

North Yorkshire Council

Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the in person Call In meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on Thursday, 26 March 2026 commencing at 10.00 am.

Councillor Andrew Williams in the Chair. plus Councillors Bryn Griffiths, Karl Arthur, David Chance, Robert Heseltine, David Ireton, Tom Seston, Subash Sharma, Phil Trumper and Janet Jefferson.

In attendance: Councillors Gareth Dadd, Paul Haslam (via Teams), Carl Les OBE and Michelle Donohue-Moncrieff.

Officers present: Gary Fielding and Kerry Metcalfe and Diane Parsons.

Apologies: Chris Aldred, Derek Bastiman, Nick Brown, Kevin Foster and Tim Grogan.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

100 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Aldred, Bastiman, Brown, Foster and Grogan. Substitutes were also noted as follows:

- Councillor Alyson Baker (for Councillor Grogan)
- Councillor Goodrick (for Councillor Bastiman)
- Councillor Nigel Knapton (Councillor Brown)
- Councillor Rich Maw (for Councillor Foster).

The Chair asked at this stage in proceedings whether Members had any queries regarding the confidential paper at Item 6, Appendix 2, as this would require retiring into closed session. No Members identified that they would like to discuss the confidential material.

101 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

102 Public Participation

Two public questions/statements had been received in advance of the meeting and agreed through the Chair; from Councillors Thomas Murray and Sarah Mason of Scarborough Town Council. The Chair agreed that in Councillor Murray's absence, Councillor Mason could put both questions to the committee.

1) Councillor Thomas Murray

As Town Mayor of Scarborough and Chair of Scarborough Town Council, I speak not just on a technical point, but on something far more fundamental to our town. Our Town Hall, opened in 1903, is a jewel of Scarborough — the civic heart of our tradition, our history, and our democratic life. It should remain the centre of Scarborough's civic life, not simply another asset within a wider property portfolio.

Within the Executive report, however, the Town Hall is treated as part of a wider "Town Hall

site”, with proposals including potential vacating, redevelopment, or disposal. And given Scarborough’s history of promised redevelopment too often resulting in sites being boarded up and left to decline, that path is simply not good enough for our beautiful Grade II listed Victorian masterpiece.

At the same time, assurances have been given that the historic Town Hall will be retained for civic and democratic use and appropriately maintained. However, those assurances were given after the fuss and do not appear anywhere in the formal documentation. There is no clear distinction between the historic Town Hall and the wider site, no formal recognition of its civic status, and no explicit safeguarding of its continued democratic function. As it stands, it is being treated as part of a broader development opportunity.

Given its historic, civic, and symbolic role - and its future as a community-focused civic building - the Town Hall is not comparable to the surrounding estate and should not be treated as a standard development asset.

As Scarborough’s civic voice, I ask that this committee ensures that the historic Town Hall is formally defined as a separate entity from the wider Town Hall site, recognised as a civic asset, and that its maintenance and continued democratic use - including by Scarborough Town Council - are explicitly protected within the Council’s plans and reflected in the report.

2) Councillor Sarah Mason

For clarity, my statement and question is based on the statement read out by Gary Fielding at the Executive Committee.

I want to raise concerns about accuracy and transparency of information regarding Scarborough Town Hall, which is repeatedly described as a single building, but in reality, it comprises of four structures: York House, 1960s extension, Customer First, and the original Grade II listed Town Hall, which includes the historic debating chamber installed in 1908.

The buildings differ in age, condition, and purpose, yet figures have been presented as a combined total.

The annual running cost of £474,000 covers the entire estate, including areas occupied by NYC staff and other tenants who pay rent.

The same applies to the £19 million refurbishment estimate. A substantial portion of that figure is likely attributable to the 1960s extension, which NYC had to vacate due to statutory compliance issues.

It is unclear how much of this relates to the Grade II listed Town Hall itself, which has served Scarborough for over a century and remains a valued civic asset.

There is reference to the Town Hall being “underutilised,” citing 33 democratic meetings in the past year. A civic building should not be judged solely on the number of meetings held per month. It is Scarborough’s heritage, identity, and democratic anchor.

I am also concerned by the suggestion that democratic meetings could be held in external venues.

These venues were not designed for democratic governance, and do not offer the same history for civic participation within our democratic process as the Town Hall. It is also suggested that older listed buildings limit the ability to provide modern digital access. Yet the Town Hall Chamber already has video and audio equipment installed, and additional technology could be added. So it is unclear how external venues, would provide a better solution. Never mind the related cost.

