

Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning
Date	27 April 2021
Present	Councillor Waller (Executive Member)

41. 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.

42. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 March 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Executive Member at a later date.

43. Public Participation

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

44. Engagement Strategy – Economic Strategy, Skills Plan and My City Centre

The Executive Member considered a report which set out proposals for engagement with businesses, residents and partners to inform the development of a new Economic Strategy and Skills Plan for York, and high level vision for the future of York city centre.

During discussion of the item, officers:

- Thanked the business community for their help and support in co-ordinating York's economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Emphasised the Engagement Strategy's joined up approach in which data is collected from multiple access

points in order to create a more complete picture of the city.

- Explained the different stages of the Engagement Strategy which were laid out in the report.
- Stated that the My City Centre project engagement begun last year before the Covid-19 pandemic caused a pause and will begin again in May with a more specific focus on certain communities, especially those usually underrepresented.
- Clarified, regarding concern that there was a lack of engagement with the Bishophill area, that the map within Annex 5 to the report was a representation of people's opinions on various areas of the city, and not a representation of the location of the respondents.

The Executive Member thanked officers for their reports and stated that:

- Care must be taken to join the consultations together to prevent the public being asked multiple times about similar issues.
- It should be ensured that residents who were not on social media were represented in the data collected.
- Officers should demonstrate that underrepresented groups which had not previously been well engaged with the Council, were being consulted, especially microbusinesses and young people.

Resolved:

- (i) That the plans for public engagement on York's economy set out in Annexes 1 and 3 be approved.

Reason: To support economic recovery and growth and the development of a new economic strategy and skills plan.

- (ii) That the recommencement of the My City Centre project from May 2021 be approved.

Reason: To generate a strategic vision for the City Centre through public engagement, to respond to place-based challenges and opportunities.

- (iii) That the revised My City Centre project scope and thematic approach in response to the changes brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic be approved.

Reason: To ensure that the project responds to the pandemic's impacts and prevailing (updated) challenges and opportunities.

- (iv) That the amended My City Centre project engagement plan set out at Annex 4, which responds to changes brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic be approved.

Reason: To ensure effective and inclusive engagement, particularly during the period where some form of lockdown will still exist.

- (v) That the budget proposals set out in Annex 3 be approved.

Reason: To ensure that project activity is resourced appropriately to delivery project outcomes.

- (vi) That regular updates on the Engagement Strategy – Economic Strategy, Skills Plan and My City Centre work be received at future Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning Decision Sessions.

Reason: To allow the Executive Member to remain informed of the progress of the Engagement Strategy.

45. Skills Strategy Update

The Executive Member considered a report which provided an update on the work of the city's Skills and Employment Board in developing a 10-year skills strategy.

During discussion of the item, officers:

- Highlighted the 4 priority projects detailed in the report, which were focused around setting foundations for approved partnerships.
- Identified 2 of these priority projects as focus for potential UK Community Renewal Fund bids, and stated that partners were seeking to bring those bids forward.

- Explained that the voice of the employer was key in influencing the work of the Skills and Employment Board.
- Expressed their gratitude towards stakeholders and elected members for their time and support.

The Executive Member stated that:

- He wished for another joint session of the Economy and Place Policy and Scrutiny Committee and the Children, Education and Community Policy and Scrutiny Committee to feed into the work of the Skills and Employment Board in developing the 10 Year Skills Strategy.
- It was important that partnership groups not represented on the Skills and Employment Board were included in development of the Strategy.
- He was grateful to officers and partners for their work during this unprecedented time.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That preparations be made for a further joint meeting of Children, Education and Community Policy and Scrutiny Committee and Economy and Place Policy and Scrutiny Committee to aid in the development of the plan.

Reason: To support the work of the partnership to develop a 10-year Skills Strategy for York.

46. Apprenticeships Update

The Executive Member considered a report which provided an update on apprenticeship activity in York in the first quarter of 2021.

During discussion of the item, officers:

- Stated that the profile of the council's impartial Apprenticeships Hub had been raised over the past few months due to engagement events across social media and virtual events.
- Explained that educational disruption during the Covid-19 pandemic had caused more young people to opt to remain in education post-16, but it was important that they were

aware and informed of all routes open to them, including apprenticeships.

- Gave notice that York's Apprenticeship Levy Transfer process was up and running.
- Informed the Executive Member that there had been improvements in the internal usage of apprenticeship levy at the City of York Council, and that its usefulness as a means to fill vacancies and upskill existing staff was increasingly understood.

The Executive Member:

- Stated that he appreciated the work around the Apprenticeship Levy and had written to the Department of Education to request more flexibility on its utilisation.
- Thanked officers for their work in a time of difficult financial circumstances brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That a 6-monthly update be received at a future Decision Session - Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning.

Reason: To continue to encourage the creation of apprenticeship opportunities in York, by supporting local businesses to access available funding and to support routes to employment for local residents.

47. The Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee Inquiry into Permitted Development Rights

The Executive Member considered a report which provided him with information on the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee's inquiry into Permitted Development Rights (PDR), which is inviting submissions on PDR related issues. The deadline for submissions in Friday, 30 April 2021.

During discussion of the item, officers:

- Explained that there were 8 main questions asked by the inquiry, which focused on issues such as the changing usage of property from office to residential and the effect it

has had on the quality and quantity of new housing, including affordable and social housing.

- Stated that in the view of the City of York Council, the Government's changes have had a negative impact, due to the fact that Permitted Development Rights do not allow the Council to request any form of contribution for affordable housing and that it had allowed a significant number of units to be proceed without planning permission.

The Executive Member thanked officers for their report and stated that he would like more information on what steps the Council was taking to aid in the changing usage of retail space in the city centre, from large floor plate shops to smaller, sub-divided units, including what the Council can aid in the regeneration process.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That the submission of evidence to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee Inquiry into Permitted Development Rights be delegated to the Director of Environment, Transport and Planning.

Reason: To enable the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee to receive the City of York Council's submissions to the Inquiry into Permitted Development Rights.

Cllr A Waller, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 11.00 am and finished at 11.37 am].