

Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Economic Development and Community Engagement
Date	6 November 2018
Present	Councillor Aspden

9. Declarations of Interest

The Executive Member was asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests that he might have in respect of the business on the agenda. None were declared.

10. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the last Decision Session held on 3 July 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Executive Member.

11. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak on Agenda Item 4 (York's City Centre Economy) under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

12. York's City Centre Economy

The Executive Member considered a report that summarised current understanding of the City Centre economy, progress to date in addressing current challenges, and the options available for short and medium term measures to support sustainable growth in the economy, with a particular emphasis on retail and the city centre.

Dave Merrett spoke in relation to the report. He expressed concern that there was an emphasis on retail rather than office space. He noted that the availability of office space in York was limited and he

urged the Council to look at this. He added that in terms of railway employers, it was difficult to find accommodation in the city. He noted the danger if the residual office sector was not protected, suggesting that York could be vulnerable to companies deciding to leave York.

The Head of Economic Growth gave an overview of the report. The Corporate Director of Economy and Place responded to the points made by Dave Merrett. He noted that office space for the city centre was part of the city centre strategy, and there was to be a dialogue on this as part of Business Week. He outlined the office space planned as part of the York Central programme adding that as part of the My City Centre consultation the use of space would be looked at as part of the vision for the future of the city centre.

In response to a question from the Executive Member, the Head of Economic Growth explained the timescales for the recommendations as detailed in paragraph 6 of the report. He was also asked and explained that the cluster of vacancies in Coney Street arose from the leases coming up at the same time, a number of which properties were owned by overseas companies. It was noted that the Council had worked with the National Trust, who owned a property on Coney Street, adding that the Council did not own any property on Coney Street.

Resolved:

- i. That the Head of Economic Growth be instructed to bring back a report outlining the impact of Business Rates on retailers in the city centre and options to mitigate that impact, if appropriate.

Reason: To support the City Centre Economy.

- ii. That the Head of Economic Growth be instructed to widen the remit of research approved through the Secondary Retail areas funding agreed in June 2018 to cover the city centre, neighbourhood shopping areas and out-of-town retail.

Reason: To support economic growth across the city.

- iii. That the Head of Economic Growth be instructed to explore options to reduce the occupancy costs and environmental impact of our retail portfolio through the use of low energy lighting and heating and the installation of low-carbon energy systems, and to bring back costed proposals for the 2019-20 budget.

Reason: To support the city centre economy.

- iv. That the Head of Economic Growth be instructed to bring forward costed proposals which would support the development of traders' associations and the broader network of independent traders across the city, and explore the potential for York to make an application as a city to the High Street of the Year awards for 2019.

Reason: To support the independent traders as a sector, ensuring the vibrancy of our city centre offer.

- v. That the Head of Economic Growth be instructed to make arrangements to pass the surplus Christmas decorations that the Council holds to Acomb Alive and Haxby Town Council to enhance their local decorations.

Reason: To further support the vibrancy of our Secondary Retail areas.

- vi. That the Executive Member consult with other Group Leaders to seek national agreement on removing Permitted Development Rights for office conversions in the city centre.

Reason: To support the City Centre Economy.

Cllr K Aspden, Chair

[The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 2.25 pm].

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