

Date:

Wednesday 22 April 2026 at 5.00 pm

Venue:

Council Chamber, Dunedin House, Columbia Drive, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees TS17 6BJ

Cllr Sylvia Walmsley (Chair)

Cllr Kevin Faulks (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Marc Besford, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Stephen Dodds, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Shakeel Hussain, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Sufi Mubeen, Cllr Tony Riordan and Cllr Marilyn Surtees

Agenda

1. **Evacuation Procedure** (Pages 7 - 10)
2. **Apologies for Absence**
3. **Declarations of Interest**
4. **Minutes** (Pages 11 - 14)
To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 17 March 2026.
5. **Call in Meeting Procedure** (Pages 15 - 16)
6. **Call In - Levelling Up Fund - Yarm Public Realm** (Pages 17 - 50)

Members of the Public - Rights to Attend Meeting

With the exception of any item identified above as containing exempt or confidential information under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100A(4), members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting and/or have access to the agenda papers.

Persons wishing to obtain any further information on this meeting, including the opportunities available for any member of the public to speak at the meeting; or for details of access to the meeting for disabled people, please.

Contact: Democratic Services Manager, Judy Trainer on email Judy.Trainer@stockton.gov.uk

Key – Declarable interests are :-

- Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's)
- Other Registerable Interests (ORI's)
- Non Registerable Interests (NRI's)

Members – Declaration of Interest Guidance



Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2 – Other Registerable Interest

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

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Council Chamber, Dunedin House Evacuation Procedure & Housekeeping

Entry

Entry to the Council Chamber is via the Council Chamber Entrance, indicated on the map below.



In the event of an emergency alarm activation, everyone should immediately start to leave their workspace by the nearest available signed Exit route.

The emergency exits are located via the doors on either side of the raised seating area at the front of the Council Chamber.

Fires, explosions, and bomb threats are among the occurrences that may require the emergency evacuation of Dunedin House. Continuous sounding and flashing of the Fire Alarm is the signal to evacuate the building or upon instruction from a Fire Warden or a Manager.

The Emergency Evacuation Assembly Point is in the overflow car park located across the road from Dunedin House.

The allocated assembly point for the Council Chamber is: D2

Map of the Emergency Evacuation Assembly Point - the overflow car park:



All occupants must respond to the alarm signal by immediately initiating the evacuation procedure.

When the Alarm sounds:

1. **stop all activities immediately.** Even if you believe it is a false alarm or practice drill, you MUST follow procedures to evacuate the building fully.
2. **follow directional EXIT signs** to evacuate via the nearest safe exit in a calm and orderly manner.
 - do not stop to collect your belongings
 - close all doors as you leave
3. **steer clear of hazards.** If evacuation becomes difficult via a chosen route because of smoke, flames or a blockage, re-enter the Chamber (if safe to do so). Continue the evacuation via the nearest safe exit route.
4. **proceed to the Evacuation Assembly Point.** Move away from the building. Once you have exited the building, proceed to the main Evacuation Assembly Point immediately - located in the **East Overflow Car Park**.
 - do not assemble directly outside the building or on any main roadway, to ensure access for Emergency Services.

5. await further instructions.

- **do not re-enter the building under any circumstances without an “all clear”** which should only be given by the Incident Control Officer/Chief Fire Warden, Fire Warden or Manager.
- do not leave the area without permission.
- ensure all colleagues and visitors are accounted for. Notify a Fire Warden or Manager immediately if you have any concerns

Toilets

Toilets are located immediately outside the Council Chamber, accessed via the door at the back of the Chamber.

Water Cooler

A water cooler is available at the rear of the Council Chamber.

Microphones

During the meeting, members of the Committee, and officers in attendance, will have access to a microphone. Please use the microphones, when invited to speak by the Chair, to ensure you can be heard by the Committee and those in attendance at the meeting.

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Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday 17th March 2026.

Present: Cllr Sylvia Walmsley (Chair), Cllr Kevin Faulks (Vice-Chair), Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Marc Besford, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Stephen Dodds, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Shakeel Hussain, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Sufi Mubeen, Cllr Tony Riordan and Cllr Marilyn Surtees

Officers: Judy Trainer, Gary Woods and Michelle Gunn

Also in attendance: None

Apologies: None

ESC/45/25 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

ESC/46/25 Declarations of Interest

For transparency purposes Councillor Jim Beall declared an interest in Item 5 – Scrutiny Review of Adult Carers Support Service - as Chair of Eastern Ravens who had given evidence to the review.

ESC/47/25 Minutes

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting on 16 December 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

ESC/48/25 Scrutiny Review of Adult Carers Support Service

Members received the Executive Summary from the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee's final report following its scrutiny review of Stockton on Tees Adult Carers Support Service.

The review concluded that Stockton-on-Tees Adult Carers Support Service was clearly a highly valued and crucial element within the Council's adult social care offer, attracting wider recognition and appreciation for what it provided. However, evidence collected as part of this review had flagged areas for attention in relation to carer-identification, signposting to / promotion of support, transitioning of young carers into the adult service, the ability to meet demand as more carers request / require help, and the need for continuous evaluation of the local offer. Unpaid carers saved local organisations a vast amount of money – as such, despite the ongoing financial limitations on the Council, they had to be supported as much as possible. Those accessing the service had reported very positive experiences – the challenge was ensuring this could be of benefit to a greater number of carers, many of whom remained hidden.

Members asked for an update to come to the next Executive Scrutiny Committee on the Council's "front door" arrangements.

AGREED that the Executive Summary be noted and an update be presented at the next Executive Scrutiny Committee on the Council's "front door" arrangements.

ESC/49/25 Scrutiny Work Programme 2026/27 - In-Depth Scrutiny Reviews

The Committee considered a report which presented topic suggestions for in-depth scrutiny reviews. The views of the Scrutiny Liaison Committee, which had met ahead of Executive Scrutiny Committee, were also considered.

It was noted that as 2026/27 was the final year ahead of the local elections, it would only be possible for one new review to be carried out per Select Committee. This recognised carry over from the current year and the need for reviews to report to Cabinet in January/February 2027 well ahead of the purdah period commencing.

The Committee identified those topics which should not be carried out and reached agreement on those which should be carried out in 2026/27. Of the remaining topics, Members were asked to vote on their preferences.

Councillor Jim Beall asked for it to be recorded that that he was not in agreement with the method of voting used to determine the topic selection.

AGREED that the following in depth scrutiny reviews be carried out in 2026/27 by Select Committees:

Adult Social Care and Health – Protection of Property
Children and Young People – Alternative Provision for Children and Young People
Community Safety – Alley Gates
People – Procurement and Tendering Processes
Place – Animal Welfare, Kennelling and Protection of Pets

ESC/50/25 Forward Plan

AGREED that the Forward Plan be noted.

ESC/51/25 Chairs' Updates

Members were provided with updates from the Chairs of each Select Committee.

With regard to the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee update, Members drew attention to the previous week's Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee where a letter outlining proposed changes to how neonatal care was being delivered across North East and North Cumbria was shared. The Committee requested that an additional meeting be scheduled to consider these developments, including the referenced 'engagement activities within the last 12 months' (which had not appeared to involve any scrutiny functions across the Tees Valley).

With regard to the Children and Young People Select Committee update, Councillor Carol Clark provided feedback from Member visits to Home and Hospital and Electively Home Educated pupils as part of the Select Committee's review of Children Not in School. The visits had proved valuable and the review would be reporting to Cabinet in June.

With regard to the Place Select Committee update, Councillor Jim Beall undertook to circulate details of the Judicial Review discussed at the last Crustacean Deaths Working Group which was administered by Redcar & Cleveland Council.

AGREED that the Chairs' Updates be noted.

ESC/52/25 Chair's Update and Executive Scrutiny Work Programme

AGREED that the Chair's Update and Executive Scrutiny Committee Work Programme be noted.

