

Meeting	Economy, Place, Access and Transport Scrutiny Committee
Date	10 December 2024
Present	Councillors K Taylor (Chair), B Burton, J Burton, Fenton, Healey (Vice-Chair), Hook, Whitcroft, Steward and Merrett
Officers in Attendance	Patrick Looker - The Head of Service Finance Claire Foale - Interim Director of City Development Simon Brereton - Head of Economic Growth
In Attendance	Councillor Kilbane Executive Member for Economy and Culture

31. Apologies for Absence (17:31)

The Committee did not receive any apologies for this meeting.

32. Declarations of Interest (17:32)

Members were asked to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interest that they might have in respect of the business on the agenda. None were declared.

33. Public Participation (17:32)

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

34. 2024/25 Finance and Performance Monitor 2 (17:33)

The Head of Service for Finance introduced the report and gave the Committee an overview of the Finance and Performance Monitor for Quarter 2.

The Committee considered the report and raised several questions relating to the Council's performance, as well as, investigating the data provided. Members enquired about how the data quantified affordable housing and how reliable the data was in relation to this. Officers noted that the data showed an increase in affordable housing supply but that with this including both City of York Council and private developments he would seek to investigate this further and see if additional information can be shared with the Committee.

Members enquired about how the roll out of electric vehicle charging was going and it was confirmed that roll out of more charging points continued and the Council was receiving grant funding from the LEVI programme to support this. The Committee also asked if rent level information could be included within the report and more up to date bus passenger figures. Officers confirmed that they would enquire regarding what additional data regarding rent and buses were available to be included.

The Committee raised questions relating tree planting and tree removals and whether there was currently a net gain within the city. Officers confirmed that they would investigate this and feedback to the Committee on net tree gain. Members also raised questions about the figures regarding waste used for energy recovery and waste sent to landfill which appeared to fall outside of the pattern of data from previous years. Officers confirmed they would investigate the figures relating to waste and feedback to the Committee. Officers confirmed they would also investigate the increase in fatalities and serious injuries in accidents following members enquiring about the increase in 2024/25 compared to previous years.

Members enquired about the challenges in recruitment in Building Control. Officers noted that the Head of Planning was reviewing recruitment in this area and that it was a national challenge around recruitment. Members raised the increase in Universal Credit claimants by 500 and asked whether this were new applicants or individuals that had been converted from old schemes. Officers confirmed that they would investigate how many new claimants were transferred from older schemes to Universal Credit.

Resolved:

- i. To provide further information to the Committee on the number of housing building consents in York are for affordable housing;
- ii. That information on the trend of private sector rent levels to be included in future finance and performance monitors;
- iii. To seek more up to date bus patronage figures and share with the Committee;

- iv. To provide further information to the Committee on the gross number of trees planted against those removed and reasons for removal;
- v. To provide further information to the Committee around how many people are moving from other welfare schemes to Universal Credit;
- vi. To review and feedback to the Committee regarding the amount of waste went to landfill and how much was used for energy recovery;
- vii. To provide further information to the Committee regarding the increase in road accidents stats in 2023/24 compared to previous year.

Reason: To ensure the Committee remain updated on the Council's Finance and Performance.

35. Economy Strategy update (18:01)

The Committee were joined by Andrew Leeming the Head of Strategy at York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority.

The Interim Director of City Development introduced the report on the Council's Economic Strategy. The Executive Member for Economy and Culture outlined how the Council's relationship with North Yorkshire Council and the Combined Authority would ensure they all were aiming for the same goals regarding economic development. He noted they all had similar targets relating to reaching net zero carbon emissions, housing, and transport. Both York and North Yorkshire he stated also suffered from being viewed as affluent areas despite having large pockets of deprivation.

The Committee discussed the joint working with North Yorkshire and the Combined Authority in relation to growing the regions economy. Members enquired about what was to be focused on and officers confirmed that with the Combined Authority the local growth plan sought to identify areas which the reason could have an economic advantage to invest into. They confirmed that this would not be about excluding sectors but finding where York and North Yorkshire could target for growth which included areas such as food, farming, engineering, and biosciences. Members asked how the regions aims would fit with the Governments national industrial strategy and the Executive Member for Economy and Culture noted that the Council and the Combined Authority would continue to engage with Government to influence national strategies.

Skills and training were discussed by the Committee. It was confirmed that the Council would receive funding as part of the Governments trail blazers

scheme to get people back into work. The Council was also pushing ahead with its Innovation Hub to support lifelong learning in the city.

The Committee enquired about how the Council can tangibly measure the outcomes of its actions on York's economy. They used the example of being Purple Flag accredited and how does the Council measure whether this increases tourism. The Executive Member for Economy and Culture stated that in relation to things like being Purple Flag accredited, he felt it was less the accreditation itself that attracted tourism but the things the Council invest in for the accreditation that creates a safe city that tourists wish to visit for York's night life.

Members discussed the prospect of a tourism tax/levy, it was confirmed that this was not something the Council had powers to impose but that it could be implemented with an agreement with the hospitality sector. It was highlighted that there were challenges in relation to getting to an agreement with the sector, which had concerns relating to short-term lets and or some industry members not engaging. The Executive Member for Economy and Culture confirmed that they would continue to lobby Government for additional powers to be held at a local level for a tourism levy that would see money reinvested into the local area.

Resolved:

- i. To request that any work undertaken to get people back to work acknowledges the impact of individuals mental and physical health can have on work.

Reason: To ensure individuals are adequately supported while searching for work.

36. Work Plan (19:21)

The Committee considered its work plan for 2024/25 and were invited by the Chair to consider what other items the Committee should focus on. Members raised the prospect of items looking into the gender pay gap, the Council's parking review, tree management, and the retendering of the city's park and ride sites in 2026. Members also noted the planning review white paper released by Government and the use of Section 106 monies as potential future items.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the Committee's 2024/25 work plan.

Reason: To ensure the Committee maintains a programme of work.

Cllr Taylor, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.30 pm].

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