

North Yorkshire Council

Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the in person meeting held on Monday, 16 March 2026 commencing at 10.00 am.

Councillor Andrew Williams in the Chair. plus Councillors Bryn Griffiths, Chris Aldred, Karl Arthur, Derek Bastiman, Nick Brown, David Chance, Kevin Foster, Tim Grogan, Robert Heseltine, David Ireton, Tom Seston, Subash Sharma and Phil Trumper.

Officers present: Melanie Carr, Gary Fielding, Amani Anderson Leefe, Margaret Wallace, Will Boardman, Daniel Harry, Barbara Merrygold and Odette Robson.

Other Attendees: Councillor Peter Lacey

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

89 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

There were no apologies for absence received.

90 Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 December 2025

Resolved – That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2025 be taken as read and confirmed by the Chair as a true record.

91 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

92 Public Participation

No public questions or statements were received.

93 Feedback on Notice of Motion - 'Supporting Area Committee Decision-Making'

Councillor Peter Lacey introduced his Notice of Motion and provided his feedback on the officer responses to the five proposals of his Notice of Motion.

He confirmed his view that Area Committees were a vital part of the council structure and drew attention to their delegated powers detailed within the council's Constitution. He suggested that whilst those powers were adequate they were not being fully exercised and in some cases, not at all.

In regard to the data pack provided to all councillors after the last election, he noted that in some cases whilst the data had been the latest available data, some of it had been out of date. He suggested that rather than waiting for the next election before providing an updated data pack, it would be better to drip feed new data to councillors as and when it became available.

Specifically in regard to the officer feedback provided in response to the five suggested ways in which the Council might enable and support area committees to exercise their delegated powers, as raised within his Notice of Motion, Councillor Lacey recognised that

good progress was being made in two of the areas and went on to propose potential actions in relation to the others i.e. that:

- Data and intelligence be provided regularly to assist area committees in exercising their powers in terms of shaping economic development or local health and care services etc.
- Action be taken to engage with area committees on SIL monies available to them or to their area, where geographically appropriate.
- A list of services and double devolution opportunities be provided to Town and Parish Councils, identifying their potential in terms of impact and support.
- Some reflection and learning be undertaken, both internally and externally, to understand how the Council is doing in in terms of neighbourhood development and community engagement.

The Committee discussed the proposals and the associated issues and challenges e.g.:

- The new division boundaries and reports produced based on those new boundaries would not align to the area committees' boundaries.
- Who would be better placed to comment on the use of CIL and 106 monies i.e. Parish Councils or Area Committees.

The Committee and Councillor Lacey noted that anything arising from the issues raised within the Notice of Motion that required a change to the Constitution, would need to be considered by the Constitution Working Group. With that in mind, it was

Resolved – That it be recommended to full Council that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Constitution Working Group for their consideration and that they report back to full Council in due course.

94 Transformation Update

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director for Resources providing an update on the progress of the transformation activity within the council, including progress with the convergence of services, associated restructures, and the development of an updated Transformation Strategy for the Council.

Gary Fielding - Corporate Director for Resources confirmed a number of key transformation headlines which included:

- Much of the service convergence and consolidation work was now completed
- The key focus now is on innovation
- Building a robust Revenue & Benefits function as a key enabler for becoming a Council for the future
- A focus on three big cross-cutting themes in the organisation - the way that we work; demand management; and prevention.

Members suggested it would be helpful to have an understanding of the timeline for progressing those areas work so that the Committee could scrutinise progress, and asked that this be included in future reports wherever possible.

Gary Fielding also suggested the Committee may wish to look at the Council's use of AI in more depth given that it is an area with lots of potential technical and security issues and associated risks to the Council.

Margaret Wallace, AD for Customer Revenue and Benefits, provided an update on customer services which had been going through a huge cultural change with a new customer service contact centre having just gone live.

Members were pleased to note the Council had successfully completed the convergence

works for the seven legacy systems within the planned 7-week downtime. It was noted that this was the first time nationally that seven systems had been converged in to one.

Attention was drawn to the statistics detailed in the presentation and it was confirmed that work to address the backlog arising from the migration process and improve response times was on track. Officers also provided a brief overview of the planned new customer platform which work had now started on.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair gave recognition to the Service's remarkable performance and gave credit to officers for the challenges they had addressed in the process.

The Chair also gave thanks to the Director for Resources for all his work and support given that it was his last committee meeting before moving on to pastures new.

Resolved – That the Transformation Update be noted.

95 Bi-annual Update on Community Safety Plan Delivery & Partnership Working

Considered – A bi-annual update on Safer North Yorkshire delivery and partnership working from the Head of Community Safety and CCTV.

The report provided an update on two of the Partnership's priorities – Domestic Abuse and Serious Violence Duty (SVD). In regard to domestic abuse, Members noted the reduction in abuse crimes and queried whether there had in fact been a reduction or was it as a result of the reduction in reporting, as identified in the report. In response it was confirmed that it was thought to be a result of the ongoing work to raise awareness through communication campaigns etc.

Members recognised how complex and multi-faceted domestic abuse was and were pleased to note the ongoing efforts of the Community Safety Partnership. In particular they noted:

- The data that showed the rise and fall in the different types of abuse
- Associated suicides were often linked to emotional abuse.
- The challenges associated with it being a rural county, and the efforts to address it through changes in commissioning
- The impact of domestic abuse on children and young people
- The statutory duty to provide safe accommodation – currently based in Northallerton, York and Harrogate, with IDAS leading on a proposal to introduce a more dispersed model.

Members noted the update on serious violence, in particular the five key priorities within the joint Serious Violence Response Strategy, the recent refresh of the Strategic Needs Assessment, and the targeted SVD interventions in place. Members requested more detailed information on the outcomes of those interventions as part of their next update on serious violence.

The Chair thanked the officer for her bi-annual update, and it as

Resolved – That the update be noted.

96 Annual Youth Justice Performance Update

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director for Children & Young People Service providing an annual performance and service overview of the North Yorkshire Youth Justice Service, introduced by Barbara Merrygold, Head of Early Help, Children & Families Service.

Members welcomed the annual update and as they had no questions, it was

Resolved - That the report be noted.

97 Draft Council Plan 2026-2030

Considered – A report of the Assistant Chief Executive- Local Engagement seeking the Committee’s feedback on the Council’s draft Council Plan 2026-30, introduced by Will Boardman, Head of Strategy and Performance.

In regard to the Council’s aim of being net zero on carbon, members noted there had been a notable shift in the language used, with a downgrading of the wording from ‘working towards’ to referencing a ‘shared ambition’. In response it was confirmed that it was not intended to dilute the language but rather to acknowledge the focus on working together.

Members also noted the lack of comparative data in the Plan, which they had previously criticised in past years. However they were pleased to see that sustainable development goals were still included and correctly mapped.

Resolved – That the draft Council Plan for 2026-30 be noted

98 Draft Work Programme 2026-27

Considered – The draft work programme for the new 2026-27 municipal year presented by the Senior Scrutiny Officer.

Members took account of the discussions on previous agenda items and other developments taking place across the county and agreed to add an in depth update on the council’s growing use of AI to the Transformation update scheduled for the committee’s September 2026 meeting.

It was also suggested that military representatives be invited to a future meeting to provide an update on their future plans for bases in the county.

Resolved – That the work programme document be updated as above.

99 Date of Next Meeting - 15 June 2026

The meeting concluded at 11.20 am.