

York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority

Minutes of the Annual Meeting held at West Offices, York on Friday 31st May 2024 commencing at 3.00 pm

Present: Mayor David Skaith in the Chair. North Yorkshire Councillor Gareth Dadd, City of York Councillor Claire Douglas, City of York Councillor Peter Kilbane and North Yorkshire Councillor Carl Les.

In attendance: North Yorkshire Councillor Kevin Foster

Officers present:

YNYCA - James Farrar, Rachel Antonelli, Debbie Mitchell, Sara Jeffs, Nick Edwards and Paul Clark

NYC – Richard Flinton, Barry Khan and Elizabeth Jackson

CYC - Ian Floyd

CA24-01 Mayor's introduction

The Mayor, David Skaith, welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority since the Mayoral election and thanked Councillors Claire Douglas and Carl Les for their work on the Combined Authority since its creation in December 2023.

CA24-02 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

CA24-03 Membership of York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority 2024/25

Considered –

A report of the Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer confirming the position of Mayor David Skaith as Chair of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA) by virtue of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority Order 2023 and the election. The report presented the appointment of Combined Authority members and substitute Combined Authority members to the YNYCA by the Constituent Councils as set out in Appendix A, and advising of the appointment of a Combined Authority Member to be the Mayor's Deputy. The report also asked members to note the Chair of the Business Committee would also be a non-voting Member of the Combined Authority.

In introducing the report Mayor David Skaith announced the appointment of City of York Councillor Peter Kilbane as Deputy Mayor for the municipal year 2024/25.

Rachel Antonelli then confirmed that a recruitment campaign for members of the Business Committee would commence after the general election on 4 July 2024.

Resolved – that:

1. the position of Mayor as Chair of the Combined Authority by virtue of that office be noted
2. the appointment of the Deputy Mayor by the Mayor be noted
3. the appointment of Constituent Combined Authority Members and their substitutes by the Constituent Councils be noted
4. the current position with regards the role of the Chair of the Business Committee on the Combined Authority be noted

CA24-04 Committee Appointments and Representation on Outside Bodies

Considered –

A report of the Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer in relation to the appointment of members onto committees of the Combined Authority, the appointment of a Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee and making recommendations relating to the representation of the Combined Authority on outside bodies.

Rachel Antonelli introduced the report and advised that discussions on committee memberships were still ongoing.

It was therefore **agreed** that the item be deferred to the Combined Authority meeting to be held on 28 June 2024.

CA24-05 Calendar of Meetings 2024-25

Considered –

A report in the name of the Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer presenting the Combined Authority's calendar of meetings for 2024-25 for approval.

Resolved –

That the calendar of meetings for 2024-25 be approved.

CA24-06 Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2024

The minutes of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority held on 18 March 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

CA24-07 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Peter Kilbane declared an interest in Minute CA24-11 on the basis that he had been appointed as Deputy Mayor and left the meeting during the consideration and vote in relation to an allowance for a Deputy Mayor.

CA24-08 Public Participation

One question had been received which, in accordance with Minute 05 a) of the meeting of 22 January 2024, was dealt with at the meeting.

Question from David Tonge – NY Climate Coalition/YNV Friends of the Earth

I'd like to make a brief statement on behalf of North Yorkshire Climate Coalition (which represents 25 local environmental organisations spanning the entire county) and the York and North Yorkshire network of Friends of the Earth.

First of all, we would like to congratulate David Skaith on becoming the region's first mayor.

In the run-up to May 2nd, we asked all the candidates to set out how they would make our region a climate leader if elected.

At our online climate and nature hustings on April 22nd, David showed great interest in harnessing the region's potential for renewables generation, in forging a truly integrated transport system, in rapidly expanding the skills base we need to build that green economy and in restoring the natural world here in York and North Yorkshire – our waterways, coasts and moorland – to its full health and its full glory.

Of course, as environmental campaigners, you would expect us to focus on these issues.

But as it happens, the things we are asking for – above all a rapid transition to a low-carbon economy – are very much aligned with the Devolution Deal and with the Mayor's plans to grow the region's economy by channelling public funds and attracting major private investment into sustainable, climate-friendly forms of economic growth.

