

North Yorkshire Council

Selby and Ainsty Area Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 6 November 2025 commencing at 10.00 am.

Councillor Kirsty Poskitt in the Chair and Councillors Karl Arthur, Mark Crane, Melanie Davis, Stephanie Duckett, Tim Grogan, Bob Packham, Andy Paraskos, Jack Proud, Steve Shaw-Wright and Arnold Warneken.

In attendance: Councillor Carl Les OBE; Celia McKeon, Chief Executive of Two Ridings Community Foundation; and Graham North, Rail Strategy and Performance Officer, York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority.

Officers present: Andy Clarke, Public and Community Transport Manager; Andrew Rowe, Assistant Director Housing; Carl Doolan, Head of Housing Management & Landlord Services; Lorraine Larini, Head of Housing Standards; Daniel Harry, Head of Democratic Services and Scrutiny; and David Smith, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

Prior to the meeting starting, the Chair acknowledged the sad passing of Judith Chilas, a former Councillor for Selby District Council, and sent condolences to her family and those that knew her.

173 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors John Cattanach, Mike Jordan, Andrew Lee and Cliff Lunn.

174 Declarations of interest

Councillor Davis declared that she is a trustee of 'Our Space', an organisation that has received a grant from the Two Ridings Community Foundation. This was not considered to affect the discussion at Item 4.

Councillor Poskitt declared that she is an employee of 'Tadcaster and Rural', and organisation that has received a grant from the Two Ridings Community Foundation. This was not considered to affect the discussion at Item 4.

Councillor Arthur declared that he works in the railway industry. This was not considered to affect the discussion at Item 5.

Councillor Davis declared that her partner works for Network Rail. This was not considered to affect the discussion at Item 5.

175 Public questions and statements

One public statement was received before the deadline of midday on 3 November 2025.

Councillor Alex Tant-Brown, Sherburn in Elmet Town Council, made the following statement.

We, the members of Sherburn in Elmet Town Council wish to make you aware of major concerns from our Town Council in regards to your planning department. Our full statement is, as of the start of my speaking, being published on our Town Council website. It is unfortunately too long to read out in the limited time I have been afforded. So, I will highlight the salient points.

Over the course of the past year, we have witnessed first hand the very worst of your planning department. To the point where we are left to conclude that consulting parish and town councils has become a glorified box-ticking exercise, rather than an opportunity for local scrutiny. As some Cllrs will know, we were unceremoniously disinvited from a recent planning application site visit, contrary to your own policies, by your officers.

In regards to when we've come to the Selby Area planning committee, the officers reports have been at best sub-standard, and at worst, read like long form campaigning leaflets. In regards to "planning balance", there seems to be none. These reports have overwhelmingly read in favour of why applications should be approved, with no regard for the potential problems of proposed schemes, or the policy-driven evidence in favour of refusal. Serious questions need to be asked as to how planning balance is being applied.

Despite councillors voting to refuse, we have been dragged into two appeals. Both of which we have lost. And why? Well, the first was because your officers decided not to put up a case. Simple as. They appeared that they were not bothered to do so. The second case. Your officers agreed what we believe to be material changes to a planning application with the applicant, without public scrutiny, and then decided to drop all three reasons for refusal.

I'll say this clearly and plainly. This is undemocratic. It avoids public scrutiny. And it simply invites developers to keep putting in speculative applications, in the hope that they can change them during the appeal process, in order to satisfy policies and not realities.

In essence, and whilst this may be something you have heard many times before, you are inviting development into a town that's infrastructure is not supportive of the residential and employment population that it needs to support. Our schools do not have capacity for more children, our doctors do not have parking and staffing capacity for current patients, let alone more. Our community groups and town council are struggling to meet the demand that North Yorkshire Council is letting fall by the wayside. These are issues that are not going to be satisfied by Section 106 payments. They need real, and immediate investment. Preferably before our town simply becomes a collection of houses loosely held together by a parish precept.

To make it clear. What we, and our residents, have experienced over the past twelve months, has been nothing short of shambolic. From your officers conduct at site visits and planning committee meetings, through to the abject failure to represent residents interests at planning appeals. Our residents pay their taxes for you to act in their best interests. Yet you leave residents to believe you are wilfully acting against their interests in planning matters. All we ask are two simple things. 1. Bring forward a strategic allocation of land for new developments, one which does not rely on small residential access roads. 2. Ensure adequate investment in our area.

