

Agenda

Meeting Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee

To: Councillors Andrew Williams (Chair), Bryn Griffiths (Vice-Chair), Chris Aldred, Karl Arthur, Derek Bastiman, Nick Brown, David Chance, Kevin Foster, Tim Grogan, Robert Heseltine, David Ireton, Tom Seston, Subash Sharma, Phil Trumper and Vacancies.

Date: Thursday, 26 March 2026

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: The Grand - County Hall

Business

1. Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

2. Declarations of Interest

All Members are invited to declare at this point any interests they have in items appearing on this agenda, including the nature of those interests.

3. Public Participation

Members of the public may ask questions or make statements at this meeting if they have given notice to Melanie Carr of Democratic and Scrutiny Services and supplied the text (contact details below) by midday on Monday 23 March 2026, three working days before the day of the meeting. Each speaker should limit themselves to 3 minutes on any item. Members of the public who have given notice will be invited to speak:

- at this point in the meeting if their questions/statements relate to matters which are not otherwise on the Agenda (subject to an overall time limit of 30 minutes);
- when the relevant Agenda item is being considered if they wish to speak on a matter which is on the Agenda for this meeting.

If you are exercising your right to speak at this meeting, but do not wish to be recorded, please inform the Chair who will instruct anyone who may be taking a recording to cease while you speak.

4. Exclusion of the Public

Members are recommended to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of each of the items of business listed in Column 1 of the following table on the grounds that they each involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph(s) specified in column 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to information)(Variation) Order 2006:-

Item number on the agenda	Paragraph Number
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5. **Chair's Introduction**
6. **Call-In of the Executive Decision - Acquisition of Resolution House in Scarborough** (Pages 3 - 42)
7. **Any Other Items**
Any other items which the Chair agrees should be considered as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances

Members are reminded that in order to expedite business at the meeting and enable Officers to adapt their presentations to address areas causing difficulty, they are encouraged to contact Officers prior to the meeting with questions on technical issues in reports.

Contact Details

Enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Melanie Carr Tel: 01609 533849 or e-mail:

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Members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting as observers for all those items taken in open session. You may be interested in [subscribing to updates](#) about this or any other North Yorkshire Council committee.

Recording is allowed at Council, committee and sub-committee meetings which are open to the public. Please give due regard to the Council's protocol on audio/visual recording and photography at public meetings. We ask that any recording is clearly visible to anyone at the meeting and that it is non-disruptive.

Anyone wishing to record is asked to contact the Democratic Services Officer (details above) prior to the start of the meeting.

Barry Khan
Assistant Chief Executive
Legal and Democratic Services
County Hall
Northallerton

Wednesday, 18 March 2026

North Yorkshire Council

Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee

26 March 2026

Call-In of Executive decision - Acquisition of Resolution House

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To enable the Committee to consider the Executive decision relating to the acquisition of Resolution House in Scarborough; and to determine whether or not the Committee would wish to refer the decision back to the Executive for reconsideration or to the full Council and, if so, the nature of its concerns about the decision.

2.0 DECISION OF THE EXECUTIVE

- 2.1 On 17 March 2026 the following Executive decision was taken:

Resolved (unanimously) – That:

- i) In-principle approval be given to acquire Resolution House, based on the Heads of Terms provided in Private and Confidential Appendix A with the final decision delegated to the Corporate Director Resources in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and Resources.
 - ii) In-principle approval be granted for investment of up to £750k to support the establishment of new front-facing customer service points in Scarborough and Malton town centres, and to fund costs associated with the advancement of redevelopment proposals for vacated sites. Release of this investment will be dependent on further detailed development and refinement of the proposals outlined within this report.
 - iii) The decision on the release of the in-principle investment be delegated to the Corporate Director of Resources in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and Resources
- 2.2 At the meeting, the Executive considered a report entitled 'Property acquisition to support the Council's asset rationalisation programme'. The report and its two non-confidential appendices are attached at Appendix 1, and the report's confidential appendix is attached at Appendix 2.
- 2.3 An extract from the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 17 March 2026 is provided at Appendix 3.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 18 March 2026 written notice was received from more than six Members that they wished the Executive decision to be called in. The notice was made by Cllr. Rich Maw, with support from Councillors: Janet Jefferson, Michelle Donoghue-Moncrief, Sam Cross, Kevin Foster, Arnold Warneken, Andy Brown, Mike Schofield, Paul Haslam and David Nolan.
- 3.2 The reasons given for the Call-In were stated as:

- i. The Executive decision appears to have been taken without key information being available to members regarding the full financial and operational implications of the proposal.
- ii. The Executive report indicates that the acquisition of Resolution House forms part of a wider rationalisation of the council's estate and may ultimately lead to the vacating of other council buildings, including Scarborough Town Hall and Ryedale House. However, the report also acknowledges that aspects of the proposal remain at an early exploratory stage.
- iii. In particular, the report does not provide clear or detailed costings for:
 - The adaptation or refurbishment of Resolution House
 - The relocation of services and staff currently located in Scarborough Town Hall and Ryedale House
 - Any adaptation works required at alternative sites, including Castle House and Stanley Harrison House
 - The operational and customer access implications of relocating public-facing services
- iv. The report acknowledges that relocating a significant proportion of staff and services away from Scarborough town centre may have implications for town centre footfall and economic activity. However, it is not clear from the report whether a full assessment was undertaken of the potential impact on the town centre economy, nor how the proposed changes to the Council's estate align with wider ambitions for town centre vitality and regeneration.
- v. The report does not appear to set out clearly how evolving patterns of work and service delivery (including hybrid working, digital access to services, and the future role of face-to-face customer contact) have been factored into the Council's long-term accommodation strategy.
- vi. Given that the acquisition would commit the Council to a significant capital decision and appears to rely on assumptions about wider estate changes that are not yet fully worked through, it is appropriate that the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee review whether sufficient information was available to support the Executive's decision at this stage.

3.3 The Council's rules in relation to the Call-In of an executive decision are set out in paragraph 16 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule in the constitution [here](#)

4.0 THE ROLE OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4.1 It is for the Committee to consider the decision which has been subject to Call-In and then to decide whether, or not, it wishes to refer it back to the executive decision-making body for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns, or whether, or not, it wishes to refer the matter to full Council.

4.2 If the Committee does not refer the matter back to the decision taker, or refer it to the Council, the decision will take effect on the date of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting. The relevant parts of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules are set out below.

