

Executive meeting on Wednesday, 9 September 2026

Written representation in relation to agenda item 10, Review of CYC community car park and on-street parking charges in response to petitions

Dear Executive Members,

My comments are personal ones, based on several decades of providing advice on parking strategy, since I led the work on London's first parking strategy in the 1970s.

I support the specific recommendations for use of the Minster Card to reduce the cost of parking in designated community car parks for York residents. However, I am very concerned about the continued lack of clarity on producing a parking strategy for York.

The parking charge increases introduced in city centre car parks in 2025 were wholly appropriate, given the Local Transport Strategy's commitment to a 20% reduction in car use. But it was a serious failure of professional judgment to propose applying the same charge to community car parks. The resulting increases of up to 500% were well in excess of what was justified given the LTS targets, and wholly inconsistent with prevailing professional guidance on parking strategy. Not surprisingly, they created adverse impacts on travel patterns and the local economy, and generated quite unnecessary animosity among the business community.

Had the Council already produced a parking strategy, it would have been clear that these car parks served a different purpose and justified a different charging regime. Officers first indicated to me in 2017 that they intended to produce a parking strategy and, through York Civic Trust, I offered to help. Yet in 2023 we were advised that the work involved would cost £60k, and could not be afforded. Sadly, the Council has now been forced to spend around twice that sum on a report covering just four car parks.

Policies 7.5 and 7.7 of the July 2024 Local Transport Strategy provide an excellent specification for the parking strategy, and the April 2025 Implementation Plan committed the Council to producing it by the end of 2026. Unfortunately, the report to next week's Executive suggests that officers are still unclear as to what is required. Para 23 suggests that the parking strategy will be part of the Kerbside Strategy, which is clearly inappropriate, since at least 80% of parking is off-street. Para 26c suggests that it will be part of the Movement and Place Plan, yet the brief for that, issued in May 2026, makes no reference to parking strategy, and a contract has now been awarded for the work specified in that brief. Para 75 states that "it is anticipated that the strategy will be developed within or alongside the Movement and Place Plan", but offers no certainty as to funding or timescale.

The Council now needs urgently to develop a parking strategy, to avoid any similar inconsistencies in policy in future. It should still be possible to have a strategy in place by spring 2027. I hope that you will now instruct officers to allocate a budget and specify a timetable for producing one.

Tony May