

# North Yorkshire Council

## Executive

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

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

In attendance: Councillors David Chance, Liz Colling, Keane Duncan (R), George Jabbour, Janet Jefferson (R), Mike Jordan, Rich Maw, Nigel Knapton, Tom Seston, Phil Trumper and Greg White

Officers present: Richard Flinton, Karl Battersby, El Mayhew, Gary Fielding, Abigail Barron, Nic Harne, Barry Khan, Kerry Metcalfe, Gareth Bentley, Fiona Casson, Sharon Cousins, St John Harris, Mark Haynes (R), Callum McKeon (R), Natasha Durham (R), and Chris Bourne (R)

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### Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

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#### **858 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

#### **859 Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 February 2026**

##### **Resolved**

That the public Minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2026, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed by the Chair as a correct record.

#### **860 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Malcolm Taylor declared an interest in respect of Minute Item 863 since a member of his family was employed by North Yorkshire Council.

#### **861 Exclusion of the Public**

It was noted that the reports relating to Minute item 863 – Property acquisition to support the Council's asset rationalisation programme and Minute Item 870 – Harrogate Convention Centre Studio 2 refurbishment works both contained exempt appendices. As the contents of the appendices were not discussed there was no requirement to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of these items.

#### **862 Public Questions and Statements**

In total there were 13 public questions or statements submitted. Five were considered under Minute Item 863 – Property acquisition to support the Council's asset rationalisation

programme, six under Minute Item 864 - Adoption of a revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, and two under Minute Item 868 – Whitby Cliff Lift and access to Whitby West Cliff Beach.

### **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.

## **864 Adoption of a revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy**

Considered a report of the Corporate Director Environment which sought approval from the Executive to adopt a revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

Introducing the report, the Executive Member for Managing our Environment noted the challenge of balancing safety, climate obligations, accessibility needs, and financial pressures on the trade in formulating the revised policy which represented a compromise between different positions.

Six public questions and statements were then presented to the Executive as follows:

### **Lisa Ridsdale**

Imagine a small village in North Yorkshire at 10 p.m. A local resident, elderly or disabled, needs to get to a hospital appointment, a care visit, or simply home safely. They phone for a taxi—and there isn't one available because the driver couldn't afford the new vehicle the council now requires. That's the reality this policy could create.

While the goals of accessibility and reducing emissions are admirable, this policy is out of touch with rural reality. Requiring all new or replacement taxis to be either wheelchair accessible, electric, or hybrid might work in a city—but in North Yorkshire, it is impractical and potentially devastating. Many villages and small towns lack reliable electric charging infrastructure, and drivers regularly cover long distances between communities. Expecting them to run electric vehicles without sufficient charging points is unsafe and unrealistic.

Then there's cost. Wheelchair-accessible, hybrid, or electric vehicles can cost tens of thousands more than standard cars. Most rural taxi drivers are self-employed, running small businesses with tight margins. For many, this requirement would be financially impossible, forcing experienced drivers out of the trade. The consequence? Fewer taxis, longer waits, and reduced service—directly harming the very people the policy is intended to help.

Accessibility isn't one-size-fits-all. Not all disabled passengers can travel in wheelchairs or use ramped vehicles. Some require assisted seating or find standard cars easier to enter and exit. Forcing all new taxis into one of these categories actually reduces flexibility and choice, undermining the policy's stated goal of improving access.

Rural operational realities also matter. Long distances, unpredictable demand, and limited charging options make electric vehicles impractical for many drivers. Mandating this combination of vehicle types without supporting infrastructure or financial assistance risks a significant reduction in service, leaving rural communities stranded.

A better approach is flexible and locally tailored. A mixed fleet, combined with incentives or phased adoption, can improve accessibility and environmental outcomes without destroying the rural taxi trade. Councils elsewhere have achieved these goals successfully without imposing prohibitive costs.

When I visited the Netherlands and Norway last year, I saw that many taxi ranks had subsidised electrical charging points specifically installed for taxis to encourage drivers to move towards these vehicles. Would this be something North Yorkshire Council would be willing to consider if it genuinely wishes to encourage drivers? And similarly, in many European countries, licensed taxi vehicles receive subsidies from the government to help operators maintain standards and modernise fleets. This helps bring the taxi sector more in line with other transport sectors such as buses, rail, and voluntary transport, which receive significant public subsidies from local councils and government. At present, the taxi trade is expected to meet these increasing regulatory standards without receiving the same level of financial support.

In conclusion, while the policy's intentions are good, in rural North Yorkshire it would place unrealistic financial and operational burdens on drivers, reduce service availability, and limit choice for disabled passengers. I urge the Executive to reconsider and adopt a practical, flexible approach that supports both the taxi trade and the communities who rely on it.

Thank you.

**Richard Fieldman**

As representative of 125 drivers, I am here today to address you on the proposed change to the vehicle licence suitability, and to convey our disagreement and total unacceptance of what you are being asked to approve.

Firstly, I was under the impression that the changes in the taxi policy was to be put on hold until the government had made its impending changes on both taxi and private hire national regulations, and its plans to create national standards throughout, as it would be wasting everyone's time and money changing the policy now, only to have to change it all again once the government had issued its decision on these matters.

