

North Yorkshire Council

Skipton and Ripon Area Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 5 March 2026 commencing at 10.00 am.

Present: Councillor Robert Heseltine in the Chair and Councillors Andy Solloway, Philip Barrett, Andy Brown, Nick Brown, Felicity Cunliffe-Lister, Richard Foster, David Ireton, Andrew Murday, Simon Myers, David Noland, David Staveley and Andrew Williams.

Present virtually: Councillor Nathan Hull.

In attendance: Rt Hon Julian Smith MP (virtual), Sophie Eveleigh, Contracts and Relationships Officer, York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority, Eleanor Nossiter, Airedale NHS Foundation Trust Head of Communications and Engagement and Freya Sledding, Airedale NHS Foundation Trust Clinical Director.

Officers present: Harriet Clarke, Senior Democratic Services Officer and David Smith, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Officers present virtually: Jon Holden, Head of School Organisation and Transport, Keisha Moore, Senior Transport Planning Officer and Chris Reynolds, Head of SEND and Resources.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

220 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

221 Minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2025

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Skipton and Ripon Area Committee held on 4 December 2025 were confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

222 Declarations of interest

There were none.

223 Update from RT Hon Julian Smith MP

The Rt Hon Sir Julian Smith MP provided a verbal update on the work that is currently being undertaken in the Skipton and Ripon constituency and raised the following points:

- The impact of the current international crisis on the cost of living and driving up fuel prices which has raised questions about defence spending.
- The Government's recent White Paper proposing reform of the SEND system and funding.
- The local government funding settlement was deemed to be manageable overall but rural councils continue to face significant financial pressure, including loss of

- the Rural Services Grant.
- The Employment Rights Bill was expected to increase costs for businesses, due to the introduction of earlier employment rights, changes to unfair dismissal processes, and concerns about its impact on small businesses already under significant pressure.
- The Spring Statement highlighted the need to support the hospitality sector given rising unemployment for young people.

Members thanked the Rt Hon Sir Julian Smith MP for the verbal update and raised the following points in response:

- Concerns about rising household energy costs, particularly in rural areas. One Member reported that their heating oil bill had increased by £80 as a result of the current international crisis. The Rt Hon Sir Julian Smith MP acknowledged these concerns and endeavoured to continue raising the issue for residents of rural communities.
- Concerns were raised that the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) would weaken the Council's new Local Plan by expanding permitted development rights in national parks, undermining their statutory duties to protect heritage and provide public access. It was confirmed that the Yorkshire Dales National Park planned to submit a response to the new NPPF guidelines. In response, The Rt Hon Sir Julian Smith MP agreed to look into the issue further.
- The upcoming ITV programme on the Angus Fire PFAS issue in High Bentham and concerns that tourism in the area may be negatively impacted. The Rt Hon Sir Julian Smith MP confirmed he had been actively engaged with the company and the Environment Agency, emphasising that a regulatory process is underway to investigate the issues and that Bentham remains open to visitors.
- One Member raised concerns that the draft NPPF weakened support for community led housing and that the Council's Local Plan contains no provision for it and also highlighted the lack of masts and poor mobile coverage in the Ripon area, with the Rt Hon Sir Julian Smith MP agreeing to follow up on both issues and seek further details on the perceived housing policy gap.
- On the matter of community led housing, the Executive Member for Culture, Arts and Housing reported that as a result of income gained from the second homes council tax premium, the Craven Community Land Trust would acquire two new homes in Settle. The Rt Hon Sir Julian Smith MP agreed to circulate a community energy projects document entitled 'Local Power Plan' from the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.
- A request for an update from Arla on the closure of the Settle dairy factory to enable residents to better understand the site's future.

224 Public questions and statements

Two public questions were received that did not relate to an item on the agenda and were dealt with under this agenda item and are detailed below.

1. Public question from Edwin Rothwell

"Hello,

I just wanted to thank you for your support and encouragement from the last time I brought a question here. Your input and the resulting discussions outside of here were really useful.

To update you on my work, I've set up a charity to facilitate the Skipton Pride celebrations and we held our first event as a charity last August. The feedback has been incredible and

we are hoping to repeat that success again this summer.

My Community Interest Company has started trading as a Coffee Shop on Swadford Street, and this has already started building a great community of customers. I have used the space to spark discussions around the Town Investment Plan, and I've been lucky to hear lots of opinions, which I will collate and feed into the Plan.

Just a reminder that I spoke here previously about Regeneration in Skipton, and the desire for my Community Interest Company to eventually start a housing project.

I have noted on your work agenda that this Committee is interested in the vacant space above shops. Converting these to residential is not often commercially viable with extra obstacles like Listed status. It seems to be the case that conversion of these spaces does require an intervention to unlock the potential housing.