5.0 CALL-IN

5.1 Note: Powers of Call-In apply only to functions which are the responsibility of the Executive.

- (d) If, having considered the decision, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee wishes to do so, then it may refer it back to the decision-making person or body for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns, or refer the matter to full Council. If referred to the decision maker they shall then consider the matter, amending the decision or not, before adopting a final decision.
- (e) If following an objection to the decision, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee does not refer the matter back to the decision-making person or body, the decision shall take effect on the date of the Overview and Scrutiny meeting.
- (f) Where the matter has been referred to full Council, but the Executive decides that the matter must be determined prior to the next Council meeting, they OFFICIALLY may proceed to determine the matter, and shall report the matter to the next Council meeting.
- (g) Subject to (f) above, if the matter was referred to full Council and the Council does not object to a decision which has been made, then no further action is necessary, and the decision will be effective in accordance with the provision below. However, if the Council does object, (note: it has no locus to make decisions in respect of an executive decision unless it is contrary to the Policy Framework, or contrary to or not wholly consistent with the Budget) the Council will refer any decision to which it objects back to the decision-making person or body, together with the Council's views on the decision. That decision making body or person shall choose whether to amend the decision or not before reaching a final decision and implementing it.

6.0 FACTUAL INFORMATION RELATED TO THE REASONS FOR CALL-IN

- 6.1 A written response to the concerns highlighted within the Call-In request is currently being drafted and will be circulated to the members of the Corporate and Partnerships Overview Scrutiny Committee ahead of the committee's Call-In meeting on 26 March 2026 as Appendix 4 to this report.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report on the Call-In process.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The process for dealing with Call-Ins is set out in the Council Constitution.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report on the Call-In process.

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report on the Call-In process.

11.0 RECOMMENDATION

- i) That the Committee considers the decision taken and called in and determines whether, or not, it wishes to refer the decision back to the Executive for reconsideration or to the full Council and, if so, the nature of its concerns about the decision.

Barry Khan
Assistant Chief Executive – Legal and Democratic Services
County Hall
Northallerton

18 March 2026

Report Author – Melanie Carr, Senior Scrutiny Officer

BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Executive Report and its Appendices B & C

Appendix 2: Confidential Appendix A to Executive Report – NB: this information is strictly confidential and not for further circulation. It may only be shared further with the explicit consent of the Director for Resources

Appendix 3 : Minutes Extract of the meeting of the Executive held on 17 March 2026 (to follow)

Appendix 4: Factual Information related to the reasons for Call-in (to follow)

Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

North Yorkshire Council

Executive

17 March 2026

Property acquisition to support the Council's asset rationalisation programme

Report of the Corporate Director Resources

This report contains a confidential Appendix A which contains information of the type defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as it contains information relating to the financial and business affairs of the Council and it is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To obtain approval for the acquisition of Resolution House, Scarborough, as part of wider plans to rationalise and optimise the Council's property portfolio.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 In October 2025 the Executive approved NYC's first Corporate Property Strategy, covering the period 2025 -2035 (CPS). The CPS sets out the aspiration to rationalise, invest in, and modernise the Council's property portfolio to support agile working, reduce our carbon footprint, deliver financial returns and unlock opportunities for regeneration and partnership working.
- 2.2 The Council owns and maintains the following assets across the Scarborough and Malton area, many of which are underutilised, outdated and inefficient:
- Scarborough Town Hall
 - Castle House, Scarborough
 - Ryedale House, Malton
 - The former Comet building, Scarborough
 - Pavilion House, Scarborough
 - Stanley Harrison House, Malton
- 2.3 Resolution House is situated on the A64 on the outskirts of Scarborough and is currently in third-party ownership. The building offers modern, fit-for-purpose office accommodation, and the Council was recently approached by its owners to explore whether there was an interest in acquiring the site. This approach has created a timely opportunity to review the Council's assets across the Scarborough and Malton area and consider future opportunities for the rationalisation and optimisation of the estate.
- 2.4 This report presents the initial findings of the asset review and recommends that the acquisition of Resolution House be progressed. The Outline Business Case (OBC) to support the acquisition provides clear evidence of the financial benefits and potential opportunities associated with the proposal, including addressing critical asset-condition

issues and enabling regeneration opportunities through the repurposing of the Council's estate.

- 2.5 The proposals will likely have implications for the future utilisation of the Scarborough Town Hall site. Scarborough town centre already contains several high-profile, long-term underutilised sites, including a number of Council-owned assets, and there is a risk that the Town Hall could become another if action is not taken. To avoid this, it is recognised that work needs to progress at pace to accelerate redevelopment proposals across the town.
- 2.6 The opportunities identified in the OBC, and detailed within this report, remain at an early, exploratory stage. Further detailed planning, consultation and analysis - including engagement with staff and partners - will be required to fully understand the operational implications of any decisions and to ensure these are carefully considered and appropriately addressed before any proposals progress.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council currently operates three sites across Malton and Scarborough that provide back-office accommodation for NYC staff as well as front-facing, customer access points (Scarborough Town Hall, Castle House and Ryedale House). In addition, three further buildings (The old Comet building, Pavilion House and Stanley Harrison House) have remained largely vacant since vesting day, pending a review of NYC's future back-office and customer facing accommodation requirements. Further information on each site is provided below, along with background on Resolution House.

3.1.1 Scarborough Town Hall

Scarborough Town Hall is a Grade II listed building and an important heritage asset for the town. Located within the Scarborough Conservation Area, it occupies a prominent town centre position overlooking the South Bay and sits adjacent to the former Futurist Theatre site, which is also held in the Council's freehold ownership.

The Town Hall site provides 9,218 m² of accommodation, including back-office space, meeting rooms, and the main customer service centre for the Scarborough area, which handles around 300 face-to-face enquiries each week.

The occupied Town Hall space currently accommodates 210 desks for NYC staff, alongside additional leased space. Desk utilisation is low, ranging from 14% on Fridays to 42% mid-week.

The overall condition of the Town Hall is assessed as poor, with net running costs - excluding backlog maintenance - totalling £474k per annum.

A 1960's constructed office block accounts for over 80% of the total accommodation area on the Town Hall site but has now reached the end of its useful life. This part of the site was vacated in 2025 due to statutory compliance concerns and has since remained vacant. In addition, the historic, grade II listed Town Hall building requires major investment and presents substantial constraints, limiting its suitability and effectiveness as office accommodation.

Occupation levels are adversely affected by the building's poor condition and inherent constraints of its age and Grade II listed status, with staff identifying a range of ongoing issues with the workspace.

A high-level assessment estimates that refurbishing the entire Town Hall site to a reasonable standard would require investment in the order of £15 million to £19million.

3.1.2 **Castle House, Scarborough**

Castle House is located within Scarborough town centre and was historically one of the County Council's main office hubs for the Scarborough area. The building covers a total area of 2,078msq and provides meeting and office space, along with a complex need day service and face to face meeting spaces for children's services.

The condition of Castle House is assessed as good, and the net running costs equate to £121k per annum.

The building currently accommodates 106 desks and is well utilised, with an average desk occupation of 75%.

3.1.3 **Ryedale House, Malton**

Ryedale House covers a total area of 3,252 m2 and provides back-office meeting and office space, along with the Council's main customer service centre for the Malton area. The customer service centre also provides a single front-door access point for customers to reach the DWP and Community Police and handles around 100 face-to-face enquiries each week.

