

DECISION SESSION - EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND MAJOR PROJECTS

MONDAY, 13 MARCH 2023

DECISIONS

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the Executive Member Decision Session held on Monday, 13 March 2023. The wording used does not necessarily reflect the actual wording that will appear in the minutes.

Members are reminded that, should they wish to call in a decision, notice must be given to Democracy Support Group no later than 4pm on the second working day after this meeting.

If you have any queries about any matters referred to in this decision sheet please contact Angela Bielby.

1. Recommendations for approval of grants from the Financial Inclusion Steering Group (FISG) Grant Scheme 2023/24

Resolved: That approval be given to the award of a total of £150,000 of grants to fund 11 projects for 2023/24, as set out in the table below, to deliver a range of financial inclusion activities by partners across the city. There is an approved budget of £50,000 for 2023/24 which will be increased to £150,000 using one-off growth. All projects are for a twelve-month period.

1. £11,644 to Age UK (York) for providing Benefits Advice through Home Visit for the extension of their Money and Benefits advice service offered to people over pension age, providing an additional two days per week of support in response to increased demand.
2. £14,585 to the Welfare Benefits Unit for Advice Extra to deliver a continuation of the Advice Extra project, building on innovative practice developed over the last few years helping to underpin first tier advisors in responding to more complex cases.
3. £25,764 to the Peasholme Charity for My Money, My Life, to continue delivery of its financial capability pathway service, offering a range of interventions to

support people from a point of 'crisis' through to a place of financial stability.

4. £20,000* to the Community Furniture Store for their IT Reuse project to continue to help reduce digital exclusion through device provision and skills enhancement, building on key partnerships and learning from existing project. Collect digital equipment, which is wiped/repaired/configured by volunteers for distribution to individuals facing digital exclusion, enabling users to access information, manage finances, look for work, and upskill, enhancing their well-being, financial security.
5. £9,800* to Experience Counts for their 50+ Project to deliver two employment related wrap around training programmes to residents aged 50+ providing individualised coaching and support to advance into employment, self-employment, volunteering or further training.
6. £15,840 to Cotermious CIC Employment & Enterprise Programme to provide practical support and employment advice to help people navigate their way back into meaningful employment through focussed training and workshops. Aimed at York's most marginalised residents many of whom are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
7. £6,938 to OCAY (Older Citizens Advocacy York) for Benefits Advocacy to deliver comprehensive advocacy support to clients (aged 50+) caught in the benefits system to ensure they maximise their entitlement. Provides emotional/practical support to manage the challenges many face in making claims.
8. £14,271* to Refugee Action York (RAY) for Financially Included – supporting access to services and support. In collaboration with CAY continue and build on the existing project to support refugees, asylum seekers and migrants to access practical support, information and guidance, to relieve hardship, reduce isolation, advance education and improve integration.
9. £16,221 to York Community Energy for supporting parents struggling with energy bills. The project aims to increase the financial resilience of single parents/ families with children who are struggling

with their energy and other bills, ensuring they get support with managing bills and keeping warm while saving energy where possible. Includes outreach activities and practical support on energy and other issues.

10. £4,100* to York Explore for 100% Digital York Partnership. The project exists to focus on supporting digital inclusion across the city working with over 15 partners. This funding extends the post of Digital Inclusion Co-ordinator (18.5 hours p.w.) for an extra 3 months to 31/3/24 (currently funded to 31/12/23).
11. £10,837 to Citizens' Advice York for Financial Inclusion for the Traveller Community to continue the existing project working with the Travellers Trust to deliver and co-ordinate advice services to the Gypsy & Traveller Community.
*four projects part funded

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

2. Financial Inclusion Interim Strategy 2023-25

Resolved: That the Interim Financial Inclusion Strategy 2023-25 be approved.

Reason: To ensure all the priorities outlined in the strategy are a focus for the council and its partners to mitigate the impact of the Cost-of-Living Crisis and drive work to address underlying causes of poverty, ensure resident income is maximised and long-term recovery is achieved.

3. Council Tax Hardship fund and Retail Hospitality and Leisure relief

Resolved: That;

- a) The council's RHL scheme (as detailed in paragraphs 5 – 12 of the published report) be noted.

- b) The council's CTS hardship scheme (as detailed in paragraphs 13 – 19 of the published report) be noted.
- c) The delegation of discretion to decide on qualifying and non-qualifying businesses (outside of those set out in Annex A of the published report) to the Head of Customer and Exchequer Services in consultation with the Head of Economic Development be approved.
- d) Approval be given to the delegation to make any changes to the council's RHL and CTS hardship scheme within the broader scope of the scheme guidance (as set at Annexes A and B of the published report) to the council's s151 officer (Chief Finance Officer) in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and Major Projects (as detailed in paragraphs 11 & 19 of the published report).

Reason: To provide cost of living support to business and residents hardest hit by the current economic pressures.