

North Yorkshire Council

Corporate Director of Community Development

27 February 2026

Permission to apply for funding to support Whitby Old Town Hall from Local Authority High Street Fund

Report of the Head of Regeneration

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the submission of an application to support Whitby Old Town Hall to the Local Authority High Street Fund for funding of £55,000 from the Director Community Development in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer sub-delegated to the Assistant Director- Resources.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report recommends that North Yorkshire Council apply for grant funding of £55,000 from the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA) to support Whitby Old Town Hall from the Local Authority High Street Fund, a fund set up to support projects emerging from the Town Investment Plans programme.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 06 May 2025, the North Yorkshire Executive committee made the decision to accept funding from YNYCA for The Town Investment Plan (TIP) programme which will develop tailored investment plans for 32 towns and key service centres across North Yorkshire. These plans will provide a strategic, co-ordinated approach to regeneration and investment at a place-based level. They will help the Council and its partners to understand investment priorities and provide a structured focus for future business cases and investment decisions.
- 3.2 As part of YNYCA commitment to the programme, a fund has been created to support capital projects emerging from the TIP programme. The Local Authorities of North Yorkshire and York are eligible to bid for funding. The project list for the Local Authority High Street fund was considered by the Growth Board on 18 Dec 2025 who supported the applications going forward.
- 3.3 Regeneration and Localities Officers have reviewed evidence and carried out community consultation in Whitby. This highlighted heritage as an investment priority for the town. Officers worked with stakeholders and relevant council services to develop a project proposal for Whitby Old Town Hall to address this need.

4.0 WHITBY OLD TOWN HALL

- 4.1 The funding will be used to repurpose the historic Grade II* Listed Old Town Hall in Whitby, bringing it back into community use as a vibrant Heritage venue. The space will celebrate the rich history of the building, the Market Place, and the wider story of Whitby, creating an engaging destination for residents and visitors alike.

- 4.2 The consultation for the emerging town investment plan highlights a range of issues relating to wayfinding around the town, community spaces and events, and limited cultural programming. This is combined with an emerging priority around distribution of footfall and raising entrepreneurial ambitions above just 'being a small business.'
- 4.3 The project will revitalise the town centre, creating an attractive, multi-functional space that increases footfall and strengthens the local economy. By introducing flexible uses, such as community events, cultural programming, and small business opportunities, the scheme aligns with the goal of resilient high streets and supports local enterprise. The Old Town Hall is a key heritage asset, and its restoration reflects the Combined Authority's commitment to heritage-led regeneration. Preserving this historic asset while adapting it for modern needs enhances Whitby's identity and visitor appeal. Ensuring the building becomes a hub for residents and visitors alike supports objectives for social inclusion and civic pride. Repurposing an existing structure delivers sustainability benefits, reducing carbon emissions associated with demolition and new construction, and through measures to improve the buildings insulation. This aligns with the Combined Authority's ambition to achieve carbon-negative status by 2040.
- 4.4 The venue will serve as a gateway to Whitby's heritage, offering exhibitions, interpretation, and events that highlight the town's unique character. By forging strong links with other heritage and cultural attractions, the project will create a connected visitor experience that encourages exploration beyond a single site, supporting local businesses and strengthening Whitby's tourism economy.
- 4.5 Through coordinated programming, shared promotion, and improved wayfinding, visitors will be inspired to move between venues, supporting local businesses and increasing footfall across the town. This collaborative approach will ensure that Whitby's heritage offer is experienced as a whole, delivering maximum benefit for the community and strengthening the town's position as a leading cultural destination.
- 4.6 The allocated funding will provide essential tools and resources to transform the Old Town Hall into a vibrant destination where the local community can actively engage with its offerings. Planned enhancements include the installation of interactive screens and digital maps, similar to those found in museums, as well as a projector for displaying videos and presentations during events. Additionally, a portion of the funding will be dedicated to improving the building's safety and security through the purchase and installation of a modern CCTV system.
- 4.7 The total project value is £125,000 of which amount that will be applied for from LA High Street Fund is £55,000 and will be used to fund to fund the capital elements
- 4.8 Is it the intention that match funding of £70,000 will be applied for from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to cover the revenue costs associated with community engagement and operation for the first couple of years until Whitby Town Council establish a sustainable model. If revenue is not secured the building will not open.

5.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSES

- 5.1 As part of project development, internal consultation has been undertaken with relevant council services. The markets Service which currently manages Whitby Market located in the undercroft of the OTH, has been actively engaged throughout the Old Town Hall (OTH) project. The service has expressed a willingness to operate the OTH as a dedicated maker space and has contributed to discussions regarding potential operating models and future activity programming. Localities have reviewed the project proposals and provided

recommendations to considering double devolution as a future management option and questioned the long-term use of the building.

In addition, Whitby Town Council has been fully involved in ongoing discussions during project development. The Town Council has expressed a strong interest in assuming future ownership and an expression of interest has already been submitted to support this.

5.2. Legal have assigned a main contact in relation to the grant application process.

5.3 Community and business engagement has been undertaken as part of the TIP programme and demonstrated support for the type of intervention that this project will address.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 On going revenue implications have been considered as part of the project development. After completion, it is hoped the asset will transfer to Whitby Town Council who will take on maintenance and on-going revenue implications. Whitby Town Council have submitted an Expression of Interest to NYC and are working with the Devolution Team in relation to the asset transfer.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Grant terms and conditions are not available at the present time but will be reviewed by Legal Services when released, should the bid be successful. If any of the grant terms and conditions present unacceptable risk for the Council then the grant offer would be declined.

8.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no Equalities implications from submitting the application. Equalities implications will be re-appraised if the application is successful as part of the acceptance procedure

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no Climate Change implications from submitting the application. Climate and sustainability implications will be reappraised if the application is successful as part of the acceptance procedure

10.0 CONCLUSIONS

10.1 That the Council makes an application to the Local Authority High Street to cover the costs of delivering the Whitby Old Town Hall

11.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 The funding will contribute towards a need identified as part of the Town Investment Plan programme. The relevant council services have been consulted and revenue implications have been considered.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 That the Corporate Director Community Development in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer sub-delegated to the Assistant Director – Resources approve the submission of the grant of £55,000

Appendices – None

Background Documents - None

Helen Jackson
Head of Regeneration
25 February 2026

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