

York Economic Strategy and related Policy & Scrutiny Committee work

Summary

1. This report provides background on the development to date of a new Economic Strategy for York; and makes proposals for how Economic Development and Transport Policy & Scrutiny Committee may wish to contribute in their cross-party policy development role.

Background

What is the Economic Strategy?

2. An economic strategy for York should help York businesses, Higher & Further Education and Skills Providers, City of York Council, Make it York, and any other relevant parties identify (a) the key challenges and opportunities for the future and (b) a prioritised action-based approach for the city to address this.
3. It is worth noting from the outset that it is a strategy owned by the city as a whole, rather than a Council strategy. Many of the ambitions we have for the city can only be delivered with the all sectors fully on board, so it is important that the assessment of challenges, opportunities and priorities is led by the business community, working in partnership with the Council and other bodies.
4. In addition, we are looking to rationalise the overall number of strategies that have an impact on the economy of York (e.g. skills strategy, digital strategy etc.) This will provide more clarity for the city in terms of our combined vision of what we are doing to improve York's economy and also a less onerous approach for partners.

Why is the city going through the process of producing a new Economic Strategy now?

5. Having a written Economic Strategy is not mandatory; however, as a city, it is helpful periodically to go through the process, collectively prioritising and articulating a joint understanding on what our focus will be over the next period. The last time we did this in relation to York's economy was in 2011, producing a strategy which was designed to last until 2015. Therefore, given this, a new Council administration and the advent of Make it York, it is timely to refresh our priorities and what action we will collectively take over the next 5 years, from 2015 to 2020.

How will we learn and build on the previous Economic Strategy, what went well and what could be improved?

6. A full evaluation of the previous strategy will be completed and published to help inform the approach, focus and actions of the new Economic Strategy. Some of the initial learning arising from evaluating the previous strategy which can help inform the development of the new strategy has included:
 - Fewer priorities are required to allow a focus on what is most important. The previous strategy had 19 priority objectives ranging from "Provide skills to match employers' needs", "Enhance the city centre and its opportunities as a business location, as a city centre of the future" and "Provide the right environment and suitable accommodation for businesses and individuals to reach their potential". There was some activity against most objectives, but many of these were only part-met given the range proposed.
 - We need to ensure actions detailed in the strategy are SMART and based on evidence where possible. We should also be clear about how we will measure success if we are to monitor progress effectively. In this, we should be explicit what is within our control and what is dependent on external investment or factors.

What has been the process to date?

7. The first step was to analyse the current state of York's economy. An 'Overview of York's Economy' document was produced, investigating key facts, strengths, weaknesses and sectoral analysis to develop a strong evidence base for basing decisions about priorities and actions for. This

is published on the Council's website at:

<http://www.yorkwow.org.uk/documents/attachment478.pdf>

8. The city has been grappling with various issues relating to growing the economy for a number of years, so in developing a new strategy, it is not a case of starting with an entirely blank sheet of paper. As the basis for the strategy refresh, a list of the top level economic priorities from recent documents, decisions and analysis was assembled. This included priorities from the previous economic strategy and themes highlighted by reviews undertaken by the previous Economic Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee. There were 26 such priorities assembled. This 'long-list' of priorities considered is also published on the Council's website at:

<http://www.yorkwow.org.uk/documents/attachment479.pdf>

9. In March, over 50 key organisations and people in the city came together to consider: 'out of all these things we're trying to achieve, which are *the most important?*' Attendees including Councillors from all main political parties, businesses of different sizes from across all major sectors of York's economy, education and skills providers.
10. People were highly engaged by the workshop. Since then, the results have been communicated back to the group, and feedback has been very positive from businesses and organisations in the city on the focused priorities arrived at. This is very important, because, as above, many of the ambitions we have for the city can only be delivered with the private sector fully on board.

What are proposed draft priorities for the emerging Economic Strategy?

11. From the workshop and refinement from feedback since, city partners arrived at 7 draft priorities:

OUR OBSESSIONS



A TANGIBLE SHIFT TO HIGHER VALUE SECTORS & JOBS



UNLOCKING BROWNFIELD SITES FOR JOBS & HOUSING



ENTERPRISING SKILLS AT EVERY AGE



TACKLING CONGESTION TO EMPLOYMENT SITES

WE WILL BE FAMOUS FOR BEING



A WORLD LEADER IN BIORENEWABLES & AGRI-TECH



A CREATIVE CITY UNIQUELY UTILISING ITS DISTINCT HERITAGE



A LEADING RAIL HUB IN EVERY WAY

12. These draft priorities will be considered by the York Economic Partnership at its next meeting in August.
13. It will also be important to test that these are the right things to be focusing on with a wider group, so this will form part of the wider consultation with residents.
14. Alongside these priorities, there will be some enablers which facilitate these city-wide priorities happening, such as doing the basics well, which might include the Council's proposed red-tape challenge, and attracting investment to do what we want, for example, through the proposed Business Improvement District.

What are the next steps in developing the Economic Strategy?