The condition of Ryedale House is assessed as poor, and the net running costs – excluding allowances for backlog maintenance - equate to £290k per annum. An assessment of backlog maintenance has not recently been undertaken due to long-term aspirations to repurpose the site, however refurbishment costs would run into several millions of pounds.

Ryedale House currently accommodates 168 desks for NYC officer use, as well as leased space to the DWP and North Yorkshire Police. Desk utilisation is low, with an average occupation of 35%.

The Ryedale House site has previously been promoted via the Ryedale Local Plan Strategy and is currently allocated for residential development within the existing Local Plan, with an indicative capacity for 60 dwellings. The former Ashfield Elderly Person's Home site, which adjoins the Ryedale House site and is also in the Council's ownership, has been submitted as a 'call for sites' development opportunity for consideration in the new NYC Local Plan and could offer further development potential.

3.1.4 **Former Comet Building and Pavilion House, Scarborough**

The former Comet building and Pavilion House are located in Scarborough town centre, close to the railway station. Both properties are held in NYC's freehold ownership, having originally been acquired by Scarborough Borough Council to support regeneration ambitions linked to the Scarborough Station Gateway project.

These ambitions included proposals to create shared public sector office accommodation within Pavilion House, in order to enable the redevelopment of the Scarborough Town Hall site. However, the delivery of these proposals was dependent on securing external Levelling Up Fund grant, and the bid was unsuccessful.

Since acquisition, substantial areas have remained vacant across both sites, pending the review of NYC's future back-office and customer-facing accommodation requirements.

The condition of both buildings is assessed as poor, and high-level estimates indicate that refurbishing Pavilion House for office use would require investment in the range of between £7million to £12million.

3.1.5 Stanley Harrison House, Malton

Stanley Harrison House is located in Malton town centre, adjacent to the railway station. The building is in NYC's freehold ownership and was originally acquired by Ryedale District Council as a potential alternative headquarters, to enable the redevelopment of Ryedale House.

The accommodation covers a total area of 709 m² and provides vacant meeting and office space to the ground and first floor of a relatively recent extension, with space in the original building leased out to voluntary and community sector organisations.

The condition of Stanley Harrison House is assessed as satisfactory and the current net running costs in its largely vacant state equate to £7k per annum.

3.1.6 Resolution House, Eastfield / Seamer, Scarborough

Resolution House was constructed in 2002 as the new headquarters for Scarborough Building Society, and is situated on the southern outskirts of Scarborough. The site covers approximately 4.25 acres, includes over 150 car parking spaces and is accessible via rail, the A64 and local bus routes. It is currently owned by Anglo American, having been acquired as the company's main Scarborough headquarters.

Resolution House was refurbished in 2017 and is fitted out to a high specification, offering modern office accommodation and a variety of open plan and individual office suites. It is estimated that the building will accommodate between 200 – 400 desk spaces, depending on configuration, and the property is rated A for energy efficiency, indicating excellent environmental performance.

In 2024, Anglo American announced its intention to close Resolution House as part of a wider consolidation of its operations at the nearby Woodsmith Mine. The company has since decided to dispose of the asset, inclusive of all fixtures and fittings, and has approached the Council to explore whether there was interest in acquiring the site.

Anglo American began marketing Resolution House for disposal earlier this year, with a guide price of £4.5million. Given the approach by the company – and the one-off, time limited nature of this opportunity - officers commenced a review of asset holdings within the local area to determine whether the acquisition might present a cost-effective solution for addressing the Council's future accommodation needs.

3.2 Review of asset holdings within the Resolution House locality

Table 1 below summarises key data for the back-office asset holdings within the Resolution House locality. Ryedale House has been included within the scope of the review due to the strong transport links between Resolution House, York and Malton as well as the availability of Stanley Harrison House.

Table 1 – Key site data – existing NYC assets

Site	Area (msq)	Net Annual Expenditure £'000	Condition	Desk spaces	FTE *	Average desk utilisation	Meeting Rooms
Town Hall	9,218	474	Poor	210	462	42%	9
Castle House	2,078	121	Good	106	399	75%	9
Pavilion House	6,400	64	Poor	0			

Former Comet building		34	Poor	0			
Ryedale House	3,252	290	Poor	168	202	35%	12
Stanley Harrison	709	7	Satisfactory				
Total	21,657	990		484	1,063	47%	30

* the FTE figure provided shows the number of employees with a work base at the location. This may not represent a true reflection of the number of employees utilising the building due to hybrid working and opportunities to use other workplaces across the NYC portfolio.

4.0 ISSUES AND OPTIONS

- 4.1 **Table 1** shows that, across the assets included within the scope of the review, the NYC estate comprises 21,657 m² and incurs annual running costs of approximately £1million (excluding staffing and backlog maintenance costs).
- 4.2 Analysis shows that desk utilisation across the sites ranges from below 20% on Fridays to around 45% mid-week, with the exception of Castle House, where occupancy rises to 85%. Several buildings operate at less than half capacity, and on average only 47% of desks are utilised - meaning that on a typical day more than 250 desks remain vacant.
- 4.3 Circa 70% of the assets are assessed as being in poor condition. High level refurbishment estimates indicate that addressing backlog maintenance and creating fit-for-purpose office accommodation would require investment of between £15million and £19million for Scarborough Town Hall, between £7million and £12million for Pavilion House, and several million pounds for Ryedale House.
- 4.4 Given the significant capital investment required to bring NYC's existing assets up to standard and the pressing need to address Scarborough Town Hall accommodation issues, acquiring Resolution House presented a clearly advantageous option that justified further investigation. On this basis, officers commenced negotiations with Anglo American on a potential purchase price - taking into account the limited market demand for an asset of this nature in its location - while also preparing an OBC to support the acquisition.
- 4.5 **Outline Business Case to support the acquisition**
- 4.5.1 Draft Heads of Terms to support the acquisition of Resolution House and the OBC are provided in **Private and Confidential Appendix A**. The proposed acquisition price included in the Heads of Terms reflects the high quality, but limited market demand, for the asset and has been negotiated on the understanding that the Council will proceed promptly with the acquisition. An aspirational target completion date of 31 March 2026 has therefore been agreed by both parties.
- 4.5.2 The OBC supporting the acquisition has been developed on the basis that the proposal will influence, and create opportunities across, the other sites included within the wider review. The potential opportunities for each of the sites are summarised in **Table 2** below.
- 4.5.3 It should be noted that the proposals set out in **Table 2** have not been formally agreed and remain at an early, exploratory stage. Further detailed planning, consultation and analysis - including engagement with staff, Unison and partners - will be required to fully understand the operational implications of any decisions and to ensure these are carefully considered and appropriately addressed before any proposals progress.
- 4.5.4 Section 4.6 of this report outlines the potential outcomes that may be delivered if the assumptions within the OBC are confirmed to be feasible. Given the positive opportunities

identified, the time-limited nature of this opportunity, and the negotiated target completion date, it is recommended that the acquisition of Resolution House be progressed. The proposals around the wider sites will be further refined, scoped and carefully developed following the acquisition.