With that in mind, I am interested in how I can help with that, as a delivery partner, and I intend to apply to the Stage 1 Community Housing Fund, to set up a Skipton Community Benefit Society (SCBS), which will aim to provide housing with genuinely affordable rents, reserved for young people who can demonstrate that they want to stay in the area.

I anticipate that the SCBS will be able to build a membership, and gather sources of funding, such as from Homes England and the Combined Authority Brownfield Housing Fund, to bring disused space in Skipton Town Centre back to life - in a high-quality and energy efficient way.

My question to the committee is whether this is something that would be supported, what is the committee's interest in the space above shops, and what concerns would the committee have about this?

Thank you

Edwin Rothwell

CIC Manager,
Heart of Skipton CIC"

A joint response to this public question was received from the Community Housing Enabler and Regeneration Officer, as detailed below:

"Thank you for your question and for the continued engagement you have shown with the work of the Skipton and Ripon Area Committee. It is encouraging to hear about the progress you have made since you last update to the Committee.

The Community Housing Team met with Mr. Rothwell on 24 February 2026 in Skipton and were supportive of his ambition to provide affordable housing in the area. Following that meeting, the team shared examples of completed community-led housing schemes and provided him with the blank grant application form for the community development set up fund. Our understanding was that he would take these materials away to review and to discuss with the wider community, to gauge interest and identify whether others might wish to join him in bringing forward affordable homes.

In relation to the Skipton Town Investment Plan (TIP), Mr Rothwell was invited to, and attended, the initial stakeholder engagement event on the 9 February 2026 representing Heart of Skipton Community Interest Company. We value his contribution to the discussions which will help shape the priorities of the TIP and we will ensure he continues to be invited to participate in future engagement opportunities."

2. Public Question from Margaret Nicholson

“What progress has been made by North Yorkshire Council in providing a safe footpath on Sutton Lane to Eastburn in Sutton on Craven, following the fatality which happened there over four years ago?”

A response to this public question was received from Richard Marr, Highways Area Manager, as detailed below:

“The project is one that needs input from both North Yorkshire Council and the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (CBMDC).

From North Yorkshire Council’s perspective, the scheme is agreed with the necessary landowners and the legal transfer of land should be completed before the end of the financial year. North Yorkshire Council is also assisting the CBMDC with their acquisitions and although progressing positively, the CBMDC are still at the early stages of negotiation.

The scheme itself is still being led by, and will be ordered by, the CBMDC, but work can only commence once the Legal acquisitions are complete.”

In response, Mrs Nicholson expressed long standing concerns about the dangerous road conditions in Sutton on Craven, noting that the issues had first been raised in October 2016 including inadequate street lighting, the absence of a pavement, the narrow road layout and heavy road traffic near the local school. A lack of confidence in CBMDC’s commitment to resolving the issue was also commented on.

225 Airedale Hospital Update

Eleanor Nossiter, Airedale NHS Foundation Trust Head of Communications and Engagement and Freya Sledding, Airedale NHS Foundation Trust Clinical Director provided a presentation which updated Members on the site preparation and design of the new Airedale Hospital and raised the below points:

- Work was underway to prepare the site, including a planning application for a new multi-storey car park and access road submitted before Christmas to ensure sufficient parking.
- Additional preparatory works included securing a new electricity supply, constructing a power substation, establishing a contractor compound for vehicles and equipment, and removing overhead power lines.
- All patient-facing services will remain on site during redevelopment whilst some administrative and support functions will relocate off site.
- A single-phase build is being explored in line with national RAAC guidance, with construction anticipated to begin in 2028/29 subject to an outline planning application being submitted this summer.
- The hospital design is progressing in line with the national Hospital 2.0 model, incorporating modular construction methods and standardised layouts.
- The new hospital will provide single en-suite rooms for all patients to improve experience, infection control and recovery.
- Engagement with the local community is informing hospital priorities and the development of community based services.
- Digital technology will be fully embedded in the hospital’s design to enhance wayfinding, equipment tracking, clinical workflows and overall care delivery.
- A clinical strategy has been developed to guide services across hospital and community settings, aligned with the Bradford District and Craven Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Plans include shifting some elements of care into community settings by 2040,

such as outpatient appointments, imaging and radiology, diagnostic tests, mobile units and one-stop clinics.

- A Target Operating Model is being developed to describe how services will be delivered from 2030 onwards.
- Public engagement indicated strong preference for improved wayfinding, accessibility, natural light, green spaces and a welcoming, inclusive hospital environment.