Chair:

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Meeting Procedure for Call In

At this meeting, it is suggested that the following procedure be followed, at the discretion of the Chair:

1. The Statutory Scrutiny Officer will present the report to the Committee.
2. The Monitoring Officer/Proper Officer will present their report (attached as an appendix) and explain their reasons for validating the call in request.
3. A spokesperson for the Members who have requested the call in, will present and explain the reasons for calling in the decision and why they submit that it does not meet the decision making principles. The decision making principles are detailed at paragraph 1.35 of the Constitution.
4. The Cabinet Member(s) will present and explain why the decision making principles were complied with. On more technical or professional issues the Cabinet Member(s) may wish to call on Directors or specialist Officers to assist the Committee.
5. The Committee may ask questions and/or seek clarification on what has been presented. Also, with the permission of the Chair, a Member/Officer, who has been required to attend the meeting, may request clarification of any points.
6. Members who have declared personal and prejudicial interests, will be given the opportunity to make representations and respond to questioning from the Committee. Members with a personal and prejudicial interest may then leave the meeting.
7. The Committee may ask questions and/or seek clarification from Members, Officers and other interested parties who have been requested/required to attend the meeting.
8. The Committee will deliberate and come to a decision.

Executive Scrutiny Committee can take one of the following actions in response to a call in:

- If the Committee considers that the decision was taken in accordance with decision making principles as set out in the constitution, it need take no further action and the decision will become effective immediately at the close of the meeting

OR

- If the Committee makes a finding that the decision did not meet/comply with the decision-making principles, it may refer it back to Cabinet for reconsideration, providing a statement of the reasons for the referral. All Members who signed the call in petition will be invited to the relevant Cabinet meeting. The Cabinet's reconsideration of the matter, and subsequent decision, (i.e. whether to amend or retract the decision) will be final.

OR

- If the Committee, having taken appropriate advice, considers the decision is contrary to the Council's policy framework or approved budget/Medium Term Financial Plan, or is not within the Cabinet's remit or powers, it can refer the matter to Council.

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REPORT TO EXECUTIVE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22 APRIL 2026

REPORT OF HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Call In – Levelling Up Fund - Yarm Public Realm

Detail

The decisions of Cabinet taken on 12 March 2026 in relation to Levelling Up Fund – Yarm Public Realm have been subject to a valid call in. The call in applies to the following decisions:

CABINET RESOLVED

1. The findings of the public engagement undertaken in relation to the Yarm High Street public realm scheme be noted.
2. With regard to the £2.35m remaining funds from the allocated budget for Yarm High Street:-
 - a) The £950,000 of SBC co-funding be returned to support the Council's MTFP and financial position.
 - b) £950,000 of the remaining LUF funding be used to repay the borrowing associated with the additional expenditure at Preston Park Museum.
 - c) The remaining £450,000 LUF funding be committed in the Yarm area.
 - d) Delegated Authority be given to the Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, to produce a shortlist of possible projects that could be achieved with the remaining budget of £450,000 and then engage with the residents and businesses of Yarm for their priorities. The list is to include the costs of each item on the list and to include the consideration of the replacement of the pontoons, to enable residents and businesses to consider the value for money and extent of the works available when providing their priorities.
3. The reasons for the validation of the call in relate to the following principles of decision-making:
 - Due consultation and the taking of professional advice
 - Explanation of options and reasons

- Relevant matters not ignored
- Clarity and explanation of information provided

The following Members and Officers have been requested to be present at the meeting:

- Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing (Councillor Richard Eglington)
- Ged Morton, Director of Corporate Services (Monitoring Officer)
- Tracey Carter, Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth

The documents detailed below are attached for consideration by Executive Scrutiny Committee:

Call in Form	Appendix 1
Cabinet Report	Appendix 2
Decision Record	Appendix 3
Report of Monitoring Officer	Appendix 4

Background Papers

None

Name of Contact Officer: Jonathan Nertney

Post Title: Head of Democratic Services

Telephone number: 01642 526312

Email address: jonathan.nertney@stockton.gov.uk

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Call-In Request Form

I/We request that the following matter be called-in for consideration by the Executive Scrutiny Committee for the reason(s) stated below.

I/We understand that a minimum of six Members of the Council excluding Cabinet Members, or two Education representatives with voting rights in respect of education matters, must submit this request before the call-in procedure is implemented.

Decision making body ie. Cabinet, Officer, or Joint Arrangement	Cabinet
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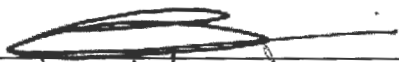
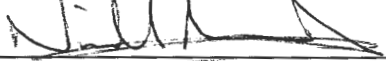


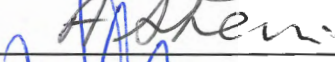
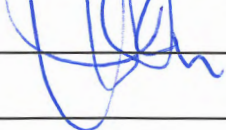
Details of decision	Levelling Up Fund - Yarm Public Realm
Ref. number (if any)	
Date of decision	12 th March 2026

Principle(s) (overleaf)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome); • due consultation and the taking of professional advice from Officers; • respect for human rights and equality of opportunity; • a presumption in favour of openness; • clarity of aims and desired outcomes; and • an explanation of what options have been considered and giving the reasons for decisions • relevant matters have not been ignored • clarity and explanation of information provided 	<p>The report presented to Cabinet on 12th March 2026 provided a progress update on the Round 1 Levelling Up Fund programme of interventions along with a summary of the public engagement undertaken to inform whether the Council should proceed with the Yarm High Street public realm proposals as presented to the public in May 2025.</p> <p><i>The Cabinet resolved that:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The findings of the public engagement undertaken in relation to the Yarm High Street public realm scheme be noted.</i> 2. <i>With regard to the £2.35m remaining funds from the allocated budget for Yarm High Street: -</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>The £950,000 of SBC co-funding be returned to support the Council's MTFP and financial position.</i> b) <i>£950,000 of the remaining LUF funding be used to repay the borrowing associated with the additional expenditure at Preston Park Museum.</i> c) <i>The remaining £450,000 LUF funding be committed in the Yarm area.</i> d) <i>Delegated Authority be given to the Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, to produce a</i>

	<p><i>shortlist of possible projects that could be achieved with the remaining budget of £450,000 and then engage with the residents and businesses of Yarm for their priorities. The list is to include the costs of each item on the list and to include the consideration of the replacement of the pontoons, to enable residents and businesses to consider the value for money and extent of the works available when providing their priorities.</i></p> <p><u><i>Reasons for the Decision</i></u></p> <p><i>To inform a decision on next steps for use of the remaining approved budget for Yarm High Street.</i></p> <p>It is clear from the most recent consultation exercise conducted by SBC that the proposals put forward in May 2025 were roundly rejected. However, it is also clear from the responses in the latest consultation that the remaining Levelling Up Funding, £2.35m, provided by the previous Government was expected to be retained and spent in the Yarm and Eaglescliffe areas.</p> <p>It is also clear that the Cabinet decision does not reflect the expectations and proposals from the responses in the latest consultation exercise. The decision record, and the discussion at Cabinet did not take these considerations into account when making their decision.</p> <p>The proposal during the Cabinet meeting by Councillor Eglington (reflecting the resolution) and supported immediately by the other cabinet members did not explore any of the alternative options within the report, or the appendix, giving the perception that a decision prior to the meeting had already been made. This demonstrated a lack of transparency and openness. Clarity and explanation are sought as to why all options were not discussed.</p> <p>No consultation or engagement has taken place with Yarm Town Council, a major partner and financial contributor, in any of the proposals provided in the Cabinet Report or the proposed resolution. An explanation as to why this crucial step did not take place.</p> <p>The Chair, Vice-Chair and Clerk of Yarm Town Council have all confirmed that no previous consultations/discussions have taken place regarding</p>
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	<p>the proposed renovation works to the High Street with them. They have also confirmed that no representative of Yarm Town Council has received any correspondence from Councillor Richard Eglinton regarding any plans or proposals following the 'YOU DECIDE' consultation exercise. Clarity is sought as to why a major partner was not consulted or approached to explain the proposals set out in the Cabinet report, or the proposed final decision. The Cabinet Report itself states that the list provided is not exhaustive but collated to steer discussion.</p> <p>No consideration has been given to return money to Yarm Town Council who were one of the partners co-funding the LUF bid. Clarity is sought as to why SBC have sought to retain the town council's element of the remaining funding.</p> <p>No consultation has taken place with the public regarding the proposed resolution/decision by the Cabinet. The clear expectation from the public following the consultation exercise is that new proposals reflecting the comments in appendix A of the Cabinet Report would steer the spending of all the LUF awarded to Yarm and Eaglescliffe in those areas. Clarity is sought as to why the voice of residents, businesses and visitors to Yarm have had the proposals ignored.</p> <p>The title of the latest consultation exercise was 'YOU DECIDE.' The clear inference and expectation from this title and the resounding No Vote was that the consultees views would be now considered as to how the remaining LUF would be spent in the Yarm and Eaglescliffe area, they would be the ones deciding. The resounding 'no' is clear that the proposals put forward by SBC were not good enough for Yarm, it was not in any way to be interpreted as an invitation for the Cabinet to take away any of the funding. Had they (consultees) known that an option to redirect 80% of that funding to help balance overspending and borrowing within SBC was being considered should have been made clear in the 'YOU DECIDE' consultation. It was not. Openness and clarity regarding, aims and outcomes is lacking and invites reputational damage to the Council. Taking away funding because people have roundly rejected an ill-conceived plan is not democracy and appears disproportionate.</p>
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	<p>These relevant matters have been ignored.</p> <p>No explanation has been provided in the decision record as to why other options (those put forward by the public and outlined in Appendix A) have not been considered. Clarity and explanation as to why those proposals have been ignored.</p> <p>The desired outcome from the 'YOU DECIDE' consultation was clear, people decide on the future shape of improvements to LUF area. The Cabinet in their short deliberation and subsequent decision appear to have completely ignored the purpose of the consultation and chose to use funding provided for the Yarm and Eaglescliffe areas to prop up the financial problems of SBC. Clarity and explanation are sought as to why the financial problems of SBC outweighed the expectations of the 'YOU DECIDE' exercise. It is suggested that the Cabinet have decided that the consultees views are irrelevant. This is a disproportionate approach from the aims and expectations of the consultation exercise. An explanation is sought to clarify the Cabinet's decision.</p>