Table 2 – potential opportunities for wider sites

Site	Potential opportunities included in OBC	
Scarborough Town Hall	Vacate and redeploy / dispose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocate existing back-office provision to Castle House and Resolution House Relocate existing customer hub to Castle House Creates a Scarborough town centre regeneration opportunity
Castle House	Retain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain current back-office provision to maintain town centre staff presence Repurpose to provide a Scarborough town centre customer facing hub
Pavilion House	Redeploy / dispose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a Scarborough town centre regeneration opportunity
Former Comet building	Redeploy / dispose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a Scarborough town centre regeneration opportunity
Ryedale House	Vacate and redeploy / dispose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocate existing back-office provision to Stanley Harrison House and Resolution House Relocate customer hub to Malton library or Stanley Harrison House Creates a housing development opportunity.
Stanley Harrison House	Retain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repurpose to provide NYC and / or other public sector partner accommodation Potential location for Malton based customer facing hub
Resolution House	Acquire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide high quality, back-office provision covering the Malton and Scarborough locality – replacing existing provision at Scarborough Town Hall and Ryedale House.

4.5.5 **Table 3** below sets out the key data for the Council's future estate, if the options set out in Table 2 are identified as being feasible following a more detailed review.

Table 3 – Key site data – potential future estate

Site	Area (msq)	Net Expenditure £'000	Condition	Desk spaces	Meeting Rooms
Castle House	2,078	121	Good	106	9
Stanley Harrison House	709	25	Good	Tbd – will be dependent on customer hub options	
Resolution House	4,651	444	Good	185*	25
Total	7,438	590		300+	34

* based on current floorplan. Opportunity to accommodate additional desks dependent on configuration.

4.6 Outcomes Identified in the Outline Business Case

4.6.1 The OBC identifies the acquisition of Resolution House, and the substantial opportunities it presents, as the most effective option for the Council.

4.6.2 Although further detailed operational planning is required, the wider proposals arising from the acquisition present opportunities to deliver notable positive outcomes and financial benefits, supporting the delivery of the Corporate Property Strategy and Council Plan ambitions by:

- **Improving customer access** through the creation of new, modern and fully accessible customer service points within Scarborough and Malton town centres.
- Providing **modern, flexible and fit-for-purpose office accommodation** that supports modern ways of working, increases productivity and improves employee wellbeing.
- **Resolving significant compliance, accessibility and building-safety issues** present within the existing estate and **avoiding the need for millions of pounds of investment** in backlog maintenance liabilities.
- **Reducing annual running costs** of the estate by an estimated minimum of **£400k per annum and enhancing long-term financial sustainability** through reduced maintenance liabilities.
- **Lowering carbon emissions** and improving environmental performance through consolidation into **fewer, more efficient buildings**.
- **More efficient use of the operational estate**, with a **50% reduction in floor area** and improved utilisation of retained buildings.
- **Supporting regeneration and housing delivery objectives** by creating opportunities for the disposal, redevelopment or repurposing of four key development sites.
- Creating potential opportunities to **generate capital receipts** from the disposal of surplus assets.

4.6.3 The financial implications associated with the proposal are set out in section 9.

5.0 REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

5.1 **Table 2** outlines that the acquisition of Resolution House may unlock significant regeneration opportunities through the repurposing of the Ryedale House, Scarborough Town Hall, Pavilion House and the former Comet building sites.

5.2 Releasing the Scarborough Town Hall site in particular has the potential to generate substantial economic benefit. The site sits adjacent to the former Futurist site, and site assembly in South Bay will create an extensive development opportunity which links the town centre with the shore. The site is a prime location and will have unrivalled views making it very attractive for a quality commercial leisure development. Indeed, there has been historic interest in this area from major national and regional operators.

- 5.3 However, it is essential that this development complements the wider regeneration of Scarborough and it is recommended that a masterplan is developed to ensure that the South Bay development and other strategic town centre sites work together to reposition Scarborough town centre, addressing vacancy rates, the quality of the leisure and family offer and providing much needed community facilities.
- 5.4 This approach will help mitigate the move of some public services to the edge of town, which may have an impact on town centre footfall. The fact that customer facing services will remain close to the town centre in Castle House should also provide some comfort for retailers.
- 5.5 The potential sale of Ryedale House and relocation of customer and some back-office services to a more central, town centre site should have a positive economic impact on Malton by increasing town centre footfall. The redevelopment of the site for housing will also assist in the delivery of housing delivery targets.
- 5.6 It is acknowledged that Scarborough town centre contains a number of high-profile, underutilised sites, many of which have remained vacant for extended periods, including those within the Council's ownership that fall within the scope of this report. There is a risk that the Town Hall site could similarly become underutilised for a prolonged period, which would be unacceptable and must be avoided.
- 5.7 To prevent further long-term underutilisation, there is a clear need to progress masterplanning and redevelopment proposals at pace and to begin identifying potential development partner(s). It is therefore recommended that a provisional budget be made available to fund the costs associated with advancing these proposals, enabling redevelopment to be brought forward as quickly as possible. It is anticipated that the number of sites available for redevelopment within Scarborough, along with the inclusion of the Town Hall site, will provide sufficient scale to make the opportunity an attractive proposition for prospective development partners.
- 6.0 **CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES**
- 6.1 The proposals set out in this report support the delivery of the Corporate Property Strategy ambitions and contributes to the Council ambitions to support thriving places, by utilising the Council's asset holdings to regenerate our towns.
- 7.0 **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**
- 7.1 Investment in the Council's existing asset base has also been considered as an option.
- 8.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**
- 8.1 The delivery of the potential opportunities identified in the OBC will require one-off investment, including:
- Resolution House acquisition costs (as detailed in **P&C Appendix A**), together with associated liabilities such as Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT)
 - A provisional sum of up to £750k to support the establishment of new front-facing customer service points within Scarborough and Malton town centres, and to fund costs associated with the advancement of redevelopment proposals for vacated sites.
- 8.2 It is recommended that the above investment be funded from the Strategic Capacity Reserve, with the release of the £750k provisional sums being dependent on further detailed development and refinement of the proposals outlined within this report.

8.3 The OBC identifies the following financial benefits if the potential opportunities identified in the proposals are realised:

- Minimum ongoing savings in property running costs of £400k per annum
- Savings of more than £20million in backlog maintenance liabilities across Ryedale House and Scarborough Town Hall
- Potential opportunities for capital receipts from the repurposing / disposal of Pavilion House, former Comet building, Ryedale House and Scarborough Town Hall.

8.4 The total investment proposed in this report would achieve a payback period of less than 10 years based solely on the ongoing savings in property running costs. The investment would be more than fully funded if capital receipt opportunities and backlog maintenance savings are considered.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The proposed purchase of Resolution House constitutes a capital land acquisition and must be progressed in accordance with the Council's Constitution and Financial Procedure Rules. Under the Property Procedure Rules the Executive must approve any acquisition over £1million in value.