The Devolution Deal says this:

“York and North Yorkshire have the ambition to be net zero by 2034 and to become England's first carbon-negative region by 2040. The region has been working closely with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's Local Net Zero Hubs and with National Energy Systems Catapult to be a trailblazing region, delivering net zero ambitions whilst creating significant new economic opportunities.”

On that note, we welcome the pledge made by the Mayor during his campaign to (I quote) “use my powers, funding and influence to deliver the actions necessary to tackle the climate and nature emergencies.”

To that end, we'd like to take this opportunity to propose an immediate first step in that direction – at least one full day of accredited climate literacy training for the entire combined authority team – to help you fulfil that pledge to the electorate and give you the knowledge and understanding that you need to make climate-aware decisions on our behalf across your wide range of responsibilities.

Finally – in the role of critical friend – we hope to forge a strong and constructive working partnership with you as you translate the Devolution Deal's net zero ambitions into action. We're eager to get started on that, and we look forward to meeting you as soon as possible.

The Mayor thanked Mr Tonge for his statement, which had been noted.

CA24-09 Combined Authority Governance

Considered –

A report of the Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer in relation to three governance matters of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority.

Rachel Antonelli introduced the report and gave an overview of the key points:

- Part 9 of the Constitution related to the governance arrangements for police, fire and crime functions and two further delegations were proposed in relation to vetting of officers to ensure safe and legal operation
- At the January meeting an interim position that webcasting and public participation would be enabled at all meetings of the Combined Authority was agreed until the Mayor took office. It was now recommended that webcasting and public participation continue for meetings of the Combined Authority and for Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Audit and Governance Committee meetings where the staff and equipment were available, and officers would use their best endeavours to ensure the necessary staff and equipment were in place for those meetings.
- The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) had met on several occasions to set allowances for roles within the Combined Authority and there were recommendations for further reviews over the next 12 months. The York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority Order 2023 provided for allowances to be paid to IRP members, and taking into account allowances paid by the Constituent Councils to their IRP members, an allowance of £500 per annum per member was recommended. One member had only undertaken part of the review and it was recommended that £250 be paid to this member.

Members supported the recommendations in relation to webcasting and public participation and it was noted that public participation was an important part of scrutiny and transparency. It was agreed that other options for the public to speak to the Mayor would be explored in the future.

Members confirmed that allowances should only be paid to IRP members as and when the Panel was required to make recommendations. In connection with this it was moved that the recommendation be amended to include that there be a review within 12 months, and this was agreed.

Resolved (unanimously) – that:

1. the Combined Authority approves the amendment to Part 9 of the Constitution, namely the inclusion of 2 additional delegations, as set out in paragraph 4.2 of this report.
2. the Combined Authority continues with webcasting of and public participation in Combined Authority Meetings with immediate effect and confirms the extension of webcasting and public participation to all public Meetings of the Combined Authority, subject to the availability of webcasting equipment and staff. The Interim Monitoring Officer be authorised to make any necessary amendments to the Constitution to facilitate this.
3. the Combined Authority approves an allowance to the Independent Remuneration Panel Members in the sum of £500 per annum per Panel

Member (£250 per annum pro rata where necessary), in addition to reasonable expenses incurred by the Panel Members, and a review of the allowance be undertaken in 12 months' time.

CA24-10 Mayoral Priorities and Budget Update 2024/25

Considered –

A report of the Interim Director of Resources seeking approval for the budget allocated to Mayoral priorities and amendments to the 2024/25 budget as outlined in the report.

The Mayor highlighted that the report presented his priorities on which he had campaigned and which were important to him.

Debbie Mitchell presented the report and gave an overview of the key points:

- An initial budget at the January 2023 meeting which covered the running of the organisation and core responsibilities
- £2.2m of funding was now available for investment in key priorities and planning for delivery of those priorities
- Some areas had been identified where the budget needed to be updated such as for missing posts and provision for remuneration for independent members
- The transfer of staff from police and fire had meant an actuarial valuation was needed for the pension funds to harmonise the rate across the Combined Authority, but which had resulted in a net cost of £181k.

James Farrar then provided an update advising that the initial economic framework approved in advance of the Mayoral election had now been reviewed against the Mayoral priorities. A new schematic had been produced to assist in refocusing resources. Key Mayoral priorities included the cost of living, great places for high streets and towns, affordable transport, housing including the brownfield housing fund and decarbonising housing and developing a business and skills innovation strategy for the region.