We request that the following Cabinet Member(s)/Officer(s) to be required to attend the Executive Scrutiny Committee	
Relevant Corporate Management Team members, Cllr Eglington, Cllr Evans	
Signed	Print Name
	Cllr TONY JORDAN
	Cllr. NIALL INNES
	Cllr HUGO STRATTON
	Cllr STEVE DODDS
	Cllr ANDREW SHERRIS
	Cllr JOHN COULSON

This form must be submitted to the Proper Officer (via Democratic Services) within four working days of the publication of the decision i.e. by 12 midnight on the fourth day.

Multiple forms (including faxed and e-mailed versions) may be submitted in respect of the same decision. If the form is e-mailed it must be subscribed to by one person only.

This form may be returned as follows:

By hand to any Democratic Services Officer

Email – 'DL Democratic Services'

Office use only	
Date received:	Initials:
Valid: Yes/No	
Reasons for invalidity:	
Reasons notified	
Executive Scrutiny Committee date:	

<p>Extract from Constitution – Paragraph 1.35</p> <p>Decisions of the Council will usually be made in accordance with the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome);• due consultation and the taking of professional advice from Officers;• respect for human rights and equality of opportunity;• a presumption in favour of openness;• clarity of aims and desired outcomes; and• an explanation of what options have been considered and giving the reasons for decisions• relevant matters have not been ignored• clarity and explanation of information provided

Please also see the guidance contained with the Scrutiny Toolkit, and Constitution.

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REPORT TO CABINET

12 MARCH 2026

REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM

KEY DECISION

Regeneration and Housing - Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Richard Eglington

LEVELLING UP FUND – YARM PUBLIC REALM

Summary

This report provides a progress update on the Round 1 Levelling Up Fund programme of interventions along with a summary of the public engagement undertaken to inform whether the Council should proceed with the Yarm High Street public realm proposals as presented to the public in May 2025. In response to the majority 'no' vote that was received, the report sets out a series of options to inform a decision on next steps for use of the remaining approved budget for Yarm High Street.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)/Decision(s)

To inform a decision on next steps for use of the remaining approved budget for Yarm High Street.

Recommendations

1. Cabinet to note the findings of the public engagement undertaken in relation to the Yarm High Street public realm scheme.
2. Cabinet to consider options for the future use of the allocated budget for Yarm High Street and agree a preferred option for its use.
3. Cabinet to consider options presented in relation to the removal and replacement of two fishing pontoons on True Lovers Walk and decide upon the most appropriate course of action regarding their future provision.

Detail

1. This report provides a summary update of all Levelling Up Fund (LUF) interventions before focusing specifically upon the Yarm High Street public realm element of the programme.

Background

Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Round 1 Programme

2. The approved LUF programme was developed in response to the publication of LUF Round 1 application in 2021 with the objectives of delivering major proposals in Yarm and Eaglescliffe under the priority themes of Transport, Culture and Town Centre Regeneration.
3. The bid focussed on delivery of improvements to cultural facilities in, and enhancements to, Preston Park Museum and Grounds (PPMG), redevelopment of Yarm Town Hall and public realm enhancements on Yarm High Street and delivery of cycleway connections in Yarm and Eaglescliffe.
4. In March 2023, Cabinet noted that work had been underway to develop a greater level of understanding on the scope, cost and deliverability of the agreed interventions and approved a funding profile to reflect the proposed interventions across Yarm High Street, PPMG and Cycleway infrastructure.
5. Since then, work has been underway to deliver a range of interventions at PPMG, with completion of the Spence Building in September 2025, a remodelled cafe and new toilets, additional parking and improvements to the Aviary and playground. A planning application for the demolition and redevelopment of South Lodge was submitted in January 2026.
6. Work to create an improved cycle link along Durham Lane to connect key employment sites and surrounding residential areas commenced in January 2026 and are on programme to complete in September 2026. The route will be comprised of segregated cycle routes, shared route, and new crossing facilities between Elton Interchange and Cleasby Way junction, extending to the new western access to Eaglescliffe Station.

Background

Yarm High Street

7. The programme of works for Yarm High Street, as set out in the LUF Round 1 bid was focussed on a public realm scheme and the redevelopment of Yarm Town Hall, in partnership with Yarm Town Council, to bring the building back into use as visitor attraction and to replace the public toilets that were displaced because of the works. The redevelopment of Yarm Town Hall was completed in September 2023 and new public toilets, located at Yarm Library opened in November 2022.

8. To help shape the public realm element of the High Street intervention and to gain insights into understand local priorities and opportunities, two periods of public consultation were undertaken in 2022.
9. The first period of consultation was undertaken in August 2022, for a period of three weeks. The consultation was promoted widely on social media and local media. Staffed engagement events were held in Yarm Library, and an online consultation form was available on the Council's website.
10. The results, published in October 2022, demonstrated that the top five improvements identified were: improving footpaths, reducing street clutter, adding more planting, improving connections and accessibility to the River Tees and providing more seating and places to rest. The findings from the initial public consultation were analysed and used to shape and develop a package of concept designs for Yarm High Street.
11. Concept designs were presented for a second round of consultation in December 2022 for a period of 4 weeks. Consultation provided the opportunity for members of the public to share their views through in-person consultation events held in Yarm Library and an online consultation form.
12. The proposals included new paving along the High Street, new landscaping, seating areas and improved public spaces, de-cluttering of pavements, new cycle parking as well as potential enhancements to the River Tees and Snaiths Field Playground.
13. The results published in January 2023 showed that 69 per cent of respondents agreed that the locations of proposed works were in the most appropriate places on the High Street, 64 per cent of respondents agreed that the proposals identified the right mix and type of improvements and 53 per cent of respondents said they would be accepting of the small loss of some parking spaces to deliver the scheme.
14. In response to public feedback received at this stage, which identified that enhancing spaces beyond Yarm High Street was a local priority, schemes to improve connections to and along the River Tees and upgrading the existing playground at Snaith's Field were developed.
15. The first phase of works focused on resurfacing the existing footpath and repairing root damage along True Lovers Walk, which were completed in September 2025, successfully improving access along walkways.
16. In response to feedback received, the scope of improvements to True Lovers Walk was broadened to consider two existing fishing pontoons located along the route.
17. A visual ground-level inspection of the pontoons was undertaken in autumn 2024, which found the pontoons to be in poor condition and their structural integrity compromised. Both structures were subsequently closed to the public.
18. Following the inspections an officer recommendation to remove the existing pontoons emerged, on the basis that their deteriorating condition, public safety concerns, ongoing

maintenance and unknown structural defects below the water line made the pontoons a financial and legal liability to the Council. The cost for removing both pontoons was estimated at approximately £20,000.

