
MEETING	DECISION SESSION - EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ECONOMY AND STRATEGIC PLANNING
DATE	28 SEPTEMBER 2021
PRESENT	COUNCILLOR WALLER

11. 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.

12. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 July 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Executive Member.

13. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there was one registration to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Councillor Claire Douglas spoke on the Planning Enforcement Update item. She raised the challenges faced by the Planning Enforcement team, and the wider Planning Department. She stated that the number of cases resolved annually by the team since 2017 have been increasing, but that there still 580 cases open, which Cllr Douglas stated was equivalent to one year's workload. She expressed her concern that the Planning Department would not be able to keep up with the current workload, and noted the importance of planning work for providing homes and workplaces for York residents and workers. Cllr Douglas stated that the current administration did not have the situation under control, arguing that there had not been enough investment in planning functions. She drew attention to upcoming staff retirements and rates of long-term sickness and raised concerns around development of the Local Plan.

14. PLANNING ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

The Executive Member considered a report which provided him with an update on planning enforcement cases and the progress of work within the planning enforcement team on its development and the new Enforcement Plan. The Head of Planning and Development Services and the Principal Development Management Officer were in attendance to present the report and respond to questions.

Officers noted that:

- In 2020 there had been 499 new planning enforcement investigation cases, and 467 were closed. A total of 580 investigations remained open at the end of the year and 12 enforcement notices had been served.
- To date in 2021, 496 new planning enforcement investigation cases were received and 522 were closed. A total of 535 remained open.
- Enforcement notices were served for a number of issues, such as failure to comply with noise conditions, an unauthorised porch, an unauthorised access road, the conversion of stables to a holiday let and untidy land. 12 enforcement notices in 2020 indicated a significant increase since 2015.
- There had been some issues in publishing the Enforcement Register online, but the fully up to date version had now been published.
- 3 members of staff had retired from the Enforcement team this year, and staff were in the process of recruiting for these posts and had increased the posts in the team by 0.8. A review of the Council's Enforcement Plan was also underway.

The Executive Member noted that:

- The current administration was committed to the delivery of the Local Plan, emphasising that more progress had been made on the current Plan than any in the last 50 years.
- Planning Enforcement was an issue that affected all ward councillors in York, and that in order to prevent frustration to reasonable members of the public and the members representing them, clarity was needed in the review on what does and does not come under the remit of the

Planning Committee and what issues can and cannot be enforced by officers.

- He had been active in responding to Government consultations on Planning, emphasising the need to balance development in keeping with the great amount of heritage in the city with sympathetic development in the future.
- The Planning Enforcement team was now at 4.8 full time equivalent positions.
- The pandemic and lockdowns may have contributed to the higher number of cases this year.
- He was looking forward to examining the key performance indicators for planning.

Resolved:

- i. That the contents of the report be noted.

Reason: To enable the Executive Member to receive the update.

15. YORK 10-YEAR SKILLS STRATEGY

The Executive Member considered a report about the development of York's 10-Year Skills Strategy, delivered through the city's Skills and Employment Board, and which presents the final draft strategy for endorsement by the Executive Member. The Skills Manager was in attendance to present the report and respond to questions.

Key points raised during the presentation of the report included:

- The strategy was a partnership produced document by the Skills and Employment Board, which was established in late 2020 to aid in the economic recovery of the city following the Covid-19 pandemic. The Board is chaired by York College and has partners from further and higher education, employee and employer representatives, the Local Enterprise Partnership and City of York Council.
- The Partnership had worked over the last 10-12 months with the support of a jointly-procured consultant to produce an initial, 1-year plan focused on short-term change which was endorsed by the Executive Member in March 2021, and the 10-Year Strategy focused on long term skills infrastructure in York.

- A robust evidence base underpinned both plans, including external strategies, policies and research, as well as built-in employer and elected member consultations. Over 250 business contributed to the building of the strategy, as well as bespoke engagement through the University of York.
- That there were 8 principles in the Strategy, 4 commitments, of which there were 3 priorities under each and 8 key priority sectors. Consultation was to continue with stakeholders to shape delivery plans over the coming years.
- There was to be key metrics under the delivery plans, asking how accessible, sustainable and scalable individual initiatives are, which would be used to measure their effectiveness..

The Executive Member noted that:

- As a member of the Skills Board, he was aware of the large levels of consultation that had gone into the Strategy.
- He recognised that there was a focus on matching unemployment with vacancies, therefore the skills gap was a crucial aspect that needed addressing.
- He emphasised the inclusive nature of the strategy, which would enable all communities in the city to benefit from economic success.
- In the context of the national debate on green jobs, he noted that the strategy would enable York to secure its fair share of these jobs.

Resolved:

- i. That the contents of the report be noted.
- ii. That the final draft of York's 10-Year Skills Strategy, recognising the strong partnership approach taken to understand, reflect and respond to local priorities be endorsed.
- iii. that the ongoing engagement with stakeholders to continue to shape delivery of the strategy be noted.

Reason: To continue to help support people and businesses through change and begin developing the skills infrastructure that will support inclusive and sustainable growth in York

CLLR A WALLER, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 10.04 am and finished at 10.29 am].