9.2 The Council has the statutory authority to proceed with the purchase under the Local Government Act 1972 which provides the power for the local authorities to acquire property necessary for the discharge of their functions. In exercising these powers, the council must be satisfied that the acquisition represents best value, supported by valuation advice and full legal due diligence, including title, planning and statutory compliance matters.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 An EIA screening has been completed and is attached at Appendix B.

11.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS (MANDATORY)

11.1 A climate change impact assessment has been completed and is attached at Appendix C.

12.0 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The HR implications arise following the acquisition of Resolution House and not from the decision to acquire. Therefore no direct HR Implications of the acquisition.

12.2 Once the decision is made detailed planning and analysis will be required, including engagement with trade unions, staff and service managers, to fully understand the operational implications of the decisions.

12.3 The proposals will likely affect the future work bases of some staff. Staff consultation and engagement, including detailed discussions with Unison, will take place.

13.0 CONCLUSIONS

That the Council acquires Resolution House to enable opportunities to support the rationalisation and optimisation of the Council's estate.

14.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 To support delivery of the Corporate Property Strategy ambitions, and the potential outcomes and financial benefits set out in section 4.6 of the report.

17.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- i) Approval be given to acquire Resolution House, based on the Heads of Terms provided in Private & Confidential **Appendix A**.
- ii) In-principle approval be granted for investment of up to £750k to support the establishment of new front-facing customer service points in Scarborough and Malton town centres, and to fund costs associated with the advancement of redevelopment proposals for vacated sites. Release of this investment will be dependent on further detailed development and refinement of the proposals outlined within this report.
- iii) The decision on the release of the in-principle investment be delegated to the Corporate Director of Resources in consultation with the Executive Member for Resources.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A : Draft Heads of Terms (Private & Confidential)

Appendix B : Equalities Impact Assessment Screening

Appendix C : Climate Change Screening

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

- Corporate Property Strategy 2025 - 2035

Gary Fielding
Corporate Director – Resources
County Hall
Northallerton

Report Author – Kerry Metcalfe, Assistant Director Commercial, Property & Procurement

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

Equality impact assessment (EIA) form: evidencing paying due regard to protected characteristics

(Form updated October 2025)

Purchase of Resolution House, Eastfield, Scarborough

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) form is a document that proves paying due regard by considering protected characteristics. EIAs that accompany reports presented to Councillors for decision-making are published with the committee papers on our website and are also available in hard copy at the relevant meetings.

Section 1: Initial Equality Impact Assessment Screening

This section documents the equality screening process of actual or potential impacts of the proposed activity on a specific protected characteristic, along with NYC's additional agreed-upon characteristics, to determine whether a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is necessary or appropriate.

Basic Details	
Directorate	Resources
Service area	Commercial, Property and Procurement
Proposal being screened	Purchase of Resolution House, Eastfield, Scarborough
Officer(s) carrying out screening	Neil Hughes
Lead Officer and contact details	Neil Hughes, Head of Commercial; neil.hughes@northyorks.gov.uk
Date of the assessment	4 March 2026
Please describe briefly what this EIA is about. (e.g. are you starting a new service, changing how you do something, or stopping doing something?)	The purchase of Resolution House, Eastfield, Scarborough to support the council's operational accommodation requirements. The building will be used to accommodate council staff and services and forms part of the council's wider approach to efficient, sustainable use of its property estate.
What does the authority hope to achieve by it? (E.g. to save money, meet increased demand, do things in a better way.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure a suitable operational building to support service delivery • Improve efficiency and value for money through ownership rather than alternative arrangements • Support modern, flexible working arrangements • Contribute to the council's long-term estate strategy
Further Details	

<p>1.1 How have stakeholders been involved in this policy/ decision/ proposal? (e.g. a consultation exercise)</p>	<p>The operational proposals that will follow the acquisition remain at an early, exploratory stage.</p> <p>Further detailed planning, consultation and analysis, including engagement with staff, partners and stakeholders, will be required to fully understand the operational implications of any decisions and to ensure these are carefully considered and appropriately addressed before any proposals progress.</p> <p>No public consultation has been undertaken as the acquisition does not directly affect service delivery to the public.</p>				
<p>1.2 Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Please explain briefly</p>	<p>As above</p>				
<p>1.3 Impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYC's additional agreed characteristics</p> <p>As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics? Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important? Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to? <p>If for any characteristic, it is considered that there is likely to be an adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate. You are advised to speak to your directorate representative for advice if you are in any doubt.</p> <p>Tick and indicate which protected characteristics are identified as relevant to the proposal (positive, negative, neutral or don't know).</p>					
Protected characteristic	Impact				Comments
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Don't know	
Age			✓		
Disability	✓				Resolution House offers improved accessibility, including lift access, compared to some areas within Scarborough Town Hall and Ryedale House
Sex			✓		
Race (including GRTS)			✓		
Gender reassignment			✓		
Sexual orientation			✓		
Religion or belief			✓		
Pregnancy or maternity			✓		

Marriage or civil partnership			✓		
NYC's additional characteristics					
People in rural areas			✓		
People on a low income			✓		
Carer (unpaid family or friend)			✓		
Are from the Armed Forces Community (including veterans)			✓		
1.4 To which Part(s) of the Public Sector Equality Duties is the Policy/decision/proposal relevant? Tick and briefly describe.					
General Duties	Yes	No	Details		
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	Purchase supports compliant, accessible accommodation		
Advance equality of opportunity	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	Opportunity to provide inclusive working environment		
Foster good relations between different groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	Not directly relevant		
1.5 Decision (Please tick one option) Decision to recommend this policy/ decision for an Equality Impact Assessment?				Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
				No	✓
If the answer is "Yes", or you indicate a negative impact on any of the characteristics mentioned in the table above, please continue to Section 2 and complete the full Equality Impact Assessment. If the answer is "No", please give a brief reason here.					
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)		Kerry Metcalfe; AD Commercial, Property & Procurement			
Date		5 March 2026			

Climate change impact assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to help us understand the likely impacts of our decisions on the environment of North Yorkshire and on our aspiration to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030, or as close to that date as possible. The intention is to mitigate negative effects and identify projects which will have positive effects.

This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. The final document will be published as part of the decision making process and should be written in Plain English.

If you have any additional queries which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Version 2: amended 11 August 2021

Please note: You may not need to undertake this assessment if your proposal will be subject to any of the following:

Planning Permission
Environmental Impact Assessment
Strategic Environmental Assessment

However, you will still need to summarise your findings in the summary section of the form below.

Please contact climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk for advice.