We might be forgettable up at Northallerton. But we will fight for all our residents to ensure they get the services and infrastructure they need. At the moment, they aren't. And their interests are not being served by your planning department, and ultimately this council.

The relevant officers were unable to attend the meeting so David Smith, Senior Democratic Services Officer, read the following response on behalf of North Yorkshire Council Planning Service.

Chair, Members,

It is with regret that Sherburn in Elmet Town Council feel dissatisfied with a number of the recommendations made by officers over the past year. We appreciate the Town Council's continued engagement in the planning process and recognise the time and effort their members dedicate to reviewing applications and submitting local comments.

However, I would like to reassure both Members and the public that officer reports are detailed, objective, and evidence-based, providing a balanced assessment of all material considerations.

For example, the report for application ZG2/23/0774/FULM – Land South of Bartlett View and Rochester Way, Sherburn in Elmet, considered by this committee in April, ran to around 80 pages, including 17 pages of consultation responses and representations. None of the technical consultees raised objections that could not be mitigated by planning conditions, or by way of inclusion within a Section 106 legal agreement.

That report also set out, very clearly, the policy position facing North Yorkshire Council, including the fact that the authority cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply (see paragraph 10.1 of the case officer's report). As Members will be aware, this triggers the "tilted balance" under paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework, meaning that planning permission should be granted unless adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. Officers are duty-bound to apply that test.

It is acknowledged that the policy situation is a complex one and that it has changed over the last 12 months.

Consultation and engagement

The Town Council suggests that consultation with parish and town councils is a "box-ticking exercise."

This is not the case. All local Parish and Town councils, are formally consulted on planning applications and their comments are given due weight. However, for an objection to carry weight in decision-making, it must be based on clear, objective, and technical planning evidence. Decisions must be robust and capable of standing up to scrutiny at appeal. Reliance on unsubstantiated concerns, or the strength of local opposition alone, is not sufficient in law.

Site visit attendance

It is unfortunate that a Town Council representative was unable to attend a recent committee site visit. Officers recognise this caused frustration and have since reviewed procedural advice with Legal Services and the Chair of the Planning Committee to ensure clarity and consistency in future. The exclusion was not intentional and has prompted constructive internal review.

Appeal decisions and professional conduct

Reference has been made to two appeals where Sherburn in Elmet Town Council consider that the Council did not defend its reasons for refusal.

It is noted that a detailed response to these issues raised have already been sent to Sherburn in Elmet Town Council, following their letter of complaint, dated 30th September.

We responded to concerns raised about the appeal process following the refusal of the planning application for 106 dwellings at Land South Of Bartlett View And Rochester Row, Milford Road. The complaint focused on the Council's conduct and representation at the appeal hearing.

The Council was represented by one of our Development Management Team Managers and a Principal Planning Officer. No legal representation was present, as the appeal was a hearing (not a public inquiry), which does not require cross-examination by legal advocates.

The Council attempted to instruct a highway expert to support its case but was unable to secure one, as neither the Local Highway Authority nor external consultants were willing or able to assist. This was also the case for a similar appeal on Garden Lane.

The Planning Inspector allowed the appeal, concluding that the proposal would not harm highway safety and complied with planning policy. The Inspector found the Council had acted unreasonably in preventing development and awarded full costs to the appellant.

The Council was unable to instruct a highway expert, but the Inspector found the scheme acceptable. The letter concluded that the Council did not act improperly in handling the appeal.

With regards to defending the Garden Lane appeal, officers looked to present the views given by members at the planning committee meeting. However, these were referred to by the Planning Inspector in his decision as being, "vague and generalised assertions about the effect of the proposal without their own substantive technical evidence", which officers could not defend strongly in planning policy terms, at the Hearing.

In the Land South of Bartlett View and Rochester Road appeal, officers sought to appoint independent highways consultants to defend a highways-related refusal reason. However, no consultant approached was prepared to do so, as none could identify any technical basis for defending the reason. Given the tight deadlines imposed by the Planning Inspectorate, a pragmatic decision had to be made promptly in consultation with the Council's Legal Team, who confirmed the approach followed was both lawful and appropriate.

