infrastructure.
12. Between 2017 and 2018, Executive supported the York Central masterplan, selected the western access option, approved submission of detailed planning applications for key infrastructure, and agreed land and compensation arrangements needed to bring the access road, bridge and spine road forward.
13. In November 2018, Executive considered the York Central Enterprise Zone Investment Case and agreed prudential borrowing of £35m, financed from future retained business rates, as part of a wider £155m infrastructure package.

14. In July 2020, Executive agreed further project funding, delegated authority to agree grant terms for £77.1m of infrastructure funding from Central Government, and approved land disposal arrangements to support relocation of rail infrastructure from the York Central site.
15. In April 2022, Executive delegated authority to enter into an Enterprise Zone funding agreement with Homes England to reimburse infrastructure costs and confirmed the Council's £35m contribution to enabling infrastructure.

Consultation

16. This cover report has been prepared to support Member understanding. It does not constitute public consultation on the CA proposal, since such consultation would need to be undertaken by the CA.
17. The CA paper stated that the MDZ proposals have been discussed with, and are supported in principle by, the relevant constituent local authorities. Following agreement in principle, the CA would work with the relevant local authority and delivery partners to define the red-line boundary, primary aims and governance.

Issues for Member Consideration

18. Members may wish to focus their discussion on the matters where the Council can most usefully influence the next stage: whether the boundary should be limited to the existing York Central geography or include related station-area and city-centre growth opportunities; how MDZ governance will interact with the existing Enterprise Zone governance; how CYC officers will report CA progress on the MDZ; how the designation can best contribute towards the site's outcomes and any additionality that might be provided for the surrounding areas through implementing an MDZ with a broader boundary than the "teardrop" site.
19. The designation decision itself sits within CA governance. The purpose of this discussion is therefore to broaden CYC's understanding, and to provide views which the Executive may wish to raise with the CA. For clarity, the Committee is not empowered to scrutinise the CA or substitute its views for those of the CA's own overview and scrutiny committee.
20. The proposed decision pathway is that Committee is asked to note the CA's paper on MDZs, prior to discussions taking place between the

Council and CA in relation to the red line boundary to be applied to the MDZ.

21. Once those discussions have taken place, a report will be taken to Executive to approve the red line boundary of the zone.
22. It should be noted that statutory planning decisions, including reserved matters decisions, remain with the Council in its capacity as local planning authority and must be considered on their own merits, separate to the MDZ designation.

Council Plan

23. The proposal links to the Council Plan priorities for a fair, thriving, green and connected city. York Central *will* support new homes, employment, public realm, sustainable travel, culture, skills and inward investment, which are key outcomes for the successful delivery of the City's Local Plan.
24. Members may wish to note that any Council support will be explicitly linked to inclusive growth, affordable housing, climate and environmental outcomes, active and sustainable travel, community benefit and high-quality place-making.

Implications

Financial

25. There are no direct financial implications arising from this scrutiny cover report. The CA paper outlined a ringfenced £10m capital MDZ Regeneration Fund and £500k capacity funding from CA resources. Any City of York Council financial commitments from future MDZ activity would require separate consideration through the Council's governance processes.

Human Resources (HR)

26. There are no direct HR implications arising from this report. Officer capacity may be required if the Council participates in boundary, governance, delivery framework or funding discussions with the CA.

Equalities

27. There are no direct equalities implications arising from this cover report. Any future Council decision should consider how regeneration benefits would be shared, including accessibility, affordable housing, employment opportunities and impacts on communities affected by development.

Legal

28. The CA paper stated that MDZs are informal, non-statutory designations and do not have formal legal status. Before any Executive decision, the Council should satisfy itself that support for an MDZ would not prejudice or fetter its statutory roles, including planning, highways, consultation, land, governance and decision-making functions. In particular, any support for an MDZ must not predetermine future planning decisions or reserved matters, which must continue to be considered on their own merits.

Crime and Disorder

29. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report. Future regeneration proposals should consider community safety, natural surveillance, public realm design and safe access through and around York Central.

Information Technology (IT)

30. There are no direct IT implications arising from this report.

Property

31. There are no direct property implications arising from this cover report. York Central involves significant land and property interests; any Council property implications from future MDZ activity would need to be considered separately.

Other

32. Other implications may include planning, transport and highways, environment, climate change, economic development, skills and communications. These would require further assessment if Executive is asked to take a formal decision or if specific projects are brought forward through an MDZ delivery framework or business case.
33. It is noted than the designation of an MDZ would not prejudice any of the

Council's statutory functions.

Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Mitigation / consideration
There may be missed opportunities around other sites within the City.	Failure to capitalise upon the most beneficial opportunities for the City.	Committee can recommend that Executive support is conditional or that further work is undertaken.
Potential confusion between existing York Central arrangements, Council roles and CA advisory structures.	Delayed and confused decision making and accountability surrounding the York Central site.	Seek clear boundary, terms of reference, reporting arrangements and Council representation before final support.
Future financial or delivery expectations	Council may be assumed to support future commitments beyond the principle of an MDZ.	State that any future Council commitments require separate decisions.

Recommendations

34. Members are asked to note the CA paper at Annex A, and provide feedback on the issues raised in paragraph 18 above.

Contact Details

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Report ☐ **Date** 14 July 2026

Approved

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Wards Affected: Holgate Ward

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Annexes

Annex A: York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority Cabinet report - New Mayoral Development Zones for York and North Yorkshire.

Abbreviations

CA	<i>York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority</i>
CYC	<i>City of York Council</i>
MDZ	<i>Mayoral Development Zone</i>
MDC	<i>Mayoral Development Corporation</i>
MDA	<i>Mayoral Development Area</i>
NRM	<i>National Railway Museum</i>