Title of proposal	Acquisition of Resolution House, Scarborough
Brief description of proposal	Acquisition of Resolution House, Scarborough, as part of wider plans to rationalise and optimise the Council's property portfolio.
Directorate	Resources
Service area	Property
Lead officer	Neil Hughes
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	Ed Rouse
Date impact assessment started	05.03.26

Options appraisal

Were any other options considered in trying to achieve the aim of this project? If so, please give brief details and explain why alternative options were not progressed.

1. Do nothing – continue to use existing office space in Scarborough and Malton
2. Do something - Undertake essential remedial works to achieve minimal compliance across existing sites
3. Do more – Undertake essential and all other works to the current office spaces in Scarborough and Malton areas and put plans in place to utilise unused buildings
4. **Optimise – Optimise the current portfolio through repurposing, and acquisition of Resolution House**

What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?

Plans have not yet been agreed or fully developed. Early, high level work identifies potential opportunities for cost savings and capital receipts through the repurposing and optimisation of sites.

If high level plans are determined to be feasible it is forecast that minimum ongoing savings in property running costs of £400k per annum can be realised, as well as savings of more than £20million in backlog maintenance liabilities across Ryedale House and Scarborough Town Hall. As well as savings in running costs and maintenance, there are potential opportunities for capital receipts from the repurposing / disposal of Pavilion House, former Comet building, Ryedale House and Scarborough Town Hall.

There will be initial capital expenditure to purchase the site, but this should be offset in the forecasted savings from disposals and / or ongoing property running costs.

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>	
<p>Minimise greenhouse gas emissions e.g. reducing emissions from travel, increasing energy efficiencies etc.</p>	Emissions from travel			X	<p>Greater number of people travelling via car to office bases due to moving out of town centre accommodation – especially the case in Scarborough</p>	<p>Assess for EV charge points at the site to allow users to utilise charging facilities as well as to charge pool cars. Ensure adequate and secure cycle storage facilities. To assess for solar carports to exploit potential solar</p>	
	Emissions from construction	X			<p>Acquisition of a fit for purpose, existing building will reduce the need for construction / refurbishments across other sites</p>		
	Emissions from running of buildings	X			<p>Disposal of older, inefficient buildings in preference of more efficient building with more efficient M&E equipment in new as opposed to existing buildings.</p>		<p>To assess for refurbishment where required and for</p>

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>	
<p>Page 23</p>					<p>Self-generation of energy – PVs. Lower energy intensity per sqm than existing provision.</p>		<p>installation of self generation activities</p>
	<p>Emissions from data storage</p>			<p>X</p>	<p>More storage of folders/files locally and on cloud and whilst operating.</p>	<p>Store majority of files on cloud systems with off-site data centres such as AWS and Microsoft.</p>	
	<p>Other</p>		<p>X</p>				
<p>Minimise waste: Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost e.g. reducing use of single use plastic</p>		<p>X</p>		<p>Increased waste at the Resolution site due to this site currently not being in use. This is offset through the optimisation and disposal of current provision</p>	<p>Ensure provision and segregation for recycling</p>		
<p>Reduce water consumption</p>			<p>X</p>	<p>Short term increased water usage at the Resolution site due to this site currently not being in use. Will be offset longer term once other sites optimised / disposed</p>	<p>Assess for the use of low flow appliances and installation of aerators on taps</p>		

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>
<p>Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise)</p>		<p>x</p>		<p>Building has been an office in the past and is located close to a main road and industrial estate – minimum impact</p>		
<p>Ensure resilience to the effects of climate change e.g. reducing flood risk, mitigating effects of drier, hotter summers</p>		<p>x</p>		<p>The project is to occupy a new office block</p>	<p>Potential to assess for replacement of guttering on site for high flow guttering alternatives</p>	
<p>Enhance conservation and wildlife</p>		<p>x</p>		<p>No development proposed on site</p>		<p>Consider landscaping which will enrich the local area and aim for onsite BNG</p>
<p>Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of North Yorkshire's landscape</p>	<p>x</p>			<p>Currently underused/underdeveloped areas are proposed to receive investment and support likely increase of employment in the local area.</p>		<p>Proposed support for current office buildings which are disposed through town plan and master plan</p>

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>
<p>Other (please state below)</p>						

Are there any recognised good practice environmental standards in relation to this proposal? If so, please detail how this proposal meets those standards.

Summary Summarise the findings of your impact assessment, including impacts, the recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

General positive impact as a result of the optimisation and disposal of current office stock which is inefficient and costly to run and maintain. Resolution House benefits from a Grade A EPC rating, indicating top-tier performance in terms of energy use and sustainability. Opportunities exist for the exploitation of self-generation activities on the site.

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Sign off section

This climate change impact assessment was completed by:

Name	Ed Rouse
Job title	Senior Project Delivery Manager
Service area	Capital Delivery
Directorate	Resources
Signature	ED ROUSE
Completion date	05.03.26

Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature): Kerry Metcalfe

Date: 5 March 2026

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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Extract from Minutes of Executive meeting held on 17 March 2023

The full Minutes of the meeting can be viewed at: [Printed minutes Tuesday 17-Mar-2026 11.00 Executive.pdf](#)

863 Property acquisition to support the Council's asset rationalisation programme

Considered a report of the Corporate Director Resources which sought approval for the acquisition of Resolution House, Scarborough, as part of wider plans to rationalise and optimise the Council's property portfolio.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources, Councillor Gareth Dadd introduced the report emphasising that estate rationalisation had been a long-standing priority and that Resolution House represented a rare, time-sensitive opportunity at a cost substantially lower than recent public speculation. He explained that while commercial confidentiality limited disclosure, the business case was robust and avoided the far higher refurbishment costs of the existing buildings of Scarborough Town Hall and Ryedale House which were neither feasible nor justifiable. He emphasised the regeneration benefits and the need to act swiftly.

Five public questions were then presented to the Executive as follows:

Councillor Thomas Murray

Since the future of Scarborough Town Hall is again being considered, I would like to ask a question.

The Executive report before you again confirms that Scarborough Town Hall is a Grade II listed building and an important heritage asset located within the conservation area, while also stating that the proposed acquisition of Resolution House and wider estate rationalisation may have implications for the future utilisation of the Town Hall site, including the possibility of it becoming vacant.

Despite the scale and significance of these proposals, Scarborough Town Council has not been meaningfully engaged in these discussions. In fact, we first learned of the proposals through social media and a press release, rather than through direct engagement. This is particularly concerning given that Scarborough Town Council leases space within the Town Hall and uses the Council Chamber and Mayor's Parlour for council meetings and civic functions, and represents around 28,000 residents.

Given that thirteen years ago the previous council undertook extensive consultation because decisions about the Town Hall were recognised as having major democratic, heritage and economic implications, and that the proposals at the time were ultimately shelved following that consultation, and given that town and parish councils were promised a collaborative relationship under the new unitary arrangements,

What concrete changes will North Yorkshire Council now put in place to ensure it can properly communicate and work collaboratively with its town and parish councils across the county? Simply saying there are around 400 councils and that meaningful engagement is therefore difficult is not good enough.