I have been working very closely with Andy Burnham, the Greater Manchester Transport group, and Louise Haigh MP (former transport minister) on the result of the Baroness Casey report, and having quite a significant input on the discussions currently taking place on the future overhaul of the taxi and private hire trade regulations.

The local taxi trade is already on a downward spiral, with drivers leaving the trade in

numbers due to the influx of Uber drivers, and the constant negative conditions being put on the trade since the combined authority took place, with almost no new drivers entering it. The new vehicle recommendations will only result in an even bigger decline, as what is being proposed are either too expensive or impractical. The trade in the rural areas of the county are not making the kind of income to afford such vehicles, and I would challenge the shortage of WAV vehicles that is being sold to you without solid evidence from an unmet demand survey to prove such a statement. It is not good enough to just compare us to other regions before making such a decision that would have a massive impact on local drivers.

Therefore, I would like to request that before this decision is taken, an unmet demand survey is commissioned at the expense of the trade, focused entirely on the disabled community and its ease of acquiring a taxi or private hire vehicle.

The report that is being presented to you for your approval will not increase the quota of WAV vehicles, it will only achieve a decline in the

taxi numbers in North Yorkshire, we are being hit over the head with a big stick, to try and put right the bad decision making previously by the council, in allowing those that had WAV vehicles to off load them in favour of a normal car. A decision I warned councillors of at the time, of what the result would be, and now down the line they are trying to right that decision by introducing an unacceptable choice of vehicle to the trade in order to hopefully force them into purchasing a WAV vehicle, which will not happen.

I would like to remind you that you are under no obligation to accept this proposal, as many other councils up and down the country have not, and numerous other councils including York, have seen the damage this would do to the taxi trade, and have accepted a policy of any vehicle that is Euro 6 emission standards, and that is what I am asking you to adopt today.

The vehicle proposal today will put us at a massive disadvantage to the every increasing Uber numbers in the area, who do not have such damaging conditions to adhere to, and will eventually be your only choice going forward. Would you really want that??

It is imperative that solid evidence is achieved before any decision is made today, otherwise the result could be massive in destroying the taxi numbers that you currently have, and would be irreversible.

Thank you for listening

**Graham Watson (Mr Watson was not present. Although his statement was not read out at the meeting it had been circulated to the Executive beforehand)**

Due to a pre-arranged estate agent visit, I ask that this statement be read out on my behalf. I am speaking as a North Yorkshire Council licensed driver based in Area G, in response to the proposed policy changes relating to wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs), hybrids and fully electric vehicles (EVs) within the hackney carriage trade.

I find it difficult to understand why the Council is now reconsidering its policy so soon. At a similar meeting around 16 months ago, it was suggested this would not progress for a further two years. Regardless of the reasons for the change in pace, any policy must reflect the realities of operating across a large, mostly rural area, including long-distance and airport work.

**i. Fully electric vehicles (EVs): not fit for purpose for my working mileage**

For the record, I am not opposed to progress, and I am not opposed to WAVs or hybrids. However, I will not purchase an EV for hackney carriage use because, for the work I do, they are not currently fit for purpose.

My Ford Tourneo, first registered on 1 December 2020, has just completed 337,000 miles. That is the level of mileage some of us in Area G routinely undertake.

Using an example route: James Street, Selby to Manchester Airport is approximately 160 miles in good conditions. A quoted EV range may look workable on paper, but real-world operating conditions reduce it significantly: motorway congestion (M62/M60/M56), winter weather, overnight road closures and diversions in summer, vehicle weight, and continuous use of heating/air conditioning, lights, wipers and customer USB charging.

If an EV requires an en-route charging stop, that is not customer-friendly—particularly on return journeys after long-haul flights—and it removes me from the road and unable to earn. For many taxi/private hire drivers doing long-distance work, mandating EVs at this time would cause genuine hardship through loss of working capacity.

**ii. 2. Hybrids and plug-in hybrids (PHEVs): benefits, but limitations and cost barriers**

Hybrids can be a good option in the right operating environment.

The Institute of Motorists (IOM) states that, in real-world city driving, hybrids can outperform standard internal combustion engines. The quoted annual average mileage for a hybrid is around 9,300 miles, with a lifespan of around 200,000 miles. In the taxi world, 200,000 miles can be roughly four years with proper maintenance.

I spoke to Danny at the Taxi Centre on 10/03/2026. The cheapest hybrid they have available was £15,995, but it was not North Yorkshire Council compliant due to its age. Realistically, drivers appear to be looking at around £23,000 for a three-year-old Toyota Corolla, plus the meter, MOT, licence plates and other setup costs.

To replace my WAV with the current-spec plug-in hybrid equivalent, I would be looking at £56,995 for a new basic model, before the usual costs.

**iii. The economics in practice: depreciation, replacement cost and working life**

In December 2020, I paid £33,019 for my current vehicle. I have just renewed my insurance with a current forecourt value of £13,009. In five years I have covered 337,000 miles. I am on my second engine and, with proper maintenance, I would hope to achieve a further 100,000 miles this year.

