



Notice of a public

Decision Session - Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning

To: Councillor Waller (Executive Member)

Date: Monday, 28 February 2022

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: The Snow Room - Ground Floor, West Offices (G035)

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 Democracy Support Group by:

4:00 pm on Wednesday 2 March 2022 if an item is called in *after* a decision has been taken.

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

Written representations in respect of item on this agenda should be submitted to Democratic Services by **5.00pm on Thursday 24 February 2022**.

1. **Declarations of Interest**

At this point in the meeting, the Executive Member is asked to declare:

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

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

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

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 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.

Please note that our registration deadlines have changed to 2 working days before the meeting. The deadline for registering at this meeting is **5:00pm on Thursday 24 February 2021**.

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 relevant Democracy Officer, on the details 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. York Business Week – 2021 Review (Pages 5 - 12)

To present the Executive Member with an evaluation of York Business Week 2021, and to propose changes to its operating model for the future.

5. Urgent Business

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

Democracy Officer

Joseph Kennally

Contact details:

- Telephone – (01904) 551573
- Email joseph.kennally@york.gov.uk

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**

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

- Registering to speak
- Written Representations
- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports

Contact details are set out above

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City Of York Council

Committee Minutes

Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning
Date	25 January 2022
Present	Councillor Waller

31. 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 discloseable pecuniary interest that they might have in respect of the business on the agenda. None were declared.

32. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meetings held on the 23 November 2021 and 15 December 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Executive Member.

33. Public Participation

It was reported that there were two registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Cllr Mark Warters spoke on matters relating to the general remit of the decision session. He spoke on the motion passed by Full Council on 16 December 2021 to review the Houses in Multiple Occupation supplementary planning document, which he stated called for 50% reduction in acceptable percentage thresholds for the proportion of HMO properties in York and for the HMO database to be published publicly. Cllr Warters stated the he had written the Executive Member two days after the Full Council meeting to ask him to progress those actions, but had not had a response until 24 January 2022. He asked the Executive Member whether a reduction in percentage thresholds for HMOs needed to go to a 12 month public consultation, and he asked when the HMO database would be published on the council website.

Cllr Claire Douglas spoke on item 4, Quarterly Economic Update. She stated the Omicron variant of Covid-19 had made January 2022 a difficult period for businesses in the city, calling on all stakeholders to work together to encourage local residents and visitors to engage in economic activity in the city. Cllr Douglas argued that although York's economy had recovered well generally, not all of the city's shopping areas had done so equally. She stated that traders and businesses on Acomb Front Street were seeing reduced levels of business due to increases in the cost of living, arguing for the outcome of a consultation on how to spend money allocated to the regeneration of the street to be released.

34. Quarterly Economic Update

The Executive Member considered a report which provided him with an update on key measures of the economy, emerging issues and achievements. The Director of Housing, Economy and Regeneration and the Economic Growth Manager were in attendance to present the report and respond to questions.

Key points raised during the presentation of the report included:

- The national economic situation was turbulent with supply chain issues, staff shortages, rising energy costs and inflation, however York had shown resilience throughout these issues.
- The Job Retention and Self-Employment Income Support Schemes closed ended in September 2022. When it closed, there were just under 2,500 people furloughed on the former scheme, down from a peak of 16,000 in January 2021.
- York remained the best performing city on the Centre for Cities Unemployment Tracker – with 2.2% of the working age population claiming unemployment benefits.
- 2021 was likely to have seen the lowest number of new business in the city for some time. However, there were measures being put in place to increase the number of start-up businesses, including a York Entrepreneurs event to promote self-employment and encourage the creation of new businesses in the city.
- York was in the top 3 cities and large towns nationally for levels of footfall and spend in the city centre, with 850,000 visitors in October 2021. 20% of these were from the York

local authority area, and 50% were from 50km or further from the city centre.

- There had been 3 roundtable meetings to stimulate innovation and sector development for the railway industry in York, alongside the preparations for York's pitch to host the headquarters for Great British Railways.
- Work had been undertaken with the Local Enterprise Partnership and Skills Team on the government's Skills Boot Camps to help ensure that residents have the necessary skills to access sustainable employment.
- Growth managers had supported 65 businesses in York and 23 inward investment enquiries.
- York Business Week took place during November 2021, with over 35 events and 600 delegates in attendance.
- Government announced that Active Travel England as a body to promote active travel as a means of decarbonising transport will be based in York.

The Executive Member commented that:

- It was important to demonstrate the importance of the economy of the whole city, rather than just the city centre, and to support more local business areas.
- He appreciated the work done during York Business Week.
- While he was pleased to see data showing York's relatively strong economic recovery, it was important to continue matching vacancies to job seekers and to develop the skills in local residents.
- There were significant opportunities in the rail industry for York in future.

Resolved:

- i. That the contents of the report be noted.

Reason: To support York's economic response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Cllr A Waller, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 10.27 am].