Councillor Sarah Mason

North Yorkshire Council has recently announced its intention to purchase a building on the outskirts of Scarborough for £4.5 million. Once realistic additional costs are included, such as relocation, legal fees, IT infrastructure, accessibility works, and full internal fit out, the

total cost of this move is likely to rise to approximately £6.5–7.5 million based on standard public sector capital benchmarks.

Alongside this, NYC has provisionally allocated £750,000 to relocate the Customer First desk away from its current location next to Scarborough's historic Grade II listed Town Hall, the civic heart of the town and a building the Charter Trustees were specifically established to protect following the enforced abolition of Scarborough Borough Council without any democratic vote. As this £750,000 is only a provisional figure, further costs for design, fit out, IT, staffing, accessibility, and operational changes are inevitable. NYC has also committed £9.4 million to the Harrogate Convention Centre for a project that only might generate £1.7 million annually.

Taken together, these three projects represent a combined expenditure of approximately £16.65–17.65 million, a figure that either matches or exceeds the council's declared £17 million budget shortfall for 2026/27.

At the same time, essential frontline services continue to deteriorate. A simple 0.8 km walk along Barrowcliffe Road revealed 18 severely blocked drains, highlighting the scale of basic maintenance issues that directly affect residents' daily lives.

Given that the combined cost of the out of town office move, the Customer First relocation, and the Harrogate Convention Centre investment amounts to approximately £16.65–17.65 million — a sum equal to or greater than NYC's declared £17 million shortfall — can the council explain how it justifies committing this level of spending on non-essential capital projects while simultaneously raising Council Tax to the maximum level and failing to deliver core services for residents?

Councillor Stacy Bolton (read by Councillor Thomas Murray)

Why is North Yorkshire Council unable to submit an expression of interest to purchase Resolution House and then undertake a full public consultation before any final decision is taken on whether the council should proceed with the acquisition?

David Bowes (read by Councillor William Stuart)

My Great Great Grandfather was Henry Bowes, sergeant-at-mace to the Scarborough Corporation & Mayoral Officer between 1901 and 1930. His address was Scarborough Town Hall. You can buy his photograph in ceremonial Gown, carrying the silver Mace for £15 from NYC. The Town Hall was the centre of civic life in the town a hundred years ago.

Town Halls are the focal point for democracy. The centre for the administration of local government, the holding of court sessions, public meetings, entertainment, registration of births deaths and Marriages. In our case, the very history of Scarborough from the Victorian period to today, including my Great Great Grandfather, is that building. The building belongs to the town. It is the town. It who we are. I've travelled extensively. I visit family on the Polish/Czech border in a city called Wałbrzych. A city of similar size to Scarborough. Yet an area more synonymous with Durham, being an ex-coal mining area with all the socio-economic associated challenges. Regardless, its civic buildings and administrative centre are immaculate, invested in, alive. The importance of these buildings is never questioned. Any redundancy, or downgrading, away from their primary function, unthinkable. Democracy and civic administration should be the heart of the city, not shifted to the periphery. This is my experience of Espoo, Finland, where I spent a considerable part of my Career, and cities in Denmark and Sweden. All areas where democracy, civic administration, and the buildings through which this is delivered, deliberately at the centre of the towns and city's. Nations where the relationship between people and local

democracy is not adversarial, collegiate, open, consultative. The benefit is obvious, civic buy in. The people are close to where decisions are made, the pride they feel for their local democracy woven into the architecture. The adjacent square, of which we also have in Scarborough, a place to meet, where children play. The local shops, bars, cafes benefit. The economy gets a boost! Tourists smile and wonder at the frontage. Town/Civic halls are fulcrum of any comparable town in most of Europe. Yet, in Scarborough we've witnessed generational decline of our town Hall. Entropy. Its primary function lessened, its potential unrealised, its end, now a possibility. A sword of Damocles hangs over it inscribed with £19m. An unnecessary sword. An unsubstantiated figure in my opinion. My question is simple.

Is managed decline our only democratic choice?

Councillor William Stuart

At the North Yorkshire Council Business and Regeneration meeting on 26 February, the Council's Principal Regeneration Officer delivered a presentation entitled "A Great Plan for Every Place." In that presentation, officers highlighted the well-known challenges facing towns such as Scarborough in making effective use of existing assets: low asset values, high redevelopment costs and weak returns on investment, all of which can lead to under-utilisation of buildings and a gradual decline in town-centre vitality.

Against that background, the Executive is now being asked to approve the purchase of Resolution House for £4.5 million while potentially vacating and disposing of Scarborough's Grade II listed civic offices and adjoining buildings in the town centre. Such a move would remove a long-standing civic presence from the heart of the town and could reduce daily footfall, economic activity and civic identity in the town centre. It would also leave a complex listed civic building requiring a new use in a market that the council itself recognises can struggle to bring forward viable redevelopment.

At the same time, the National Planning Policy Framework emphasises the importance of protecting the vitality and viability of town centres and directing significant employment and activity to accessible town-centre locations wherever possible.

In light of the council's own regeneration principles and the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, how does the Executive justify spending £4.5 million to relocate council activity away from Scarborough's town centre while potentially leaving a major civic building vacant or under-utilised?

Reply

The following reply encompassing all five questions was then provided by the Corporate Director Resources:

In talking about the Town Hall it's important to recognise that there are four constituent buildings on the site:

1. The listed Town Hall building,
2. a 1950's/1960's extension,
3. York House (the old Brewery), and
4. the Customer Services building.

Changes since 2012

In 2012 this same decision was considered by Scarborough BC but was not progressed due to elected member and public feedback. However over the past 14 years local

government has seen significant change and the financial landscape and condition of the buildings on the Town Hall site are now far more challenging. Despite the decision not being progressed by Scarborough Borough Council, a plan was not put in place to invest in the Town Hall building, and with only minimal investment since that time, this Council has therefore inherited a considerable liability (estimated at £19m). The acquisition of Resolution House offers a far more cost-effective solution to our accommodation needs than continued investment in the Town Hall. A proposal to spend a sum to the magnitude of £19m for what is essentially staff accommodation would cause a similar set of public challenges around value for money.

We are also dealing with very real issues around the quality and suitability of the back-office accommodation at the Town Hall. The current standard of accommodation is not acceptable.

Occupation of the Town Hall

COVID19 and the increase in hybrid working, along with the poor building condition has had a significant impact on the occupation of the Town Hall.

In late 2025 the 1950s/60s block on the Town Hall site had to be vacated urgently due to statutory compliance issues. As a result, around 80% of the floorspace on the Town Hall now stands empty and of the 210 remaining desks utilisation is just 42% at its peak, mid-week (around 88 employees).

Following the closure of the 1950's/60's block several of the civic rooms in the Town Hall - including the civic parlour - have had to be temporarily repurposed as office space. This does not represent a good use of this historic, civic space, nor does it provide an appropriate working environment for our staff.

