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Meeting	Economic Development and Transport Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	18 January 2017
Present	Councillors Cuthbertson (Chair), Cullwick, Looker, D Myers, K Myers, Warters and Richardson (Substitute for Councillor Gates)
Apologies	Councillors D'Agorne and Gates

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### **32. Declarations of Interest**

Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests which they may have in respect of the business on the agenda. No additional interests were declared.

### **33. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of 14 November 2016 be approved as a correct record and then signed by the Chair.

### **34. Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

### **35. 2016/17 Finance and Performance Monitor 2 Report - Economic Development and Transport**

Members considered a report which provided details of the 2016/17 forecast outturn position for both finance and performance across services within the Economy and Place Directorate. The report incorporated data to September 2016, as reported to the Executive on 24 November 2016.

Officers drew Members' attention to the main variations, as detailed in paragraphs 4 to 7 of the report, including a shortfall

in planning fee income due to a lower number of large planning fees.

Members questioned officers about the £112k unachieved legacy saving from council transport costs. They were informed that the Fleet Board had recently met and were aware of the need to resolve this issue. It was, however, unlikely that the saving would be achieved during the current financial year.

Referring to the forecast shortfall from parking income, officers stated that discussions were still ongoing regarding compensation from the Environment Agency for use of an area of the car park at St George's Field during works being undertaken to upgrade the Foss barrier. Income from parking in November and December had been better than had been anticipated. In response to questions from Members, officers stated that the Castle car park was the most successful car park in terms of income generation and that it accounted for around 25% of the total income from parking. It was noted that there was also an anticipated shortfall in Automatic Number Plate Recognition income relating to the Coppergate scheme, although it was anticipated that further income would be generated.

Discussion took place on issues in respect of the following performance data:

- Clarification was sought as to whether CES13 (Homes Provided on Brownfield Land) included accommodation units such as student accommodation.
- Referring to the indicators in respect of the condition of roads, officers confirmed that a new monitoring system had been implemented, which would provide more up to date data. A ranked list of schemes would be presented to Members as part of budget proposals.
- Members were concerned to note the increase in the percentage of vacant city centre shops (CJGE23). It was noted that this was an issue nationally and that there were currently no vacancies in respect of retail premises owned by City of York Council. Members agreed that, as part of their next update report to the committee, it would be useful to seek the views of the Business Improvement District (BID) as to actions that could be taken to address this issue.
- Officers were asked to comment on the figures in respect of road traffic accidents since the introduction of 20mph

limits. They stated that, as the figures were relatively small overall, a longer period of time would be required to assess the impact of the 20mph introduction. The figures were, however, reviewed on an annual basis to identify particular trends and sites of concern and consideration was given to interventions and engineering solutions where appropriate.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To update the scrutiny committee of the latest finance and performance position.

### **36. Update Report on Wage Data**

Members considered a report which provided an overview of latest available wage data for York, including key trends and issues of note. The report included:

- A summary of the most recent average earnings data, as well as variations between different groups (full time, part time, male and female)
- Analysis of key issues
- Exploration of possible policy responses

The committee was asked to reflect on current policy interventions to address issues around wages, and to consider whether more, or different interventions should be recommended to the Executive.

Discussion took place regarding the drive for University and research-led business growth in key sectors such as agri-tech and biosciences and the impact of the sale by Defra of the site of the Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera) to Capita. Officers stated that they believed that the site offered opportunities which could be explored.

Referring to paragraph 9 of the report, Members commented on the conversion of office accommodation to housing and hotels at a time when a lack of good quality city-centre office space had been identified as a challenge within the city's Economic Strategy. Members stated that it was important for the city centre to retain employment, particularly in light of the timescales for the York Central project. Officers explained some of the challenges facing the Council in addressing this

issue, including market forces and permitted development rights. There were risks involved if an interventionist approach was taken. In response to questions from Members, officers explained that some local authorities had sought exemptions from office to residential change of use permitted development rights.

The Chair drew Members' attention to the work that the Leeds City Region LEP was carrying out to promote an inclusive approach to growth. He suggested that it would be helpful to explore how their expertise could be utilised.

Members suggested that it would also be useful for research to be carried out, particularly in respect of gender, low pay and self-employment. Referring to the figures on part-time working, it was acknowledged that, for some employees, the decision to work part-time may be a preferred choice – insufficient information was available to determine motives.

- Resolved:
- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
  - (ii) That the committee continued to support actions outlined in the Economic Strategy aimed at raising wages in the city.
  - (iii) That the expertise of the Leeds City Region LEP be sought to help identify the key issues in promoting economic growth.

- Reasons:
- (i) So that Members are aware of key trends in relation to York's economy and wages of residents, and are able to implement suitable policy interventions if necessary.
  - (ii) To continue to encourage and stimulate economic growth for the city alongside partners.
  - (iii) To utilise expertise in this field.

