

Meeting:	Combined Executive Member Decision Session
Meeting date:	5 August 2025
Report of:	Director of Public Health
Portfolio of:	Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care / Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Economy & Culture

Decision Report: York and North Yorkshire Economic Inactivity Trailblazer: Grant Acceptance

Subject of Report

1. This Decision Report requests that members accept the York-specific funding agreed as part of the £10m Economic Inactivity Trailblazer, awarded to York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority as part of the government's Get Britain Working programme. This is worth £1,038,250 to York and comes alongside other funding streams and programmes delivered across the whole region which will benefit York residents.
2. The paper details the purpose of the funding, the intended outcomes, the process for allocating the resource, and specific details of the schemes in York which will benefit, along with impacts.

Benefits and Challenges

3. The benefits of this resource include investment in local services which will support residents to engage with employers, access key work, volunteering and employment opportunities, and increase the number of people in York in work.
4. The limited time window of delivery of the Trailblazers programme – within this financial year – alongside the fact that tackling long-term economic inactivity is often complex and requires a multi-

component approach, constitute the key challenges within this project.

Policy Basis for Decision

5. The acceptance of this resource aligns with the Economic Strategy 2022-2032 for York, specifically around good jobs and increasing productivity, and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2032, where good jobs are seen as a fundamental 'building block' for health.
6. Reducing the number of people in York economically inactive due to ill health will help meet the core commitments in the Council plan, specifically affordability, Equalities and Human Rights, and Health Inequalities.

Financial Strategy Implications

7. Members are being asked to accept £1,038,250 under a grant agreement to fund new and existing projects delivered by CYC and partners in 2025/26. The grant will also cover any management and administration costs incurred by the Council and therefore there will be no additional cost to CYC in accepting this funding.

Recommendation and Reasons

8. Members are recommended to:

Accept funding worth £1,038,250 from York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority to deliver and /or commission the individual projects and schemes set out in this paper as part of the economic Inactivity Trailblazer programme.

Reason: this will increase the number of people in York in good jobs, and support individuals currently economically inactive to benefit from key work, volunteering and employability opportunities.

Background

9. The Get Britain Working Trailblazer was announced by the Government in November 2024, alongside the Get Britain Working White Paper. York and North Yorkshire is one of eight sites in

England and Wales chosen to focus on improving the support available to people who are economically inactive due to ill health and help them return to work.

10. The purpose of the Get Britain Working Trailblazer Fund is to mobilise local work, health and skills support – so everyone who wants to work can get the joined-up support they need. The learning from the Trailblazers will support development of national policy and the design of how locally joined-up support will work in practice across England and Wales.
11. Currently in York, the data shows that we have not been unaffected by nationally rising trends around economic inactivity, although in general the picture is more positive than the national average:
 - 19.8% of the working age (16-64) York population are economically inactive, vs an England average of 21.1%
 - 5,900 people 16-64 who are inactive due to long term health issues
 - 29.9% of disabled people are economically inactive vs and England average of 39.8% nationally
 - 77.3% of people with a physical or long-term health condition are in work vs and England average of 65.3%
12. York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA) are the accountable body and lead on the programme. £10m has been made available by the Government to be spent in entirety within the 25/26 financial year.
13. YNYCA requested project proposals in March 2025. City of York Council (CYC) convened a group of officers from the Council and partner organisations to work up projects that aligned with the following priorities, identified based on the profile of need across York and North Yorkshire:
 - Engaging and supporting individual
 - Good Work
 - Joining Up Services and Support
14. Following invitation from the Combined Authority for applicants to submit business cases, projects were submitted by CYC for

consideration by YNYCA. YNYCA received additional proposals from North Yorkshire Council and the Integrated Care Board, with the total cost of proposals significantly in excess of available funding.

15. YNYCA then reviewed proposals against the DWP-approved Trailblazer Delivery Plan and led further discussion to refine and restructure proposals in line with available funding and the strategic priorities of the programme. In particular, YNYCA wished to see consistent delivery across York and North Yorkshire, requiring the two Councils to join up or align approaches in some areas.
16. CYCs proposals have been developed at pace, given the short period of time in which to deliver these programmes, and aim to enhance engagement and support given to key groups in the city such as young people (where rates of economic inactivity are rising fastest), people with mental health problems, neurodivergent individuals, disabled people, unpaid carers and veterans.
17. We also sought to maximise existing assets in the city to deliver the outcomes that the YNYCA programme requires, including our emerging Mental Health Hub model and the high take-up of the Good Business Charter.
18. The suite of proposals looks to provide comprehensive wrap-around support to local businesses and employers by scaling-up best practice, as well as piloting new approaches for new innovative interventions.
19. The proposals broadly utilise existing mechanisms for funding, through existing contracts or arrangements to minimise additional procurement periods. Where thresholds may not allow this, proposals have been scaled to meet requirements. Given the need for funding to be spent within a single year, the approach needed to be pragmatic.
20. The CYC projects approved by YNYCA are as follows:
 - Carers programme
 - Citizens Advice services in Primary Care
 - Employer Engagement

- Good Business Charter
 - Inspiring Potential 50+
 - Mental health hubs
 - NEET re engagement
 - Opportunity broker
 - PLC+
 - School transition
 - Supported pathways / Archaeology on Prescription
 - Veterans programme
 - Workplace health checks
 - Youth mentoring
21. As part of the wider Trailblazers programme, York residents will also benefit from programmes delivered across the YNYCA geography including a Wage Subsidy Scheme, primary care interventions, and the Trailblazer Interchange.
22. YNYCA have confirmed that payment will be monthly in arrears, aligned to agreed payment schedules and that this is not payment by results. The council and providers must comply with the terms of the agreement, including the return of monitoring data, in order to receive scheduled funding, although it is recognised that this is about testing approaches and learning from them so there may be challenges in collecting some data.