15. Draft timeline for next steps



16. The main next step is to consider what we, as city partners, will collectively do to achieve each of these ambitions. It is important that this stage keeps partners engaged, and helps to bring together ideas and gain the expertise from a range of people to refine the tangible actions we will take across partners. This will be done through workshops over the next few months, bringing key organisations and individuals together to develop proposals under several of the themes.
17. As part of this consultation, there will also be a broader consultation with residents and others with an interest in this area, to contribute their views and suggestions on what should be done.
18. The assumption in bringing forward proposals is that there is no overall budget increase in Council funding. So central to the strategy will be big ideas for external investment; e.g. Local Enterprise Partnerships, private sector.

The role of scrutiny Economic Development and Transport Policy & Scrutiny Committee

19. As can be seen through the draft timeline above, in the city developing the new Economic Strategy there is likely to be a window of July to October where there is considerable scope for policy development.

A standard Scrutiny Review process may mean recommendations from Economic Development and Transport Policy & Scrutiny Committee are not able to be fully utilised or taken into account as part of this process given the timescales.

20. Therefore in order to exercise this key function of cross-party policy development in relation to York's Economic Strategy, the following options set out below are proposed.

21. **Options**

Option 1:

- The committee selects 4 of the priorities members have a particular interest in.
- 2 members of the committee are assigned to each priority.
- Members attend and contribute to the relevant cross-sector workshops on delivering the priority, with a particular focus on the Council's (and through its commissioning relationship, Make it York's) role in delivering that priority. This workshop will include many of the core elements of a Scrutiny Review such as considering best practice and understanding the views of experts and partners.
- In addition to these workshops, members meet with relevant officers and consider further evidence of what works, and best practice in other cities.
- Update reports would be brought and discussed by Economic Development and Transport Policy & Scrutiny Committee at its meetings during this period.
- Members summarise findings and recommendations about the priority on consideration of the evidence and discussions they have been part of; which will be collated with the other themes and developed into a report.
- A draft report would be considered by Economic Development and Transport Policy & Scrutiny Committee in November.
- A completed scrutiny report would be provided as an accompanying report to Executive when it considers the Economic Strategy.

Option 2:

- The committee selects 2 of the priorities members have a particular interest in.
- 4 members of the committee are assigned to each priority.

- Members attend and contribute to the relevant cross-sector workshops on delivering the priority, with a particular focus on the Council's (and through its commissioning relationship, Make it York's) role in delivering that priority. This workshop will include many of the core elements of a Scrutiny Review such as considering best practice and understanding the views of experts and partners.
- In addition to these workshops, members meet with relevant officers and consider further evidence of what works, and best practice in other cities.
- With few topics to be considered, further activities could be considered as part of the evidence collection process.
- Update reports would be brought and discussed by Economic Development and Transport Policy & Scrutiny Committee at its meetings during this period.
- Members summarise findings and recommendations about the priority on consideration of the evidence and discussions they have been part of; which will be collated with the other themes and developed into a report.
- A draft report would be considered by Economic Development and Transport Policy & Scrutiny Committee in November.
- A completed scrutiny report would be provided as an accompanying report to Executive when it considers the Economic Strategy.

Option 3: The committee waits for the Economic Strategy to be published and then scrutinises the strategy.

Analysis

22. Option 3 would not enable the Committee to exercise a policy development role, so is not recommended. Option 2 would provide the opportunity for stronger analysis given the tighter focus so is considered the preferred option.
23. Given the focus of the Committee, as well as existing and ongoing work, from an officer perspective, the priorities which would work best for consideration by Economic Development and Transport Policy & Scrutiny Committee would be:
 - A tangible shift to higher value sectors and jobs
 - Tackling congestion to employment sites
 - A creative city uniquely utilising its distinct heritage
 - A leading rail hub in every way

24. In order to feed into the policy development process in a timely manner, some of the details of these proposals, such as the individuals interviewed etc., would need to be an iterative process rather than decided from the outset by the Committee as part of a regular Scrutiny Review.

Consultation

25. Details of the consultation which has already happened and will be completed is outlined in the sections above.

Council Plan

26. The proposals for a new Economic Strategy relate closely to the development of a new Council Plan and it is important that the two strategies complement and align.

Implications

- 27.
- **Financial** There are no financial implications associated with the recommendations in the report.
 - **Human Resources (HR)** There are no HR implications associated with the recommendations in the report.
 - **Equalities** There are no equalities associated with the recommendations in the report.
 - **Legal** There are no legal implications associated with the recommendations in the report.
 - **Crime and Disorder** There are no crime and disorder implications associated with the recommendations in the report.
 - **Information Technology (IT)** There are no IT implications associated with the recommendations in the report.
 - **Property** There are no property implications associated with the recommendations in the report.

Risk Management

28. There are no known risks associated with the recommendations in the report.

Recommendations

29. Members are asked to
- i. Actively engage with and contribute to the Economic Strategy development process
 - ii. Confirm taking forward option 2 set out above in relation to its input into policy development for the new Economic Strategy
 - iii. Decide which priorities it wishes to cover
 - iv. Make any suggestions about key pieces of evidence members would wish to cover under these priority headings.

Reason: To enable the Committee to fulfil its policy development role in a tangible way, contributing to the key decisions and actions to be taken around York's economy for the next 5 years.

Contact Details

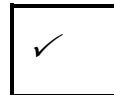
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**Report
Approved**



Date 13/7/2015

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Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report