

12th April 2016

Decision Session
Executive Member, Economic Development and Community
Engagement (Deputy Leader)

Report of the Director of City and Environmental Services

Business Friendly Council: progress update

Summary

1. City of York Council wishes to create an environment where businesses feel that engaging with us is a productive process, and that it is easy to access business advice through the right channels whenever it is needed.
2. A consultation exercise was undertaken with businesses in November 2015 to gauge how the Council is viewed by the business community, and to ask them how they wanted their relationship with the authority to look and feel. The results of this are provided in Annex 1 to this report.
3. Cllr Aspden and council officers have already presented feedback from consultation with businesses and proposed next steps to the Chamber of Commerce.
4. This document sets out the work that has been undertaken to progress our business friendly ambitions since the last report to Executive in December 2015.

Recommendations

5. The Executive Member is asked to:
 - a. Note the work that has been undertaken to reach the objective of becoming a Business Friendly Council.
Reason:
To ensure that the administration is aware of the work being carried out towards becoming a Business Friendly Council.
 - b. Advise which, if any, of the options set out in this paper are preferable to Members as 'next steps', and decide timescales for this work to be undertaken.

Reason:

To develop options agreed by Members within a structured initial timescale, and to provide an update report for discussion by the Executive Member in Autumn 2016.

Background

6. The Council Plan, agreed by Executive in October 2015, includes the ambition to become a Business Friendly Council. This is included as a priority in the joint administration's twelve point plan.
7. A subsequent report in December 2015 reported the results of a consultation survey with businesses, and their experiences of dealing with the Council.
8. Since then various different activities have been undertaken, with more planned, to try and establish what the essence of 'business friendly' is, and how we might achieve this.
9. This report sets out the findings of the consultations, input from partners, staff, and local business, and sets out potential discrete projects that might be undertaken to develop our capacity in this area.

Consultation

10. We have been working closely with a number of partners, to seek opinions, ideas and suggestions from those who deal with business and the local authority on a daily basis, and who, therefore, would be best placed to support the project. The list includes our staff, as well as business groups in the City:
 - Chambers of Commerce,
 - Visit York,
 - The Federation of Small Businesses and;
 - York Professionals
 - Our survey went out to over 1,000 local businesses

Options

11. The table below is a non-exhaustive selection of comments, ideas and suggestions taken from the various sources with whom we have consulted. Some will require financial and staff resource to implement, as well as possible training.

12. There will certainly be time requirements to ensure that the options taken forward are fully investigated and suitable for absorption into Council policy and practice.

13. Advice and notes have been added to aid the Executive Member discussion, without being too prescriptive, although it is felt that an audit of existing business support services and activities is fundamental to the work we are undertaking.

14. In addition, the options have been divided into three distinct themes to ensure that there is clear delineation between them.

Theme 1 – COMMUNICATION

15. This theme considers how we communicate both internally, as well as with business, our information and signposting processes, and what we might do to improve these things.

16. This is by far the broadest category, and therefore the one that has the potential to deliver the greatest impact for business. Over the last few months we have already begun work in this category, and examples of best practice and engagement include:

- The Procurement Team have been working closely with the SME Growth Manager at Make it York, and recently delivered a presentation at a business breakfast seminar entitled 'The Procurement process and engaging with SMEs'. The scope of work they have been undertaking extends far beyond this one session, and their reputation with business is growing in trust and confidence.
- The Customer Service Centre is working with colleagues in ICT to try and streamline the check-in process at West Offices, and links have been made with Make it York to begin work aligning their website content with that of the Council.
- The Public Protection team are heavily involved in a programme of engaging with business to raise awareness of their services and to build strong working relationships. They regularly attend seminars, work with the LEP, Make it York and others, and arrange bespoke presentations for businesses which need support and advice, most recently running a business compliance session.

