



**Notice of a public
Decision Session - Executive Member for Finance and Performance
Meeting to be held in consultation with the Executive Member for
Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods (for agenda item 4 Approval of
Financial Inclusion Grant Funding and Awards 2022/23)**

To: Councillor Ayre (Executive Member for Finance and Performance) and Cllr Craghill (Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods)

Date: Wednesday, 16 March 2022

Time: 12.30 pm

Venue: The George Hudson Board Room - 1st Floor West Offices (F045)

AGENDA

Notice to Members – Post Decision Calling In:

Members are reminded that, should they wish to call in any item* on this agenda, notice must be given to Democratic Services by **4:00pm on Friday 18 March 2022.**

*With the exception of matters that have been the subject of a previous call in, require Full Council approval or are urgent which are not subject to the call-in provisions. Any items that are called in will be considered by the Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee.

Written representations in respect of items on this agenda should be submitted to Democratic Services by **5:00pm on Monday 14 March 2022.**

1. **Declarations of Interest**

At this point in the meeting, the Executive Members are asked to declare:

- any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests
- any prejudicial interests or
- any disclosable pecuniary interests

which they may have in respect of business on this agenda.

2. **Minutes** (Pages 1 - 4)

To approve and sign the minutes of the Decision Session held on 14 February 2022.

3. **Public Participation**

At this point in the meeting members of the public who have registered to speak can do so. Members of the public may speak on agenda items or on matters within the remit of the committee. The deadline for registering at this meeting is at **5:00pm on Monday 14 March 2022.**

To register to speak please visit www.york.gov.uk/AttendCouncilMeetings to fill out an online registration form. If you have any questions about the registration form or the meeting please contact the Democracy Officer for the meeting whose details can be found at the foot of the agenda.

Webcasting of Public Meetings

Please note that, subject to available resources, this public meeting will be webcast including any registered public speakers who have given their permission. The public meeting can be viewed live and on demand at www.york.gov.uk/webcasts.

During coronavirus, we've made some changes to how we're running council meetings. See our coronavirus updates (www.york.gov.uk/COVIDDemocracy) for more information on meetings and decisions.

4. **Approval of Financial Inclusion Grant Funding** (Pages 5 - 10) **and Awards 2022/23**

This report seeks approval of the recommended awards of grants under the above scheme following a round of competitive bids and a selection panel process.

5. **Urgent Business**

Any other business which the Executive Member considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972.

Democracy Officer:

Name: Angela Bielby

Telephone: (01904) 552599

Email: a.bielby@york.gov.uk

For more information about any of the following, please contact the Democracy Officer responsible for servicing this meeting:

- Registering to speak
- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports and
- For receiving reports in other formats

Contact details are set out above.

This information can be provided in your own language.

我們也用您們的語言提供這個信息 (Cantonese)

এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দেয়া যেতে পারে। (Bengali)

Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim własnym języku. (Polish)

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde almanız mümkündür. (Turkish)

یہ معلومات آپ کی اپنی زبان (بولی) میں بھی مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ (Urdu)

 **(01904) 551550**

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City of York Council

Committee Minutes

Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Finance and Performance in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing & Safer Neighbourhoods (Agenda Item 4, Financial Inclusion/Welfare Benefits Update Report) and the Executive Member for Economy & Strategic Planning (Agenda Item 5, Omicron Business Support Grants)
Date	14 February 2022
Present	Councillors Ayre, Craghill [until 10.10am] and Waller [until 10.20am]

6. Declarations of Interest

The Executive 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 interests that he might have had in respect of business on the agenda. They confirmed they had none.

7. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the Decision Session held on 13 December 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Executive Member.

8. Public Participation

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

9. Financial Inclusion/Welfare Benefits Update Report

The Executive Members considered a report that detailed a number of financial inclusion activities. The Director of Customer and Communities gave an overview of the activities, explaining the renewed Service Level Agreement with the Welfare Benefits Unit, updating on the Financial Inclusion Steering Group (FISG) 2022/23 grant scheme, and detailing the proposed funding of a Community Involvement Officer to deliver actions relating to food poverty priorities.

The Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods welcomed the proposals noting that the Welfare Benefits Unit did crucial work in York and she commended their advisors for this. She noted the progress of the financial inclusion grant scheme, adding that she was happy to extend the work of the digital advisors. She also welcomed the funding of the Community Involvement Officer post in addressing the right to food motion at Council. She added that the York Food Poverty Alliance brought together grass roots groups and volunteers in providing a way into more formal networks. The Executive Member for Finance and Performance noted the work of the Welfare Benefits Unit in supporting individuals and communities. It was then;

Resolved:

- i. That the Service Level Agreement for the Welfare Benefits Unit at Annex A for a period of 3 years 2022 to 2025 at a cost of £22,700 per year (as detailed in paragraphs 3-6 of the report) be approved;
- ii. That the criteria and progress of the 2022/23 FISG grant scheme including the approvals of awards at the next Executive Member Decision Session for Finance & Performance on 16 March 2022 (as detailed in see paragraphs 7-12 of the report) be noted;
- iii. That £39k funding for a Community Involvement Officer role to deliver actions relating to food poverty priorities in the city be approved. This will be funded from the existing York Financial Assistance Scheme Emergency Fund for one year (as detailed in see paragraphs 13-17 and 26 of the report);
- iv. That the use of funding previously agreed by Executive on 30 September for a 100% Digital York Project Co-ordinator, over an 18 month period rather than a year (as detailed in see paragraph 18 and 19 of the report) be approved.

Reason: To ensure councillors, residents and stakeholder groups are aware of the ongoing financial inclusion activity across the city and use of associated funding and approvals.

[Cllr Craghill left the meeting at 10.10am]

10. Omicron Business Support Grants

The Executive Members considered a report that presented with them with the new Omicron business grants schemes for approval. The report also includes the officer decisions on the Covid Additional Relief Fund (CARF)

and the new Omicron Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) made on 21 January 2022 and 2 February 2022 respectively for ratification.

The Head of Customer and Exchequer Services explained the funding received for each of the schemes. He noted that all reliefs will need to have been applied by 30 September 2022 and the council would be writing to businesses to inform them of their eligibility.

The Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning noted that the system had become complex and he thanks officers for their work on this. He also noted the work of the Economic Growth team in providing advice to businesses. He thanked the Federation of Small Businesses, York and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce, York Business Improvement District, Traders Associations and York Retail Forum for putting messages across to businesses. He noted the importance of the inclusion of many businesses in receiving the grants. The Executive Member for Finance and Performance noted the importance of getting funding to businesses speedily and he thanked staff for their work. It was then;

Resolved:

- a) That the adoption of the Government's Omicron Hospitality & Leisure Grant (OHLG) made at Executive on 13 January 2022 (as detailed in paragraphs 6 – 10 and Annex A of the report) be noted;
- b) That the Officer Decision of 2 February in delivering the new Omicron ARG scheme (as detailed in paragraphs Paragraph 11 – 14 and Annex B & C of the report) be ratified;
- c) That the Officer Decision of 21 January in delivering the new CARF scheme(as detailed in paragraphs Paragraph 16 – 20 and Annex D & E of the report) be ratified;
- d) That the delegation of any future changes resulting from government guidance in relation to all schemes in this report be given to the Chief Finance Officer (s151), Director of Economy & Place and Director of Customer & Communities in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and Performance.

Reason: To provide financial support to the city's businesses during the ongoing covid-19 pandemic and the impact of the Omicron Variant.

[Cllr Waller left the meeting at 10.20am]

11. Application for Community Right to Bid under the Localism Act 2011

The Executive Member considered a report that detailed an application to list Holgate Allotments, York as an Asset of Community Value (ACV), for consideration by the Council. The application had been made by Holgate Allotment Association. The Asset Manager explained that the allotments had been removed from the ACV list after 5 years from date of listing. This application was a request to re-add the site onto the Council's ACV list (for a further period of 5 years). He added that the council legal team had confirmed that the application was valid, that no objections had been received, and that the application had received support from York Allotments CIO (YACIO) and the Headteacher of St Paul's CE Primary School. The Executive Member confirmed he was happy to accept the recommendation to approve the renewal of the ACV listing and then;

Resolved: That approval be given to the renewal of the listing of Holgate Allotments, York, as an Asset of Community Value (ACV).

