

Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Finance and Performance in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing & Safer Neighbourhoods (Agenda Item 4, Financial Inclusion/Welfare Benefits Update Report) and the Executive Member for Economy & Strategic Planning (Agenda Item 5, Omicron Business Support Grants)
Date	14 February 2022
Present	Councillors Ayre, Craghill [until 10.10am] and Waller [until 10.20am]

6. 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 disclosable pecuniary interests that he might have had in respect of business on the agenda. They confirmed they had none.

7. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the Decision Session held on 13 December 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Executive Member.

8. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

9. Financial Inclusion/Welfare Benefits Update Report

The Executive Members considered a report that detailed a number of financial inclusion activities. The Director of Customer and Communities gave an overview of the activities, explaining the renewed Service Level Agreement with the Welfare Benefits Unit, updating on the Financial Inclusion Steering Group (FISG) 2022/23 grant scheme, and detailing the proposed funding of a Community Involvement Officer to deliver actions relating to food poverty priorities.

The Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods welcomed the proposals noting that the Welfare Benefits Unit did crucial work in York and she commended their advisors for this. She noted the progress of the financial inclusion grant scheme, adding that she was happy to extend the work of the digital advisors. She also welcomed the funding of the Community Involvement Officer post in addressing the right to food motion at Council. She added that the York Food Poverty Alliance brought together grass roots groups and volunteers in providing a way into more formal networks. The Executive Member for Finance and Performance noted the work of the Welfare Benefits Unit in supporting individuals and communities. It was then;

Resolved:

- i. That the Service Level Agreement for the Welfare Benefits Unit at Annex A for a period of 3 years 2022 to 2025 at a cost of £22,700 per year (as detailed in paragraphs 3-6 of the report) be approved;
- ii. That the criteria and progress of the 2022/23 FISG grant scheme including the approvals of awards at the next Executive Member Decision Session for Finance & Performance on 16 March 2022 (as detailed in see paragraphs 7-12 of the report) be noted;
- iii. That £39k funding for a Community Involvement Officer role to deliver actions relating to food poverty priorities in the city be approved. This will be funded from the existing York Financial Assistance Scheme Emergency Fund for one year (as detailed in see paragraphs 13-17 and 26 of the report);
- iv. That the use of funding previously agreed by Executive on 30 September for a 100% Digital York Project Co-ordinator, over an 18 month period rather than a year (as detailed in see paragraph 18 and 19 of the report) be approved.

Reason: To ensure councillors, residents and stakeholder groups are aware of the ongoing financial inclusion activity across the city and use of associated funding and approvals.

[Cllr Craghill left the meeting at 10.10am]

10. Omicron Business Support Grants

The Executive Members considered a report that presented with them with the new Omicron business grants schemes for approval. The report also includes the officer decisions on the Covid Additional Relief Fund (CARF)

and the new Omicron Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) made on 21 January 2022 and 2 February 2022 respectively for ratification.

The Head of Customer and Exchequer Services explained the funding received for each of the schemes. He noted that all reliefs will need to have been applied by 30 September 2022 and the council would be writing to businesses to inform them of their eligibility.

The Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning noted that the system had become complex and he thanks officers for their work on this. He also noted the work of the Economic Growth team in providing advice to businesses. He thanked the Federation of Small Businesses, York and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce, York Business Improvement District, Traders Associations and York Retail Forum for putting messages across to businesses. He noted the importance of the inclusion of many businesses in receiving the grants. The Executive Member for Finance and Performance noted the importance of getting funding to businesses speedily and he thanked staff for their work. It was then;

Resolved:

- a) That the adoption of the Government's Omicron Hospitality & Leisure Grant (OHLG) made at Executive on 13 January 2022 (as detailed in paragraphs 6 – 10 and Annex A of the report) be noted;
- b) That the Officer Decision of 2 February in delivering the new Omicron ARG scheme (as detailed in paragraphs Paragraph 11 – 14 and Annex B & C of the report) be ratified;
- c) That the Officer Decision of 21 January in delivering the new CARF scheme(as detailed in paragraphs Paragraph 16 – 20 and Annex D & E of the report) be ratified;
- d) That the delegation of any future changes resulting from government guidance in relation to all schemes in this report be given to the Chief Finance Officer (s151), Director of Economy & Place and Director of Customer & Communities in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and Performance.

Reason: To provide financial support to the city's businesses during the ongoing covid-19 pandemic and the impact of the Omicron Variant.

[Cllr Waller left the meeting at 10.20am]

11. Application for Community Right to Bid under the Localism Act 2011

The Executive Member considered a report that detailed an application to list Holgate Allotments, York as an Asset of Community Value (ACV), for consideration by the Council. The application had been made by Holgate Allotment Association. The Asset Manager explained that the allotments had been removed from the ACV list after 5 years from date of listing. This application was a request to re-add the site onto the Council's ACV list (for a further period of 5 years). He added that the council legal team had confirmed that the application was valid, that no objections had been received, and that the application had received support from York Allotments CIO (YACIO) and the Headteacher of St Paul's CE Primary School. The Executive Member confirmed he was happy to accept the recommendation to approve the renewal of the ACV listing and then;

Resolved: That approval be given to the renewal of the listing of Holgate Allotments, York, as an Asset of Community Value (ACV).

Reason: To ensure the Council meets its legislative requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and promotes community access to community facilities.

Cllr N Ayre, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 10.21 am].