Economic Impact of Staff Moves and impact on Town Centre viability

As detailed above, far fewer staff use the building today, and the Town Hall site is now significantly under-utilised.

As part of our wider asset rationalisation programme, we recently closed and disposed of North Yorkshire House (NYH). 300 of our staff were based in NYH and were initially moved to the Town Hall, but were subsequently relocated to Castle House because of the accommodation issues.

The current proposal is that Customer services will remain in the town centre, at Castle House, alongside the existing back-office accommodation. With the closure of North Yorkshire House, Castle House now hosts more staff than before, increasing footfall into the town centre, and largely offsetting the proposed relocation of staff from the Town Hall to Resolution House.

Regeneration Opportunities

The Council has inherited a number of prominent, empty buildings within Scarborough Town Centre. We do not want the Town Hall to become another – so the report recommends a £750k investment to progress redevelopment proposals on these sites so that plans can be brought forward as quickly as possible.

The council fully recognises the importance of supporting the vitality and viability of Scarborough town centre.

Redevelopment of the sites, listed in the report, will promote uses that will diversify the town centre offer, protect heritage assets and enhance footfall.

To ensure that the right type of uses are attracted to the town centre, the council intends to engage and work with partners to set out development opportunities for the sites, ensuring that they will contribute positively to regeneration outcomes. Any future proposals for listed buildings will be subject to appropriate planning and heritage considerations, with the Council actively seeking uses that align with town centre policies, protect heritage value and support economic activity.

Heritage Considerations and Civic / Democratic Accessibility

We fully recognise the Town Hall as an important heritage asset and that its potential is not being realised. The site is significantly under-utilised, and it would require very substantial investment to bring the building back up to an appropriate standard. That level of investment simply wouldn't represent value for money for staff accommodation. Given this reality, it is only right that we explore alternative options for the future of the building.

Our aim is to ensure the Town Hall is properly protected, invested in, and revitalised so that it remains in meaningful use and is preserved for future generations. We are not proposing that it be left empty. It will remain occupied while future plans are developed. We have not yet determined the future arrangements for North Yorkshire Council's democratic meetings. However, it remains entirely possible that meetings could continue to be held in town centre venues such as the library, the Spa, museums, or local hotels. In the year to March 2026, the Town Hall has hosted 33 democratic meetings – 24 for Scarborough Town Council and 9 for NYC – averaging fewer than three meetings per month. The annual running cost of the building is £474k (excluding repairs). If the site were used solely for civic meetings, this would equate to £14k per meeting, with the effective cost rising significantly once maintenance liabilities are factored in.

It is also important to note that accessibility today often comes through digital means. Good remote access can make our meetings more inclusive and transparent. Achieving this is more challenging in older, listed buildings such as the Town Hall, where the infrastructure limits what we can deliver.

Engagement with the Town Council and other stakeholders

As the report details, our plans beyond the acquisition remain at an early, exploratory stage as the proposals have moved at pace.

Resolution House was placed on the market earlier this year with a guide price of £4.5 million including fixtures and fittings. However, the price that has been provisionally agreed with Anglo American is significantly lower than the guide price on the understanding that the Council progresses the acquisition swiftly, and aims to complete the transaction by the end of March 2026.

All evidence indicates that the provisional purchase price represents extremely good value. Resolution House provides high-quality, modern office accommodation. We therefore expect to move in on an "as is" basis without the need to incur significant costs beyond the acquisition price. Given the significant opportunities this acquisition provides—to address long-standing challenges and to deliver substantial financial benefits—we simply do not believe we can allow this opportunity to pass us by.

We will engage fully with staff, services, customers, elected members, stakeholders and partners as work beyond the acquisition progresses.

In response, Councillor Murray asked what proportion of the quoted annual maintenance cost and renovation cost for the Town Hall site pertained to the historic listed building. The reply was that this figure could be estimated but was currently not available. Councillor Stuart referenced the risk of another town centre building (the Town Hall) remaining underutilised.

The Chair then invited the following local NYC councillors to address the meeting: Councillors Liz Colling, Rich Maw, Janet Jefferson, Tom Seston and Keane Duncan. Concerns were raised that these proposals were rushed and the business case lacked sufficient detail. While recognising the need for urgent action on accommodation standards, members emphasised the importance of consultation, the preservation of civic heritage, and the maintenance of accessible local democracy. Transport links, customer journey arrangements, consultation with external partners who shared use of buildings, and the future use of vacated buildings were all raised. A specific proposal was made to consider establishing an additional customer access point at Resolution House to serve nearby communities such as Eastfield and Seamer. Officers agreed to explore this. Members also highlighted the need for careful sequencing of regeneration activity to avoid prolonged vacancy across multiple sites.

In response, it was confirmed that:

- The inherited Town Hall estate represented a substantial long-term liability, with essential works costed at around £19 million.
- Low utilisation levels — only 42% of available desks at peak — indicated that the estate no longer functioned as a suitable accommodation base.
- The 1950s–60s block was now entirely unusable and civic rooms were being repurposed as makeshift office space.
- Resolution House required only light adaptations, as fixtures and fittings would be retained.
- Customer services would remain in the town centre at Castle House.
- Any future proposals for the listed Town Hall would involve consultation, heritage assessment and a town-centre-focused regeneration strategy.

Members were also reminded that, because over 300 staff had recently been relocated into Castle House following the closure of North Yorkshire House, town-centre footfall had increased, offsetting the smaller number of staff who would move to Resolution House.

The Executive then discussed the report. They welcomed the proposals and the strength and clarity of the business case which would serve to address some of the long-standing challenges around the Council's estate in Scarborough and Malton, notably the poor condition of the Scarborough Town Hall site and Ryedale House. The importance of retaining a customer access point in both Scarborough and Malton town centres was emphasised. The employment and economic benefits to the Scarborough South area were also noted as was the proximity of Resolution House to Seamer train station. In respect of the future of the cherished historic Scarborough Town Hall building, the example of Skipton Town Hall was cited which now housed the Craven Museum and Gallery.

At the conclusion of the debate, Councillor Gareth Dadd proposed an amendment to the report's recommendation (i) that in principle approval be given to the acquisition with the final decision delegated to the Corporate Director Resources in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and Resources.

Resolved (unanimously) that

- i) In-principle approval be given to acquire Resolution House, based on the Heads of Terms provided in Private & Confidential **Appendix A** with the final decision delegated to the Corporate Director Resources in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and Resources.
- ii) In-principle approval be granted for investment of up to £750k to support the establishment of new front-facing customer service points in Scarborough and Malton town centres, and to fund costs associated with the advancement of redevelopment proposals for vacated sites. Release of this investment will be dependent on further detailed development and refinement of the proposals outlined within this report.
- iii) The decision on the release of the in-principle investment be delegated to the Corporate Director of Resources in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and Resources.

Reasons

To support delivery of the Corporate Property Strategy ambitions, and the potential outcomes and financial benefits set out in section 4.6 of the report.

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