Reason: To ensure the Council meets its legislative requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and promotes community access to community facilities.

Cllr N Ayre, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 10.21 am].



**Decision Session –
Executive Member for Finance & Performance**

16 March 2022

Report of the Director, Customer & Communities

Recommendations for approval of grants from the Financial Inclusion Fund 2022/23

Summary

1. This report seeks approval of the recommended awards of grants under the above scheme following a round of competitive bids and a selection panel process.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing & Safer Neighbourhoods, is asked to approve the award of £157,062 of grants to fund nine projects for 2022/23 as set out in the table below to deliver a range of financial inclusion activities in the city. There is an approved budget of £150,000 for 2022/23 and a carried forward underspend from 2021/22 of £7,726 giving an available total of £157,726. All projects are of a twelve month duration.

Organisation	Project title	Brief Summary	Amount
Blueberry Academy	Blueberry 50/50 On Line Marketplace	Run an on line market for young people with learning difficulties to manage on line sales for recycled/reuse items generating income and acquiring skills from their enterprise activities.	£9,000
Experience Counts	50+ Project	Deliver four employment related programmes to residents aged 50+.	£19,320
Changing Lives	Financial & Social Inclusion Worker	Support vulnerable and hard to reach residents to gain financial independence.	£19,479*
Refugee Action York (RAY)	Advice & Support – Equal Access for All	In collaboration with CAY provide support to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants to access practical support, information and guidance relieve hardship, reduce isolation, advance education and	£13,480

		improve integration.	
Peasholme Charity	My Money, My Life	Continue delivery of its financial capability pathway service	£27,543
Citizens' Advice York	Financial Inclusion in the Traveller Community	Continue project working with the Travellers Trust to deliver and co-ordinate advice services to the Gypsy & Traveller Community.	£5,385
Age UK (York)	Reaching Out to Older People in their Community	Enhance the financial stability of older people (50+) living on a low income, promoting improved health and wellbeing, reducing reliance on other services, and to help retain their independence. A partnership with OCAY (Older Citizens Advocacy York), Friends of St Nicholas Fields & York Energy Advice.	£18,692
IT Reuse	IT Reuse project	Provide those on low incomes with a refurbished computer to alleviate digital poverty helping to reduce financial exclusion to enable people to manage their finances, apply for benefits, learn new skills, apply for jobs, access banking and find better on-line deals. Donated unwanted IT equipment is repaired and configured by volunteers to distribute to those who experience financial and digital exclusion.	£26,864*
Welfare Benefits Unit	Advice Extra	Extend reach of services to underpin first tier advisors in responding to more complex cases.	£17,299

*projects part funded

Reason: to ensure that funds set aside to support the delivery of financial inclusion activity are allocated appropriately.

The Financial Inclusion Innovation Fund 2022/23

3. The Financial Inclusion Steering Group (FISG)¹ is responsible for overseeing the delivery of a range of financial inclusion activities including strategic oversight of the council's Discretionary Housing

¹ Now includes: Welfare Benefits Unit, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York CVS, Explore York, Citizens Advice York, the York Food Justice Alliance, Community First Credit Union and a number of CYC directorate representatives. The Executive Members for Housing & Safer Neighbourhoods, for Finance & Performance and for Adult Social Care & Health are members of the group. There is a standing invitation to a representative of the Parish Councils.

Payments (DHP), York Financial Assistance Scheme (YFAS) and Council Tax Support (CTS) schemes. Seven bespoke projects for 2021/22 are currently funded through FISG which has an approved budget of £100k in 2021/22 which is available for specific Financial Inclusion schemes.

4. The group's purpose is:

'To ensure that local people have the knowledge of and access to appropriate services, allowing them to make more informed choices to achieve and maintain financial stability'.