Given the significance of this asset to Scarborough’s heritage and democratic life, I believe the “vision” for the Grade II listed Town Hall should include and continue to remain in democratic use by both STC and NYC, alongside the wider community and third-party use.

Can the committee be provided with a full building-by-building breakdown of both the annual running costs and the refurbishment estimates for York House, 1960s extension, Customer First, and the Grade II listed Town Hall?

Gary Fielding responded to both questions as follows:

The statement presented at the Executive Committee, along with the written response to the issues raised in the Call In, acknowledges that the Town Hall site comprises four distinct buildings: the Grade II listed Town Hall, the 1950s/1960s extension, York House, and the Customer Services building. It is recognised that each of these buildings presents different options and opportunities, particularly given the listed status of the historic Town Hall.

We fully accept that the value of the listed Town Hall building cannot be measured solely by the number of meetings it hosts each month. A range of qualitative and functional factors must also be taken into account. However, as a public organisation, we have a clear duty to ensure that public funds are used in a manner that delivers economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Cost and affordability will therefore remain core considerations in all decision-making.

In response to the request for a building by building breakdown of refurbishment estimates, the following figures are provided:

| | Low £'000 | High £'000 |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Town Hall listed | 6,000 | 7,000 |
| 1950/60’s extension | 5,500 | 6,500 |
| York House offices | 1,500 | 2,500 |
| Customer First building | 2,000 | 3,000 |
| | 15,000 | 19,000 |

Annual running costs cannot be provided at an individual building level because costs are monitored for the site as a whole (e.g. utilities have single, site-wide meters).

If allocated on a floor area basis, the estimated net annual running costs are:

| | Net Costs - £'000 |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Town Hall listed | 166 |
| 1950/60’s extension | 166 |
| York House offices | 81 |
| Customer First building | 61 |
| TOTAL | 474 |

Refurbishing the listed Town Hall alone would not address the wider challenges around staff accommodation. Furthermore, the estimated one-off cost of £6-7 million, plus annual running costs of around £166k, is not affordable for the Council - particularly where the primary outcome from the investment would solely be the retention of existing civic and democratic use.

Any long term proposal for the Town Hall must be financially sustainable without significant further investment from North Yorkshire Council. Given the scale of refurbishment costs and wider financial pressures the Council faces, alternative options will need to be explored.

We do not oppose the listed Town Hall building being retained for community or civic use, provided this does not place substantial cost on this Council. Our aim is to ensure the building is protected, revitalised and kept in meaningful use for future generations.

While no cast iron guarantee can be given regarding the long term future use of the building, there is no short term requirement for the Town Council to vacate the premises. The building will continue in existing civic and democratic use while options for it, and the wider Town Hall site, are developed.

We are open to discussions with the Town Council and other partners where there is a viable intention for them to take on future responsibility for the listed building. However, any ongoing or capital costs would need to be met from sources other than North Yorkshire Council.

In the meantime – while future options are developed - assurances remain in place that the Town Hall will continue in civic and democratic use, will be kept in reasonable repair, and Scarborough Town Council will be a stakeholder in shaping future proposals.

The Chair thanked Gary for his responses. Hard copies of the detailed figures quoted were circulated to committee members.

103 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved

As agreed under Item 1, that the committee reserves the right to move into closed session during the meeting if required to discuss material provided in the confidential paperwork at Item 6, Appendix 2.

104 Chair's Introduction

The Chair outlined the process to be followed at the meeting in order to consider the Call In. The proposer of the Call In (Councillor Maw) would be invited to speak to provide his rationale, followed by Councillors Donohue-Moncrieff and Jefferson as signatories to the Call In. The Corporate Director will then be afforded opportunity to respond to issues raised and the Executive Member will also be able to address issues raised. Finally, the meeting will proceed to wider discussion and debate among the committee members.

105 Call-In of the Executive Decision - Acquisition of Resolution House in Scarborough

Considered - The decision of the Executive relating to the acquisition of Resolution House in Scarborough, drawing on the reports provided and officer responses.

The Chair invited Councillor Maw to speak to his rationale for requesting the Call In. Councillor Maw outlined his reasons for initiating the Call In, seeking to ensure the council had adequate evidence before committing to significant capital expenditure and relocating staff. He highlighted concerns about potential gaps in the Executive report, including reliance on an outdated EPC rating, the absence of detailed costings for adaptations to Resolution House and other buildings in the estate review and uncertainties regarding staff numbers and operational suitability. He also questioned whether the urgency of the proposed purchase was justified and sought assurances that wider impacts - particularly on Scarborough Town Hall's heritage, town centre vitality and economic activity - had been fully assessed. Clarity was given that the concern was around completeness of information.

