

North Yorkshire Council

Executive

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 17 February 2026 commencing at 11.00 am.

Councillor Carl Les in the Chair. Councillors Mark Crane, Gareth Dadd, Richard Foster, Michael Harrison, Simon Myers, Heather Phillips, Janet Sanderson, Malcolm Taylor and Annabel Wilkinson.

In attendance: Councillors Alyson Baker, Caroline Dickinson, Kevin Foster, Caroline Goodrick, Paul Haslam (R), David Hugill, Andrew Lee (R), Karin Sedgwick, Steve Shaw-Wright and Andrew Williams.

Officers present: Richard Flinton, Karl Battersby, El Mayhew, Gary Fielding, Nic Harne, Richard Webb, Abigail Barron, Barry Khan, Daniel Harry, Elizabeth Jackson, Chris Watson and Jo Ireland.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

847 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

848 Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 February 2025

Resolved

That the public Minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2026, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed by the Chair as a correct record.

849 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Michael Harrison declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Minute 851 as his employer was listed within the Treasury Management Quarter 3 report. As he had previously been granted a dispensation by the Standards Committee he remained in the meeting room and took part in the debate and vote on the item.

Councillor Malcolm Taylor declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Minute 854 as he was a shareholder and a family member was a director of Scarborough Athletic Football Club. He left the meeting room during the debate and vote on the item.

Councillor Gareth Dadd declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Minute 851 in relation to second homes. As he had previously been granted a dispensation by the Standards Committee he remained in the meeting room and took part in the debate and vote on the item.

850 Public Questions and Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

851 Q3 Performance and Budget Monitoring Report

Considered – A joint report of the Chief Executive and Corporate Director Resources bringing together key aspects of the Council’s performance on a quarterly basis.

The Executive Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Heather Phillips, introduced the report which covered the period 1 October 2024 to 31 December 2025 and highlighted improved performance of Allerton Park and good progress on the Housing Revenue Account.

The Leader welcomed Members of Scrutiny Board to the meeting, including Councillor Steve Shaw-Wright who was attending his first meeting as Chair of the Housing and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and Councillor Caroline Goodrick who was attending her first meeting as Chair of Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In response to questions to Executive Members from Scrutiny Chairs and Member Champions the following was confirmed:

Thriving Places and Empowered Communities

- The Executive Member for Culture, Arts and Housing referred to the new mobile library which had added 18 new stops to the existing 24, enabling visits to more villages and communities.
- The Executive Member for Open to Business reported that 32 Town Investment Plans were scheduled for delivery during the year and that work had already commenced in 23 locations.
- Vacancy rates in Scarborough and Malton – it was explained that vacancy levels in Scarborough and Malton were broadly in line with the national average. The Council was exploring opportunities to acquire properties to support new business start-ups and was working to improve the vitality of high streets, noting that high streets were becoming places for social interaction rather than solely retail.
- A separate response would be provided in relation to outreach, livestream and community project engagement numbers.
- Households in temporary accommodation / homelessness prevention – it was confirmed that a range of preventative actions were being undertaken with landlords in order to reduce evictions wherever possible. Legislative changes would assist this work and the Council could provide rent payments or bonds when needed. Despite these efforts, numbers in temporary accommodation and continued to rise due to limited housing options and there was ongoing investment in the Council’s own temporary accommodation stock to increase capacity.

Sustainable and Connected Places

- The Executive Member for Managing our Environment advised that the Council was progressing towards harmonising bin collections across the area, with Richmondshire scheduled later in the year, supporting the long-term aim of achieving one unified collection system across North Yorkshire.
- Residual waste levels – In response to concerns about continuing high levels of residual waste, it was explained that a new waste strategy would be developed alongside renewed communications to encourage residents to place the correct materials in the correct bins. They confirmed participation in the BBC “bin day” campaign and joint work with the Rotters to improve public understanding of recycling requirements, with the aim of reducing residual waste as far as possible.
- Waste to landfill – whilst landfill was used only as a last resort, temporary shutdown periods at the Allerton Park plant could necessitate it when alternative plants were unavailable as the Council sought to avoid simultaneous shutdowns across plants to ensure mutual spare capacity. Allerton Park generated enough

energy to power 65,000 homes, although the strategic objective remained to reduce residual waste overall.

- In response to a request for improved visibility of recycling performance, it was confirmed that a graph could be included showing recycling rates over time.