Members welcomed the verbal update and raised the following points:

- The urgency of completing the hospital rebuild as quickly as possible was emphasised.
- One Member suggested revisiting previous work on Mid Craven healthcare provision, highlighting overcrowded healthcare facilities and proposing renewed collaboration across NHS services, council land assets, GP practices and other stakeholders, which the Airedale team welcomed and agreed to re-engage in these discussions.
- Concerns were raised about parking capacity and transport links, particularly access from the railway station.
- Members welcomed the focus on community based services and sought assurance regarding the future use and viability of Skipton Hospital and satellite sites.
- Questions were raised about the proposed footbridge across the bypass, challenges with patient transport access and the need for improved drop-off facilities.
- Concerns were noted regarding single occupancy rooms potentially reducing patient socialisation. The Airedale team outlined mitigations including dedicated ward social spaces and increased group rehabilitation activities.
- The team confirmed significant improvements to parking layout, overall capacity, accessible parking provision and electric vehicle charging points.
- In response to one query, it was confirmed that the programme is fully Government funded with no PFI involvement.
- It was confirmed that solar panels were included in the car park design, with wider energy strategy details to follow as the design progresses.
- Ongoing challenges were noted in ensuring patients are fit for discharge and improving pathways to support timely and effective discharges.

226 Wyvern Link Road, Skipton

A briefing note providing a progress update on Wyvern Link Road was presented to the Committee.

As the relevant officer was unavailable to deliver the update, the Senior Democratic Services Officer provided a short summary of the briefing note and included the following points:

- At the Skipton and Ripon Area Committee meeting on 4 December 2025, an additional recommendation was resolved by Members that officers submit a draft business case for consideration by the Executive within six months.
- That phase 1 was completed on time but had identified significant issues concerning flood resilience and operational performance of the scheme. Further internal work was now required to consider the issues raised.
- It had been reported that the scheme had not yet reached an appropriate stage to allow a draft business case to be prepared for consideration by the Executive.

In response to the update, Members raised the following issues:

- Members emphasised the urgency of progressing the long delayed scheme, highlighting flood resilience concerns, heavy goods vehicle movements, and the reliance of the waste depot on the new Link Road.
- Concerns were raised about delays attributed to the Environment Agency and LGR, and a report setting out the final scheme was requested by July 2026.
- Councillors highlighted the strong business case and the anticipated improvements to traffic flow.
- Members sought clearer detail on the timescales for the completion of phase 2.
- The Chair requested Executive Member involvement, including the Executive Member for Highways and Transportation and it was agreed that the two Executive Members of the Skipton and Ripon Area Committee would draft a constructive letter to the Executive regarding the Wyvern Link Road project.

At this point in the meeting, Members agreed to bring item 9 – Ripon Mobility Hub Update forward.

227 Ripon Mobility Hub Update

A report was submitted in the name of the Corporate Director of Environment which provided an update on the work undertaken to explore whether a mobility hub in Ripon would be a feasible option.

Keisha Moore, Senior Transport Planning Officer presented the report and raised the following points:

- The feasibility study formed the first stage of the business case process, assessing whether there was a clear need for intervention and identifying the potential benefits.
- The current transport challenges in Ripon, particularly issues relating to congestion, active travel provision, connectivity, and the constraints posed by limited rail access via Thirsk.
- The study demonstrated that a mobility hub could significantly improve sustainable travel choices through improved active travel provision and better public transport options. It would also contribute to wider Council objectives, including reducing carbon emissions, improving air quality and supporting economic growth.
- The work undertaken was more detailed than is typically required at this early stage, providing a strong foundation should Members wish to progress to the next phase of development.
- In summary, the feasibility study indicated that a Ripon Mobility Hub is a credible and deliverable option in principle, offering clear positive outcomes for connectivity, sustainability, and the economic vitality of the city.
- Table 1 outlined the four options summarised as follows:
 1. Do nothing
 2. Option A – do minimum
 3. Option B – do medium
 4. Option C – do maximum

Members noted the contents of the report and raised the following points:

- Members welcomed the progress made on the feasibility study for a Ripon Mobility Hub.

- Concern was expressed that local Division Members had not been consulted on the four options set out in Table 1 prior to the report's publication. In response, Members were reassured that there would be opportunities to feed into the options as they move into the next stage of development.
- Several Members felt that a hybrid of options B and C would be most effective, with reduced emphasis on the satellite hubs and greater focus on the development of the bus station and alleviating pressure on car parking. This included exploring alternative parking locations for empty coaches so that the existing coach park could be utilised for car parking.
- Members acknowledged the cost constraints identified in the report and recognised that a hybrid option would require additional resources, so any chosen approach needed to remain feasible.
- The potential contribution of the Clotherholme development in funding transport improvements, which could support a hybrid of options B and C was highlighted, noting that this had not been referenced in the report. In response, it was clarified that this update was high level and that while recent housing development had been considered within the wider context, it had not been included in this particular report to the Area Committee.
- A query was raised regarding whether improvements to additional bus routes, beyond Ripon to Thirsk, would be explored. The Senior Transport Planning Officer confirmed that all major routes were recognised, but as only the Harrogate and Thirsk routes provide onward rail connections, these remained the focus for connectivity improvements.
- One Member emphasised the importance of developing a bus route to Clotherholme.