It is always preferable for such matters to be discussed transparently at committee, but the timescales dictated by the Inspectorate did not permit this on that occasion.

Infrastructure and cumulative impacts

Concerns have been raised that Sherburn in Elmet lacks the infrastructure to support additional development. Officers fully appreciate these concerns. However, when assessing a planning application, the Council can only consider the specific harm arising from the development proposed, and ensure that it is mitigated in proportion to that impact.

The Section 106 agreement for the Bartlett View application secured contributions towards education, healthcare, open space and highways in line with the evidence provided by statutory consultees. Existing infrastructure deficiencies in the wider town, however pressing, cannot lawfully be addressed through a single planning application.

Strategic planning and investment

The Town Council has asked that a strategic allocation of land be brought forward for development in Sherburn in Elmet.

North Yorkshire Council is actively preparing a new Local Plan to replace the legacy district plans. This will identify strategic growth areas and infrastructure priorities across the county. However, the Local Plan process is necessarily detailed and evidence-based, and will take several years to reach adoption.

The second request, for “adequate investment in the area”, is understood and noted. In planning terms, however, investment can only be sought through Section 106 obligations or planning conditions, and only where these meet the legal tests set out in national policy. Broader funding decisions and service investment lie outside the scope of the planning decision-making process, though they may of course be pursued through other Council programmes.

Planning balance

Finally, with regard to “planning balance”:

Each recommendation presented to this committee reflects a careful weighing of identified harms against the social, economic and environmental benefits of the proposal, in accordance with both national and local policy. Officers do not advocate for development but apply the professional and policy framework impartially. The conclusions reached are always open to Member scrutiny and challenge at committee.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Chair, I would like to reaffirm that planning officers across North Yorkshire Council act with professional integrity, objectivity, and transparency.

Their reports are thorough, their recommendations are grounded in evidence and policy, and they remain committed to engaging respectfully with all parish and town councils — including Sherburn in Elmet — to secure the best planning outcomes for local communities.

Councillor Alex Tant-Brown was provided the opportunity to make a supplementary statement and the following points were raised.

- It was questioned why the Garden Lane appeal was a hearing and not a public inquiry.
- Concerns were raised about the objectivity of the complaint process, noting that a complaint was responded to by the planning service that it was about.
- In terms of the cumulative impact on Sherburn in Elmet, it was suggested that this should be considered as part of the principle of development under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- Concern was expressed that a date of 2029 for the new Local Plan is too late, given the applications that are forthcoming.

Members raised concerns that specific applications had been referred to in the officer response.

Members noted the issues raised by the public speaker.

176 Two Ridings Community Foundation - Heart of Yorkshire Fund

Celia McKeon, Chief Executive of Two Ridings Community Foundation, presented the report and provided the following updates.

- Since the end of the financial year, two further rounds of grants have been awarded. In March, the panel met and awarded organisational development and small grants totalling £46,667. A further round of applications opened in June, with the panel meeting in September to award grants totalling almost £30,000.
- The fund will reopen for applications in June 2026, with an anticipated application window of 6–8 weeks. During this period, support will be provided to applicants and following due diligence and assessment, the panel will meet in September 2026 to make a decision on the applications received.

Following these updates, the following answers were provided to queries raised by members.

- It was clarified that while Two Ridings also administers funds covering other parts of North Yorkshire, the Heart of Yorkshire Fund is limited to the former Selby District Council area. Details of all Two Riding funds, including those available to the Ainsty area, are published on their website. As funds open and close throughout the year, the website is the most reliable source for up-to-date information. In response to a query about the Allerton Waste Recovery Fund, it was confirmed that the fund has now closed and that there is no remaining balance.
- Further information was requested on the grant awarded to 'Moving the Masses' and their activities. This information would be provided after the meeting.
- Concerns were raised about the short application window for grants, with Members noting that while extending the period could increase administrative costs, the current approach may restrict access for some groups who need support but must wait to apply. In response, it was explained that the 6–8 week window is intended to strike a balance between being open long enough for applications and providing quick decisions, as a longer window would delay outcomes. It was highlighted that if sufficient funds are available, additional rounds may be opened during the year. It was also highlighted that groups can apply to other Two Ridings programmes at different times of the year – Two Ridings will signpost groups to the most suitable funding opportunities, and urgent needs outside the main window can often be addressed through alternative funds.
- It was highlighted that the Fund is promoted on social media, the organisation's newsletter, and its website, giving groups the maximum opportunity to be informed. Members expressed interest in receiving regular updates on awarded grants in order to support their promotion. In response, it was confirmed that once panels have met and grants have been awarded, a list of successful applications and details of the recipient organisations can be shared with members to help them disseminate the information locally. It was also suggested that letters to successful organisations can include a request for funded groups to inform their local councillors about their activities, to help ensure councillors are aware and engaged.