By comparison, the PHEV option uses a 2.5 litre petrol engine and delivers around 35 miles on a full electric/hybrid charge. The fully electric Tourneo is currently around £79,000, with an advertised maximum range of roughly 350 miles in ideal summer conditions and without air conditioning.

**iv. What happens next: the realistic choices available to me**

1. Keep my current vehicle on the road for as long as it remains safe and compliant (the most realistic all-round option).
2. Remortgage my house to buy a replacement vehicle (not an option—I have only just paid my mortgage off).
3. Sell up, return to full-time employment, and leave another gap in the Area G

hackney carriage market.

4. Move from hackney carriage to private hire and spend around £50,000 on a non-WAV—again leaving a gap in hackney provision.

**v. WAV demand and suitability: real demand versus mandated supply**

In the five years I have operated a WAV, I have only carried a handful of wheelchair passengers—no more than six jobs across roughly 1,560 days. I actively advertise that I am wheelchair friendly, including on local radio and in local magazines and programmes, but the demand I see in practice is very limited.

WAVs can also introduce additional background noise (for example, ramps and securing equipment), which can affect passenger experience on longer journeys.

**vi. Taxi ranks and WAV safety: current infrastructure is not fit for purpose**

A further issue is that many Council taxi ranks are not suitable for safe WAV operation. I will use Selby (James Street) as an example. The dropped kerb is located at the top of James Street, which can force a wheelchair user into the road to access the taxi. This is one of the busiest roads in Selby, frequently used by through-traffic and HGVs, and the taxi rank itself is also used for deliveries.

To load safely, a driver typically needs a minimum of around five metres: approximately three metres to deploy the ramp, around one metre for the wheelchair itself, and additional working space for the driver. Five metres is effectively two taxi bays—so if another taxi is parked directly behind, safe loading becomes very difficult or impossible. I am willing to demonstrate this if it helps.

I have written to Gareth Bentley asking for a risk assessment. The response I received indicated there was nothing wrong with the James Street rank, but I do not believe a proper, on-site risk assessment was completed. I ask the Council to carry out and publish a formal risk assessment of WAV loading/unloading at ranks such as James Street, with an on-site review at busy times.

**vii. 7. Enforcement and unintended consequences**

I also believe that forcing hackney carriage drivers into unaffordable vehicle choices will further reduce trade in towns and could open the door to larger app-based operators. If the Council cannot enforce consistent standards across all licensed vehicles—especially those licensed elsewhere but operating locally—then any additional burdens placed on existing local drivers may simply accelerate the decline of the current, high-quality fleet.

On enforcement, my personal experience is that I have not seen a North Yorkshire Council licensing or enforcement officer in Selby for an extended period. The only enforcement officers I recall seeing recently were from neighbouring authorities. Consistent local enforcement matters, particularly if policy changes are introduced that increase cost and complexity for compliant drivers.

**viii. 8. Requests to the Council**

- Do not mandate full EV ownership for hackney carriage drivers who undertake high-mileage and long-distance/airport work until the vehicles and infrastructure are demonstrably fit for purpose.
- If changes are introduced, include realistic exemptions or transitional arrangements based on mileage patterns and operating area.
- If WAV numbers are to be increased, provide meaningful financial incentives and a

clear funding route—otherwise supply will reduce rather than grow.

- Carry out formal risk assessments of WAV loading/unloading at taxi ranks (including Selby, James Street) and make physical improvements where required.
- Provide reliable taxi-accessible EV charging infrastructure if electrification is expected.
- Maintain consistent, visible local enforcement to protect standards and ensure a level playing field.

In my opinion, North Yorkshire currently has one of the best fleets of taxis and private hire vehicles in the country. I am concerned that an overly rapid or unrealistic policy shift—without infrastructure, exemptions and funding—will damage that fleet and reduce service provision in towns like Selby. Thank you for considering this statement.

**Jackie Snape, Chief Executive, Disability Action Yorkshire**

Chair and councillors, thank you for the opportunity to speak.

I want to ask you to reconsider whether the option recommended in this report is the right one for wheelchair users in North Yorkshire.

This decision is ultimately about whether disabled residents will have the same practical access to taxi services as everyone else. At present, North Yorkshire has just one wheelchair accessible hackney carriage for every 10,250 people. The national rural average is one per 8,150, and the best performing rural authorities provide one per 2,000 to 3,000 people. That clearly shows wheelchair users here are already significantly underserved.

The question for councillors today is therefore not simply about vehicle standards. It is whether this policy will increase the number of wheelchair accessible taxis in North Yorkshire — or allow the current shortage to continue.

Given that starting point, councillors may wish to ask whether the recommended option, which allows new taxis to be licensed as zero-emission or hybrid vehicles instead of being wheelchair accessible, will actually improve accessibility

Improving air quality is clearly important, but the key question is why accessibility and environmental progress are being treated as competing options rather than priorities that should move forward together.

The council's own report notes that only 8.5% of private hire vehicles are wheelchair accessible. That means more than 90% of the fleet is unavailable to wheelchair users. Councillors may therefore wish to question whether relying on pre-booking alone is a realistic solution in a large rural county like North Yorkshire.

