

Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning
Date	26 January 2021
Present	Councillor Waller (Executive Member)

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### **1. Declarations of Interest**

The Executive Member was 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 he might have in respect of the business on the agenda. None were declared.

### **2. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 December 2020 be approved and then signed by the Executive Member at a later date.

### **3. Public Participation**

It was reported that there were no registered speakers under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

### **4. Economic Strategy Update**

The Executive Member considered a report that provided a progress update on City of York Council's work to develop a new Economic Strategy for York.

The Corporate Director of Economy and Place, the Head of Economic Growth and the Manager of Economic Growth were in attendance to provide an update and respond to questions.

The Executive Member noted that:

- The timetable for developing the Strategy had been impacted by the subsequent national lockdown (November 2020 and January 2021) and the rapidly changing Tier restrictions. The restrictions had a

significant impact on the workload of the Economic Growth Team and businesses could not be expected to meaningfully engage with the Council on medium or longer-term economic matters at a time when business survival was paramount.

- Business engagement would progress in late spring/early summer, with a new strategy brought to Executive in the autumn for sign-off.
- The twin track approach to the new strategy would continue the long established focus on developing higher paid jobs in key sectors across the economy, while developing a clearer approach to inclusive growth across the economy. These two priorities would be underpinned by two cross-cutting themes, the notion of 21st century jobs, built flexibly around the needs of employees, and supported by continuous learning to improve individual mobility, and a focus on a green economic recovery, addressing the Council's low-carbon commitments and York's world-leading bio-economy, life sciences and agri-tech innovation assets.
- Officers had been focused on reviewing and refreshing the economic evidence base, attached at Annex A of the report, which included gap analysis work to ensure that the impacts of Covid 19 were incorporated into the evidence as well as identifying additional themes requiring further research, analysis work or engagement.
- Work was underway to ensure that the engagement activity dovetailed with and informed other planned engagement taking place across the Council's Economy and Place Directorate during 2021, including My City Centre, Local Transport Plan 4, Climate Change and the Councils Skills Plan.

The Executive Member agreed that due to the pandemic it was very difficult to conduct this work and he appreciated the support officers were providing to those businesses who were currently focused on their day to day survival.

In answer to the Executive Members questions, officers confirmed that although the strategy was being postponed significant national capital investment on infrastructure programmes, including carbon reduction, green jobs and rail transitions, would continue and apprenticeship programmes would still be made available.

The Executive Member noted that an update would be brought to a future Decision Session and he thanked officers for their report.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That the draft economic evidence base and plans for engagement activity be noted.
- (iii) That business engagement activity be undertaken on the Council's Economic Strategy in late spring/early summer 2021.
- (iv) That efforts be maintained to ensure that York's voice was heard on national infrastructure programs, that the use of Government funding be maximised and reported in the economic quarterly update and that work to assist young people into employment be endeavoured.

Reason: To support York's economic recovery from Covid-19.

#### **5. MHCLG Consultation: Supporting Housing Delivery and Public Service Infrastructure**

The Executive Member considered a report that provided an update on the consultation published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 3 December 2020 entitled, 'Supporting Housing Delivery and Public Service Infrastructure.'

The Corporate Director of Economy and Place, the Assistant Director of Planning and Sustainable Development and the Development Manager were in attendance to provide an update and respond to questions.

The Assistant Director of Planning and Sustainable Development confirmed that the MHCLG consultation sought views on a series of proposed measures that sought to support housing delivery, economic recovery and public service infrastructure. The Executive Member noted that specifically, the measures being consulted on were:

- a. A proposed new permitted development right for the change of use from Commercial, Business and Service use to residential to create new homes.

- b. Measures to support public service infrastructure through the planning system – extended permitted development rights for Schools, Colleges, Universities and Hospitals; with the right to also include prisons and in the future Ministry of Defence sites, and
- c. An approach to simplifying and consolidating existing permitted development rights following changes to the Use Classes Order.

The Development Manager addressed each main area of the consultation and he highlighted the Council's draft responses to the questions, as noted in Annex 1 to the report.

The Executive Member thanked the general public, the Chamber of Commerce and Councillors for corresponding with him on this item and he highlighted his concerns and made a number of additional suggestions to be included, following discussion it was agreed that:

- All elements of noise related impacts should be considered, not just commercial noise impacts.
- There was a need to respond to structural changes in the retail industry but that this should be properly planned to concentrate retail frontages and avoid the scenario where remaining shops and services were pepper-potted among residential uses.
- The Council would be supportive of a new use class covering houses used for short-term letting and visitor holiday accommodation, so that any gain to the housing stock from the proposed change of use delivers benefits to residents.
- The scope for the re-purposing out of town retail should be subject to planning permission given the scale, surroundings and location of such uses.
- The special character of York's city centre was derived in part from the historic environment of its shopping streets and to not have suitable safeguards in place would be harmful to its character and appearance.
- The special character of York's Conservation Areas needed full consideration when assessing any approvals.
- The Government's stated aim of increasing the supply of housing through the permitted development right would only be delivered if it provided homes with a decent standard of amenity for future residents.

- Relevant partner organisations should oversee the provision of medical/health facilities to avoid them being clustered in hard to reach places.

It was also noted that members of the public/consultees should be given sufficient time to fully consider public service applications. This change would undermine public confidence in the planning process and should this aspect of the proposals be taken forward, the Council would want to see the detail of a system to require public service applicants to undertake meaningful pre-application consultation with the community.

The Executive Member thanked officers for their comprehensive review and confirmed he would also be writing to MHCLG to address specific concerns.

Resolved:

- (i) That the content of the report and annex 1 be noted.
- (ii) That the Councils response, including the Executive Members comments, to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) consultation be submitted by the Assistant Director for Planning and Public Protection.

Reason: To enable the MHCLG to receive the Councils overall response to the consultation.

Cllr A Waller, Executive Member  
[The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 10.59 am].

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