Combined Authority members congratulated the Mayor on his election and looked forward to working together to achieve good outcomes for the region based on these priorities.

The Mayor then moved to a recorded vote on the recommendations contained in the report, which were carried unanimously.

FOR: Mayor David Skaith. Councillors Gareth Dadd, Claire Douglas, Peter Kilbane and Carl Les.

Total = 5

AGAINST: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

Resolved – that:

1. the budget of £2.21m for Mayoral priorities be approved
2. the budget amendment of £361k for costs not originally included in the budget be approved
3. it be noted that the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Mayor and in line with delegated authority levels, will ensure any procurement exercises and funding agreements for the proposed priorities are completed.

CA24-11 Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Considered –

A report of the Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer presenting the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) in relation to the roles of the Deputy Mayor, Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Independent Member for the Audit and Governance Committee and Independent Person for Standards, which was attached at Appendix A.

Rachel Antonelli presented the report and advised that at the January 2024 meeting of the Combined Authority the IRP had been requested to undertake the work in two parts with the allowance for the Mayor being taken first, and the remaining four roles later.

The Combined Authority formally recorded its thanks to the Independent Remuneration Panel for their work on this.

Resolved – that:

1. in line with the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority Order 2023, if the Mayor appoints a Deputy Mayor who is one of the Leaders of either constituent Authority, then no remuneration is paid. If a Deputy Mayor is appointed from another Combined Authority Member, the IRP defer making any further recommendation until the Mayor has appointed a Deputy Mayor.

(Unanimous)

(Councillor Peter Kilbane declared an interest in the recommendations relating to an allowance for the Deputy Mayor and left the meeting during consideration and vote on this recommendation)

2. the total remuneration package for the York and North Yorkshire Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime is £65,670, with the additional £3,000 allowance should the Mayor delegate Fire and Rescue functions to the role holder. In line with other similar roles both relating to the Police (Fire) and Crime Commissioner or Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime roles, indexation should apply to this allowance.
3. the remuneration for the Independent Member for the Audit and Governance Committee of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority is £1,500 per annum.

4. the remuneration for the Independent Person for Standards at the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority is £1,000 per annum.
5. travel expenses are also payable, to be paid to all posts at the standard rate within the terms of Members Expenses of the Combined Authority.
6. the IRP also recommends that the allowance for all posts be reviewed in 12 months' time, at which time indexation will also be considered for all posts.

(A single vote was taken on resolutions 2 to 6)

CA24-12 Appointment of Director of Resources and s73 Officer

Considered –

A report of the Head of Human Resources in relation to the appointment of an officer to be responsible for the proper administration of its financial affairs which the Combined Authority is required to appoint under Section 73 of the Local Government Act 1985. In the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority this role is discharged by the Director of Resources.

Sara Jeffs presented the report and advised that following a recruitment process the unanimous decision of the interview panel was to appoint Michael Russell to the role and the Combined Authority was now requested to formally appoint Mr Russell as the statutory Section 73 Officer.

Resolved –

That the Combined Authority formally appoints Michael Russell as the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority's Section 73 Officer (Director of Resources).

CA24-13 Reporting of Urgent Decisions

Considered –

A report providing details of urgent decisions made by the Interim Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Lead Members of the Combined Authority, which the Combined Authority was asked to note.

There were two urgent decisions, both related to amendments to the Constitution of the Combined Authority as follows:

- An amendment to the composition of the Audit and Governance Committee to ensure it was properly constituted
- Amendments to Part 9 of the Constitution to ensure that the Combined Authority could operate in a safe and legal manner in relation to the transition of the North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's Office and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority into the Combined Authority

Resolved –

That the urgent decisions set out in the Appendices to the report, which were taken by the Interim Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Lead Members of the Combined Authority, be noted.

CA24-14 Forward Plan

Considered –

The Combined Authority's draft Forward Plan was submitted for approval for publication on the Combined Authority's website. The Governance and Assurance Manager reported on new entries to the plan since the agenda was published.

Resolved –

That the draft Combined Authority Forward Plan be approved.

CA24-15 Urgent Business

There were no items which the Chair agreed should be considered as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances.

The meeting concluded at 3.53 pm.