

York Economic Strategy and Economic Partnership

Summary

1. This report presents the draft Economic Strategy 2022-2030, a commitment to York and its economic future, and the city's blueprint for financial stability, growth and prosperity. (See Annex A)
2. This is an updated version of the Council's existing Economic Strategy 2016 – 2020, and has been in development for several years. Whilst this period of time has been extended due to the COVID pandemic, it has also allowed for a rigorous consultation process with contributions from hundreds of key organisations, business and stakeholders from across the City, as well as York residents themselves
3. This has resulted in the development of a robust Strategy, underpinned by five core themes to nurture an inclusive, sustainable economy, providing opportunity for all.
4. To support the development and implementation of the Economic Strategy Delivery Plan, a Partnership Board will be established to influence and guide future progress against targets set.

Recommendations

5. The Executive Member is asked to:
 - i) Approve the draft Economic Strategy
 - ii) Initiate the next phase of consultation for the strategy
 - iii) Approve the draft terms of reference for the Economic Partnership

Reasons:

- i) To support the content and purpose of the next Economic Strategy for York

- ii) To agree that all key required elements of the Strategy are present
- iii) To allow for preparation of a complete Strategy for final approval Executive in October 2022.

The Economic Strategy

6. The process of developing the Strategy began in 2019, and has been through several phases of development.
7. The Executive Member last received a formal update on the [progress of the Economic Strategy](#) in October 2021 setting out ongoing consultation programmes and results, and outlining the development of the key themes central to driving and delivering the Strategy.

Strategy themes

8. To align with the key economic ambitions for York, regional and national considerations and the Levelling Up agenda, five themes, each with sub-strands, have been developed as the nucleus of the Strategy. These are:
 - **York as a global city:** How our economy relates to the world beyond the York boundary; import, export and trade; inward investment; attracting customers from elsewhere. The importance of links with places outside of York, whether international or much closer to home. Our global strengths – a unique rail cluster, the emerging Bio-economy, our UNESCO designation as city of media arts – are at the heart of our ambitions
 - **A greener economy:** As our Climate Change Strategy shows, York cannot become net-zero without businesses playing their part. The city can help businesses as they seek to reduce their carbon footprints, understand their environmental impact, reduce energy use and keep short and long term costs down, and it is vital that we do so. The green economy is growing and can provide new opportunities through initiatives such as BioYorkshire, building the green jobs of the future that will support our city's net zero ambition.
 - **A thriving workforce:** Our Skills Strategy has already set out a clear vision to helping the people of York develop the skills and attributes needed in the 21st century economy. We need to focus on the work-life blend, helping businesses to get the most from their employees and enabling the people of York to find the best opportunities to make a decent living. Thriving isn't just about earning money, and health and wellbeing are equally important. Businesses are vital to supporting wellbeing, both as employers

and providers. We need to further strengthen links between education and business to help young people thrive while maximising the potential of career changers and retraining to provide the workforce of the future.

- **Thriving businesses:** As businesses change and grow, there is much that York can do to guide and enable decisions that fit with our city's vision. The role of infrastructure – our transport networks, our built environment, our education and health systems, our digital networks – is to support York and its economy develop. We need to enable workspace to develop for in a post pandemic world, enabling businesses to adapt to new models of hybrid and flexible working. Future proofing York's economic space, from the city centre to our business estates, are at the heart of our ambitions, and the Planning system is key to guiding change. In the Covid pandemic, we have recognised the importance of our small and micro businesses, developing innovative approaches to supporting their role in helping our people to thrive. Continued help is needed for this vital part of our economy which is overlooked in national and regional support.
- **An economy driven by good business:** Whether it is supporting our net zero commitments, helping our residents to thrive, or inspiring the next generation, good business is at the heart of our strategy. In becoming the first Good Business Charter City, York has demonstrated that we embrace the benefits of ethical business, and we want to continue to grow that model. We can help to strengthen links between business and community, and show how working together in business networks and associations can help both businesses and their employees to thrive.

9. In order to illustrate each of the themes, case studies from local business sharing their lived experience and best practise will form part of the final strategy.

