
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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