
Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning
Date	1 November 2022
Present	Councillor Mason
Officers in Attendance	Simon Brereton, Head of Economic Growth Will Clarke, Economic Growth Officer Anthony Dean, Public Protection Manager

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (16:00)

The Executive Member was asked to declare, at this point in the meeting, any disclosable pecuniary interests or other registerable interests he might have in respect of business on the agenda, if he had not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests. None were declared.

15. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (16:00)

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

Councillor Kilbane spoke about the Inclusive Growth Fund. He spoke about the cost of living crisis and income disparities within York, explaining that economic circumstances are the main determinant of life expectancy. He also argued for targeted intervention and financial inclusion in certain areas in York, including places in Clifton, Tang Hall and Westfield.

Flick Williams spoke about access issues for the York Christmas Markets and asked questions regarding changes of footstreet hours, what training was provided to barrier guards, and what changes have been introduced to improve the temporary barriers on Spurriergate for people with access needs.

16. **FOOD SERVICE PLAN (16:07)**

The Executive Member considered a report that presented the Food Service Plan for 2022/2023, which is a statutory requirement for the Council, and this is overseen by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The Public Protection Manager provided a review of what was achieved in 2021/22 and summarised what the Council plan to do to ensure compliance in 2022/23 in terms of hygiene and standards.

He noted that in 2021/22, all onsite inspections for A and B rated premises were completed but the requirement to inspect all C rated premises was not achieved due to several issues. Of those inspected, 86% were broadly compliant with 41% achieving a food hygiene rating score of 5. In terms of food standards, the Council also had to undertake an assessment on all the unrated businesses, of which there were 1100 on the register. Overall, following interventions, 382 written warnings were issued, 2 premises voluntarily closed, 5 hygiene improvement notices were served and there are 3 pending prosecutions being considered.

For 2022/23, the Council plans to comply with the minimum FSA standards but also go beyond it to deal with a backlog of inspections as a result of the pandemic. They aim to inspect A, B and C rated premises alongside inspect premises that are non-broadly compliant, rated 3 or 4, butchers' shop, newly registered businesses and ones that have had complaints. Animal food and feed inspections will be undertaken by North Yorkshire County Council.

The Executive Member welcomed the Plan and in answer to his questions, Officers confirmed that food standards across businesses have partially dropped, and this can be attributed to the pandemic, financial restrictions, and staffing, amongst others. They then highlighted the importance of these wider inspections to ensure businesses are compliant with regulations and that standards don't drop.

Resolved:

- i. That the Food Service plan is approved.

Reason: To ensure the Council has a plan to fulfil its obligations under the Food Law Code of Practice.

17. INCLUSIVE GROWTH FUND UPDATE (16:16)

The Executive Member considered a report that provided an update on the actions set out in the Inclusive Growth Fund, as agreed by the Executive Member at the Decision Session on 18 September 2019.

Officers provided a background to the Fund and some of its eight inclusive growth projects, the challenges faced and the successes since its approval in September 2019. They also confirmed that York has signed up to the Good Business Charter before explaining that all of the Inclusive Growth funding has now been committed to the projects, with the commitment that it will be spent by the end of the 2022/23 financial year.

The Head of Economic Growth then addressed some comments from public participants and discussed the importance of the York Poverty Truth Commission, which communicates with experts, residents, and local businesses to understand issues, during the cost of living crisis. He then went on to explain that residents across the whole city are experiencing difficult economic circumstances so there needs to be an inclusive strategy for all residents. Rising costs for small businesses were also noted and Officers confirmed that the Council is focussing on assisting them through this Fund and other projects.

The Executive Member welcomed the strategy, especially in relation to small businesses and mental health support, during the pandemic and the cost of living crisis;

Resolved:

- i. That the progress made on the agreed Inclusive Growth Fund projects be noted.

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

18. QUARTERLY ECONOMIC UPDATE (16:28)

The Executive Member considered a report providing updates on the local financial climate, core business support work and Council-led initiatives, and included an update on the state of the national and local economy, key account management work, progress against major milestones, and inward investment.

The Head of Economic Growth detailed the report, highlighting that the price of energy and petrol is driving inflation and having a large impact on households and businesses. He explained that this has affected mortgage rates, business borrowing costs, business loans, debts, transport costs and wage resulting in low confidence levels for businesses. He also stated that the Council predicts 1 in 5 households in York will suffer due to the cost of living increase.

He noted that job vacancies continue to rise with around 3,800 jobs available within a 5 mile radius of York. Unemployment rates remain level with 2,440 people claiming out of work benefits, but he explained that this is still higher than pre-pandemic levels.

Officers highlighted the York Business festival which is a month long event focussing on supporting businesses to find ways to alleviate costs and trade better this month and encouraged people to sign up. They also provided updates on the Great British Rail bid, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the additional Covid-19 relief fund from which nearly 1000 local businesses benefited from, and the Good Business Charter before he confirmed 100 businesses from York have signed up to it, including Make it York and Yorwaste.

The Executive Member expressed agreement with the concerns set out in the report and,

Resolved:

- i. That the Quarterly Economic Update report is noted.

Reason: To support York's ongoing economic work and understand how York is performing from an economic perspective.

CLLR A MASON, Executive Member
[The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 4.39 pm].