

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

**21 March 2023**

**Inclusive Growth Fund**

**Summary**

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

**Recommendations**

2. The Executive Member is asked to:
  - i. 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.

- ii. Consider a final allocation of £30k from the inclusive growth fund to support inclusive growth aspects of the Big Tent Festival

Reason: To support inclusive growth in the City of York

**Background**

3. This paper provides an update on the final allocation given to the inclusive growth fund initiatives. As discussed in the last update, the inclusive growth fund was established in September 2019, when the Executive Leader approved the proposal to establish a fund which would support eight inclusive growth projects across the City, using £300k of the £660k Leeds City Region Business Rate Pool.
4. 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.

5. 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
  
6. Soon after the establishment of these projects, the Covid-19 pandemic hit the UK and the Council's work went towards ensuring the survival of businesses and jobs through the delivery of Covid-19 grant schemes, such as the Micro Business Grant Scheme and the two rounds of Additional Restrictions Grant. With the immediate effects of the pandemic subsiding, delivery of the inclusive growth projects progressed throughout 2022. As such, nearly all of the £300k has been distributed as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Inclusive Growth Fund Allocation**

<b>Project title</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Current status</b>
Establishing a York Poverty Commission	£20k	Allocated
Community hubs as drivers of economic growth	£40k	Allocated
Greening our retail estate	£70k	Partially allocated - £50k remains
Community jobs fairs	£30k	Allocated
14+ vocational training and work	£50k	Allocated
Independent retail growth fund	£40k	Allocated
Mental health, wellbeing, and employment	£25k	Allocated
York Economic Strategy consultation	£25k	Allocated

## **Inclusive Growth Fund Project updates**

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

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

8. As reported in the last update, the £20k from the Inclusive Growth Fund has been delivered to York CVS and will help cover staff salaries, expenses for the community commissioners and venue hosting for meetings.
9. The community commissioners have been meeting for several months now and developing their relationships of trust and sharing their personal stories. They have identified the issues they wish to focus on which will lead to them identifying civic commissioners.
10. The launch of the poverty truth commission will take place on the 9th March, with invitations sent out to people who they think would be ideal civic commissioners, as well as to people who have supported the commission so far.

### ***Community Hubs***

11. As outlined in the previous two reports, this project is complete. For an update on the Community Hubs as a whole see the paper that went to [Full Council on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022](#).

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

12. Following a project review, £20k of this £70k fund was allocated towards procuring researchers to produce a report that examined the 'green' economy in York. The research, which delivers on an objective set out in York's 10 years Economic Strategy, maps out the types of green jobs and skills that exist and are in demand in York.
13. The Institute of Employment Research, based at the University of Warwick, were awarded the contract for this research project. The researchers worked with the Council's economic growth team to finalise the boundaries of the project before setting off to work. Workshops were held with the Council's housing, waste, transport, climate change and skills team to get an understanding of green jobs and skills across these different areas, with key stakeholders such as the Y&NY LEP attending. The researchers also presented their draft findings at an event at York

Business Festival, where business leaders from York's bio-economy and rail sectors shared their thoughts on the research.

14. The research report has now been delivered, with the paper summarised and available to download from the [Council's website](#). It is also attached as Appendix A of this report.
15. The report will guide the council and key stakeholders in efforts to support the growth of the green economy and ambitions to become a net-zero city by 2030. For instance, the Y&NY Chambers of Commerce are using the report in the development of York's Local Skills Improvement Plan.
16. The remaining £50k of this fund remains unallocated. We have received a request from the Big Tent Project for this funding which is discussed at the end of this report.

### ***Community Job Fairs***

17. The £30k allocated to this project has been delivered to York Learning to help run Community Job Fairs. The purpose behind this funding was to ensure that jobs fairs not only occurred in the city centre but in York's communities, to make it easier for communities to access employment opportunities. This is in addition to the twice-yearly fairs held at the York Railway Institute.
18. The latest job fair was held in February 2022 in Acomb, where there were 268 job seekers and 23 exhibitors offering employment opportunities. The next one is planned for 22 March at York Railway Institute.
19. York Learning will continue to run these community job fairs up to 2025 through this funding.