The consultation results also raise an important question. Wheelchair users ranked the option requiring all new taxis to be wheelchair accessible as their first choice, while the trade ranked it fourth. Yet the proposed policy adopts the option wheelchair users ranked lowest. If the people most affected by a policy are asking for stronger accessibility, why does the recommended option move in the opposite direction?

For many wheelchair users, taxis are not simply a convenience — they are the only form of independent transport available, particularly in rural areas where other public transport options are limited. Without enough accessible vehicles, people face longer waits, fewer

spontaneous journeys, and reduced opportunities to participate fully in everyday life.

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the council not only to avoid discrimination but to actively advance equality of opportunity. With the current shortage of accessible vehicles, we ask councillors to consider whether the recommended option does enough to meet that duty.

I would therefore ask councillors to reconsider the recommendation and to look again at a stronger option — such as requiring new hackney carriage vehicles to be wheelchair accessible.

Because the real test of this policy is simple: will it leave wheelchair users with better access to taxis than they have today — or not?

### **Ian Lawson**

The council had the opportunity to address the shortage of wheelchair taxis (WAVs) back in February 2023. The proposed Licensing Policy believed that by removing the 7 zones and deregulating the number of licensed taxis the acknowledged shortage of wheelchair taxis would disappear. That was wishful thinking as 67 WAVs on 31 March 2023 is now 60 despite an increase of 112 non-WAV taxis. In my opinion, the current proposal to amend the Licensing Policy will see a significant increase in zero emission taxis like the Toyota Prius, and little if any increase in the number of WAVs. If I am correct then NYC will have fallen short of its PSED once again by failing to eliminate the indirect discrimination imposed on wheelchair users by the taxi trade.

Despite numerous and lengthy documents provided for the Executive meeting today and only two clear days for us to study them I have not found any explanation why 1320 PHVs are not to be subject to the same low and no emissions as are proposed for taxis. Paragraph 6.3.1 in the Report of the Corporate Director states that “practical and legal reasons rule” it out. Surely, the Executive and the disabled community deserve to know what these reasons are, as PHVs using diesel and petrol engines are an attractive 4th option for taxi drivers when they change their vehicle.

The second issue which is a mystery is why was the second-place option for both the taxi Trade and Wheelchair Users & Others not pursued? All new and replacement taxis to be wheelchair accessible until a certain number are reached would be an outcome demonstrating that the council is compliant with its PSED. It would also guarantee an increase in the number of WAVs. Surprisingly, the EIA does not address this decision, so I ask why not? I believe that the public would find this an anomaly which makes a mockery of the Consultation process. Giving the taxi trade their first choice which is the disabled communities last choice is simply wrong.

The raising of the age limits on licensed taxis is beneficial to the taxi trade enabling them to keep their current taxis for at least 5 more years. So, the potential increase in WAVs and a cleaner, greener climate is a number of years away.

Transport related social isolation is very real in North Yorkshire, even more so for wheelchair users. The review does not “incentivise the uptake of wheelchair accessible taxis” as advised in the Dept of Transport Best Practice Guidance 2023 for Licensing authorities. In reality, it is difficult to understand how the Report, if adopted, will increase the number of wheelchair taxis.

I ask that the members of the Executive reject this discriminatory proposal.

**9. Diane Roworth (attending remotely)**

I am Diane Roworth, I am the Chair of York Access Forum, and a disabled person.

I love North Yorkshire – it is just the best place to live – unless you are a wheelchair user without your own transport.

In consultation with disabled people, York Council has done a lot of work to increase the number of WA taxis. Disabled people now have the freedom to leave the confines of their home to work, play, study, shop, visit relatives, all the sorts of everyday activities non disabled people take for granted.

We have championed a pro-active approach to increasing the numbers of WAV – we now have one-third more than in the whole of North Yorkshire – that's why I say NY is not such a great place for disabled people to live. But it could be.

WAVs are one part of the transport jigsaw.

If I want to go out with a friend who is a wheelchair user, it's not easy. Neither of us drive because of our impairments, BUT we can book a wheelchair taxi for the first leg to the Station. Once there, Passenger Assist will help us onto the train, and off again at the other end. But then what? Are we going to be able to get a WAV to take us where we want to go?

It doesn't matter how accessible the Railway Station, or the bus or the shop or the museum or the streets are - if a disabled person cannot get a WA taxi, they cannot complete the first stage of their journey, so the whole journey is out of reach. How many times must that happen every day?

Taxi drivers AND disabled people will benefit by increasing WAV across North Yorkshire.

Taxi drivers get more passengers; disabled people get more opportunities to leave their homes. That's why BOTH parties put option 2 as their second choice.

The argument about emissions is one side of the coin – but this will happen anyway – there are more opportunities to buy fuel efficient vehicles, with less running costs than ever before. WAV's can be bought 2nd hand and still meet emissions targets.

So, let's listen to what disabled people are saying. You asked them for their priorities, and they told you more WAVs. You specifically consulted them - they were strong in their feedback, but you have not taken account of their views.