| Outline suggestion | Basic description/ action | Notes/ advice |
|---|--|---|
| Audit of engagement methods | Are there consistent methods of approach set out for officers to adhere to? What types of engagement are we using, and are using them well enough? i.e. Newsletters, forms, surveys, website, face to face, email, phone, infographics | Any examples of best practice, supported by user numbers and feedback? |
| Audit of existing business support arrangements | Baseline of people, processes and services already in place to support business | Fundamental to the project. Can we streamline what we have? What would enhance our current offer? e.g. staff training, shorter processes |
| Communication Plan | Is there a Council Communications Plan? If so, what is our 'offer' for businesses? | If there is a Comms Plan, is it fit for purpose, or does it need to be reviewed to ensure a business inclusive approach? |
| CYC Intranet and Internet | Is it user friendly and does it provide an easy to use channel through which businesses can access what they need? | Intranet also to be looked at, for example, to make sure that everyone has their profile page set up. |
| Directory of Council Services | An interactive guide to the business services we provide: outline of service, officer name, profile (from COLIN?) and contact details. | Foundation for dovetailing key pieces of work and expertise across the authority. Look at what work teams are doing and investigate the collaborative links between them all. |
| Information | Requests for information come from a number of different sources. How is information sought and provided? Are there any common themes. Accessibility, usefulness etc | Leaflets, online, face to face. Idiot guides, info for all types, size and age of business. |
| Make it York | Clarify the working relationship between make it York and CYC. What is it that each organisation does, what are the links and areas of specialism? | Clear, consistent message needed to remove confusion. What are the discrete purposes of each? |
| Networking events | 'Meet the buyer', face to face sessions for example. What can realistically be done here to benefit business? | Consider invitation only to tailor to specific audiences and to prevent 'hijacking' (Planning events problems) |
| Signposting | Look at better signposting of people, services and information. | What do we do now, and what more can we do? |
| Social media | Make better use of the technologies available. Can Facebook and Twitter really be of tangible use to businesses in making connections, networking and finding out about events relevant to them? | What are the rules on local authority use of Linked In? |

Theme 2 – CONSULTATION

17. How and why do we consult with business? Do we need to? What do we do with the feedback we receive?

| Outline suggestion | Basic description/ action | Notes/ advice |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| BFC Performance scorecard | Establish a suite of KPIs to measure how we currently perform and how the changes we make impact on outcomes | 12 months after any changes are implemented, share with original survey group and seek feedback. Have we made a positive impact? |
| Consultation with business | How robust are our procedures? Do they consider who, how, when, why, what? | What do we do with feedback? Are services reviewed as a result? |
| Staff grown improvement | Circulate a list of suggestions for ideas, change and practical solutions for officers to comment upon and to add to. | Staff deal with business on a daily basis. What do they think needs to happen to achieve our BFC objectives? |

Theme 3 – BEHAVIOURS

18. Options under this theme particularly consider existing working practices, cultures, gaps and weaknesses, and what might be done differently or more effectively.

| Outline suggestion | Basic description/ action | Notes/ advice |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| 'Bespoke' business offer | Consider what a bespoke offer to businesses of all shapes, sizes, ages and areas of expertise might look like | Is this feasible and what might we do to support this? |
| Business Co-ordinator role | Should we consider a Business Co-ordinator type role within the authority, for example to advise Members? | Is that covered sufficiently by MiY? Alignment of our services with theirs and clear role specifications are essential. |
| Business Friendly Charter | Develop a short and simple Charter setting out our commitment to supporting business, backed up by a robust, measurable Action Plan | Would a Charter be of any use, or do we just need small changes to our business processes, internal culture and procedures? |
| Governance | What kind of governance mechanisms run through business related issues? | E.g. who is responsible for agreeing contract awards, transparency and honesty etc. Is governance even an issue? |
| Interdependencies | A number of other considerations run in parallel with enabling a business friendly approach, and should be set out and considered. | Might include development of the Local Plan, new/ sustainable/ affordable housing, major infrastructure and transport networks, education, skills and training, GVA, high sector salaries. |

Analysis

19. The number of options available is broad and will impact differently on the services that we provide, and how we deal with business.