### ***14+ Vocational Training and Work***

20. This project is now complete. For an update on the project as a whole see the paper that went to the [Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning's decision session](#) in November 2022.

### ***Independent Retail Growth Fund (IRGF)***

21. Eight traders' associations and business groups received small grants from the IRGF in July 2022. The reasons for funding were ostensibly

intended to boost local economies, promote small independent businesses, and increase footfall.

22. Each business or organisation has reported on how funding was spent as part of their grant funding agreement, much of which has had a far-reaching impact on the local community, visitors and the businesses themselves. Allocated amounts and their updates are as follows:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Amount received</b>
Indie York	£2,500
Bishy Road Traders' Association	£2,500
Acomb Alive!	£2,500
Haxby and Wigginton Traders' Association	£5,000
Goodramgate Traders' Association	£3,965
Micklegate Business Initiative	£3,500
York Wedding Suppliers	£2,500
York Market Traders' Forum	£2,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>£24,965</b>

23. Appendix B to this report includes a breakdown of how each organisation used the funding.

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

24. Three different projects have been developed and supported since the last update, with all the funding now allocated.
25. The first of which builds on the initial project delivered under this fund, which was the 'Building Business Resilience' report with York St John University in 2021. Using the recommendations of this report, we have provided £5k to support York St John Communities Centre to deliver free wellbeing coaching sessions to business owners, employees and the self-employed in York.
26. In these 1-2-1 coaching sessions, the coach's role is to use their skills of listening, reflecting, and questioning to help the client:
- explore their life and the field of possibilities that's open to them
  - identify their untapped resources and unrealised potential
  - choose which courses of action make most sense to them
  - make the desired changes to their life

27. Each client will be offered a series of five coaching sessions and can be provided by telephone, and online through Zoom or MS Teams. The sessions will be up and running for March 2023.
28. The second project supported through this fund is with York Mind. We have provided them £12.5k to offer two services to the business community.
29. The first of these services is free mental health training, which are focused on how to look after your employees and how to look after yourself as a business owner. These sessions will help attendees learn about developing a mental health strategy for their business, ensuring that staff are educated and supported to take care of their mental wellbeing. They will be running both in-person and online from March to June 2023.
30. In addition, we have supported York Mind to develop a knowledge hub for small businesses in York. Through the hub businesses will be able to access a wide range of resources to help them implement a wellbeing strategy for their staff, as well as to support the needs of business owners themselves. This content will include the likes of webinars, short videos, leaflets, posters, blog posts and links to other useful resources.
31. The knowledge hub will be free to access for 6 months. After the 6 month-period, the hub will become a paid service and users will have the choice to continue subscribing. In doing so, it is hoped that this will help achieve a core aim of the inclusive growth fund, which was to fund one off pieces of work so that they can become self-sustaining and support inclusive growth over the long-term. The knowledge hub will launch in April 2023.
32. The third project funded was delivered in conjunction with the [Burnt Chef Project](#). Hospitality professionals can face long antisocial hours and tough environmental conditions on a daily basis and The Burnt Chef Project is working to tackle the work-related stress in the hospitality industry through training.
33. Across February 2023, the Burnt Chef Project ran 2 ‘Manager’s Mental Health Awareness’ workshops for anyone with a supervisory role in the hospitality industry in York. The workshops covered mental health in hospitality, the role of a manager, how to talk to someone about their mental health and provide self-care tips and resources.

34. Over 20 managers in the hospitality industry in York were supported with this free training, which was made possible through this fund.
35. At the end of January, the Council laid on an event to announce all these new offers, along with the existing free resources such as the services offered by York Ending Stigma, St Nicks and the FSB. Representatives from different organisations spoke at the event, such as the Health and Safety Executive, to champion the work York is doing in this area and encourage businesses and employees to utilise these free resources. The Council has since developed a [webpage](#) that lists all these resources and will promote it to the business community through its weekly business newsletter and social media channels.