There IS a way out. You can demonstrate your commitment to improving the sad situation for disabled people in North Yorkshire, and your duty under the Public Sector Equality Act by choosing Option 2.

This meets the 2nd choice of the taxi drivers, AND the 2nd choice of disabled people – a win-win for everyone and a more accessible North Yorkshire for everyone.

Please think again, don't imprison disabled people in their own homes, choose Option 2 as a pro-active way forward.

**Reply**

The Executive Member, Councillor Richard Foster replied as follows:

Prior to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) on 1 April 2023, the Council had 67

wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles whereas the total is now 60. While this is true, the number of wheelchair-accessible private hire vehicles has risen significantly—from 29 to 60. Overall, the total number of licensed wheelchair-accessible vehicles has increased by 25% from 96 to 120 since LGR.

We recognise the continued need for more WAV hackney carriages because, unlike private hire, there is not always an opportunity to discuss any accessibility needs at the time of booking a hackney carriage vehicle. It is for these reasons that the proposed revisions focus specifically on hackney carriage vehicles. The Council intends to build on the incentives for WAVs included in the previous policy, which had already contributed to growth in total WAV numbers. As declared in February 2023, the Council always intended to consider its position further. Following the formulation of the Draft Inclusive Service Plan (ISP), the priority is now clear, and the focus is on increasing WAV hackney carriages to build on the progress already made.

Paragraphs 1 to 28 of Appendix D to the report entitled 'Adoption of an Inclusive Service Plan focused on Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing' details the expected outcomes of the proposed policy:

<https://edemocracy.northyorks.gov.uk/documents/s64768/Appendix%20D%20-%20Analysis%20-%20HC%20PH%20ISP%20Policy%20Review.pdf>

This projects an increase in wheelchair accessible vehicles after implementation of the proposed policy.

The report also confirms that a review of the effectiveness of the new policy will commence 12 months from full implementation, with further research and consultation, to decide whether any further adjustments are needed.

After consideration of the responses made to the options which the Council consulted upon, the proposed policy is considered a more reasonable and proportionate measure to satisfy the Council's public sector equality duty and its air quality obligations without imposing unnecessary regulatory burdens on businesses.

Imposing similar requirements on private hire vehicles is considered at paragraphs 83 and 84 in the proposed Inclusive Service Plan and are not considered appropriate:

83. A hackney carriage vehicle can be hailed by passengers on the roadside, it can stand on a rank to await the approach of passengers and it can be pre-booked by telephone. In contrast, private hire vehicles are licensed to perform pre-booked work only, which must be obtained through a licensed private hire operator. On that basis, any accessibility needs can be discussed at the time of booking a private hire vehicle, which will not necessarily be the case for hackney carriage vehicles. It is perhaps for this reason that 64.5% of all licensing authorities require all or part of their hackney carriage fleet to be wheelchair accessible while only 4.8% of licensing authorities require all or a part of their private hire fleet to be wheelchair accessible.

84. It is therefore not considered necessary to also apply the WAV/ZEV/HEV requirement to private hire vehicles at present, particularly in light of the fact that 8.5% of the private hire vehicles in North Yorkshire are wheelchair accessible under existing arrangements – slightly above the average of 7.2% across all 'largely rural' areas in England and Wales. However, it is proposed to introduce new obligations on all private hire operators to identify a passenger's accessibility needs prior to taking a booking, to

ensure that an appropriate vehicle is provided.

The Head of Licensing, Gareth Bentley then added:

The prospect of conducting an unmet demand survey was considered shortly after the decision was made to formulate an Inclusive Service Plan. In practice, a substantial amount of this work has been carried out. We have evaluated and monitored the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) in the area, compared these figures against national data, consulted with taxi drivers, operators, wheelchair users, disability action groups, and other stakeholders, and drawn evidence-based conclusions from this work.

By any relevant metric, the number of wheelchair accessible taxis in North Yorkshire is low - low compared against national averages; low compared against other rural authorities; low as a proportion of the fleet; and low as a ratio against population figures.

The one element sometimes included in a standard unmet demand survey that we have not undertaken is direct rank observations (to measure queue lengths, waiting times, and vehicle availability at taxi ranks). For WAVs specifically, such observations would be ineffective and would significantly underestimate the true demand, for two key reasons:

1. Wheelchair users represent around 2.4% of the population and therefore conventional rank-based survey methods lack the statistical power to reliably detect and quantify unmet demand for WAVs.
2. There are only 60 WAV taxis in the entire area at present, so wheelchair users are already discouraged from attending ranks in North Yorkshire because they would have little expectation of finding a suitable vehicle.

On that basis, all of the meaningful and effective components of a standard unmet demand survey have already been carried out. The evidence in this respect has been presented in the form of statistical analysis and stakeholder engagement. It shows that WAV availability in this area is significantly lower than national averages (even when compared only against other rural authorities), and wheelchair users experience substantial difficulty accessing taxi services.