5. The aim of the group is to secure the following outcomes:

- Ensure that residents have the knowledge to manage their finances effectively
- Better coordination of advice services across the city
- Advice givers and those 'sign posting' better understand the welfare benefits system
- Explore opportunities to reduce general living expenses.

6. To target resources effectively to support those that need it most, bids were invited from partners across the sector for projects that promote financial inclusion in a variety of settings. Performance is monitored regularly to ensure that organisations awarded grants deliver outcomes that align with the group's objectives.

7. The council provides a broad range of support to residents in need of assistance through a number of channels which has extended significantly during 2020/21 and 2021/22 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The most recent summary of work in this area was reported to the Executive Member for Finance and Performance on 13/12/21². This included an update on the outcomes of the projects that FISG already directly funds.

8. The bidding process to fund projects for 2022/23 opened in mid-January and by the closing date of 11 February 2022 eleven bids from ten organisations were received with a total value £220,661 far exceeding the £157,726 available and the highest value for several years. Six of the bids sought to build on projects already funded by FISG in 2021/22 and four were from organisations that have not asked for this funding before.

9. Bids were subject to panel selection and assessed against a range of criteria drawn from the outcomes noted in paragraph 5 above. The panel convened on 2 March 2022 and was made up of two senior CYC officers

² <https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=875&MId=12656&Ver=4>

and a representative of the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust. Approved projects are subject to the council's Financial Regulations and a Service Level Agreement is put in place for each before funds are released. Grants are paid by instalment with regular reporting on progress built in to ensure delivery.

10. Competition was very strong and the panel had to make some difficult choices given the demand. Whilst all the bids had merit not all met the criteria sufficiently. Two bids were partially funded. The panel were extremely grateful for the interest shown and the quality of the submissions which reflects well on the entire sector and their commitment to supporting the city's residents. Constructive feedback has been offered to the two unsuccessful bidders.
11. A bid has been submitted in previous years for Citizens Advice York GP surgery Financial Inclusion advice work – this is seen to be critical to responding to pandemic impacts and so Public Health will fund work undertaken to March 2023, during which period alternative health related solutions will be sought for future years. If it had been approved through the FISG grant scheme this would have reduced the amount has instead been available to support other projects as outlined in this report.

Consultation

12. None required as this report is not a policy paper.

Analysis

13. There is no further analysis other than the existing information provided in the report.

Council Plan

14. Outcomes achieved through the council and its partners will contribute to the Council Plan commitment to help deliver 'Well paid jobs and an inclusive economy'. This includes tackling financial exclusion by investing in financial inclusion projects with measurable outcomes.

Implications

15. (a) **Financial** – The direct financial implications relate to the funding of the Financial Inclusion Innovation Fund bids which is funded within approved budget allocations/reserves. The funding available in 2022/23 is £150,000 plus £7,726 carried forward from 2021/22 making a total of £157,726.

- (b) **Human Resources (HR)** - There are no implications
- (c) **Equalities** – There are no direct implications
- (d) **Legal** – There are no implications
- (e) **Crime and Disorder** - There are no implications
- (f) **Information Technology (IT)** - There are no implications
- (g) **Property** - There are no implications

Risk Management

16. The key risk is that projects do not deliver the required outcomes – this is managed by an individual Service Level Agreement per project and regular monitoring of outputs. Outcomes are also reported to Executive Members in a Financial Inclusion update every 6 months.

**Contact Details
Author:**

John Madden
Strategic Manager
Corporate Strategy & City
Partnerships
Tel No.01904 551132

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Pauline Stuchfield – Director, Customer &
Communities

Report Approved

Date 7 March 2022

Specialist Implications Officer(s) *None*

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

Annexes:

None

Background Papers:

Recorded decision on 2021/22 Awards 15/3/21:

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=6108>

Financial Inclusion/Welfare Benefits Update Report 13/12/21:

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=875&MId=12656&Ver=4>

List of Abbreviations

CYC	City of York Council
FISG	Financial Inclusion Steering Group