

**Decision Session – Executive  
Member Economy and Strategic  
Planning**

**27 September 2022**

**Inclusive Growth Update**

**Summary**

1. This report provides an update on the actions set out in the Inclusive Growth Fund, as agreed by the Executive Leader at his Decision Session on 18 of September 2019.

**Recommendations**

2. The Executive Member is asked to:

- 1) Note the progress that has been made on the agreed Inclusive Growth Fund projects

Reason: So that the Council nurtures a pipeline of projects that positively address inclusive growth in the City of York.

**Background**

3. At a Full Council meeting on 17 of July 2019, £300k of the £660k Leeds City Region Business Rates Pool was reallocated to support inclusive growth across York. In September 2019, the Executive Leader then approved the proposal to establish an Inclusive Growth Fund which would support eight inclusive growth projects.
4. By inclusive growth, it is meant that the benefits of economic growth must be felt by all those in society, regardless of where they live, how they make a living, and who they are. Inclusive growth cannot have neighbourhoods that are left behind, opportunities that are only selectively available, or a two-tier economy where some people do well at the expense of others who are not.

5. The eight projects approved by the Executive Leader were intended as one-off pieces of work that would spur inclusive growth for the city over the longer term. The projects would either be subsumed into mainstream budgets or become self-sustaining.
6. These eight projects were as follows:
  - Establishing a York Poverty Commission
  - Community hubs as drivers of economic growth
  - Greening our retail estate
  - Community jobs fairs
  - 14+ vocational training and work
  - Independent retail growth fund
  - Mental health, wellbeing and employment
  - York Economic Strategy consultation
7. With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020 and subsequent drop in national economic output by the largest margin since 1709, these projects were put on hold as the Council re-assessed the economic and social landscape of York.
8. The focus of the Council's work went towards ensuring the survival of businesses and jobs primarily through the delivery of Covid-19 grant schemes, such as the Micro Business Grant Scheme and the two rounds of Additional Restrictions Grant. This focus is evident in Figure 1 with City of York Council being among the top 5 local authorities in the UK for delivering its allocation of Covid-19 financial support from the Government.

| Local Authority        | Allocation          | No of payments | Value of payments   | Percent spent | Average grant |
|------------------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|
| South Yorkshire MCA    | £31,721,837         | 24,025         | £47,939,507         | 151%          | £1,995        |
| Maidstone BC           | £64,595,814         | 9,650          | £71,592,928         | 111%          | £7,419        |
| West Berkshire Council | £63,860,844         | 9,347          | £69,392,366         | 109%          | £7,424        |
| <b>City of York</b>    | <b>£113,425,329</b> | <b>27,655</b>  | <b>£113,429,729</b> | <b>100%</b>   | <b>£4,102</b> |
| Basingstoke & Deane BC | £49,141,983         | 7,489          | £48,678,616         | 99%           | £6,500        |
| Warwick DC             | £73,471,157         | 17,315         | £71,854,422         | 98%           | £4,150        |

Figure 1: Local Authority Spend of Covid-19 Funds<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> BEIS – Coronavirus grant funding: local authority payments to small and medium businesses

9. At the same time, the gravity of the pandemic underlined the importance of every job, every business and every citizen in our economy and gave cause to double down on the commitment to achieve inclusive growth across York.
10. Not only did this flow through into the work re-started in developing York's 10-year economic strategy and in the inclusive growth project initiatives themselves, but across the wider York business community as businesses across the city signed up to the Good Business Charter (GBC). The GBC is an accreditation which organisations in the UK can sign up to in recognition of responsible business practices, such as paying the real living wage, providing fairer hours and contracts, and commitment to diversity and inclusion. York was the first city in the UK to sign-up to the GBC.
11. With Covid-19 restrictions fully removed in July 2021, work on the inclusive growth projects were able to significantly progress. As such, all funding has now been committed to the inclusive growth projects, with the commitment that it will be spent by the end of the 2022/23 financial year.
12. It is clear though that the significant rise in the cost of living will lead to a drop in York residents living standards, with inflation and the cost of energy unlikely to abate in the short-term. As such, a strong focus and commitment to inclusive growth must be maintained if inequalities are not to be worsened.
13. A final report in 2023 will provide a detailed inclusive growth evidence base, summarising York's position so that an assessment can be made of how to progress inclusive growth in the city.