- Members asked about outcome reporting for funded projects. In response, it was confirmed that Two Ridings monitors and evaluates all grants, with reporting requirements kept proportionate to the size of the award to avoid overburdening smaller groups. All grantees provide an end-of-grant report detailing activities, numbers supported, impact achieved, learning gained, and plans for continuation. To avoid overload, individual reports are not routinely shared with the panel, but the overall impact of the Fund is reviewed.

Resolved

- a) That the update is noted.
- b) That further information on the grant awarded to 'Moving the Masses' be provided after the meeting.
- c) That updates on successful grantees be shared with Members so that they can help to promote the organisations.

177 Update on Rail Matters by the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority

Graham North, Rail Strategy and Performance Officer, York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority, presented the report and the following points were clarified.

- It was highlighted that the station usage figures are updated annually, typically at the end of November, and therefore the figures included in the report are based on the previous year's data and may be out of date.
- Members highlighted the importance of improving public transport to reduce car usage and encourage greater mobility.
- Lower usage of Cattal Station was considered likely to result from limited parking availability and Members asked whether any of the £10 million investment on the York–Harrogate line could be directed to provide parking at Cattal. Officers confirmed that the funding is no longer available and that its purpose was solely to increase train frequency. It was noted that the Maltkiln development includes provision for car parking; however, there is currently no funding or opportunity to deliver this ahead of the development. Members emphasised that improvements were required before the development of Maltkiln. Officers advised that previous work had identified potential sites for parking, but costs could be significant due to site constraints. Parking issues at Cattal Station were noted by officers.
- Members raised concerns about overcrowding on trains from Selby, particularly at peak times, and asked whether additional capacity could be provided. Officers advised that Northern is aware of the issue and has begun adding extra coaches on some services, such as race days, but overall capacity is limited due to a shortage of rolling stock. Some additional stock may become available in about two years, although competition for resources across the UK remains a challenge. Much of Northern's fleet is old, and while new rolling stock is planned, it is not expected until the early 2030s.
- Regarding the work at Sherburn in Elmet Station, it was reported that options are being explored to determine the lowest-cost solution. Members welcomed plans to improve Sherburn in Elmet Station, noting the town's significant growth, the station's proximity to an employment site, and the need for better infrastructure, including car parking and improved accessibility. They highlighted that overcrowding at Selby is partly due to TransPennine trains not stopping at Sherburn in Elmet but expressed concern that opting for the cheapest improvement option could overlook accessibility requirements. Officers explained that the immediate priority is enabling TransPennine services to stop, which may involve a minimum-cost solution such as platform extension, as full

accessibility upgrades could cost around £10 million and are difficult to fund in the current climate. While acknowledging the importance and legal requirement for accessibility, officers advised that funding is not currently available and that delivery will depend on future government funding and prioritisation.

Resolved

- a) That the update is noted.

178 Public Transport in the Committee Area

Andy Clarke, Public and Community Transport Manager, presented the report and explained that the bus network in the Selby area had remained largely unchanged for most of the year, following substantial changes introduced in January which had bedded in well. He reported that Arriva, the main operator, was pleased with the changes and had seen improvements in punctuality and service reliability, enabling investment in two new buses. Passenger numbers had increased as a result of the changes, although the Government's national fare cap rising from £2 to £3 at the start of the year had had a dampening effect.