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

28th February 2022

Review of York Business Week 2021

Summary

1. York Business Week (YBW) is an annual event celebrating and supporting businesses in the city. The 2021 event was led by the Council's Economic Growth Team, delivered in partnership with York's business membership organisations and city partners.
2. An evaluation of Business Week 2021 was undertaken through a survey which sought to gather feedback from York's business community on last year's programme of events. There were 35 events attracting over 600 delegates. The Business Conference, networking events, peer to peer support, leadership and wellbeing were the most popular events and topics. The week was particularly popular with small businesses, with fifty eight percent of delegates from small companies of 1 to 5 employees, and reached a new audience with over 60% of delegates being first time attendees at council events.
3. Based on feedback there are a number of ideas to further develop the event in the coming years including programme and delivery infrastructure development and a review of the YBW website. The operating model options include a similar style event to the last YBW with the council providing virtual events and partners having the option to deliver in-person events, as delegates flagged a preference for a mix of virtual and hybrid events. Another option is to reduce the number of Council events that take place during a week-long YBW and for the Council to also deliver a series of events throughout the year akin to the Young Entrepreneurs event that took place this month, and, the business support events that the Council's Growth Managers are planning for this quarter. It is proposed that the Council's Economic Growth team undertakes further engagement with York's business membership

groups before taking a report back to the Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning on this in the spring.

Recommendations

4. The Executive Member is asked to:
 - 1) Note the contents of the report
 - 2) Consider the alternate operating models for York Business Week moving forwards (paras 16 – 20)
 - 3) Support further engagement with partners on the future operating model for York Business Week with a report coming back to a Decision Session in the spring

Reason: To support the Council's delivery of business-focused events across York.

Report

5. York Business Week is an annual event celebrating and supporting businesses in the city. Historically the event has been delivered by the Business Events Teams at Make It York and delivered on a commercial basis with sponsor partners.
6. The recent re-amalgamation of the Make it York Business Team with City of York Council's Economic Growth Team meant that last year's event was delivered on a free of charge basis by the Economic Growth Team with partners including the Federation of Small Businesses, York & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce, the Institute of Directors, York BID, Make it York, the University of York, York St John University, York & North Yorkshire LEP and the Ad:venture Programme.
7. The aims of the event were to:
 - Inspire and celebrate local business success
 - Deliver a series of virtual events to address current business aims
 - Understand the middle and longer term opportunities for growth
 - Showcase the Council and partners' practical support for local companies.

8. The week-long programme of activities featured a mixture of 35 virtual and in-person events attracting over 600 delegates and included sessions/workshops on skills, start up support, marketing, networking, mental health & wellbeing, business growth, sustainability, access to finance, carbon reduction and retail trends to highlight a few.
9. The week opened with the Business Week Conference, the Council's flagship event, and featured talks on the Good Business Charter, Local Economic Insights, and the new Labour Market. There was also talks on Reshaping the Economy and supporting Business Recovery along with a panel Q&A session.
10. As part of York Business Week, the Economic Growth Team also secured a visit to Haxby from the national Small Business Saturday (SBS) campaign fleet. The SBS campaign last year was titled 'Small Business, Big Thank You', which was especially pertinent after a difficult couple of years for businesses as a result of the pandemic, and is also entirely suited to the wide range of small and micro businesses in the area. This took place on Tuesday 9th November 2021 and was a great opportunity to showcase local businesses and the local area in the run up to Christmas. The full day event saw the arrival of the fleet - an electric car, scooter and a van, and 6 businesses were interviewed about their businesses and products on local radio. The event was well attended and the national organiser described it a one of the best outings they had during the entire campaign.
11. York Business Week delegates were asked to complete an evaluation survey to give feedback as well as an indication of what they considered to be the more popular events. The main evaluation points from the survey include:
 - Over 45% attended 1-2 events and over 40% attended 3-5 events
 - Over 50% delegates wanted to attend more events but didn't have the time
 - The Business Conference, networking events, peer to peer support, leadership and wellbeing were the most popular events and topics
 - Delegates would like to see more hybrid events
 - 58% of delegates were from small companies (1-5 employees)

- Over 60% of delegates were first time delegates to Council events with all saying they are likely to attend other events
 - It was felt there were too many events crammed into the week.
12. **Costs** – This year’s event was delivered on a very limited budget with the only significant cost being a basic update and development of the YBW website. The website is held, maintained and updated by an external company and the cost of this was £560 +VAT. The Council’s virtual events were delivered via existing virtual meeting platforms, and partners who delivered in-person events met all costs associated with room hire, refreshments and AV etc.
13. **Benefits** – The survey feedback suggests businesses value the business support the week provides and anecdotal feedback gathered in conversations and across networking sessions suggest the same:
- Several businesses that attended the Leadership Challenge said it was the best thing they could have done with their new business and it gave them the confidence to successfully implement ideas they were initially hesitant about
 - The Ad:Venture start up programme delivered intensive start up business support to over 14 businesses
 - The CYC Sustainable Building in-person event sold out and was a very popular event with delegates attending from across York and North Yorkshire
 - The Small Business Saturday visit directly supported 6 local businesses from the Haxby and Wigginton area with marketing and promotional support through local radio airtime and SBS promotions
 - The Growth Managers’ peer to peer sessions were already hugely popular but the YBW showcase gave them added exposure and appeal to attract even more delegates on an ongoing basis. Themes tackled to date include: sales; marketing; branding; social media; SEO; data protection; start-up support; skills; HR; furlough; working remotely; legal; R&D tax credits; and investments
 - Partner events such as The BID’s session on the future of retail were well attended and provided high quality and thought provoking external speakers

- The business conference provides a local and regional economic overview and informs stakeholders of the Council's strategic approach to guiding the development of York's economy.