19. Works to upgrade Snaith's Field playground were completed in October 2025. The installation of new play equipment, provision of new seating and resurfacing works to the existing footpath have made the location more accessible, which has been well received by users of the park.
20. In May 2025, proposals for a series of improvements to the public spaces on Yarm High Street, developed in response to the two periods of public consultation were presented.
21. Following publication of the scheme in May 2025 some concerns were raised regarding the appearance of the proposed planters and a revised design was undertaken to incorporate a more subtle and refined finish to the planter material, in keeping with the character of the High Street. Furthermore, a commitment was made at Cabinet in July 2025 to assess the cost of re-providing pontoons in the current locations.
22. Despite these refinements to the scheme, a variety of representations were made to the Council throughout summer and autumn of 2025 in opposition to the proposed scheme, culminating in an instruction to pause the planned start of works whilst further public engagement took place to make sure any interventions reflected local views.

Yarm High Street Public Engagement - December 2025

23. Local people were invited to share their views on the proposed improvements to Yarm High Street over a 4 week period ending in early January 2026 under the banner of 'Yarm High Street - You Decide'. In-person engagement events were held in Yarm Library as well as an online form that was available on the Council's website.
24. The purpose of the engagement was to understand public views on whether the Council should proceed with the proposed scheme and from the 1,564 responses received, results showed that 225 (14 per cent) respondents agreed that Yes - the Council should proceed with the scheme as proposed whilst 1339 (86 per cent) people expressed a view that No – the Council should not proceed with the scheme as proposed.
25. A full summary of the engagement results can be found at Appendix 1.

Next Steps

26. As the recent engagement process produced an 86 per cent 'No' response as to whether the Council should proceed with the scheme as proposed, a decision is sought on next steps for use of the remaining approved budget.
27. As per the report to Cabinet in March 2023, the approved budget for the Yarm High Street element of the LUF programme was £4,600,000 to support interventions including a public realm scheme, redevelopment of Yarm Town Hall, relocation of public toilets, improvements to Snaiths Field and enhanced access to the River Tees.

28. The £4.6m was made up of £1m Council funding (from the previously approved £3million from the MTFP in 2020/21 for investment in interventions in Ingleby Barwick, Norton and Yarm), £3.5m LUF and £100k Yarm Town Council funding. To date c.£2.25m has been spent or committed leaving a balance of c.£2.35m made up of c.£950k Council co-funding and c.£1.4m LUF.
29. The Levelling Up Fund is currently administered opposite MHCLG under the Government's Regeneration Funding Simplification Programme – Local Regeneration Fund (LRF).
30. The Local Regeneration Fund simplifies capital funding by consolidating the Levelling Up Fund, Town Deals, Future High Streets Fund and Pathfinders Pilot into a single funding pot. The LRF programme attempts to provide a greater flexibility and allows for more local control, enabling local authorities to make decisions about moving funding between projects, cancelling and creating new projects.
31. Taking the flexibilities afforded by the Local Regeneration Fund into account, alongside the remaining c.£2.35m budget, a range of uses for the funding can be considered. The make-up of the remaining budget (LUF and SBC funding) allows for potentially more than one alternative use as the remaining budget could be considered as a single sum or separate budget strands by funding source.
32. To aid deliberation on potential next steps, a range of alternative courses of action are set out below. The options are by no means exhaustive, rather an attempt to categorise the potential alternatives within the existing LRF remit, options outside of the LRF remit and potential to split the funding by source.

Retain Funding in Yarm High Street / LUF Round 1 boundary

- Remove Council co-funding into Council reserves (£950k)
- Develop alternative scheme on Yarm High Street.
- Develop alternative scheme in Yarm and Eaglescliffe area.
- Utilise LUF to offset borrowing (approved at Council in February 2025) c£950k to deliver Aviary, Stockton & Darlington Railway heritage feature and Central Area.
- Explore increased scope of interventions in PPMG beyond planned programme.
- Retain LUF money (c£1.4m) for alternative scheme in Yarm and Eaglescliffe area (including High Street)

Reallocate some or all funding from Yarm / LUF Round 1 boundary to interventions across the Borough

- Remove Council co-funding into Council reserves
- Hold LUF funding for a period of time as contingency across LRF programme.
- Identify and develop a new project to allocate some or all LUF funding.
- Allocate to an existing project elsewhere in the Borough

Pontoons

33. Following the commitment to revisit the principle of removing the fishing pontoons, made at Cabinet in July 2025, further evaluation, including a dive inspection, has since been undertaken to establish the cost and deliverability of removing and replacing the two existing wooden pontoons.
34. The estimated cost of removing the existing pontoons and replacing with a modern standard, similar sized structure using composite and steel materials to provide improved durability and a longer service life would be approximately £135,000.
35. A decision on replacing the pontoons would be subject to securing the necessary permits and consents along with a detailed risk assessment to ensure they meet the Council's statutory duties and are safe for public use.
36. Cabinet is therefore asked to consider whether to proceed with the removal of the pontoons only, or the removal and installation of new pontoons.
37. Given the condition of the pontoons, in either scenario they must be removed which is estimated at £20,000. The cost of removal and installation of the pontoons, if instructed, will be deducted from the remaining allocated funding of £2.35m as set out in paragraph 28.

Community Impact and Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment

38. Proposals in this report have been the subject of an Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment, which will be developed further once Cabinet have taken a decision on a preferred alternative use for the remaining funding.

Corporate Parenting Implications

39. There are no corporate parenting implications in this report.

Financial Implications

40. The funding referenced above of £2.35m is within the approved Capital Programme. The specific financial impact would be determined by the solution chosen. Up to £950,000 of the Council revenue funding referenced could be utilised to support the revenue MTFP and/or reserves position. The £1.4m LUF monies can be re-prioritised under the flexibility provided by the Local Regeneration Fund (this all-encompassing fund covers what were previously referenced as Future High Street Fund, Town Deal and Levelling Up Funds). If Cabinet's preferred option is to utilise some of the LUF funding for offsetting prudential borrowing, the remaining LUF budget for reuse would be circa c£450K
41. Any financial changes to the capital programme would be reflected in a subsequent quarterly MTFP update to Cabinet.

Legal Implications

42. The MHCLG's technical guidance on the flexibility of the Local Regeneration Fund provides
43. "We are giving local authorities greater ability to make decisions locally about moving funding between projects in their funding portfolio. Local authorities should consider how they can use this increased flexibility to invest more effectively, whether that is pooling funding in the same area, redeploying funding to different priorities or making changes to existing projects to expedite delivery and maximise their impact".

and further that

44. "We no longer require local authorities to seek approval from MHCLG for any changes to project activities and/or spend profiles as long as the following conditions are met:
- all MHCLG funding is spent by end March 2028
 - all project activity contributes to one or more Government Missions, and in particular economic growth outputs and outcomes as described in the simplified monitoring framework
 - consideration is given to the areas and communities that originally stood to benefit from the funding
 - the portfolio of projects continues to offer VFM - the S.151 Officer (or equivalent) must confirm this is the case
 - MHCLG spend is on activity that falls entirely within the administrative boundaries of the local authority (although this should not restrict collaborations with other local authorities)
 - does not require additional in-year funding above the yearly MHCLG allocation
 - the total MHCLG grant is not exceeded
45. As long as the conditions already mentioned above are met, changes could include:
- amendments to the scope of existing projects, cancellation of existing projects and creation of new projects
 - amendments to project outputs and outcomes
 - amendments to project spending profiles

Risk Assessment

45. A detailed risk assessment of the preferred option will be undertaken in line with the Council project governance and risk assessment criteria.