Councillors Donohue-Moncrieff and Jefferson subsequently put a range of questions and concerns to the committee as signatories to the Call In. These included concerns about the lack of early consultation, the speed of the process, and the economic risks to Scarborough of removing staff from the town centre, in addition to the accessibility of Resolution House

and a desire to retain use of the Town Hall for civic purposes.

Gary Fielding (Corporate Director, Resources) addressed a number of the issues raised by response, including reference to the fact that Align Property Partners had provided independent professional input and Resolution House was judged to be in excellent condition with superior energy performance. Gary also highlighted that the site offered substantially better parking provision than the Town Hall as well as lift access. Anglo American had indicated that some of their staff had routinely walked to the office from Seamer station, so it was presumed that access via public transport was feasible. It was affirmed that customer access in Scarborough town centre would continue through Castle House.

The Chair sought clarity on the further action to be proposed through the Call In. Councillor Maw formally proposed that the matter be referred to full Council and was seconded in this by Councillor Jefferson.

The Executive Member sought to provide responses on certain points raised thus far including noting that an economic impact assessment for Scarborough was not deemed necessary when North Yorkshire House was closed and that Seamer station, based on Google mapping, is 0.6 miles from Resolution House (13-minute walk).

The Chair invited the Corporate Director to respond to the Member questions/concerns and the following additional points were highlighted:

- the Town Hall is no longer fit for purpose for staff - evidential photographs of the significant deterioration of the site were displayed for the committee
- the condition of the building has in itself led to dwindling staff occupancy
- the choice for Members is either to spend £19m to bring the Town Hall up to an acceptable condition or spend £4.5m to purchase Resolution House.
- Estimates suggest that the resulting loss of trade in Scarborough town centre would be a fraction of the cost to the council to provide ongoing maintenance of the Town Hall.
- Resolution House may also be attractive to certain partners looking to potentially co-locate and tentative discussions are underway.

Committee members were invited to then discuss and debate the matter. Discussion included the following key areas:

- Members supporting the acquisition highlighted the serious deterioration of both Scarborough Town Hall and Ryedale House, noting long-standing maintenance backlogs and poor working environments.
- Several Members emphasised the need to maintain easy, accessible customer-facing services in town centres. Officers confirmed work would continue with partners to ensure visibility of services and to enhance the digital offer alongside face-to-face provision.
- Strong concerns were expressed about the future of the Grade II listed Town Hall, with Members highlighting emotional, historical and democratic importance. Members stressed the need for a clear strategy for the civic functions of the site, including potential transfer to Scarborough Town Council, which, unlike North Yorkshire Council, could access certain grants for its enhancement.
- Members expressed dissatisfaction with how the proposal was communicated publicly, describing it as late, unclear and lacking reassurance about the future of the historic building.
- The Corporate Director responded that alternative buildings options were less favourable and stated that the decision creates the opportunity to plan a proper masterplan for the Town Hall site. Due diligence and condition surveys will be undertaken as part of the acquisition process. Members were invited to note the strong carbon-reduction benefits from reducing the estate and using more energy-efficient

buildings. Gary Fielding also confirmed a willingness to work with Scarborough Town Council and community stakeholders on civic-use solutions.

- The Executive Member rejected claims of “hollowing out” in Scarborough, noting significant recent investment in Scarborough by the council. It was acknowledged that communications could have been stronger, but the time-sensitive nature of the opportunity was emphasised.

Returning to Councillor Maw’s seconded proposal to refer the Executive decision to full Council, the Chair requested that a named vote be taken, with the results as follows:

| | |
|----------------------|---------|
| Councillor Arthur | For |
| Councillor Baker | Against |
| Councillor Chance | Against |
| Councillor Goodrick | Against |
| Councillor Griffiths | Against |
| Councillor Heseltine | Against |
| Councillor Ireton | Against |
| Councillor Jefferson | For |
| Councillor Knapton | Against |
| Councillor Maw | For |
| Councillor Seston | For |
| Councillor Sharma | For |
| Councillor Trumper | Against |
| Councillor Williams | Against |

There were no abstentions. It was noted that the proposal failed.

The Chair moved that the committee endorses the Executive decision to acquire Resolution House and that no further action is taken as regards the Call In. This was seconded by Councillor Ireton. A vote by show of hands gave a result of eleven in favour and three against and as such was carried.

As a result, the decision made at Executive on 17th March 2026 came into immediate effect.

The Chair closed the meeting by noting that the next scheduled meeting of the committee would be 15 June 2026.

The meeting concluded at 11.54 am.