It was proposed by Councillor Simon Myers and seconded by Councillor Andrew Williams that when developing the full report officers engage with local Members and note that the Area Committee favours in principle the redevelopment of the Ripon bus station and that the report looks at possible sources of funding for this including the recent major housing developments in Ripon.

Resolved

- i. That Members of the Area Committee note the progress made on the Ripon Mobility Hub feasibility study, including the positive outcomes of the assessment and the identification of Option B as the most balanced and deliverable approach.
- ii. That Members acknowledge the next steps required to finalise the Strategic Outline Case and progress towards the Outline Business Case, including confirming the preferred delivery and operational model for the scheme.
- iii. An additional recommendation was added by the Committee that when developing the full report officers engage with local Members and note that the Area Committee favours in principle the redevelopment of the Ripon bus station and that the report looks at possible sources of funding for this including the recent major housing developments in Ripon.

Councillor Andrew Williams left the meeting at 11:45 am

SEND and Resources presented the Annual Schools Update report which sought to inform Members of the local educational landscape, educational achievement and the financial challenges which affect schools in the Skipton and Ripon committee area.

Jon presented the report and the following points were made by Members:

- In response to concerns about Forest Moor School in Darley, the Head of SEND and Resources confirmed that these issues would be taken forward with the Wellspring Academy Trust.
- Members raised concerns about the number of exclusions, particularly since academy conversions. Officers agreed that exclusion levels are too high but advised that there is no strong evidence linking increased exclusions to the number of academies.
- One Member questioned discrepancies between the report's pupil place data and feedback from local schools. Officers confirmed the figures were accurate as of 31 August 2025 and encouraged Members to raise any specific data queries directly with the team.
- Concerns were expressed about the financial impact of the revised home to school transport policy, particularly for Settle College, which has experienced reduced pupil numbers. The Head of School Organisation and Transport acknowledged these pressures and reminded Members that a post-implementation review included consideration of impacts on schools.
- Clarification was given that school capacity is calculated using a Department for Education formula, which is currently under review.

Resolved

That Members note the report on educational factors in the Skipton and Ripon committee area.

229 Rural Energy Policies and Local Fuel Pricing Update

Harriet Clarke, Senior Democratic Services Officer presented a report which provided an update on rural energy policies and local fuel pricing disparity across the Skipton and Ripon area.

The report included a Skipton and Ripon household energy fuel profile, as well as some of the factors that contribute to increased household energy costs. Some of the key rural energy policies affecting the constituency area were noted, including the Council's Choices4Energy programme. Paragraph 6.3 provided a summary of fuel prices across various locations in the Skipton and Ripon area.

Members noted the contents of the update and raised the following points:

- A request was made for further information on the energy schemes referenced in the report, including the Council's Choices4Energy programme.
- Members noted that residents in rural areas often pay higher fuel costs than those in urban settings, particularly households off-grid and reliant on heating oil.
- Members also highlighted fuel price variations between petrol stations, recognising that while this is frustrating for consumers, pricing decisions are made by private businesses operating within a free market. One Member commented that, aside from Government schemes to support remote communities, there is limited scope for further intervention.
- Members welcomed the Government's new Fuel Finder scheme, which provides retail fuel prices and forecourt information across the UK.
- One Member requested data on the uptake of the Council's Choices4Energy

scheme.

- In response to Councillor David Ireton's query regarding a resident's concern about fuel prices at ASDA in Ingleton compared with Settle, the Clerk reported that a response from ASDA was still awaited despite follow up contact. The Clerk confirmed that the resident had been updated directly and informed that the matter was being presented to the Committee today.

Resolved

That Members note the contents of the report.

230 Committee work programme

Members reviewed the work programme and suggested the following additions:

- A request was made to consider opportunities to explore new funding sources, noting emerging schemes such as community energy projects and a Combined Authority led sustainable transport scheme. The need to consider how new funding could be effectively utilised was emphasised.
- It was reported that the Ousewem modelling report had been completed which looked at the ways in which natural flood management can control flooding. It was suggested that this item could be presented to the Committee in due course.
- The Vice-Chair referred to the upcoming Community Safety and CCTV annual report scheduled for June, noting that a wider North Yorkshire review of CCTV provision is currently underway. Concerns were raised about coverage gaps, including at Skipton bus station where a temporary camera had proved effective and at locations such as Ripon bus station. The Executive Member for Corporate Services had been contacted to seek clarification on how urgent or short term issues can be fed into the broader NYC review.

231 Any other Items

There were no urgent items of business.

232 Date of next meeting

Thursday 4 June 2026 at 2.00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 12.26 pm.