Wards Affected and Consultation with Ward/Councillors (refer to Concordat for Communication and Consultation with Members)

Eaglescliffe East, Eaglescliffe West and Yarm Wards

Background Papers

Report to Cabinet March 2023, Report to Cabinet July 2025

Name of Contact Officer: Iain Robinson
Post Title: Assistant Director Town Centre Development
Telephone No. 01642 526017
Email Address: ian.robinson@stockton.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Yarm High Street Engagement - Summary of Findings

Yarm High Street – You Decide engagement ran from Wednesday 10 December 2025 to Monday 12 January 2026.

In-person engagement events were held in Yarm Library on three separate days as well as an online form that was available on the Council's website.

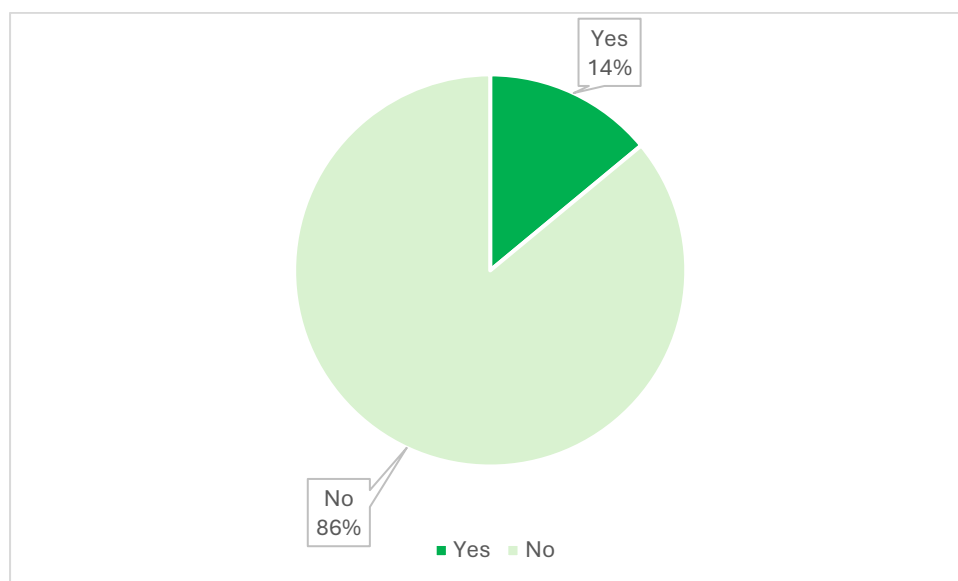
In total, 1,564 responses were received.

This summary presents the findings of this engagement.

Do you think the Council should proceed with the proposed Yarm High Street improvement scheme?

Question 1 of the survey asked respondents, 'Based on the information provided, do you think the Council should proceed with the proposed Yarm High Street improvement scheme?'

Respondents were asked to answer Yes or No to this question and the graph below details the results.



The results revealed that 225 (14 per cent) respondents agreed that Yes - the Council should proceed with the scheme as proposed whilst 1339 (86 per cent) people expressed a view that No – the Council should not proceed with the scheme as proposed.

Free Text Responses

In Question 2, thematic analysis of the optional free text question - *If you would like to explain your view, please use the space below* was undertaken to identify common themes across the

1190 written responses that were received. Examples of comments made under the key themes are summarised below.

Please note that people often raised more than one issue so for this reason percentages won't sum to 100 per cent.

Key Themes	Examples of comments
53 per cent of responses made comments on the theme of Parking & Traffic Congestion	Parking availability is already restricted. Removing parking spaces will increase congestion. Housing growth impacting on parking.
51 per cent of responses made comments on the theme of Yarm's Historic Character	Scheme is too modern and not in keeping with the historic Georgian High Street. Frequent comparisons to looking like Teesside Park.
26 per cent of responses made comments on the theme of Accessibility	Pavements and cobbles need to be better maintained as existing paving creates trip hazards. High Street is not very accessible for wheelchairs and public transport users.
18 per cent of responses made comments on the theme of Antisocial Behaviour	New public spaces will encourage more ASB, littering, loitering and vermin.
15 per cent of responses made comments on the theme of Traffic Congestion	Traffic congestion and traffic flow will be problematic. Need to look at creating a bypass or other traffic solutions.
13 per cent of responses made comments on the theme of New Planters & Seating	New planters and seating are deemed not necessary or of the wrong design. Style of benches and planters are too modern and feel inauthentic for Yarm. Concern that new public spaces won't be maintained by the Council.

In addition to the thematic analysis, respondents offered ideas for delivering High Street improvements, which have been summarised below.

- Focus on the maintenance of existing infrastructure such as re-lining parking bays and repairing paving slabs, road potholes and existing seating.
- Improve parking arrangements on the High Street including providing additional disabled parking bays and designated parent and child spaces.
- Improve and increase public toilet provision.
- More investment in the Riverside walkways including improving access to pontoons and more seating.
- Construct a ring road or bypass around Yarm High Street and a footbridge/subway to ease congestion, reduce vehicle emissions, and improve air quality.
- Improve signage to long-stay and short-stay car parks.
- Introduce a park and ride scheme.
- Alleviate the financial pressures faced by the Local Authority including a reduction in Council Tax burden on households.

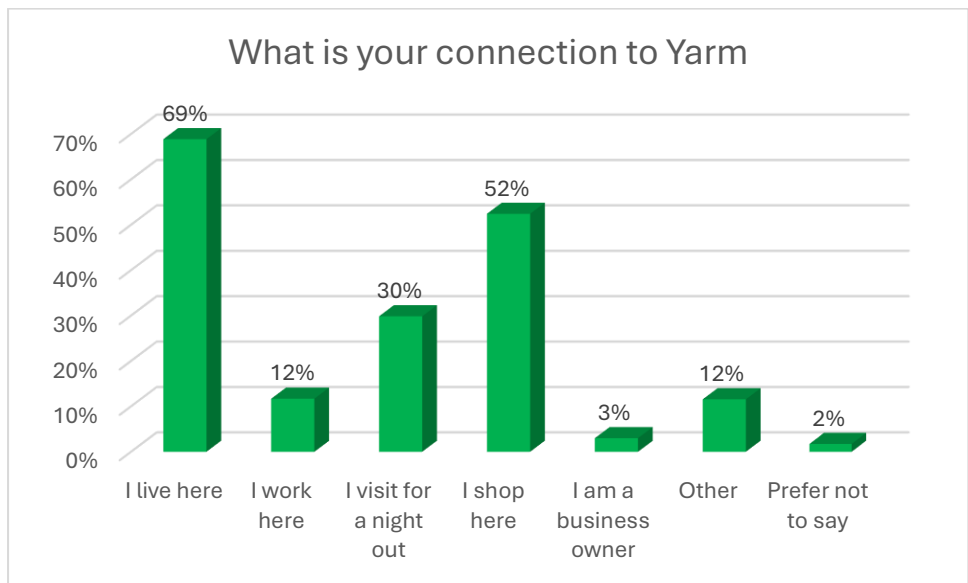
- Allocate funding to improvements at North Tees Hospital or in places like Thornaby or Billingham.

Profile of responses

This section summarises the demographic profile of people that responded to the engagement.