The Future of York Business Week

14. Historically YBW was delivered by the Events and Business Teams at MIY on a commercial basis. Special efforts were made to find sponsorship partners which generated up to £20,000 to deliver the week long programme of activities. This allowed MIY to employ an AV company, hire venues for the different events, a host for the business conference, and provide lunch and refreshments. The Events Team facilitated the delivery function and the Graphic Design and Web Teams provided printed promotional material and website development and updates. However, this requires a significant time and resource commitment to curate and deliver a full week of events in this fashion. Since the re-amalgamation of the inward investment function with the Council's Economic Growth Team there is no longer the available resources to secure sponsorship or the personnel to curate and deliver an intensive in-person program in the way the larger team at MIY had done previously.
15. In reflection of this, and combined with the pandemic and ensuing lockdown, the 2021 week's activities switched to a virtual platform which eliminated most of the costs associated with venue hire, refreshments and AV. This allowed the Economic Growth Team and partners to deliver York Business Week relatively cost free. If York Business Week was to operate as it had previously been done through Make it York, it would have required a considerable budget (c. £15,000) and personnel to maintain a similar in-person delivery standard.
16. The success of this approach and the positive feedback received means that consideration should be given to replicating this operating model moving forwards, allowing a cost effective approach with partners that maximises participation through a mixture of virtual and in-person events. The Council is able to deliver most of its events on a virtual basis and partners have the option of in-person or hybrid events where they can cover any delivery costs.
17. The benefit of this model is clear in that the council incurs modest costs and any other costs are spread across the partnership. However, the caveat is we lose some operational control and it would make sense to secure support from the Council's Web Services team to update and develop the YBW website as there are likely to be costs associated with

this should we continue to work with an external company. We can also explore how the YBW website could be developed to promote Council and partner business events across the year. Moving forwards, we would need more lead in time to strengthen and align the delivery model with partners.

18. In addition to this approach there is the option to reduce the number of Council events that take place during a week-long YBW and spread them over a 12 month period. This would allow a targeted focus on particular themes throughout the year, and mean that events during business week are not having to compete for delegate time during a busy schedule of events. It would also allow the team to spread the required resources across annually rather than an intensive focus for 4 or 5 months of the year.
19. The aforementioned approach also has the added benefit of allowing time and resources to focus on other key work priorities such as ongoing work with different sectors including roundtables, which enhances the Council's business relationships with local companies and provides a huge amount of business intelligence as we have seen with the recent rail sector roundtables including:
 - Garnering support, advice and intelligence to support the Great British Railways bid to bring the new rail HQ to the city
 - Starting an initiative with Siemens, the National Railway Museum and the Railway Industry Association to create awareness of the rail sector as an employer in schools across the city
 - Harnessing the collective industry and National Skills Academy for Rail ambition to create a Rail Skills Centre of Excellence in York, and incorporating this into the city's Skills Strategy
 - Introducing York's colleges to the rail sector to work with students on delivering a catering service to a local operator and participate in business and sustainability projects
 - Working with industry and the York Career Ready programme to provide work placements and internship opportunities to local students
20. It is therefore proposed that the Council's Economic Growth team undertakes further engagement with York's business membership groups and city partners to develop the future operating model options

for York Business Week outlined above, with a report back to the Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning in the spring.

The Role of Economic Development

21. Economic development plays a critical role in driving economic growth, supporting good quality employment and facilitating an improvement in residents' quality of life. The Economic Growth Team play a pivotal role in enabling and sustaining employment in the city contributing to a successful local economy. The Business Week programme, whether through an intensive week of events or targeted events throughout the year, is a key tool to do this, and coupled with existing work through sector roundtables, provides a focal point for key issues and targeted support.

Council Plan

22. The Business Week activities in which ever form, continues to addresses 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;
 - Safe communities and culture for all; and,
 - An open and effective council.

Implications

- **Financial** – Potential staff costs associated with bringing the YBW website in house
- **Human Resources (HR)** – no implications;
- **One Planet Council / Equalities** – our work positively supports the Council's equalities objectives;
- **Legal** – no implications;
- **Crime and Disorder** – no implications;
- **Information Technology (IT)** – no implications;
- **Property** – no direct 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 of Housing Economy and
Regeneration

Report
Approved



Date: 16 February 2022

Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: n/a

List of Abbreviations Used in this Report:

AV – Audio visual
B2B – Business to business
BID – Business Improvement District
CYC – City of York Council
HQ – Headquarters
HR – Human resources
LEP – Local Enterprise Partnership
MIY – Make it York
R&D – Research and development
SBS – Small Business Saturday
SEO – Search engine optimisation
YBW – York Business Week