20. The recommendation is that a small number of options which the Executive Member feels to be of greatest priority are selected, with the remainder to form part of a longer term action plan or disregarded altogether.

21. There is also scope for some 'quick wins' to be carried out that would take little time and officer resource, such as a listing of the interdependencies which could be set out for consideration when business related decisions are made.

Next steps:

22. Our work plan is multi-faceted:

- We will take the prioritised actions outlined in the three themes above.
- We will repeat the Business Friendly Council survey of November 2015 every two years (minus the business support element of question five as this is now the remit of Make it York), with the intention that feedback from business reflects the continuous service improvement we aspire to provide.
- Through the repeat survey, we aim to show that we have raised perceived levels of satisfaction with the Council, and by the end of the current administration, no service area will have less than 50% satisfaction.
- In particular, Procurement has made great improvements to their working practices and, as a result, their working relationships with the business community have strengthened. We believe this model can be applied to other service areas, and we will look to work, initially, with Planning, Environmental Protection and Licensing teams to try and embed similar working values.
- We intend to standardise our approach to consultation with business, and intend to work to two fundamental principles in order to engage at the right level, and with the right people. These are:
 - Before any survey or consultation is sent out to the wider business community, we will engage with local business

groups to ensure that it is appropriate to do so and fit for purpose

- No survey should take more than ten minutes of local business time to complete
- We will take our action plan proposals and outline the Business Friendly Charter to the Federation of Small Business event at the University of York St. John on 18th April to gauge reaction from businesses directly, and allow them an opportunity for further input on our proposals.
- We will further engage with local business advocates to report progress on the project to date, and to seek continued support for our work at a grass roots level. Organisations will include the Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses and York Professionals.

Council Plan

23. The Council Plan, approved by full Council in October 2015, includes a priority to ensure that York becomes a business friendly council. It is also in line with the Council Plan objectives to create a prosperous city for all where local businesses can thrive.

Implications

Financial

24. Some of the recommendations to deliver against a business friendly council could require further funding, but there will also be potential changes to processes and culture that could be made in a revenue neutral way in the context of the current local Government funding environment.

Human Resources (HR)

25. Not known at this point, will become clearer the further the chosen options are developed.

Equalities

26. Not applicable

Legal

27. Not applicable

Crime and Disorder

28. Not applicable

Information Technology (ICT)

29. There are changes required from an ICT perspective, some of which are currently ongoing and have already been outlined in this report.

30. There is potential for more work with ICT implications to come forward, depending upon the options chosen by Members.

Property

31. Not applicable

Other

32. Not applicable

Risk Management

33. There are no known risks at the time of writing this report.

Contact Details

Author:

Author's name

Phil Witcherley

Title

Group Manager,
Policy and Strategy Team
(Economy and Place)

Dept Name

City and Environmental
Services

Tel No.

553343

Co-Author's Name

Penny Nicholson

Title

Policy and Strategy Officer
(Economy and Place)

Dept Name

As above

Tel No.

551506

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Not applicable

Chief Officer responsible for the report:

Executive Member responsible for the report:

Cllr Keith Aspden
Deputy Leader,
Economic Development & Community
Engagement

Report

Approved

**Date**

4/4/2016

Chief Officer's name

Neil Ferris
Acting Director, City and Environmental
Services

Report

Approved

**Date**

4/4/2016

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Business Friendly Council –
Report to the 3rd December 2016 Executive decision session from the
Office of the Chief Executive