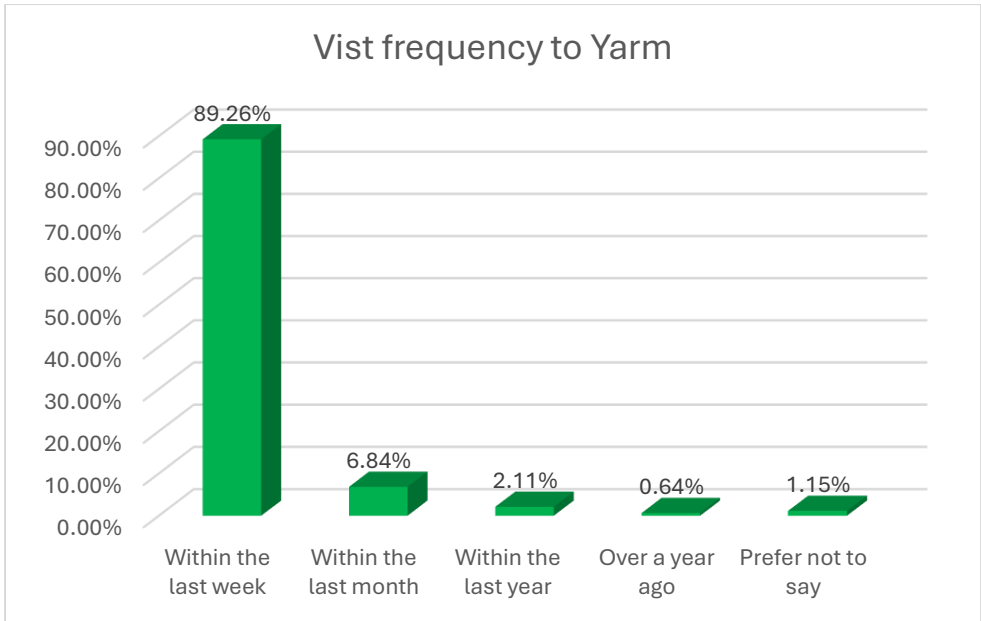
Connection to the Area

Respondents to the engagement found that respondents typically live in the area, shop in Yarm or visit for a night out. A smaller number of responses were received from people that work in the area, with this figure standing at 12 per cent. With regards to the response from business owners, this figure stood at 47 responses, making up 3 per cent of the total responses.



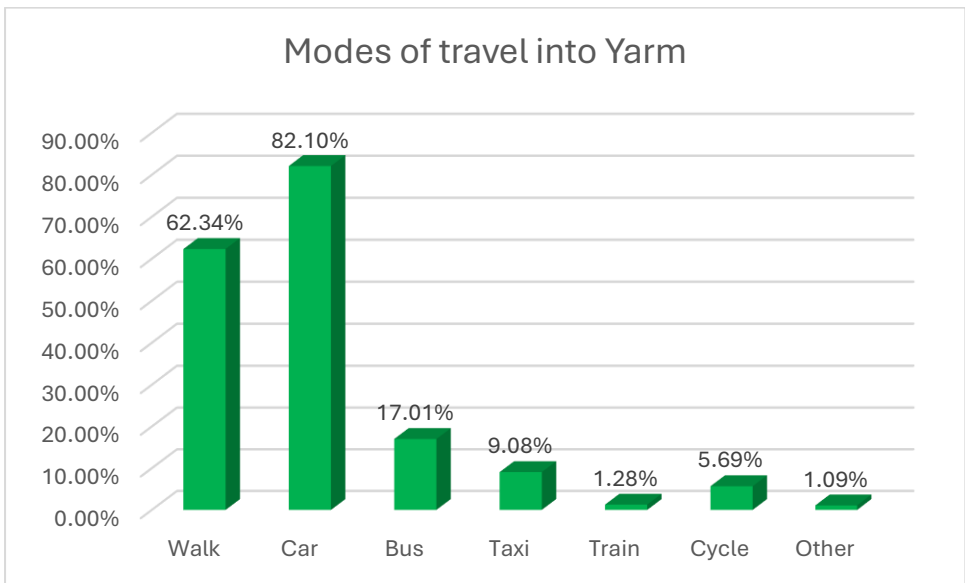
Visit Frequency

Most people who responded to the engagement were people that have visited Yarm recently, with 89 per cent of respondents visiting within the last week.



Modes of Travel

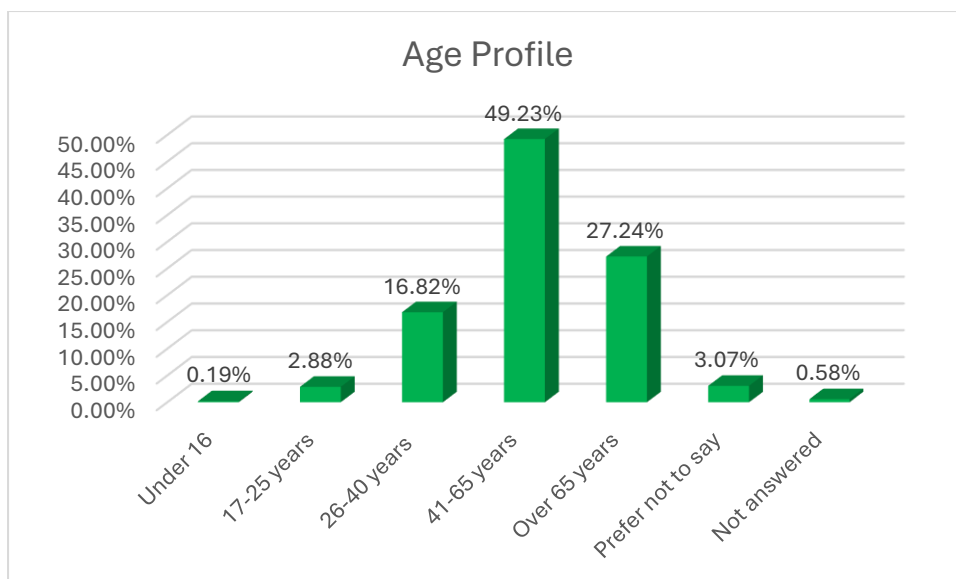
When travelling to and from Yarm, the most used mode was to travel by car (82 per cent). The second most popular mode was that of walking, with the figure being 62 per cent. Of the other transport modes, bus was slightly more popular than taxi (17 per cent versus 9 per cent) followed by cycle at 6 per cent, train at 1 per cent and 'other' at 1 per cent.



Age

The majority of respondents (49 per cent) were aged between 41 – 65 years old, with the second highest age category being Over 65 (27 per cent).

16.8 per cent of respondents were aged 26-40 years old and only 48 people aged 25 or under responded to the engagement.



Next steps

This report has presented a summary of the results from engagement on *Yarm High Street – You Decide* that was held from Wednesday 10th December 2025 to Monday 12 January 2026. In total 1564 responses were received. Overall, responses to this engagement were from local people that either live in Yarm or visit for shopping or leisure. Most of the respondents are people that have recently visited Yarm and have travelled by car or on foot. This round of engagement received low levels of engagement from young people and people that work or own a business in Yarm.

The purpose of the survey was to understand public views on whether the Council should proceed with the proposed scheme. Feedback will be used to inform a future decision, which will be presented to a Cabinet meeting in due course.

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STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET DECISION

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting 12 March 2026

1. Title of Item/Report

Levelling Up Fund - Yarm Public Realm

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that provided a progress update on the Round 1 Levelling Up Fund programme of interventions along with a summary of the public engagement undertaken to inform whether the Council should proceed with the Yarm High Street public realm proposals as presented to the public in May 2025. In response to the majority 'no' vote that was received, the report sets out a series of options to inform a decision on next steps for use of the remaining approved budget for Yarm High Street.

The report provided a summary update of all Levelling Up Fund (LUF) interventions before focusing specifically upon the Yarm High Street public realm element of the programme.

The approved LUF programme was developed in response to the publication of LUF Round 1 application in 2021 with the objectives of delivering major proposals in Yarm and Eaglescliffe under the priority themes of Transport, Culture and Town Centre Regeneration.

The bid focussed on delivery of improvements to cultural facilities in, and enhancements to, Preston Park Museum and Grounds (PPMG), redevelopment of Yarm Town Hall and public realm enhancements on Yarm High Street and delivery of cycleway connections in Yarm and Eaglescliffe.

In March 2023, Cabinet noted that work had been underway to develop a greater level of understanding on the scope, cost and deliverability of the agreed interventions and approved a funding profile to reflect the proposed interventions across Yarm High Street, PPMG and Cycleway infrastructure.

Since then, work had been underway to deliver a range of interventions at PPMG, with completion of the Spence Building in September 2025, a remodelled cafe and new toilets, additional parking and improvements to the Aviary and playground. A planning application for the demolition and redevelopment of South Lodge was submitted in January 2026.

Work to create an improved cycle link along Durham Lane to connect key employment sites and surrounding residential areas commenced in January 2026 and were on programme to complete in September 2026. The route would be comprised of segregated cycle routes, shared route, and new crossing facilities between Elton Interchange and Cleasby Way junction, extending to the new western access to Eaglescliffe Station.