### **Inclusive Growth Fund Project updates**

14. The current status of the Inclusive Growth Fund projects is as follows:

| <b>Project title</b>                         | <b>Funding</b> | <b>Current status</b>    |
|--|----------------|--------------------------|
| Establishing a York Poverty Commission       | £20k           | In progress via York CVS |
| Community hubs as drivers of economic growth | £40k           | Complete                 |
| Greening our retail estate                   | £70k           | In progress              |

|   |      |                               |
|---|------|-------------------------------|
| Community jobs fairs                    | £30k | In progress via York Learning |
| 14+ vocational training and work        | £50k | Complete                      |
| Independent retail growth fund          | £40k | In progress                   |
| Mental health, wellbeing and employment | £25k | On hold                       |
| York Economic Strategy consultation     | £25k | Complete                      |

### ***Establishing a York Poverty Truth Commission***

15. It was agreed at the Executive Members Decision Session in February 2021 that Council funding for the Poverty Truth Commission (PTC) was dependent on other funders being prepared to contribute and an organisation being identified to act as the fundholder. York Centre for Voluntary Service (CVS) have now successfully raised additional funds from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, University of York, and the Two Ridings Community Foundation's Deciding Together Fund. Council funding has now been released to York CVS and the project is underway.
16. £20k from the Inclusive Growth Fund will help cover staff salaries, expenses for the community commissioners and venue hosting for meetings.
17. As discussed in the last update report, across October 2021 two preliminary sessions were held to get an understanding of what a PTC might look like in York and to talk to those who might like to get involved.
18. Since then, York CVS has been focused on recruiting people with experience of poverty to become community commissioners, of which they currently have 10 and are aiming to have 12-15. The 10 commissioners have already met and been introduced to each other.
19. These community commissioners will identify issues which keep them in poverty and from that they will be able to identify and invite civic commissioners to join the PTC. This approach, and the PTC in general, is very much led by the community commissioners. It is thus not yet clear who will be invited to be a civic commissioner at this stage.

## ***Community Hubs***

20. As outlined in the previous report, this project is complete. The work undertaken as a consequence of the funding meant that at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, our community hub network was well established and had dedicated Council staff resource. For an update on the Community Hubs as a whole see the paper that went to [Full Council on Thursday 19 May 2022](#).

## ***Greening our retail estate***

21. Following a review of this project there has been a reallocation of the budget for this initiative. The overall spend commitment remains at £70k, but this has been split for two projects.
22. £20k of this £70k fund has now been allocated towards procuring researchers to produce a report which examines the current, and forecasts the future, 'green' economy in York, with special regards to 'green' jobs and 'green' skills.
23. The report will initially map out what the green economy is with an introductory explainer that defines the green economy, green jobs and green skills, along with an overview of York's current green economy, including its constituent industries, assets and current job numbers. It will then map out what they key industries in York will be, what skill requirements will be needed and job forecasts, before concluding with a prioritised list of actions for the Council and partners to take to support the development of a greener economy.
24. Procurement is on-going at time of writing. The project will be concluded in November with the study being launched at York Business Festival 2022 as part of the Greener Economy week.

## ***Community Job Fairs***

25. Community Job Fairs run by York Learning take place twice a year at the York Railway Institute, with these being run in March and September in 2022. At the time of writing, the September fair has not taken place yet but has 73 employer's set-up to exhibit.
26. This will be the first jobs fair since late 2019 in which social distancing rules will not limit the number of attendees and organisations attending. In our last update, it was reported that the Job Fair in March 2022 had much more of the 'buzz' usually associated with pre-Covid events but was limited due to social distancing rules.

27. From a York Learning perspective, the team has benefited hugely the Job Fairs initiative, and they have been able to recruit learners for various programmes including ever-popular English and Maths, ESOL provision, their vibrant Information, Advice and Guidance programme and the thriving Digital Skills courses.
28. Further jobs fairs are planned in Acomb in November this year and at York Railway Institute in March 2023. The list of jobs fairs that have undertaken since the Inclusive Growth Fund was agreed in September 2019 are detailed in Figure 2.