Annexes

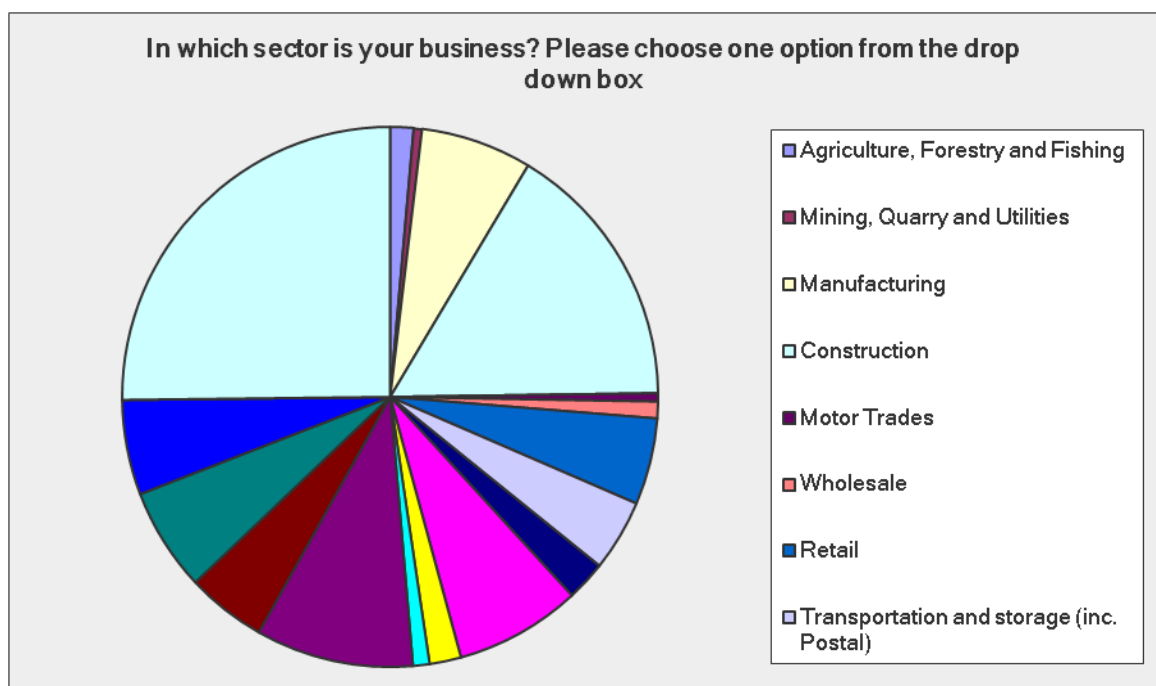
Annex 1: Business Friendly Council Survey (November 2015): Results
from a total of thirteen questions

Annex 1

Question 1

In which sector is your business? Please choose one option from the drop down box

| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing | 1.4% | 3 |
| Mining, Quarry and Utilities | 0.5% | 1 |
| Manufacturing | 6.7% | 14 |
| Construction | 16.2% | 34 |
| Motor Trades | 0.5% | 1 |
| Wholesale | 1.0% | 2 |
| Retail | 5.2% | 11 |
| Transportation and storage (inc. Postal) | 4.3% | 9 |
| Accommodation and food service | 2.4% | 5 |
| Information and Communications | 7.6% | 16 |
| Finance and Insurance | 1.9% | 4 |
| Property | 1.0% | 2 |
| Professional, Scientific and Technical | 9.5% | 20 |
| Business administration and support services | 4.8% | 10 |
| Education | 6.2% | 13 |
| Health | 5.7% | 12 |
| Public administration | 0.0% | 0 |
| Other | 25.2% | 53 |
| answered question | | 210 |
| skipped question | | 0 |



Question 2

How many people are employed by your company?

| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| 0 - 5 | 50.0% | 104 |
| 5 - 10 | 17.3% | 36 |
| 10 - 20 | 11.5% | 24 |
| 20+ | 21.2% | 44 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | 208 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | 2 |

Question 3

How long has your business been established?

| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| 0 - 6 months | 2.9% | 6 |
| 6 months to a year | 3.8% | 8 |
| 1 - 2 years | 6.2% | 13 |
| 2 - 5 years | 14.8% | 31 |
| 5 - 10 years | 16.7% | 35 |
| 10+ years | 55.7% | 117 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | 210 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | 0 |

Question 4

How many times in the last year have you contacted the Council on behalf of your business?

| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Never | 39.9% | 83 |
| Once | 7.7% | 16 |
| 1 - 3 times | 23.6% | 49 |
| 3 - 7 times | 10.6% | 22 |
| 7 - 10 times | 1.4% | 3 |
| 10+ times | 16.8% | 35 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | 208 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | 2 |

Question 5

As a business, how would you rate your experience of the following:

| Answer Options | 1 - Poor | 2 | 3 - Good | 4 | 5 - Excellent | Response Count |
|---|----------|----|----------|----|--------------------------|----------------|
| Broadband - access to and advice on | 15 | 18 | 32 | 13 | 9 | 87 |
| Business rates - accessing rate relief information easily and quickly online | 20 | 17 | 27 | 8 | 5 | 77 |
| Business support and advice - effective neutral signposting | 20 | 23 | 14 | 12 | 0 | 69 |
| Continuity planning - flooding, fire, cyber security | 20 | 17 | 17 | 5 | 0 | 59 |
| Health and safety - advice on compliance at work and with employees | 18 | 14 | 17 | 8 | 5 | 62 |
| Licenses and permits - information and guidance on what, where, why and when | 23 | 14 | 21 | 6 | 6 | 70 |
| Planning and Building Control - guidance and advice | 21 | 25 | 21 | 7 | 6 | 80 |
| Consultation - clear outcomes that arise from dialogue and consultation with the business community | 26 | 15 | 24 | 4 | 1 | 70 |
| York Apprenticeship Hub Service - Service for smaller businesses/ SMEs | 18 | 14 | 21 | 6 | 5 | 64 |
| Links to Education - to develop young people's skills, career aspirations and employability | 16 | 21 | 17 | 4 | 3 | 61 |
| | | | | | <i>answered question</i> | 115 |
| | | | | | <i>skipped question</i> | 95 |

Question 6 -

Is anything you could suggest that might help us be more business friendly?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Council behaviours/ cultures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Don't promise what cannot be delivered or make a political debate over everything</i> - Council seen as inactive rather than proactive - Avoid mixed messages | <p>Consultation, information and engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would have been useful to have an LDF and stuck to it prior to Vangarde development - Was not aware of York Apprenticeship Hub or Links to Education so these could be better publicised - Engage with businesses | <p>Council support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving City Office powers to stop mega-amplified buskers, which has been damaging our small business for 8 years - Anything that promotes York as a good place for meetings (formal or informal) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supportive and entrepreneurial approach to community and voluntary sector start ups - Social enterprise is the growth area in all sectors |
| <p>Communication and relationship building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Start listening to businesses - - <i>Just talk to us</i> - Have never been contacted by anyone from Business Friendly Council. - Communicate with businesses on a regular basis with a suitable platform | <p>Customer service issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low levels of responsiveness to emails - Continuity of staff - Staff education in their work field | <p>Procurement processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Pro SME policy on tendering and partnerships</i> - Reduce rates - Less restricted tendering for Council contracts - Framework for consultants should be split into construction cost bands |
| <p>Misconceptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The same three firms seem to win all the contracts - Tried to become involved in the procurement process for tendering for construction work. Was told that the council mainly uses three firms and independent building firms will not be seriously considered. - The more open tendering process which is encouraged by central Government does not seem to be carried out by York council | <p>Suggestions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One point of contact - Think how modern social-media can assist SMEs - Business seminars - Create a free wifi zone across York City Centre - Promote meeting venues and facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publicise York Apprenticeship Hub or Links to Education - Better support community and voluntary sector start ups - CYC to be more visible - The Council should have | <p>Keep it local</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Stop spending money on external experts who do not understand York</i> - Allow York based smaller businesses access to Council contracts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work closely with local businesses and support them by buying from them - You don't need one firm from outside of the area doing small alterations to Schools, public buildings, etc. - Cost bands mean smaller local firms with local |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Miscellaneous</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recycling waste - School Transport - don't put all your eggs in one basket - Waste and Recycling Collection | <p>business sector in all of their committees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The tendering procurement process needs to be better publicised and give everyone a chance | <p>knowledge, who employ local people could actually get local employment</p> <p>Equality and fairness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Treat all business same |
|---|---|---|