He noted that one area affected by the changes was the Leeds Road section of the route in Selby, which lost its service. Feedback via the local MP highlighted that some residents, particularly those with accessibility issues, were adversely impacted. In response, a low-frequency alternative was introduced recently, operating four journeys between Thorpe Willoughby and Selby Bus Station on weekdays. This service will run for six months before being evaluated. Andy Clarke also confirmed that Coastliner services between Leeds and York via Tadcaster continued to use grant funding to support three journeys per hour, which had been positive overall, despite some traffic-related reliability issues during the summer. He emphasised that the report focused only on services with notable updates and did not cover all routes.

During the discussion, the following points were raised.

- A member asked why services through the Ainsty part of the area were not mentioned in the report. In response, the officer confirmed that there was nothing specific to update on those services.
- A member raised concerns that Barlow is almost unserved after 2pm and asked for a later bus. The officer agreed to review options but noted funding constraints, explaining that a longer-term settlement would help and suggested community transport for hospital access.
- Another member highlighted that North Duffield has a service to York but not Selby and asked about a proposed minibus linking Hemingbrough, Riccall, Osgodby, Barlby, North Duffield, Skipwith, and Thorganby. The officer highlighted funding constraints but confirmed that a countywide review is underway.
- Further concerns were raised about Hemingbrough and nearby villages being cut off, with parish councils offering funding. The officer welcomed this and noted driver shortages have eased.
- A member asked about real-time information displays and a hospital bus shelter. The officer confirmed five displays at Selby Bus Station, two in Sherburn, and one in Tadcaster, with more planned. He said funding for the hospital shelter is in place and installation is expected this financial year.
- The Chair raised the issue of the Under-19 fare cap not covering travel into West Yorkshire. The officer agreed to explore solutions.

Resolved

- a) That the update is noted.

179 Housing and Community Centres

Andrew Rowe, Assistant Director Housing; Lorraine Lorini, Head of Housing Standards; and Carl Doolan, Head of Housing Management & Landlord Services, provided an update on housing and community centres, explaining the context and progress since the introduction of new consumer standards for social housing.

Key points highlighted by officers include the below.

- The new consumer standards introduced by Government require higher housing quality and management standards.
- Following a self-assessment, a self-referral was made to the regulator, acknowledging non-compliance and setting out an improvement plan. An improvement board meets monthly, alongside regular engagement with the regulator. Seven workstreams underpin the improvement plan: governance, stock quality, safety and compliance, understanding tenants' needs, repairs and maintenance, safe neighbourhoods, and fair allocation and tenancy management.
- Repair numbers have doubled due to higher standards and survey findings.
- Significant work has been done to harmonise policies following local government reorganisation. IT systems are being consolidated into a single system.
- A learning and development strategy is in place to meet new qualification requirements for senior managers.
- A stock condition survey is underway and the aim is to have covered 50% of homes by March 2026 and 100% by September 2026.
- Safety plans have been approved for the main health and safety risks. Fire risk assessments are now 100% complete and asbestos compliance is ongoing.
- Financial implications for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan are being monitored.
- Service charges remain inconsistent across former districts and will be reviewed.
- A sheltered housing stock review is ongoing and this will inform future provision.
- Community centres funded by the HRA are treated as council buildings and this creates cost pressures.
- Initial safety compliance issues at community centres have been addressed and the stock condition reports have been completed.
- Usage of community centres varies significantly. Potential options include increasing community use, hosting council services, or considering redevelopment for housing in the long term.
- Engagement with community centre management committees, parish councils, and stakeholders will continue through November and December, with wider consultation and potential asset transfer discussions from 2026 onwards.
- No decisions have been taken regarding community centres and proposals will ensure buildings remain safe while in operation.

The following key points were raised in the discussion.

- Members asked about retrofit challenges. Officers confirmed funding is available but contractor capacity is a constraint. Eight principal contractors have been onboarded, and some funding supports skills development for in-house teams. Work prioritisation is based on property condition.
- Questions were raised about empty homes and lettable standards. Officers explained that all homes will meet EPC C by 2030 and asbestos will be removed. Empty homes fall into three categories: minor hazards, significant hazards, and major capital works. Current void rates are around 4%, with a target of 2.5%. Category 1 voids cost about £15,000 to repair, with Category 2 costing £27,000, and Category 3 costing up to £50,000. It is the aim to improve over 1600 homes by 2028. The ALIGN framework should enable returning 10 properties per week to allocations.