### **37. York Central Project - West Yorkshire Transport Fund**

Members considered a report which provided a summary of the Council's commitment to join the West Yorkshire Transport

Fund (WYTF), and to use this funding to enable delivery of York's two primary strategic major transport projects, namely roundabout improvements on York Outer Ring Road and York Central Access Road and Station Gateway.

Officers were questioned about the timescales for the delivery of the improvements to the access onto the York Central site and of the partnership approach that was being taken.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To ensure that the committee is kept updated on progress with the York Central project.

### **38. Guild of Media Arts**

A presentation was given by the Guild of Media Arts on the work of the Guild, progress to date and plans for the future.

Members were informed that the Guild had been established for a year. An Annual Report was being prepared and could be shared with the committee in due course. The Guild had 200 members, many of whom were self-employed, and it was one of the largest guilds in the city. Four formal meetings were held each year and provided an opportunity to share creative ideas around specified themes. A Court comprising of ten members met six times a year. Details were also given of the way in which the Guild linked with other UNESCO cities and with the Sheffield Creative Guild.

Details were given of the objectives of the Guild. These included nurturing skills, sharing best practice, building contacts and supporting career development. The Guild was also working with Mediale as part of the celebration of UNESCO designation. Members were informed that the Guild was keen to raise awareness of the city's skill base and to develop jobs and employment, as well as making the city a great place in which to live.

Members gave details of the review that was being carried out by the Impact of the Arts and Culture Sectors on the Economy of York Scrutiny Task Group. They sought the Guild's views as to how City of York Council could assist and strengthen the impact of the arts and culture on the local economy. The

representatives from the Guild suggested that the Council should consider:

- creating an ecology and putting in place a framework within which individuals and businesses could flourish. It was also important that the Local Plan included reference to culture and to health and wellbeing.
- its role as an important investor in culture.
- the role it played in ensuring that national resources, for example funding from the Arts Council, were brought into the city.
- recognising fully the importance of universities. They attracted high quality people to the city and it was important they these skills were retained. This meant that affordable housing and office accommodation needed to be available.
- an apprenticeship scheme.
- its role as an enabler.
- ways of nurturing the growth of businesses.
- ways in which it could be a great facilitator.

The views of the Guild representatives were sought as to the barriers in retaining and expanding these businesses in York. They stated that the following factors were very important:

- Good flexible premises to enable growth – flexibility of space.
- Good transport links.
- A vibrant city centre.
- An acknowledgement that some young people may move away to explore what larger cities such as London and Leeds had to offer, but that they may later return to York, recognising it as a vibrant and exciting place to work.
- Rigorously ascertaining the reasons why businesses left York. A census was being carried out by the Guild and the development of this type of data over future years would be helpful.
- The city could currently offer quite good small premises but did not have warehouse type accommodation that was available in some cities. Consideration could be given to utilising aerodromes and the putting in place of a chain of office space. The Guildhall complex had the potential to be the face for this type of provision.

- The York Central project presented a golden opportunity for the city – the heritage element was already in place through the National Railway Museum.
- York had to recognise that it was competing with cities like Edinburgh, London and Manchester. These cities were a draw because of their huge markets and job opportunities. York was, however, better placed than others in terms of what it could offer regarding quality of life.
- Connectivity was a key consideration for businesses.

Members were informed of the work that was taking place to involve young people in initiatives such as the Digital Adventurers.

Members congratulated the representatives from the Guild on what had been achieved over the last year and thanked them for their attendance at the meeting.

Resolved: That the presentation be noted.

Reason: To inform the committee on the work of the Guild of Media Arts and its contribution to the economy of the city.

### **39. Work Plan 2016/17**

Members gave consideration to the committee's work plan for 2016/17.

The Chair reminded Members that a workshop on transport had been arranged for 15 February 2017. This session was open to all Members.

Members noted that, due to the level of interest and engagement in the Impact of Arts and Culture Sectors on the Economy of York scrutiny review, the work of the task group may not now be completed by the end of the current municipal year. An interim report would, however, be presented to the committee.

Members agreed that the report on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Grass Verges Scrutiny Review should be deferred to the meeting in May 2017 to enable there to have been a six-month implementation period.

Resolved: That the work plan be approved subject to the following:

- Update from Business Improvement District - BID (March 2017)
- Interim Report on Impact of Arts and Culture Sectors on the Economy of York (March 2017)
- Information from Leeds City Region on their research re economic growth (introductory report in March 2017 and an invitation to attend the meeting in May 2017)
- Update report on Implementation of Recommendations from Grass Verges Scrutiny Review (defer to May 2017 meeting)

Reason: To ensure that the committee has a planned programme of work in place.

Councillor Cuthbertson, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.25 pm].