Safe, Healthy and Living Well

- The Executive Member for Health and Adult Services explained that North Yorkshire had been a trailblazer in extra care housing for around two decades and had approved significant capital investment to progress to the next phase. He confirmed that work was underway to develop the next generation of extra care and supported living schemes, including issuing requests for information to the wider developer market, and that the evolving model would incorporate more provision for working-age adults where there was a known shortage of suitable accommodation.
- Referrals to Children's Social Care were beginning to fall, although challenges remained, and this was starting to have a beneficial knock-on effect throughout the service.
- Numbers of looked after children – In response to a question about the rise in the number of children in care, it was confirmed that referrals had fallen by 12% compared with the same period in the previous year owing to strengthened practice in the Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST). She explained that many children entering care in Q3 were part of sibling groups and that plans were in place to ensure help was offered at the lowest appropriate level. She added that child protection plans were beginning to come down and that North Yorkshire continued to have a comparatively low rate of 52 children per 10,000 population, against a national average of 74.
- Stability of short-term placements – although short-term placement stability had improved to 13% in Q3, any repeat moves were concerning. Moves could occur while assessments were completed to identify the most suitable long-term family. She noted that foster care capacity had at times reached 99–100%, limiting flexibility, and confirmed that foster carer recruitment continued to be a priority.
- Use of short-term beds – the reduction in use of short-term care beds, was predominantly the result of the Council's own activity. The Council had set a target to reduce both the number and duration of short-term placements. The average length of stay remained high at around 16 weeks and that proactive work, particularly ensuring timely therapeutic support from NHS partners, was helping residents move on more quickly to appropriate long-term accommodation.
- Healthy You Service – In response to a query about a statement noting that “no children” had completed the initial programme of support, officers clarified that referrals into the Healthy You pathway were still being developed. Work was underway through the “Best Start in Life” and “Healthy Babies” programmes to improve early-years health and healthy lifestyle engagement.
- Childhood obesity rates – In response to concern about rising obesity rates among 4–5-year-olds, it was highlighted that public health funding was increasingly directed towards prevention programmes with measurable outcomes. While it was difficult to attribute specific causes for rising obesity rates or to quantify the precise impact of national measures such as sugar reduction initiatives, focusing on targeted programmes with clear end points remained the most reliable way of assessing success.
- Library Service – In response to a request for a breakdown of library usage by age and geographic area, it was confirmed that the matter would be referred to Overview and Scrutiny. Children aged 5–9 and 10–14 used libraries more than any other demographic and that this reflected strong engagement with reading challenges and promotional activities.

Maximise Potential

- Timeliness of EHC Plans – the Executive Member reported that performance had risen from 8% of plans issued on time in January 2025 to over 80% in January 2026. This improvement had been achieved through a more structured approach to casework, increased availability and input from educational psychologists, timelier information, and robust monitoring at each stage of the EHC process to identify and resolve delays early.
- Permanent exclusions – preventative support was available through commissioned places in Pupil Referral Units and that schools could also access alternative provision. It was confirmed that all excluded children must receive education by the sixth day and that consultation had taken place on extending PRU age ranges to respond to rising exclusions among younger pupils. SEND hubs continued to provide school-led support, with a developing focus on strengthening inclusion in mainstream schools and ensuring responses were tailored to each child's individual circumstances.
- CAMHS – In response to questions on pressures within CAMHS and their knock-on impact on wider council services, it was acknowledged that national recruitment and retention issues within CAMHS had affected performance and risked influencing parental decisions, including elective home education. The Council continued to work closely with health partners and monitored performance through regular partnership meetings.
- Elective home education – In response to concerns that unmet needs might drive families toward elective home education, the Executive Member stated that the Council worked actively with schools and families to avoid unnecessary withdrawal. A suite of early help services, delivered in partnership with health colleagues, was available to support children and families and to help maintain school placements wherever possible.

One Council

- Benefit processing times - it was noted that performance remained above local targets. It was explained that delays had largely resulted from the convergence of IT systems, including a six-week system outage over the summer, which created a backlog and staff had worked overtime to recover the position and processing times were now improving. Although local targets were not yet being met, performance was within the national target set by the DWP. Further detailed scrutiny of the issue was scheduled for March.

Revenue Budget, Treasury Management and Capital Plan

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources, Councillor Gareth Dadd, introduced each section of the report, and reported an overspend of £4.6m at the end of Quarter 3. The overall position was £3m better than at outturn for Q2 although there had been a slight deterioration within Health and Adult Services and a further £2m deterioration in Children and Young People's Services. Members considered the recommendation relating to the Prevention Plus project, and the Executive Member for Health and Adult Services highlighted this as a positive endorsement of the directorate's ability to deliver preventative work despite revenue pressures. He noted that the £3.6m investment over three years would progress key early-intervention initiatives, building on work with community anchor organisations to reduce demand for statutory services.