The programme of works for Yarm High Street, as set out in the LUF Round 1 bid was focussed on a public realm scheme and the redevelopment of Yarm Town Hall, in partnership with Yarm Town Council, to bring the building back into use as visitor attraction and to replace the public toilets that were displaced because of the works. The redevelopment of Yarm Town Hall was completed in September 2023 and new public toilets, located at Yarm Library opened in November 2022.

To help shape the public realm element of the High Street intervention and to gain insights into understand local priorities and opportunities, two periods of public consultation were undertaken in 2022.

The first period of consultation was undertaken in August 2022, for a period of three weeks. The consultation was promoted widely on social media and local media. Staffed engagement events were held in Yarm Library, and an online consultation form was available on the Council's website.

The results, published in October 2022, demonstrated that the top five improvements identified were: improving footpaths, reducing street clutter, adding more planting, improving connections and accessibility to the River Tees and providing more seating and places to rest. The findings from the initial public consultation were analysed and used to shape and develop a package of concept designs for Yarm High Street.

Concept designs were presented for a second round of consultation in December 2022 for a period of 4 weeks. Consultation provided the opportunity for members of the public to share their views through in-person consultation events held in Yarm Library and an online consultation form.

The proposals included new paving along the High Street, new landscaping, seating areas and improved public spaces, de-cluttering of pavements, new cycle parking as well as potential enhancements to the River Tees and Snaiths Field Playground.

The results published in January 2023 showed that 69 per cent of respondents agreed that the locations of proposed works were in the most appropriate places on the High Street, 64 per cent of respondents agreed that the proposals identified the right mix and type of improvements and 53 per cent of respondents said they would be accepting of the small loss of some parking spaces to deliver the scheme.

In response to public feedback received at this stage, which identified that enhancing spaces beyond Yarm High Street was a local priority, schemes to improve connections to and along the River Tees and upgrading the existing playground at Snaith's Field were developed.

The first phase of works focused on resurfacing the existing footpath and repairing root damage along True Lovers Walk, which were completed in September 2025, successfully improving access along walkways.

In response to feedback received, the scope of improvements to True Lovers Walk was broadened to consider two existing fishing pontoons located along the route.

A visual ground-level inspection of the pontoons was undertaken in autumn 2024, which found the pontoons to be in poor condition and their structural integrity compromised. Both structures were subsequently closed to the public.

Following the inspections an officer recommendation to remove the existing pontoons emerged, on the basis that their deteriorating condition, public safety concerns, ongoing maintenance and unknown structural defects below the water line made the pontoons a financial and legal liability to the Council. The cost for removing both pontoons was estimated at approximately £20,000.

Works to upgrade Snaith's Field playground were completed in October 2025. The installation of new play equipment, provision of new seating and resurfacing works to the existing footpath have made the location more accessible, which has been well received by users of the park.

In May 2025, proposals for a series of improvements to the public spaces on Yarm High Street, developed in response to the two periods of public consultation were presented.

Following publication of the scheme in May 2025 some concerns were raised regarding the appearance of the proposed planters and a revised design was undertaken to incorporate a more subtle and refined finish to the planter material, in keeping with the character of the High Street. Furthermore, a commitment was made at Cabinet in July 2025 to assess the cost of re-providing pontoons in the current locations.

Despite these refinements to the scheme, a variety of representations were made to the Council throughout summer and autumn of 2025 in opposition to the proposed scheme, culminating in an instruction to pause the planned start of works whilst further public engagement took place to make sure any interventions reflected local views.

Local people were invited to share their views on the proposed improvements to Yarm High Street over a 4-week period ending in early January 2026 under the banner of 'Yarm High Street - You Decide'. In-person engagement events were held in Yarm Library as well as an online form that was available on the Council's website.

The purpose of the engagement was to understand public views on whether the Council should proceed with the proposed scheme and from the 1,564 responses received, results showed that 225 (14 per cent) respondents agreed that Yes - the Council should proceed with the scheme as proposed whilst 1339 (86 per cent) people expressed a view that No – the Council should not proceed with the scheme as proposed.

A full summary of the engagement results was attached to the report.

As the recent engagement process produced an 86 per cent 'No' response as to whether the Council should proceed with the scheme as proposed, a decision was sought on next steps for use of the remaining approved budget.

As per the report to Cabinet in March 2023, the approved budget for the Yarm High Street element of the LUF programme was £4,600,000 to support interventions including a public realm scheme, redevelopment of Yarm Town Hall, relocation of public toilets, improvements to Snaiths Field and enhanced access to the River Tees.

The £4.6m was made up of £1m Council funding (from the previously approved £3million from the MTFP in 2020/21 for investment in interventions in Ingleby Barwick, Norton and Yarm), £3.5m LUF and £100k Yarm Town Council funding. To date c.£2.25m had been spent or committed leaving a balance of c.£2.35m made up of c.£950k Council co-funding and c.£1.4m LUF.

The Levelling Up Fund was administered opposite MHCLG under the Government's Regeneration Funding Simplification Programme – Local Regeneration Fund (LRF).

The Local Regeneration Fund simplified capital funding by consolidating the Levelling Up Fund, Town Deals, Future High Streets Fund and Pathfinders Pilot into a single funding pot. The LRF programme attempted to provide a greater flexibility and allow for more local control, enabling local authorities to make decisions about moving funding between projects, cancelling and creating new projects.

allowed for potentially more than one alternative use as the remaining budget could be considered as a single sum or separate budget strands by funding source.

To aid deliberation on potential next steps, a range of alternative courses of action are set out below. The options were by no means exhaustive, rather an attempt to categorise the potential alternatives within the existing LRF remit, options outside of the LRF remit and potential to split the funding by source.

- Retain Funding in Yarm High Street / LUF Round 1 boundary
- Remove Council co-funding into Council reserves (£950k)
- Develop alternative scheme on Yarm High Street.
- Develop alternative scheme in Yarm and Eaglescliffe area.
- Utilise LUF to offset borrowing (approved at Council in February 2025) c£950k to deliver Aviary, Stockton & Darlington Railway heritage feature and Central Area.
- Explore increased scope of interventions in PPMG beyond planned programme.
- Retain LUF money (c£1.4m) for alternative scheme in Yarm and Eaglescliffe area (including High Street)

Reallocate some or all funding from Yarm / LUF Round 1 boundary to interventions across the Borough

- Remove Council co-funding into Council reserves
- Hold LUF funding for a period of time as contingency across LRF programme.
- Identify and develop a new project to allocate some or all LUF funding.
- Allocate to an existing project elsewhere in the Borough

Following the commitment to revisit the principle of removing the fishing pontoons, made at Cabinet in July 2025, further evaluation, including a dive inspection, had since been undertaken to establish the cost and deliverability of removing and replacing the two existing wooden pontoons.

The estimated cost of removing the existing pontoons and replacing with a modern standard, similar sized structure using composite and steel materials to provide improved durability and a longer service life would be approximately £135,000.

A decision on replacing the pontoons would be subject to securing the necessary permits and consents along with a detailed risk assessment to ensure they meet the Council's statutory duties and are safe for public use.

Cabinet was asked to consider whether to proceed with the removal of the pontoons only, or the removal and installation of new pontoons.

Given the condition of the pontoons, in either scenario they must be removed which was estimated at £20,000. The cost of removal and installation of the pontoons, if instructed, would be deducted from the remaining allocated funding of £2.35m as set out in paragraph 28 of the report.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The findings of the public engagement undertaken in relation to the Yarm High Street public realm scheme be noted.
2. With regard to the £2.35m remaining funds from the allocated budget for Yarm High Street:-
 - a) The £950,000 of SBC co-funding be returned to support the Council's MTFP and financial position.