29. **Figure 2: York Learning Jobs Fairs**

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Venue</b>                           | <b>No of Exhibitors</b> | <b>No. of Visitors</b> |
|-------------|--|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 25/9/19     | York RI                                | 68                      | 578                    |
| 6/11/19     | Local -<br>Acomb parish<br>Church Hall | 27                      | 241                    |
| 23/9/2020   | Virtual                                | n/a                     | n/a                    |
| 6/10/2021   | York RI                                | 49                      | 274                    |
| 23/3/2022   | York RI                                | 57                      | 396                    |
| 21/9/2022   | York RI                                | tbc                     | tbc                    |
| Nov 2022    | Acomb                                  | tbc                     | tbc                    |
| Mar 2023    | York RI                                | tbc                     | tbc                    |

**14+ Vocational Training and Work**

30. The initial aim of this project was to support non-academic career routes for young people at risk of becoming ‘Not in Education, Employment or Training’ (NEET) through working with York’s secondary schools and colleges.
31. The Council has recruited 14 places from 8 of the 9 mainstream secondary schools in York for a two year course, starting in September 2022, for Year 10 students leading to accreditation and progression to York College Post 16. The funding has allowed this to be offered to schools at the reduced rate of £650 per place for the full year which has maximised take up. This is in addition to support that enable the ten Year 11 students training in Construction at York College last academic year.

32. The new Identified students all will benefit from the different style of learning and engagement that the course will offer.

### ***Independent Retail Growth Fund***

33. A meeting with traders' associations was held on the 29 June 2022. As well as hearing the benefits of the Good Business Charter, traders' associations were invited to submit proposals for projects and initiatives, particularly around Winter and Christmas 2022.

34. Applications to the fund closed on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August and we are still considering the merits of the applications in the light of available funds. The Executive Member will be updated in future reports.

### ***Mental health, wellbeing and employment***

35. This initiative was designed to support mental health, wellbeing and employment in the city. The initial project funded under this was 'Building Business Resilience' research report which York St John University produced for in July 2021, followed by a mental health event at York Business Week in 2021.

36. The Council continues to promote a number of free support services such as the [HSE's working minds](#) and [St Nick's Thriving at Work](#) service through its weekly business bulletin.

### ***York Economic Strategy and Partnership***

37. At the Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning Decision in June 2022, the initiation of the next phase of York's 10-year Economic Strategy consultation was approved. This consultation involved the following:

- May – Our Big Conversation - targeted focus groups
- June to August – Our Big Conversation - 6 week resident, business and partner consultation
- July to August - Open call for comments on draft Economic Strategy

38. The funding from the Inclusive Growth Fund has ensured that the consultation and development of the strategy has had an inclusive approach. For instance, under the first phase of the consultation, the Council commissioned York Citizens Advice to consult with its clients on the priorities of any future economic strategy.
39. Phase 2 of Our Big Conversation has also had a particular emphasis on reaching all of York's communities, including the disabled community, children and young people, older people, students, black and minority ethnic people, and the LGBTQ+ community.
40. With this consultation period now over, the Council is carefully studying the results and will refine its draft strategy accordingly. These refinements will be articulated to the Executive Member before the final strategy is brought before the Executive in October.

## Council Plan

41. The projects in the Inclusive Growth Initiatives Fund address the following outcomes from the Council Plan:
  - Good health and wellbeing;
  - Well-paid and an inclusive economy;
  - A better start for children and young people;
  - A greener and cleaner city; and,
  - Safe communities and culture for all.

## Implications

- **Financial** – no new financial commitments. Previous commitments within the body of the report;
- **Human Resources (HR)** – no implications;
- **One Planet Council / Equalities** – the proposed project to green the Council's retail estate will address the Council's climate change challenge. A number of the proposed projects will positively support the Council's equalities objectives;
- **Legal** – no implications;
- **Crime and Disorder** – no implications;
- **Information Technology (IT)** – no implications;
- **Property** – depending on the findings of the survey, the proposed project to green the Council's commercial estate will have property implications. Any measures taken to improve the energy efficiency of



the Council's commercial stock will need to balance commercial viability with environmental benefits.

## Risk Management

There are no specific risks identified in respect of the recommendations.

## Contact Details

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Report  
Approved



Date 14 Sept 2022

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

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

## List of Abbreviations Used in this Report

CYC – City of York Council

MIY – Make it York

NEET – Not in Employment, Education or Training

GBC – Good Business Charter