*The 'Suggestions' box draws together all themes from across the table, so there will be some duplication elsewhere. Not all question responses have suggestions

Question 7 -

Does your business provide goods or services to the Council?

| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Yes | 41.6% | 57 |
| No | 58.4% | 80 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | 137 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | 73 |

Question 8

Does your business provide goods or services to a contractor of the council?

| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Yes | 18.0% | 24 |
| No | 82.0% | 109 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | 133 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | 77 |

Question 9

How would you rate your experience of procurement in the Council?

| Answer Options | 1 - Poor | 2 | 3 - Good | 4 | 5 - Excellent | Response Count |
|--------------------------|----------|----|----------|----|---------------|----------------|
| Pre contract process | 27 | 15 | 26 | 6 | 6 | 80 |
| Contract management | 17 | 15 | 27 | 9 | 7 | 75 |
| Payment terms | 12 | 9 | 27 | 13 | 17 | 78 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | | | | | 84 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | | | | | 126 |

Question 10

Are there any points on procurement that you would like to make, and where you would like to see the council's services improved?

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Communication and relationship building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would be good to be contacted as a local business when our type of services are required - More support for start-ups in consideration for contracts particularly those that are creative in finding solutions | <p>Customer service issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have contacted the council on a number of occasions to try to see if we can become a supply partner and have not received a reply. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stick to timescales - Sort out your systems and pay people on time | <p>Consultation, information and engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clearer signposting to opportunities to provide services to the council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More transparent procurement information - More information at the outset - Provide clear guidance on who to contact with issues - Distribution of procurement matters to all businesses in the region - I work predominantly in local government on transformation and future service modelling. If York City Council are undertaking this type of role (and I assume you are), then I would like to understand why I have not seen it advertised. |
| <p>Keep it local</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local companies should be used - I would like the council to seek out local suppliers - <i>You just don't support local businesses</i> | <p>Equality and fairness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Fairness not favourites</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A fair process - Be clear that everyone is pricing the same - Added value and social impact is important <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As a sole trader it is difficult to meet the criteria set. Smaller types of opportunities are infrequent so I presume you already have preferred deliverers of these services | |
| <p>Council related comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Often seems that CYC is trying to control the market when in reality it should be facilitating it.</i> | <p>Suggestions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Directory of businesses by type so they can be contacted directly when a tender of interest is due - Council needs to be more proactive in seeking out local suppliers instead of them coming forward <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More local procurement events would be good. - Procurement Team to take a more prominent role in facilitating | |

Procurement processes

- The regional contracting system is such a pain we've abandoned trying to take part.
- The recent changes have made it more onerous
- A simplified process
- A realistic lower limit for tendering

- The Yortender process does not facilitate effective dialogue.
- Too much paper work
- Exact specifications of goods to be supplied.
- The system to us seemed to work quite well before all the PQQs.

- Too much information required at PQQ stage
- Procurement dept processes disbar better performing companies from the tender process
- unrealistic timescales are given for completing jobs
- Standardise PQQs

Small business issues

- Make it easier for smaller business to engage with the Council
- ***We used to work for the Council but the work was amalgamated. We were too small to tender for the contract.***
- Smaller businesses are pushed out of the tender process when contracts are made too big.
- There is positive bias towards large, long established businesses in the questions and financial information required
- More options for small businesses to provide services to CYC
- When the Frameworks/ Term Contracts and Approved lists were introduced, as we were not one of the 'big boy' contractors and did not have an ISO9001 or 14001 or similar, we were not considered an appropriate contractor to work with, even though we had provided a good reliable service for many years.
- References from the last three years are always requested in PQQs. We are unable to provide these as we are not on a framework or an approved list and have not got the opportunity to carry out the works and gain the experience. ***It's like the chicken and egg scenario.***
- Actively support small businesses better and make the process easier to navigate.