Consultation Analysis

23. The discussion around the proposals involved officers from across a wide range of council services, working alongside NHS colleagues from the ICB and VCSE organisations. As a DWP programme, the Trailblazer's parameters and ambitions are defined nationally.

Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

24. The only other option for CYC would be to not accept the funding: this was rejected as the funding scheme provides external funding which provides the opportunity for the Council to deliver on multiple objectives, as above.

Organisational Impact and Implications

- ***Financial***

This is one-off funding, and any expenditure and projects will end at 31 March 2026 and when all of the funding has been used. The risk of continued pressure on the Council after this will be managed through an exit strategy and monthly budgetary control reporting to ensure this there is no recurring expenditure. The grant will also cover any management and administration costs incurred by the Council and therefore there will be no additional cost to CYC in accepting this funding.

Of the £10m allocated by Government, £1,038,250 is being granted directly to CYC. However, North Yorkshire will also benefit from schemes run by City of York Council within North Yorkshire, and York will benefit from schemes run by North Yorkshire Council within York. YNYCA's calculation of the beneficiaries shows 72% of the benefits accruing in North Yorkshire, and 28% in York. This is broadly in line with the population split and cohorts of people eligible for these projects.

- ***Human Resources (HR)***

Schemes funded through this programme are either commissioned by CYC (and may therefore involve the recruitment of staff by a voluntary sector partner) or involve in-house recruitment within CYC to deliver programmes. The one-year nature of the project, as well as the very tight timeframe for delivery, may mean there are recruitment challenges within a number of schemes. Any recruitment undertaken will follow the Council's established HR procedures, similarly any commissioned services including people resources will follow appropriate procurement processes.

- ***Legal***

In order to accept the funding, CYC will be required to enter into a formal Grant Agreement with the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority. The Grant Funding Agreement is not yet available, however once issued the Agreement will be reviewed by Legal Services.

Any expenditure of the Grant will be in line with the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

- ***Procurement***

Any contracts entered into in respect of the Grant funding will be in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023.

- ***Health and Wellbeing***

There is substantial evidence that gaining and retaining a good job has a positive affect on wellbeing, and also that supporting people with health conditions into work – in whatever shape or form is possible – has health benefits.

- ***Environment and Climate action***

There are no direct climate implications of this paper

- ***Affordability***

Getting York residents who are currently inactive into good jobs is likely to lead to improve household income levels in the city, increasing affordability and decreasing financial exclusion and poverty.

- ***Equalities and Human Rights***

These sets of projects will support people with long term health conditions with skills, engagement with support and employability, so positive equalities implications are anticipated from accepting this grant. The values emphasised by this programme are around connection to opportunity, tailored support, and employer adjustment, and engagement with the schemes will be on an entirely voluntary basis on the part of residents.

North Yorkshire Council conducted an EIA screening process on their receipt of this grant and a full EIA was not deemed necessary.

- ***Data Protection and Privacy***

There are substantial Data Protection and Privacy challenges involved in delivering this set of programmes.

Draft data requirements to log and track the individuals that are engaged within the projects, as well as the businesses engaged, have been received. Consisting of around 55 pieces of information, including National Insurance Number and health information, this places a significant overhead upon projects to record this information and submit it to CYC on a month basis. CYC will then consolidate this monthly and submit to YNYCA and DWP.

Concerns have been raised about the nature of the information to be captured and how this is to be used. As a national programme, the requirements are set by DWP, and discussions are taking place between YNYCA and DWP to try to balance the programme assurance and evaluation needs with the operational realities of the projects.

A DPIA will be conducted to cover all of the CYC-specific Trailblazer schemes prior to contracts being awarded / information being collected, and commissioned services will include individual Data sharing agreements with providers. The project is being supported by Veritau, providing specialist advice on the data protection aspects of this work.

- ***Communications***

The Economic Inactivity Trailblazer schemes nationally have been extensively communicated and covered in local media. The delivery of York-specific programmes is a positive story for the city, and CYC will maintain communication as the programme develops around its impact

- ***Economy***

The economic benefits of this programme should be, in the long term, substantial, improving productivity and leading to economic growth, as well as more sustainable jobs market and making it easier to York companies to access the hidden talent within our population.

Risks and Mitigations

25. Several risks have been identified within this project:

- Expectations of full in-year delivery on the proposals, in the context of a significant delay in the grant agreement from the CA
- Risks around the financial risks on providers, given payment will be in arrears
- Potential recruitment issues given all money has to be spent in year
- Data requirements including the collection of a large quantity of service-user data to satisfy DWP requirements.

26. Mitigations for these risks have been discussed with partners throughout the process and are summarised in the material above.

Wards Impacted

27. All wards are impacted by this project

Contact details

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Background papers

Annexes

Annex A: List of CYC Economic Inactivity Trailblazer Schemes