

# YORKSHIRE PURCHASING ORGANISATION MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2025

Present:

**Barnsley**  
Councillor Barnard (Sub)

**Calderdale**  
Councillor Judge

**Doncaster**  
Councillor Church

**Knowsley**  
Councillor Lonergan

**Kirklees**  
Councillor Turner (Chair)

**Wakefield MDC**  
Councillor Pickersgill

**York**  
Councillor Rose

**Rotherham**  
Councillor McKiernan

<b>1:</b>	<b>Members Declaration of Interest</b>
	No declarations of interest were made.
<b>2:</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
	Apologies for absence submitted prior to the meeting were accepted on behalf of Councillors Anderson (Wigan), Bond (St Helens), Frost (Barnsley), and White (North Yorkshire).
<b>3:</b>	<b>Urgent Items</b>
	Simon Hill (Managing Director) raised that following a Member appointments panel on 17 <sup>th</sup> November, Richard Taylor has successfully been appointed to the permanent role of Executive Director – Commercial.
<b>4:</b>	<b>Minutes of the Audit &amp; Governance Sub-Committee – 7<sup>th</sup> November 2025</b>
	<b>Resolved</b> – (1) That the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit & Governance Sub Committee held on 7 <sup>th</sup> November 2025 be accepted as a correct record, and the recommendations contained within the minutes are also agreed.

<b>5:</b>	<b>Minutes of the Management Committee – 18<sup>th</sup> July 2025</b>
	<b>Resolved</b> – (1) That the Minutes of the meeting of the YPO Management Committee held on 18 <sup>th</sup> July 2025 be accepted as a correct record.
<b>6:</b>	<b>YPO Pay Policy</b>
	<p>Jacquie Lightfoot (Executive Director) talked through the Pay Policy report.</p> <p>Sections 38 to 43 of the Localism Act 2011 require that local government employers produce a policy statement that covers several matters concerning the pay of their staff and principally senior officers. The policy statement meets the requirements of the Localism Act in this regard.</p> <p>YPO’s updated pay policy for 2025 is attached at Appendix 1 within the pack.</p> <p>The Local Government Transparency Code 2014 outlines information that each local government employer must publish and additional information that is recommended for publication, following the principle that all data held and managed by local government employers should be made available unless there are specific sensitivities e.g. protecting vulnerable people, commercial or operational considerations.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b> – (1) That Members agreed the Pay Policy for YPO for 2025 as set out in Appendix 1.</p> <p>(2) Members agreed the information to be published in line with the revised transparency requirements as set out in Appendix A and B within the Pay Policy Statement.</p>
<b>7:</b>	<b>Governance Group Report</b>
	<p>Matthew Hirst (Head of Finance) shared the Governance Group update report, which summarises the group’s work since June 2025.</p> <p>The group’s main focus currently is on policy management and review, to track progress and establish timelines for policy updates.</p> <p>The YPO digital constitution is also being worked on. This will bring all YPO’s governance documents together in one accessible place on the YPO website. This mirrors the process that is undertaken in Local Authorities.</p> <p>Matthew explained that the Terms of Reference for the Audit &amp; Governance sub-committee have been amended following recommendations from internal audit and are attached as an appendix to the report.</p> <p>Councillors asked for clarity on certain aspects of the reports and Officers provided appropriate responses.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> (1) Management Committee receive the report and the amended Terms of Reference for the sub-committee (Appendix 1).</p>

	(2) Management Committee note the updated Terms of Reference for the Governance Group (Appendix 2).
<b>8:</b>	<b>Management Agreement</b>
	<p>Simon Hill (Managing Director) shared the Management Agreement report, which provides the Committee with an update on the completion of the new Management Agreement, dated August 2025.</p> <p>Now that the new Management Agreement is complete, it will be included as part of the Digital Constitution documents, which is now available on the Members website.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> (1) Members noted the completion of the Management Agreement and that the temporary resolution agreed has now been superseded.</p> <p>(2) Members noted the creation of a Digital Constitution for YPO.</p>
<b>9:</b>	<b>Verbal Update from Chair of Audit &amp; Governance Sub-Committee</b>
	<p>Councillor Rose (Chair of Audit &amp; Governance Sub-Committee) shared a verbal update following the Audit &amp; Governance Sub-Committee meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2025.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b> – (1) That the verbal update be noted.</p>
<b>10:</b>	<b>Lead Authority Issues</b>
	<p>Gillian Marshall (Wakefield) shared there are no lead authority issues to raise.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b> – (1) That the Lead Authority update be noted.</p>
<b>11:</b>	<b>Exclusion of the Public &amp; Press</b>
	<b>Resolved</b> - <i>That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Agenda Items 12 to 16 on the grounds that they were likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as described in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.</i>
	<b>IN PRIVATE:</b>
<b>12:</b>	<b>Business Update - (Exempt Paragraph 3)</b>
	The Managing Director (Simon Hill) presented the Business Update which provided Members with an update on activities of the organisation since the last committee and provided an overview on forthcoming activities and challenges.