The Corporate Director Environment, Karl Battersby commented further that the Council recognised the concerns expressed and was seeking a proportionate approach that supported both accessibility and environmental objectives. Several elements of the wider report had broad support across the trade. He emphasised that while national regulation would be helpful, current government consultations appeared focused on transferring responsibilities rather than introducing comprehensive national standards. The Council's view was that licensing powers were best retained locally but supported by clearer national regulation.

Invited to comment further, the public speakers raised further concerns around private hire fare levels for WAVs, that wheelchair users don't use taxi ranks because they don't expect to find a WAV, and the need for public subsidy for the taxi trade in similar manner to community transport. Councillor Greg White also addressed the meeting highlighting the risk that further drivers may switch from Hackney to private hire licences.

Members of the Executive then discussed the report. Members appreciated the difficulty in achieving a balance, of trying to encourage more WAVS whilst mitigating the impact on the taxi trade, but welcomed the initiative to arrange a bulk deal supply of WAVs to resell or lease to the trade at cheaper than normal market value, and stressed the importance of reviewing the efficacy of the policy in 12 months.

**Resolved (unanimously)** that Executive adopts the revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy as detailed in Appendix A, taking account of updates

prompted by Best Practice Guidance along with the recommendation put forward by the General Licensing and Registration Committee that all new and replacement hackney carriage vehicles be wheelchair accessible, zero emission or hybrid electric vehicles, with existing licensed hackney carriage vehicles retaining 'grandfather rights' until they are no longer fit for purpose.

### **Reasons**

The Council has committed to reviewing the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy with a view to making hackney carriage and private hire services more inclusive and the Council must have regard to the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance. A review of the effectiveness of the new policy will commence 12 months from full implementation to decide whether any further adjustments are needed. The recommendation seeks to increase the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles whilst balancing its impact on the trade.

## **865 Adoption of an Inclusive Service Plan focused on Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing**

Considered a report by the Corporate Director Environment which sought approval from the Executive to adopt a new Inclusive Service Plan in relation to hackney carriage and private hire licensing.

**Resolved (unanimously)** that Executive adopts the Inclusive Service Plan as detailed in Appendix A, taking account of the recommendation put forward by the General Licensing and Registration Committee that all new and replacement hackney carriage vehicles be wheelchair accessible, zero emission or hybrid electric vehicles, with existing licensed hackney carriage vehicles retaining 'grandfather rights' until they are no longer fit for purpose.

### **Reasons**

The Council has committed to developing and maintaining an Inclusive Service Plan and must have regard to the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance. A review of the effectiveness of the new policy will commence 12 months from full implementation to decide whether any further adjustments are needed. The recommendation seeks to increase the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles whilst balancing its impact on the trade.

## **866 Review of North Yorkshire Pavement Licence Policy**

Considered a report of the Corporate Director Environment which sought adoption of the proposed Pavement Licensing Policy following consultation. Introducing the report, the Executive Member for Managing our Environment, Councillor Richard Foster explained that the policy established a consistent county-wide framework for pavement licensing following changes in government legislation.

**Resolved (unanimously)** that the Executive:

- i. adopt the proposed Pavement Licensing Policy as shown in Appendix A of the report
- ii. authorise the approval of minor and inconsequential amendments to the policy from time-to-time by the Corporate Director Environment in consultation with the Executive Member for Managing our Environment to reflect legislative changes or correct any inaccuracies.

## **Reasons**

The adoption of a Pavement Licensing Policy enables the Council to effectively regulate the placement and use of removable furniture on the public highway. The policy is intended to ensure that such furniture is utilised in a manner that is safe, convenient, and does not give rise to public nuisance. It further seeks to preserve unobstructed access to the highway for all users, while facilitating the creation of vibrant public spaces and supporting businesses in operating in a way that is both responsible and acceptable to the wider community.

A six-week public consultation was held to provide members of the public and relevant stakeholders with a meaningful opportunity to review and contribute to the development of the draft policy. This process is intended to ensure transparency, encourage community engagement, and support the formulation of a policy that reflects a broad range of perspectives.

### **867 Sprucing Up Scarborough – High Street Rental Auction Pilot**

Considered a report by the Corporate Director Community Development in respect of a proposed new High Street Rental Auction Pilot in Scarborough which aimed to work proactively with property owners to bring empty units back into commercial use and stimulate footfall in the area.

Introducing the report, the Executive Member for Open to Business, Councillor Mark Crane explained that Scarborough had been selected due to the significant number of long-term empty properties. Using this new legislation, the Council's intention was to engage with landlords to encourage re-occupation, using a 'carrot and stick' approach. The new power for local authorities required landlords to rent out persistently vacant commercial properties to new tenants such as local businesses or community groups through an auction following a preliminary ten week notice period; however, early adopter councils had demonstrated that dialogue with councils was enough to effect change without recourse to further action.

Local division member, Councillor Liz Colling addressed the meeting asking to what extent the scheme depended on Pride in Place funding, as decisions on that funding were expected on 27 March and also whether the Council would fund improvements to premises to make them lettable and, if so, how such expenditure would be recovered.