General

- Open up highway and civil works to competitive tendering rather than using DLO
- Would like to be able to bid when you have training requests
- More opportunities to quote for printing
- Make those on benefits do some of the traditional public sector jobs, gives them focus and saves public money
- General public should be given choice to purchase services they want by fostering an open market.

Question 11

Can you share an example of where you have had a positive experience with the Council?

*Number of respondents who said they had not had a positive experience with the Council (of 48 answers) 16, or 33%

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Specific service areas and people positively acknowledged</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Superfast broadband - Alcohol Licensing Licensing Business Rate - Adam Grey and Simon Middleton.....very supportive to a new SME - Building Control - Youth Festivals - Highways | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning permission - Councillors and staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small business advisor - Providing order numbers - Dealing with Trading Standards - Ann Spetch, WDU contact for Early Years - Esther Priestley, Dan Calvert and Harvey Lawson (Planning) - Waste collection | <p>Support services and staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In previous years when budgets were available, staff were happy, committed and professional - As a whole I have lost faith in City of York Council, but some great individual people work there - People are friendly and willing to offer help - Generally most contacts have been very positive - No engagement |
| <p>General comments</p> | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I am closely involved with a local college and intend to employ an apprentice next year because the council brought this opportunity to my attention. - You were polite and positive when discussing failure to reimburse a fine for travelling over Lendal Bridge - Have attended meet the buyer events These would be improved if reps from different council departments were present rather than central procurement - Recent communications with Make it York have been positive, previously ineffective - We were invited to tender for the works to the Central Library which was surprise as we do not understand how we came to be invited for this tender. - Support with setting up and housing a new business. Involvement in key city strategies. - We have done some work for a member of east riding council who deals with us directly. We always have to tender against a reasonable amount of contractors, however I feel it is fair. | | |

Question 12

Can you tell us about a bad experience you may have had?

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Contracts, pricing and costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council only ask for money for taxes and memberships - I applied for a pitch at the St. Nicholas Fair this year but was turned down. As a new and small SME based in York I felt a let down. I think it was because I couldn't offer as much money for the pitch as other businesses. - (A new member of staff) decided to cancel the work which had already commenced and refused payment. Hence, I don't look for work with the council anymore - Lost a contract we had been doing successfully for several years with the council because the contract was merged with other similar contracts throughout the council - Procurement professionals need to understand the businesses they engage with. Could make significant cost savings if they engaged with those who could assist them. - Driving for miles to see a tiny job, pricing it rock bottom only to find there are eight other people in for it. - Money still owed to us for services provided because of a dispute as to who ordered and who was paying. - Struggling to get paid and being passed around with no one prepared to take ownership - Disagreement over final accounts - We were awarded a print contract after a long tender process, which was almost immediately cancelled due to the council's "cost cutting" measures. - I have been wrongly accused regarding council tax issues and lost time and money sorting out the councils mistakes - We won a tender to compost green waste. This was cancelled and given to your internal contractor | <p style="text-align: center;">Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In previous years when budgets were available, staff were happy, committed and professional - As a whole I have lost faith in City of York Council, but some great individual people work there - People are friendly and willing to offer help - Generally most contacts have been very positive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No engagement - Staff not taking the initiative to find things out - My contact was made redundant, leaving me to deal with a senior member of staff who was rude and unprofessional - Everybody seems to be ill all the time or can't wait to get home in the afternoon. - Hopeless communication - Some staff changes have been for the worse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No engagement | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Timing and delays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of activity over recent years on the York plan - Courses cancelled at short notice due to lack of take up <p style="text-align: center;">General comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Its a broken council - Debacle over Vangarde has led to the forecast footfall drop the city centre - Start-ups dismissed out of hand by communities team - Tenant's choice - Allowing some business advertising around city, yet hassling us | <p style="text-align: center;">Support services and process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I have contacted the council on a number of occasions to try to see if we can become a supply partner and have not received a reply. - If we are contacted and we submit a price, we have no further contact even if we call or email - I had to contact you 3 times over several months to get reimbursement for a fine for travelling over Lendal Bridge - Council losing important | <p style="text-align: center;">Specific service areas and people negatively acknowledged</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flytipping - Planning – not enough staff, so slow, time consuming and frustrating - Internet cabling for an office took five months - Signposting to specific information is unclear unless you physically visit Council Offices - Make it York is slow - Local flooding not dealt with |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difficultly trying to provide our services to the council - I've not seen many well-publicised opportunities to work with the council | <p style="text-align: center;">paperwork</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tendering, delay with projects, poor briefing - Procurement process is not fulfilling its potential | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legionella Control - Business rates - Council Tax - Procurement |
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Question 13