Simon Hill explained that there had been little change in the overall financial position. It was noted that competitive pricing remains essential to retain commercial value and protect market share, with this built into the forward planning strategy. The recent launch of consultancy and training services has been successful, proving to be popular and delivering strong value. Despite challenging market conditions, the business continues to track toward profit targets by maintaining margins and reducing overheads.

Richard Taylor (Executive Director – Commercial) shared challenging market conditions, budget restrictions, and cost of supply teachers has led to reduced spending in schools. However, YPO brand continues to grow, now representing 37% of total sales. The final quarter is expected to be demanding, but proactive plans are in place to sustain growth. Work is underway to strengthen the brand through research and fit-for-purpose initiatives, while digital transformation is ongoing with the most recent tender awarded to Sitecore for a new website platform.

Andrea Smith (Executive Director – Procurement) provided an update on procurement activities, highlighting a new focus on partnerships with the Department for Education and a review of existing commercial arrangements to ensure they deliver value for YPO and our customers. A dedicated committee is being established to assess new partnerships.

Progress continues on the Atamis system, with Phase 2 linking to the website and Phase 3 planned for customer rollout, which has already attracted interest from local authorities. Framework activity remains strong. 19 frameworks are currently in pre-market engagement stage, supported by positive supplier engagement and an SME event to assist with compliance under the new Procurement Act.

Rebate performance is on track supported by the launch of an in-house tracking system developed after the previous supplier could no longer provide this. Andrea provided information on YPO Learning Box, which is designed to streamline school administration by providing a single login access to all their resources. Engagement levels are high across procurement, and the next 18 months are expected to be particularly busy.

Matt Hirst (Head of Finance) reported that net profit is on track to meet the budget target for the year, despite challenging market conditions on product sales. The half year forecast has taken place to review the position. Business planning processes have been on-going in quarters three and four.

Cash management remains a priority to strengthen YPO's position, combining tactical working capital, we have seen an improvement on cash collections from debtors and effective stock management, which has reduced holdings whilst maintaining 98-99% availability on core items. YPO has also fully repaid the loan to Wakefield Council, creating greater flexibility for future funding initiatives, and will continue treasury management collaboration with Wakefield Council.

Jacquie Lightfoot (Executive Director – Operations) reported that workforce planning will commence in partnership with the Local Government Association, extending into next year, alongside ongoing reviews of HR systems, policies and procedures.

Operational performance during the peak period was strong, with border and line fill rates maintained above 99%, reduced stock holdings, and 97% on-time deliveries.

Jacquie shared the logistics team has been shortlisted for three awards, including Peak Performance, Inventory Team and Young Manager of the Year for Transport Manager.

It was noted that work continues with 3PL partners, with a tender process underway for a second provider.

IT is preparing for a major upgrade on the Nav system scheduled for 2027, supported by a short-term contract hire to guide YPO through the process.

Jacquie shared an update on the property strategy as discussions are ongoing to address extending the footprint and the challenges that come with this. Various potential expansion options are under review.

Councillor Barnard asked a question around Digital transformation relating to IT. Simon shared we only use Microsoft packages and no unsupported or unsecure equipment. Andrea advised that we carry out our due diligence in the tender process, check for certifications, and remove any companies if necessary checks are failed.

Councillor Pickersgill requested Cyber Security to be kept in future discussions.

Councillor Pickersgill enquired as to whether we had seen a reduction in contributions on the West Yorkshire Pension Scheme. Matt Hirst advised that he had not yet had an update but will follow this up.