In response, Councillor Colling was advised that while Pride in Place funding would be beneficial, alternative Council funding could be explored if necessary. Any investment in private property would be secured through a lien so that funds could be recouped upon sale. Further clarification was provided that the Council was seeking new burdens funding for operational elements of the scheme, while Pride in Place funding would act as the incentive for landlords.

Members of the Executive then commented on the report. Concerns were raised about the poor condition of some buildings and longstanding issues with particular landlords holding onto assets. Members urged caution about taking on liabilities and expressed preferences for encouraging a diverse range of tenants rather than an over-concentration of vape shops, charity shops, and betting outlets. It was noted that the intention was for agreements to remain between landlords and tenants, with the Council facilitating the process rather than taking ownership. Members also questioned the absence of involvement from the regional Mayor, who held responsibilities for economic development across York and North Yorkshire.

**Resolved** that the Executive

- i. Note the report and the new HSRA powers that the Council can utilise.
- ii. Grant consent to begin community engagement relating to the designation of a High Street Rental Auction (HSRA) area in Scarborough.
- iii. Delegate powers to designate the final HSRA area and to delegate powers to implement individual rental auctions to the Corporate Director Community Development
- iv. Approve that continual evaluation to be undertaken during the Scarborough pilot to assess the outcomes, impacts and resource implications. Authorisation to extend application of the powers to be delegated to the Corporate Director for Community Development in consultation with the Executive Member for Open to Business.

### **Reasons**

To address a long-standing regeneration issue in an area with the highest vacancy rate amongst our urban centres that has been consistently raised from numerous quarters as a priority need for Scarborough.

Use of new HSRA powers are recommended given the limitations of existing powers and initiatives to effect significant improvements.

### **868 Whitby Cliff Lift and access to Whitby West Cliff Beach**

Considered a report by the Corporate Director Environment in respect of the future of Whitby Cliff Lift. Introducing the report, the Executive Member for Highways and Transportation, Councillor Malcom Taylor recognised the strong public feeling about the Whitby Cliff Lift. He noted that the lift had been closed by Scarborough Borough Council in April 2022 and highlighted that the debate included both the condition of the lift and the cost-effectiveness of the seasonal bus service. Usage figures for 2025 showed a significant decline, resulting in a cost of £41.63 per one-way journey, which he considered unsustainable.

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

#### **Councillor Sandra Turner**

Councillor Turner acknowledged the financial constraints but stressed the importance of the lift. She highlighted its role in servicing over 160 beach huts, including 10 luxury huts, and providing essential disability access. She reported a recent incident where a person using a mobility scooter suffered an accident on the zig-zag path, requiring coastguard and ambulance assistance. She emphasised Whitby's status as one of the UK's top seaside destinations, drawing millions of visitors annually, and expressed concern that removal of assets would diminish its appeal. She therefore asked on behalf of a resident that no decision be taken until up-to-date costed quotes are provided at a public meeting.

#### **Peter Graham (read out by Councillor Phil Trumper)**

Firstly I would like to thank the Scarborough and Whitby Councillors in particular Councillors Trumper and Swannick for their unanimous support for re opening the above, creating a business plan and asking for the lift to be maintained annually going forward which is something that SBC neglected previously.

I also thank the experts from Woodsmith Mine for their two inspections and for proving the £5m worse case scenario price obtained by SBC is irrelevant at best or simply a tool to get

the lift closed.

Further to the meeting at Whitby on Monday 2nd March I fully understand the way NYC apply for Blue Flag Beach status.

In applying I can only presume an able-bodied person sat at a desk fills in the application without consultation with Whitby Disabled Action Group or Whish. Both are perplexed to having never been consulted on the accessibility of the beach.

The facilities that are provided to back up the Yes answer are all based halfway along the beach near the lift but nowhere near either slipway. See answers below supplied by Chris Bourne for the two questions and answers submitted on the application.

i. Is the beach accessible for disabled people or people with impairments?

Yes

ii. Please explain how the beach has been made accessible e.g. ramps, accessible toilets / changing facilities, beach matting, beach wheelchairs, assisted access from staff, floating aids at the beach to facilitate access onto the sand and/or into the water.

Slipways, ramps, accessible toilets, and a beach wheelchair is available.

NYC are earning a lot of money from Whitby which has increased recently with the second homes council tax and this year's massive increase on what is already expensive car parking. Tourist tax is in the pipeline to.

I can only presume that no grants, lottery funding, sponsorship or backing from the Mayor has been looked into by NYC to help fund the reopening of the lift.

SBC neglected both Scarborough and Whitby's infrastructures over the years but they've gone now so it's up to NYC to put right their wrongs, starting with Whitby's West Cliff Lift.

Councillor Trumper then emphasised significant public support for the lift, referencing nearly 6,000 petition signatures. He highlighted serious health and safety concerns caused by the lift's closure, including vehicles blocking beach access for emergency services. He argued that Anglo-American inspections contradicted earlier reports and urged the Committee to consider only options one and six in the report.

## Reply

Councillor Taylor responded to Councillor Turner's specific question that the Executive was aware of the resolution from the Scarborough and Whitby Area Committee at its meeting on 2 March 2026 which was included in the report before us. The Executive would consider the request as part of its decision-making process on this item.