The Executive Member presented the Capital Plan and highlighted the proposed allocation of £175,000 for pay-on-entry technology at 15 public convenience sites, explaining that the inclusion of the sum in the report was not intended to pre-empt any future Executive decision but to ensure funding would be available promptly if required. Officers also noted the extension of two existing loans to Yorwaste and Bracewell Homes confirming that these were continuations of current arrangements rather than new facilities.

Resolved (unanimously)

That the Executive

- (i) notes the position on the Council's Treasury Management activities during the third quarter of 2025/26.
- (ii) refers this report to the Audit Committee for their consideration as part of the overall monitoring arrangements for Treasury Management.
- (iii) note the updated Q3 2025/26 Capital Plan.
- (iv) approve the allocation of £175k of Strategic Capacity Reserve to deliver the pay-on-entry technology to 15 public convenience sites pending approval of proposals to be presented to Executive (paragraph 4.2).
- (v) approve the extension to the repayment deadline for the existing Yorwaste loan to 27 March 2028 (paragraph 4.3).
- (vi) approve the extension to the term for the existing Bracewell Homes loan to 31 March 2036 (paragraph 4.4).
- (vii) notes the forecast outturn position against the 2025/26 Revenue Budget, as summarised in paragraph 2.2.1.
- (viii) approves up to £3.6m over a three year period to fund a programme of Prevention Plus as set out in section 2.6 and delegates authority to the Corporate Director, Resources in consultation with the Corporate Director, HAS and the Executive Members for Finance and HAS to reframe the approach including the overall funding (up to a maximum of £3.6m over three years) in the event that NHS partners do not provide sufficient contribution to the overall funding.

852 NYC Pay Policy for Senior Managers

Considered – A report of the Assistant Chief Executive Human Resources and Business Support presenting the NYC Pay Policy for Senior Managers 2026–2027, which the Council was required by the Localism Act 2011 to publish annually. The report set out the pay bands and principal pay terms for the Council's senior managers for the next financial year April 2026 to March 2027.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources, Councillor Gareth Dadd, introduced the report and advised that the policy remained unchanged from the previous year.

Resolved

That the Executive recommend to Full Council, at their meeting on 18 March 2026, the approval of the Pay Policy for publication.

Reason for recommendations

A legal requirement to publish the pay policy as set out in the Localism Act 2011.

853 DfE High Needs Capital Proposal

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People’s Service outlining the Department for Education’s review of previously approved free school schemes, and seeking direction on whether the Council should accept a £5.6m capital grant or request that the DfE continue with the previously approved proposal to deliver a new 120-place special school in Northallerton for children with social, emotional and mental health needs.

The Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills, Councillor Annabel Wilkinson, introduced the report. She summarised that the DfE had invited the Council to choose between two options:

- Accepting a £5.6m grant to support alternative local SEND capital priorities; or
- Proceeding with delivery of the new special school at the former Northallerton School site.

The report set out the risks and benefits of both options and it was recommended that the DfE be requested to continue with the delivery of the school, given rising demand and the benefits for children living in the north of the county as currently the council was dependent on independent schools a distance away.

Resolved (unanimously)

That the Executive gives approval for

- 1) The grant to be declined at this time
- 2) Officers to request the DfE proceed with the delivery of the special school in Northallerton
- 3) Officers to inform the DfE that the council remains open to further dialogue on this issue once the full detail of national reforms are known and understood

Reasons for recommendations

The reasons for the recommendation were that on balance and consideration of all the benefits and risks set out in section 4 and 6 the special school would add a significant resource to the local educational offer.

Whilst there were benefits and risks to either option the council already had some resource available to it to increase SEN resource base capacity alongside the DfE delivering the school. Taking the grant does provide further capital resource, though presently it was not known what the timeline or traction will be for future reforms of the system and the impact on demand for special school places.

The Council could continue to roll out specialist places in mainstream schools with the resources already available. It was assumed further allocations will be forthcoming, however, the risk being that further HNPC allocations are reduced which would restrict the numbers that can be created.

Alternative options considered

The alternative option available to the council was to accept the £5.6m capital grant and forgo the delivery of the special school. This option would also present both potential benefits and risks.

Accepting the grant would provide additional flexibility to the council in providing specialist places. Combined with existing capital grants it would allow the council to be more

ambitious with the roll out of mainstream SEN Resource Bases known locally as Targeted Mainstream Provisions and potentially create an opportunity to work with special schools and/or academy trust to provide smaller satellites of special schools.