Councillor Pickersgill asked if we should consider offering a smaller product range at lower prices. Simon advised that while value for money remains important, YPO operates in an open marketplace where schools and staff have developed expectations for a wide choice and competitive pricing. The challenge is to strike the right balance between range and affordability. Andrea confirmed that regular range reviews are undertaken and highlighted the importance of maintaining a competitive YPO own-brand offering.

Councillor Lonergan requested an update on the procurement team's capacity. Andrea explained that the current market remains challenging, but recruitment is progressing gradually, with a renewed campaign planned for the New Year. In the interim, trusted consultants are being brought in to provide temporary support and maintain continuity.

	<p>Councillor Rose raised a query regarding section 7, noting a deviation in net other income, primarily due to a shortfall in the training academy. Matt explained that income is dependant on having a full team in place, and while current performance falls short of ambitious targets, recruitment is expected to become easier moving forward.</p> <p>Councillor Rose raised a query regarding portfolio performance and discussed whether risks are being managed effectively, and progress is maintained at the desired pace. Matt confirmed that monthly updates, including ROI tracking, are shared through forum reports, and while improvements are being targeted, strong foundations are in place. Andrea noted the introduction of the new tracking system to enhance project oversight. Simon added that a review of the status of more than 30 projects will be undertaken to provide a clear view of portfolio performance.</p> <p>Councillor Rose raised a query regarding parcel carrier arrangements, specifically whether thresholds for switching between primary and secondary carriers are defined. Jacquie explained that volume calculations involve significant background work and are currently managed through a percentage split between the two carriers. Pricing remains under review as part of the ongoing tendering process.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b> – (1) That the report be noted.</p>
<b>13:</b>	<b>5 Year Strategy Overview (Exempt Paragraph 3)</b>
	<p>Simon Hill (Managing Director) presented the 5-year strategy overview report, which provides the Committee with an update on the headline principles of the 5 Year Strategy being prepared for signoff at the Management Committee in July 2026, and to obtain members agreement to the principles ahead of completion of the detailed work on the document.</p> <p>Simon talked through the key headlines of the report, and shared the plans for the 5-year strategy. The strategy has involved consultation with Chief Executives relating to the principals.</p> <p>Councillor Rose noted that the plan align well with council priorities.</p> <p>Councillor Pickersgill suggested that decisions regarding the estate should align with YPO's core strategy.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> (1) Members considered the list of Operational Principles and Strategic Objectives, and agreed to support the preparation of a 5 Year Strategy document on this basis.</p>
<b>14:</b>	<b>Budget and Business Plan – (Exempt Paragraph 3)</b>
	<p>Matthew Hirst, Head of Finance, presented the report which presents the 2026 operational profit and loss budget. It also highlights exceptional cost items and Capital Expenditure that needs to be funded next year. Matthew talked through the headlines of the report.</p>

	<p>Simon shared the business plan for the transition year 2026, including the profit targets built in for next year.</p> <p>Section 4 to 7 give detail of the breakdown of profit and loss. The budget is ambitious but reflects the challenges. Our focus is on becoming more dynamic to enable us to provide the best value for money for our customers.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b> - (1) That the Committee agree the proposed budget for 2026.</p> <p>(2) That the Committee reviewed the exceptional and capital items highlighted and the proposed funding of these.</p>
<b>15:</b>	<b>Governance Review (Exempt Paragraph 3)</b>
	<p>Simon Hill, Managing Director, shared the report with Members, which provides an update on the limited company governance review that has been on-going during 2025. This work has been carried out with the support of legal advice from Bevan Brittan. The Monitoring Officer from WMDC has also been involved in some meetings.</p> <p>Councillor Pickersgill suggested arranging a separate meeting to discuss options in person once full legal advice has been received.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b> - (1) Management Committee note the contents of the report and the outlined next steps around the procurement review.</p> <p>(2) Management Committee note the direction of travel indicated around the governance review.</p> <p>(3) It was agreed a separate session to discuss options around this would be arranged for after the Member Informal session in March.</p>
<b>16:</b>	<b>Report of Non-Executive Director – (Exempt Paragraph 3)</b>
	<p>Members gave consideration to a report of the Non-Executive Director which detailed her recent observations of the organisation. Helen Lisle talked through the key headlines of the report.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b> - (1) That the report of the Non-Executive Director be noted.</p>
	<b>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</b>
	<b>Resolved</b> – That the next meeting of the YPO Management Committee will be held on 17 <sup>th</sup> July 2026.