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

36. The City's *Economic Strategy* was agreed by the Council's Executive on 22 November as part of the 10 Year Strategy and Policy framework, which also includes Climate Health and Wellbeing 10 year strategies, and the 10 year City Plan.
37. Full Council ratified the Economic Strategy on 15 December 2022 as part of report from the Executive Leader on the 10 Year Strategy and Policy Framework.
38. A preliminary meeting of the new Economic Partnership was held in October 2022. The Partnership discussed the new Economic Strategy, including its impact on equalities issues. The Partnership will meet again in March 2023.
39. The fund supported the consultation process of the strategy, which included the two rounds of the 'Our Big Conversation' across the summers of 2021 and 2022 and the consultation with York Citizens Advice. It also supported the case studies and photography that form part of the strategy document, ensuring that the diversity of York's business community is represented in the 10 year Economic strategy.

### **Remaining Funds of the Inclusive Growth Fund**

40. £50k of the 'Greening our Retail Estate' funding remains unallocated and if not allocated will be used to meet budget challenges elsewhere in the council's revenue budget.

41. Through discussions with the Executive Member, the 'Big Tent' project have requested £30k of support for the York 'Big Tent Ideas and Festival Summit' in June 2023.
42. The Big Tent Festival's aim across two days is to stimulate regeneration in York and nationally, and specifically support left behind communities. This includes physical, economic, cultural, social, and religious regeneration.
43. They intend to do this through organising a two day festival with a range of events and activities that provide a platform to showcase to policy makers and influencers the innovation, creative thinking, opportunities and challenges in York and the North Yorkshire region. They state it will provoke new thinking and actions, promote policies, actions, and investments to support sustainable inclusive growth, and demonstrate to business, academia, civil society and the community at large the value of constructive political engagement and even civil disagreement in changing lives for the better.
44. The organisers have listed ways in which the events would support inclusive growth in the city. These include:
  - Working with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation to develop a stream of programming around their emerging futures programme to redesign economic and social models to reduce poverty
  - Working with developers in the city to showcase models for sustainable growth
  - Creating platforms for local people to have their say on reforming the city and the country through, in particular, the Speakers Corner and art wall
  - Working with the York and North Yorkshire Growth Hub and York St John's University to bring new investment to York start-up and scale-up businesses through the pitch pit
  - Working with the Yahala-Mataam pop-up restaurant run by York's refugee communities to provide a platform for them to showcase their food and cultures, and to talk about their experiences
  - Working with York's Inclusive Equal Right UK 3.0 group to promote York's anti-racism strategy at the events



- Working with local schools to provide free coding lessons to pupils and present back findings to the Summit
- Working with Matt+Fiona Consultancy to engage young people in developing visions for their built environment and empower them to bring that vision to life during the events.
- Providing a Community Fayre for local community groups to reach out to attendees to explain their work and engage new clients, volunteers, and users
- Tendering work and partnership opportunities to local independent businesses first and use local providers wherever practically possible, such as their Festival bookshop which will be run by the Little Apple Bookshop.
- Providing paid and unpaid opportunities for local students and young people to work on the Festival, providing stewarding and in other roles.
- Making tickets free to all for the Ideas Festival with a partnership to promote in partnership with JRF

45. If the Executive Member wishes to support this initiative, there is sufficient funding remaining to provide a £30k grant from the fund. The balance of unallocated funding would be used to support pressures elsewhere in the Council budget.

## Council Plan

46. 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** – the proposed project to green the Council’s retail estate will address the Council’s climate change challenge.
- **Equalities** - The Council needs to take into account the Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it in the exercise of a public authority’s functions). A number of the proposed projects will positively support the Council’s equalities objectives and an Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out for each one;
- **Legal** – the provisions governing grants as set out in the Contract Procedure Rules will need to be followed in order to ensure best value is being obtained in respect of the use of the grant funding;
- **Crime and Disorder** – no implications;
- **Information Technology (IT)** – no implications;
- **Property** – no implications.

## Risk Management

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

## Contact Details

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### Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

**Tracey Carter**  
**Director – Housing, Economy & Regeneration**

Report  Date 15 March 2023  
 Approved

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

For further information please contact the author of the report

## Background papers

**Appendix A:** York Green Jobs and Skills report

**Appendix B:** Independent Retail Fund – feedback from traders

## **List of Abbreviations Used in this Report**

CVS – Centre for Voluntary Services

FSB – Federation of Small Businesses

LEP – Local Enterprise Partnership