Are there any other general comments that you would like to make?

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| <p style="text-align: center;">Local business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Please buy from local suppliers, I am a growing business employing more and more people and I only supply York council a very small amount - Everybody (York based) should get chance to quote on requirements if they meet the standard - Support your local service providers | <p style="text-align: center;">General</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Waste of time nothing ever happening after filling this type of form in its only a paper exercise !!!!!!! - I think the council are doing a great job. I'm currently enjoying a good experience working with Make it York. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep up the good work. - How long have you got ? - Keep trying what other choice do we have! | <p style="text-align: center;">Business Support and Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The staff could only work for the council. They wouldn't last five minutes in the real world. - People move around from one department to another so you lose the contact of who you were dealing with - The feeling that comes to us is that the council are only interested in working with large business |
| <p>Business needs and economic growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council's policies or lack of them, is driving firms out of the City - What can CYC do to help my business? - We are looking for open-plan office space. 100m.sq.with 2 parking spaces within the inner ring road. We've been looking for 6 months. There isn't any, its either retail or residential. The Council's policies or lack thereof, is driving firms out of the City Centre and you will lose the diverse economy that makes places buzz. - York is a fantastic place but too much emphasis on tourism & housing. More focus on business development and support. - It's great to see the Council taking more steps to be pro-business. - In general....very pleased with the support, seminars and guidance from CYC. | | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Service specific</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cleaning of pavements in Coney Street and St Helen's Square leave a lot to be desired - Find a way to control the buskers, recent negotiations between council and buskers - we weren't even told of the meeting! And the buskers "won". We may have to leave Davygate. - We use planning office regularly and they always very helpful | <p style="text-align: center;">Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Please continue with the developing programme of improving a business approach to help in the generation of increase economic development for all - The council needs to be innovative, creative, professional and respectful no matter how big the organisation is they are dealing with. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We could do with some meet the buyer meetings to know how to tender and get jobs from the council | |

Contracts and finance

- No real value for the rates we pay, no recognition for creating employment, £30k paid out zero return
 - The tendering process (Yortender) seems to favour existing contractors / suppliers
- Look at the cost/benefits forecasts prior to decisions, then again after decisions have been implemented, i.e. traffic closures for events like Skyride and the York marathon.
- *Local company* was providing a Legionella Control service to part of the council, providing employment for 3 local people. Contract was made much much bigger and given to a larger company out of the area.
 - Worked for the council for 32 years, now not getting work in favour of large companies
- Would be great to work with the Council in York, but would help if sensible decisions could be made around tendering and payment terms.
- We used to get an order for window cleaning for the year but now have to request an order each month which is obviously more time consuming.

Communication and information

- Documents need to be brief, exclude unneeded sections.
- Guides need to be written in layman's terms and avoid or explain legal terms.
 - I had no idea the Council supported businesses or where I might find information
- I avoid contacting the council if at all possible as I expect to be given the run-around by different departments, before either giving up or being promised a call back that wouldn't happen.
- Communicate:, we cannot build a relationship if we don't speak

Council

- Council has a long way to go to make up for its shortcomings over the last few years.
 - Trying to build a business to help support the local community, don't feel we are given opportunities from the council
- I can see an improvement, but it needs to be vast
 - Council offices lack private meeting rooms
- The system works very well as far as we are concerned. Any issues we have had have been handled very well by whichever council member of staff has dealt with us.
- The council typically does the best it can in constrained circumstances