- b) £950,000 of the remaining LUF funding be used to repay the borrowing associated with the additional expenditure at Preston Park Museum.
- c) The remaining £450,000 LUF funding be committed in the Yarm area.
- d) Delegated Authority be given to the Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, to produce a shortlist of possible projects that could be achieved with the remaining budget of £450,000 and then engage with the residents and businesses of Yarm for their priorities. The list is to include the costs of each item on the list and to include the consideration of the replacement of the pontoons, to enable residents and businesses to consider the value for money and extent of the works available when providing their priorities.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To inform a decision on next steps for use of the remaining approved budget for Yarm High Street.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

None

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight, 20 March 2026

Proper Officer

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**AGENDA ITEM
REPORT TO EXECUTIVE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
22 APRIL 2026
REPORT OF THE
MONITORING OFFICER**

CALL-IN VALIDITY REPORT

LEVELLING UP FUND: YARM PUBLIC REALM

SUMMARY

This report provides a formal assessment of the validity of a call-in request submitted in respect of the Cabinet decision of 12 March 2026 concerning the Levelling Up Fund – Yarm Public Realm.

Its purpose is to determine whether the issues raised meet the constitutional threshold for call-in and whether they engage one or more of the Council’s Decision-Making Principles in a manner which warrants further scrutiny.

In doing so, the report distinguishes between:

- (a) the lawfulness of the decision — where Cabinet acted within its powers and followed the correct governance route; and
- (b) the clarity and consistency of the process by which that decision was reached, which is the proper focus of call-in.

The report identifies those principles that are potentially engaged and therefore defines the scope within which the Committee may properly undertake its scrutiny.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Scrutiny Committee:

- 1. Notes that the call-in request is valid; and
- 2. Proceeds to consider the call-in on the grounds identified in this report.

BACKGROUND

- 1. This report assesses a call-in request following Cabinet’s decision of 12 March 2026 titled *Levelling Up Fund – Yarm Public Realm*. The assessment is undertaken in accordance with:
 - a. the Local Government Act 2000;

- b. the Council's Constitution; and
 - c. the Council's Decision-Making Principles (paragraph 1.35).
2. The purpose of this report is to determine whether the call-in request meets the constitutional requirements for validity and whether it should proceed to the Executive Scrutiny Committee.
3. The assessment focuses solely on whether the matters raised by Members, if supported by evidence, could reasonably indicate that one or more of the Decision-Making Principles may not have been fully demonstrated at the point Cabinet made its decision.
4. This report does not assess the merits of the decision. Those are matters for Cabinet and, where appropriate, for Scrutiny.
5. For clarity, nothing in this report suggests that the decision was unlawful. The question is whether issues of clarity, process, and interpretation arise that are capable of supporting scrutiny.
6. Particular regard has been had to the recognised distinction in public law between public engagement — a non-determinative exercise designed to inform decision-making — and consultation, which may give rise to legitimate expectations depending on how it is presented. That distinction is central to the issues raised.

THE CALL-IN PROCESS

Legislative and Constitutional Framework

7. Call-in is a statutory safeguard within the Council's governance framework, enabling scrutiny of executive decisions prior to implementation.
8. Section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 requires that councils maintain arrangements for the review of executive decisions.
9. Call-in is an exceptional mechanism. It is not intended to revisit the merits of a decision or to substitute the judgement of the Executive, but to ensure that decisions have been taken in accordance with proper process.
10. Under the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000, only executive decisions may be called in.

Threshold for a Valid Call-In

11. A call-in request is valid if it:
 - a. Is supported by at least six non-Cabinet Members;

- b. Relates to a decision that has been made but not yet implemented; and
 - c. Alleges a potential failure to comply with one or more Decision-Making Principles.
12. A call-in request is invalid if it:
- a. Does not allege a procedural failing;
 - b. Seeks to challenge operational or financial management decisions rather than the decision itself; or
 - c. Simply requests further explanation without identifying a potential departure from the Decision-Making Principles.

Decision-Making Principles (Constitution Paragraph 1.35)

13. The relevant principles are:
- a. Proportionality;
 - b. Due consultation and the taking of professional advice;
 - c. Respect for human rights and equality;
 - d. A presumption in favour of openness;
 - e. Clarity of aims and desired outcomes;
 - f. Explanation of options and reasons;
 - g. Relevant matters not ignored; and
 - h. Clarity and explanation of information provided.

THE DECISION UNDER CHALLENGE

14. The decision under challenge was taken by Cabinet on 12 March 2026. In summary, Cabinet:
- a. noted the outcome of public engagement;
 - b. considered a range of options for the use of the remaining Levelling Up Fund allocation; and
 - c. determined a preferred approach to the allocation of that funding.
15. The report makes clear that the engagement exercise was undertaken to inform decision-making, rather than determine it.

SUMMARY OF GROUNDS RAISED IN THE CALL-IN

16. The call-in raises concerns which may be summarised as follows:
- a. That the “YOU DECIDE” framing of the engagement created an expectation that the outcome would be determinative;
 - b. That the decision did not reflect the outcome of that exercise;
 - c. That alternative options were not fully explored or explained;

- d. That key stakeholders, including Yarm Town Council, were not engaged;
 - e. That relevant matters raised through the engagement were not adequately addressed; and
 - f. That the rationale for the final decision was insufficiently clear.
17. Taken together, the call-in raises issues concerning the clarity, consistency, and interpretation of the engagement exercise and its relationship to the decision taken.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST DECISION-MAKING PRINCIPLES

Proportionality

18. No substantive issue arises under this principle.

Assessment: Satisfied; does not support validity.

Due Consultation and Professional Advice

19. The central issue concerns the alignment between the intended purpose of the exercise (engagement) and its presentation, including the use of the “YOU DECIDE” wording.
20. That wording is capable, as a matter of ordinary language, of suggesting a determinative role for participants.
21. In public law, the manner in which an exercise is presented may be as significant as its substance. Where presentation is capable of shaping understanding, it is necessary that both participants and decision-makers are clear as to its true status.
22. The call-in therefore raises credible issues as to:
- a. the consistency between the intended purpose and presentation of the exercise;
 - b. whether that presentation could reasonably have influenced public understanding; and
 - c. whether Cabinet had sufficient clarity as to the status of the exercise and the weight to be attributed to its outcome.

Assessment: Supports validity.

Respect for Human Rights and Equality

23. No substantive issues arise.

Assessment: Satisfied; does not support validity.

Presumption in Favour of Openness

24. The decision was taken in public session with full publication of papers.

Assessment: Satisfied; does not support validity.

Clarity of Aims and Desired Outcomes

25. The aims and intended outcomes were clearly set out.

Assessment: Satisfied; does not support validity.

Explanation of Options and Reasons

26. The call-in raises a reasonable question as to whether the options available and the reasons for the preferred option were sufficiently explained, particularly in light of the engagement outcome.

27. Scrutiny may properly examine whether Cabinet was provided with a sufficiently clear and structured explanation to enable an informed decision.

Assessment: Supports validity.

Relevant Matters Not Ignored

28. Matters relating to engagement outcomes, stakeholder expectations, and their interpretation are plainly relevant considerations.

29. Scrutiny may examine whether Cabinet had full visibility of these matters.

Assessment: Supports validity.

Clarity and Explanation of Information Provided

30. While the engagement results were presented, the call-in raises a credible issue as to whether the relationship between those results and the decision-making process was sufficiently clear.

31. Scrutiny may therefore consider whether Cabinet had a full understanding of the nature of the exercise and the weight it should carry.

Assessment: Supports validity.

OVERALL VALIDITY DETERMINATION

32. The call-in sets out substantive and credible grounds for further scrutiny under the following Decision-Making Principles:

- a. Due consultation and the taking of professional advice
 - b. Explanation of options and reasons
 - c. Relevant matters not ignored
 - d. Clarity and explanation of information provided
33. On this basis, the call-in request is valid.
34. All remaining Decision-Making Principles appear to have been satisfactorily demonstrated and do not provide additional grounds for call-in.
35. The matters identified relate to the clarity and consistency of the process rather than the lawfulness of the decision. The decision was taken within the Council's governance framework and remains permissible, with the engagement exercise informing, but not determining, the final outcome.

ATTENDANCE

36. The Committee will determine attendance at the call-in meeting. Officers will liaise with the Chair to ensure appropriate attendance.

SUPPORTING GUIDANCE

37. This assessment has had regard to:
- a. The Local Government Act 2000;
 - b. The Council's Constitution;
 - c. Relevant statutory and LGA guidance;
 - d. Knowles on Local Authority Meetings;

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- Cabinet Report – 12 March 2026
- Cabinet Decision Notice
- Call-In Request
- Engagement Documentation

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