High Needs Provision Capital Allocation guidance released in 2025 by the DfE had a strong steer towards local authorities using high needs capital to support mainstream schools in meeting the needs of children with SEND. It states “Whilst local authorities can determine how best to spend this funding to address local priorities, we want to work alongside them to achieve our shared ambition for better outcomes, better experiences for children and young people and their families, and a financially sustainable system” This is then followed by “We encourage local authorities to use this funding to set up resourced provisions or special educational needs units (SEN units) in mainstream schools to increase local capacity”

The combination of the wording in the latest HNPCA guidance and the general understanding that reforms are likely to focus on strengthening the mainstream school offer support this alternative option to accept the grant. However, the detail of the reforms has not yet been fully announced nor the timeline, and therefore it is not possible to assess what impact they will have within the system at this stage on lessening the demand for special school places.

The council had been informed that the grant on offer will not affect any future capital allocations for high needs provision and accepting it would also remove any risk of DfE decision making and value for money judgments which could ultimately see the school not being delivered.

Another benefit to the council would be that taking the grant would release the site to the council for alternative use in the future.

Whilst there are positive aspects to accepting the grant there are also identified risks which have led to the proposal to move ahead with the originally planned school. These risks include:

- SEND reforms are not yet fully understood and the timeline for implementation will not be immediate.
- Accepting the grant and expanding the roll out of other provisions will require additional capacity from the council in order to deliver any subsequent schemes
- There are limited options to expand existing special school provision, and the grant is not sufficient to provide new special school facilities
- Use of high-cost independent school places are unlikely to reduce in the near future
- At present, due to the timeline given by the DfE, alternative options have only been able to be evaluated at a high level

Within the current capital programme the council has £6.9m still to be allocated. This will be the subject of a subsequent report to the Executive, following the conclusion of this matter. This allocation will continue to allow the council to deliver additional resource bases. Any future, as yet unconfirmed, HNPCA allocations would also allow the council to be more ambitious with regards to delivering more specialist places.

854 Loan Facility for Scarborough Athletic Football Club (SAFC)

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director of Community Development proposing the provision of a loan facility of up to £150,000 on commercial terms to Scarborough Athletic Football Club (SAFC), together with a linked grant to offset interest charges where repayments were maintained. The report explained that the club was experiencing a

short-term cash flow challenge arising from the refurbishment of its pitch, which had required the team to play away from Scarborough during the season.

The Executive Member for Culture, Arts and Housing, Councillor Simon Myers, introduced the report. He highlighted that the pitch works were progressing well and that the club, which was owned by its members, played an important role in the community, particularly in providing opportunities for young people. The temporary relocation had reduced revenue, and the loan would help the club manage cash flow until the works were completed.

Members recognised the significant community value of the club and welcomed the proposal. Concerns were raised about ensuring that the loan did not create a precedent for ongoing financial support and it was confirmed that the loan was intended solely to address a short-term need. It was noted that a similar loan to Selby Town FC had previously been repaid in full, demonstrating the viability of the approach. The Director confirmed that delegated authority was necessary to finalise terms following detailed financial assessment by officers.

(Councillor Malcolm Taylor declared an interest in the matter and left the meeting room during the debate and vote on the item.)

Resolved (unanimously)

That Executive approve

- 1) To award SAFC a loan on commercial terms up to a total value of £150k.
- 2) If the loan repayments are adhered to, to provide SAFC with a grant that contributes towards the value of any interest charged.
- 3) That the terms of the loan and the accompanying grant be delegated to the Corporate Director of Resources, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance.

Reasons for recommendations

To support the long-term financial sustainability of SAFC. The loan was designed to provide some additional financial security and support the club as they worked to reset their financial position during this period. It was expected the position would improve significantly once the pitch repairs were completed and play returned at the SSV for the start of the 2026/27 season.

855 Forward Plan

Considered – The Forward Plan for the period 6 February 2026 to 28 February 2027 was presented.

Resolved

That the Forward Plan be noted.

856 Date of Next Meeting - 17 March 2026

857 Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies

The Leader agreed that the following item should be considered as a matter of urgency as the next meeting of the Executive was on 17 March 2026, which was too long to wait to make the appointment.

Considered – A report of the Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Democratic Services in relation to a vacancy on the Selby Area Internal Drainage Board following the resignation of one of the current nominated representatives.

Resolved

That the Executive appoints Councillor Robin Poskitt to the vacant seat on the Selby Area Internal Drainage Board.

The meeting concluded at 12.18 pm.