Consultation, key strategies and economic evidence base

10. Engagement has been a core part of the Strategy development process, discussing ambitions and potential content with multiple partners including businesses and business support organisations, traders; associations, Universities, elected Members and Council officers.
11. It has also been informed by our collection and analysis of metrics on the York economy through our Economic Strategy evidence base. From

these qualitative and quantitative information sources we can broadly form a general picture of the current York economy.

12. Online consultation has been undertaken as part of a wider package of emerging Council policies and strategies, the results of which will be fed into the Strategy.
13. In addition, each of the themes either supports, or runs in parallel with, sister plans, strategies, legislation, policies and initiatives to ensure secure threads run between ambition, action and deliverability.
14. Specialist teams from the Council have contributed through the 10-Year Skills Strategy for York, the Council's low carbon commitments, tourism plan, health and wellbeing plans and emerging Climate Change Strategy. More broadly we have also taken into consideration the work of colleagues at York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership through their ['greener, fairer stronger economy' vision](#).
15. This work has helped to identify a baseline for the York economy, as has using ongoing plans and strategies, for example, the two phases of 'Our Big Conversation', 'My City Centre' and the 'Microbusiness Grant Scheme Evaluation'.

York Economic Partnership

16. Over the course of the COVID 19 pandemic, an informal partnership of Business Leaders was developed with the aim of steering York through the through the most challenging of economic landscapes. This group was supported by several local networks, businesses and business organisations, proving to be a good working model for an economic partnership.
17. It is from this collaborative, unified approach from which the proposal for a York Economic Partnership has arisen. Previous iterations of the Economic Strategy have been guided by Economic Partnerships, and this fulfils a specific commitment from the 2019 – 2023 Council to formalise such a partnership.
18. York's Economic Partnership will bring together employers, entrepreneurs, education providers, employee representatives, sector representatives and City of York Council to form part of the city's partnership structures, with the City Leaders' Group providing overall direction and setting the 10 year plan.
19. The Partnership will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the new York Economic Strategy 2022-30, and will seek to facilitate a deep

and long lasting partnership to support the advancement and achievement of the aims set out in York's Economic Strategy.

20. It is expected that members of the Board will represent a broad spectrum of sectors and organisations, and membership will be reviewed annually, and perhaps be temporarily extended to include additional expertise as agreed by the Board.
21. Organisations joining the Board will commit to contributing towards city-wide objectives rather than promoting their own commercial interests.
22. It is proposed that the Board will meet every 6 months, with the frequency of meetings to be reviewed annually, and may establish sub-groups for more detailed work under the five themes of the strategy.
23. Beyond agreeing its own business, the Board is not a decision making body but will advise and make recommendations to the Council
24. The draft Terms of Reference are included at Annex B of this report.

Consultation

25. Consultation to shape the Economic Strategy has been extensive, with engagement with multiple cohorts through roundtable sessions, workshops and meetings, and has been an essential part of the Strategy development. This is set out in paragraphs 11 - 15 above.
26. The development of the strategy and partnership and the evidence base have been presented to multiple Executive Member decision sessions and Scrutiny meetings, as follows:
 - [Agenda for Decision Session - Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning on Wednesday, 20 October 2021, 3.00 pm \(york.gov.uk\)](#) – item 20
 - [January 2022 Quarterly Economic Update.pdf \(york.gov.uk\)](#) 46
 - [Inclusive Growth Update report EMDS April 2022.pdf \(york.gov.uk\)](#) 59
 - [Scrutiny report - Economy & Place Scrutiny - 12th Feb 2020](#)
 - [Scrutiny report - Economy & Place Scrutiny - 24th November 2020](#)
 - [Report to Executive Member for Economy & Strategic Planning Decision Session - 16th March 2020](#)
 - [Report to Executive Member for Economy & Strategic Planning Decision Session - 21st October 2020](#)
 - [Report to Executive Member for Economy & Strategic Planning Decision Session - 26th Jan 2021](#)

- [Report to Executive Member for Economy & Strategic Planning Decision Session - 27th April 2021](#)

Council Plan

27. Our work 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; and,
- Safe communities and culture for all.

28. Implications

- **Financial** – no financial implications;
- **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

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

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Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes:

Annex A: Draft Economic Strategy for York 2022 - 2030

Annex B: York Economic Partnership Draft Terms of Reference

Abbreviations:

SME – Small and medium (business) enterprises