- Members suggested displaying information in empty property windows to reduce public queries. Officers noted security concerns but agreed to consider options.
- Questions on allocations and three-way swaps were raised and officers confirmed that there has been no policy change.
- Members raised service charge inconsistencies and grounds maintenance costs. Officers confirmed a review is underway to ensure fairness and alignment with tenant responsibilities.
- Members welcomed engagement on community centres and stressed the need for more prescriptive arrangements with management committees to maximise community benefit. Suggestions included rationalising timetables and using centres for advice and support services.
- Positive feedback was given for the housing team's response to a recent major fire, which required rehousing multiple households.

Resolved

- a) That the update is noted.

180 Home to School Travel Policy: Update on queries raised

Daniel Harry, Head of Democratic Services and Scrutiny introduced the report, highlighting that responses had been provided to queries previously raised by Members.

A member questioned why exceptional circumstances were not considered in a specific case. The officer replied that the committee's role is to check policy compliance and then consider exceptional circumstances – such as distance, safety, transport arrangements, or other factors. He confirmed that 'other factors' is open to interpretation and members have discretion.

Resolved

- a) That the report is noted.

181 Updates from the Area Committee's MPs

The Chair introduced the report, highlighting that written responses had been received from both MPs. No questions or comments were made by Members in relation to the report.

Resolved

- a) That the report is noted.

182 Work programme

Councillors requested an update on the Transforming Cities Fund project in Selby, asking whether work has started and why the Railway Club building remains in place.

There was a discussion on the issues highlighted in the public question received earlier in the meeting. The following points were made.

- Regarding infrastructure and cumulative impact – Concerns were raised that infrastructure improvements are not keeping pace with development and that the cumulative impact of planning applications is not being adequately addressed. Members highlighted issues relating to traffic congestion and noted that Selby records some of the

poorest air quality readings in North Yorkshire. Specific reference was made to Sherburn in Elmet, where members expressed concern about the lack of infrastructure and the cumulative effect of ongoing development. Councillor Bob Packham, Division Member, advised that work is underway to press for essential infrastructure improvements and expressed hope for support from North Yorkshire Council.

- Regarding Planning Committee site visits – Councillor Bob Packham, Vice Chair of the Selby and Ainsty Area Planning Committee, reported that discussions are ongoing with officers to establish a clear protocol for site visits, which will differ from the approach previously taken at Sherburn. Members noted the importance of incorporating local input from parish councils, noting that excluding this information would not support effective decision-making.
- Regarding officer involvement in planning decisions – Members expressed concern at reports that officers may have overturned planning decisions without consulting elected Members. They agreed that that officers should, at a minimum, notify the Chair of the Planning Committee and provide an explanation for the decision. Members requested confirmation from officers as to whether this had happened.
- Regarding officer support for appeals – Members felt that officers should attend appeals to support the council’s position, even if their professional view differs. It was noted that officers are employed by the council, and members expect them to make every effort to uphold decisions made by the authority.
- Regarding views provided by North Yorkshire Highways on planning applications – Members raised concerns about inconsistencies from Highways regarding access points for housing developments. It was stressed that Highways need to provide clear, consistent decisions on access routes to avoid confusion and maintain confidence in the planning process.
- Regarding delays in the planning process – some Members raised concerns regarding the length of time taken to determine applications, with delays seemingly often linked to responses from internal departments. It was felt that prolonged decision-making is unfair to applicants and local communities.
- Regarding the handling of public questions at meetings – some Members expressed the view that they should have the opportunity to ask officers questions on responses to public questions and to discuss public questions as part of the meeting.

Following the discussion, Members requested that officers from the Planning and Planning Enforcement teams attend a future meeting to provide clarification on the statement issued in response to the public question and to address the above concerns.

It was also highlighted that a discussion should take place between the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Selby and Ainsty Area Committee and Area Planning Committee.

Resolved

- a) That the above issues be added to the work programme.

183 Any other items

There were none.

184 Date of next meeting

Thursday, 19 March 2026 at 2.00pm – Formal Meeting.

The meeting concluded at 12.30 pm.