The Chair then invited local North Yorkshire Council members to address the committee.

Councillor Colling reported that the Scarborough and Whitby Area Committee had twice considered the lift and that local confidence in the decision-making process was undermined by the absence of up-to-date costings. She urged commissioning a full survey and a business case before any permanent decision. Councillor Chance shared historic knowledge of the site, stating that condensation and some water seepage had always

been present, dating back to the 1960s. He warned that the current report relied on outdated and flawed information and argued that removing the lift would fail Whitby's heritage and tourism economy. He quoted the Area Committee's unanimous resolution calling for an up-to-date survey, costings, a business case, and an annual maintenance plan. Councillor Maw spoke about accessibility, drawing on his own temporary mobility challenges. He questioned what accessible route would remain if both the lift and bus service were withdrawn. He highlighted dangers for wheelchair users on the zig-zag path and argued that the lift was a critical community asset.

In reply to members' comments, the Corporate Director Environment, Karl Battersby acknowledged that the Council had inherited the issue and faced £30 million of coastal infrastructure pressures. He stated that while costs required further analysis, it was clear the lift had suffered significant internal corrosion. Option two—decommissioning but not permanently removing the lift—had been suggested as a pragmatic approach pending further work. He reiterated that the bus service had proved too expensive to justify.

Invited to comment further, Councillor Turner asked whether long-term financial impacts of not reopening the lift would be considered and called again for a full business plan. Councillor Trumper restated concerns about the reliability of the earlier cost estimate and Councillor Chance clarified that he had always referred to condensation rather than ongoing water ingress.

**Resolved (unanimously)** that the Executive

- i. commission an up-to-date survey of the Whitby Cliff Lift, including full costings for potential reinstatement, and withdraw the current bus service (whilst looking at alternative solutions); and
- ii. work with Whitby Town Council and community representatives to develop options based on accurate evidence.

### **Reasons**

To establish a solid evidence base to investigate future options for Whitby Cliff Lift

## **869 Maltkiln Masterplan Framework**

Considered a report of the Corporate Director Community Development which sought Executive approval to adopt the masterplan framework (Appendix A) for the new settlement (Maltkiln) as required by Policy NS3 of the adopted Maltkiln Development Plan Document.

Introducing the report, the Executive Member for Open to Business, Councillor Mark Crane explained that the masterplan provided the strategic direction required by the adopted Development Plan Document and that significant further work would follow. Members noted that the project had a long history and acknowledged the most recent correspondence which had been received from parish councillors and from NYC members in connection with this latest report.

**Resolved (unanimously)** that the Executive agrees the adoption of the Maltkiln masterplan framework (as set out in Appendix A) as required by Policy NS3 of the adopted Maltkiln Development Plan Document.

### **Reasons**

The masterplan framework is recommended for approval as it provides a comprehensive and deliverable framework for creating a sustainable, well-connected new settlement that aligns with the council's strategic priorities.

The draft masterplan framework sets out a balanced approach to housing, employment, transport, and green infrastructure, ensuring that growth is supported by the necessary infrastructure, phasing and community facilities. It demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainable design, active travel, biodiversity enhancement, and high quality placemaking, helping to create a resilient community where residents can live, work, and thrive.

Agreement of the masterplan framework will provide clarity for future planning decisions, support coordinated delivery and maximise the long term benefits of the development for future residents.

#### **870 Harrogate Convention Centre – Studio 2 refurbishment works**

Considered a report of the Corporate Director Resources in respect of proposed refurbishment works to Studio 2, Harrogate Convention Centre. Introducing the report, the Executive Member for Finance and Resources, Councillor Gareth Dadd noted that inflation had increased costs but that the business case remained sound with only a modest change to the payback period. In the ensuing discussion reference was also made to site visits illustrating the potential benefits of redevelopment.

**Resolved (unanimously)** that the Executive

- i. Approve the revised Business Plan for Studio 2.
- ii. Approve the overall funding of £9.4m required for the redevelopment of Studio 2, to be funded from the Strategic Capacity Unallocated Reserve.
- iii. Award a construction contract for the Studio 2 redevelopment as detailed in Appendix A of the report.

#### **Reasons**

Investing in Studio 2 will attract larger conferences that require more breakout spaces. Estimated at an overall project value of £9.4m this investment is expected to be repaid through increased income. The Executive is requested to approve the additional expenditure of £2.4m for Studio 2, subject to the Corporate Director Resources being satisfied with the business case for investment and consulting with the relevant Members.

This investment will help rebuild confidence in the venue, paving the way for future investments and funding. Developing Studio 2 will enhance HCC's economic impact by creating jobs and improving its viability as a financially sustainable venue.

#### **871 Forward Plan**

Considered the Forward Plan for the period 6 March 2026 to 31 March 2027.

**Resolved** that the Forward Plan be noted.

#### **872 Any Other Items**

There were no urgent items, however the Chair advised that an additional meeting of the Executive would be required to consider an additional delegation proposed by the Combined Authority in respect of bus services.

#### **873 Date of Next Meeting - 21 April 2026**

The meeting concluded at 1.46 pm.