

## **City of York Council's One Year Business Support Strategy – November 2021 Review**

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### **Background**

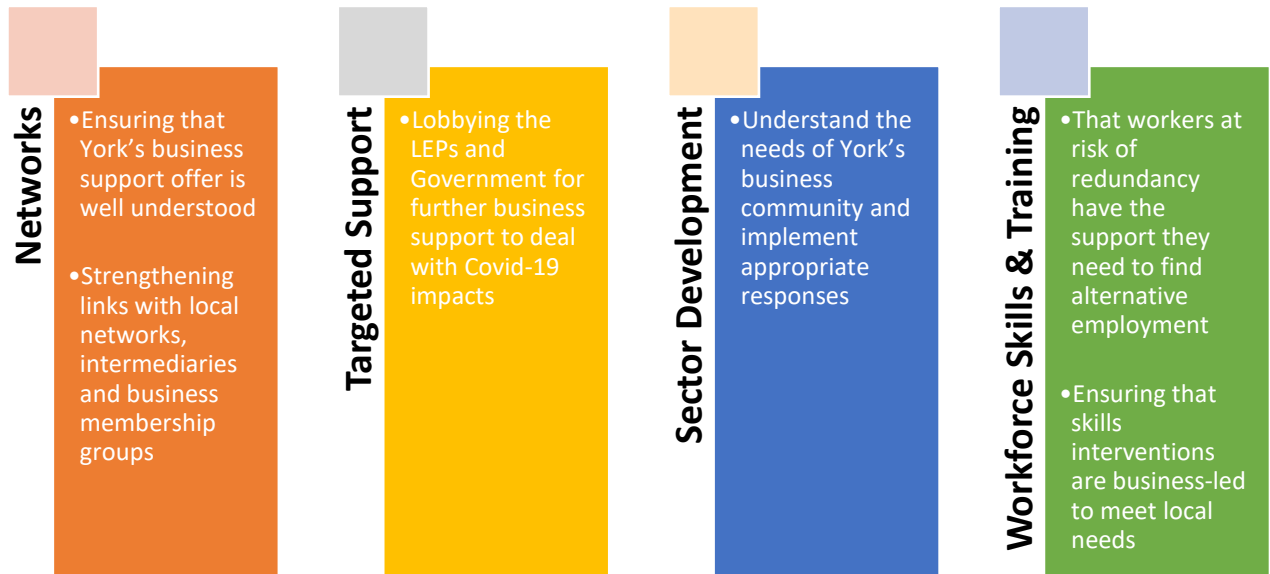
City of York Council's One Year Recovery and Renewal Plan highlighted the need for a revised set of strategies to address the very significant and immediate impacts of Covid-19 across all aspects of life in York. In terms of supporting the economic recovery of the city, a One Year Transport and Place Strategy (approved in June 2020 by the Council's Executive) was accompanied by a One Year Business Support Strategy, One Year Skills and Employment Plan and Tourism Marketing Plan (all approved in July 2020 by the Council's Executive).

More than a year on from the publication of the Council's One Year Business Support Strategy, this document reviews progress against the strategy's actions and highlights what activity remains to be delivered or where actions need to be reconsidered in terms of their relevance. Additional business support activities will be incorporated into the Council's new Economic Strategy for York which is due to be brought to the Executive for sign off in early 2022.

### **The Strategy**

The Council's **One Year Business Support Strategy** comprises four key themes:

1. Networks: strengthening links with public and private sector business support providers, and helping businesses to understand what is available;
2. Targeted support: lobbying the LEP and Government for further targeted support, informed by genuine business need through our sector roundtables;
3. Sector development: working with our established list of key sectors to formulate and implement sector specific plans; and,
4. Workforce skills and training: helping both individuals at risk of redundancy and businesses needing to flex and adapt to take advantage of the help on offer.



*Figure 1: City of York Council's One Year Business Support Strategy - key themes*

A series of activities underpin each theme, and these are set out in the table below alongside commentary on how these actions are to be delivered, anticipated outcomes, progress to date and activity still to be completed.

**One Year Business Support Strategy - One Year On Review**

| <b>Priority Area: Networks</b>          |  |   |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Action</b>                           | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Outcome</b>  | <b>Progress to Date</b>   | <b>Activity to be Delivered</b>   |
| Establish & promote a York Business Hub | Relaunching Make it York's business support offer as York's business hub, with the support offers of partners clearly articulated and sign-posted to | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensuring that York's business support offer is well understood by businesses and partners</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make it York website updated during 2020 to include a range of public sector business support offers</li> <li>- CYC business newsletter developed and issued weekly communicating a broad range of business support offers from public and private sector partners</li> <li>- Business-facing content on the CYC website updated following the return of the Make it York</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing activity ongoing</li> </ul> |

|   |  |  | Business Team to the Council   |  |
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| Strengthen links with local networks, intermediaries and business membership groups | Developing strong links with local business networks, intermediaries and membership groups to ensure the needs of local businesses across are well understood, necessary support provision is provided and the city's business interests are communicated with one voice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved sharing of business intelligence</li> <li>- stronger co-ordination of lobbying efforts</li> <li>- York's voice is recognised and heard both regionally and nationally</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Business Leaders Group created with monthly meetings held</li> <li>- Regular meetings held with York's key business membership groups and city partners</li> <li>- Traders' Association roundtable created with two meetings held to date</li> <li>-</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing activity ongoing</li> </ul>  |
| Continue FSB membership scheme & explore a Chamber scheme for large businesses      | Supporting SMEs to be part of business membership groups, enabling them to access a wide range of support and advice   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SMEs able to access a wide range of business support and advice</li> <li>- SMEs being part of a strong</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Over 600 free FSB memberships provided to local small and micro businesses</li> <li>- Discounted Chamber membership</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funding allocated to the FSB and the York Chamber of Commerce to be drawn down following the submission of suitable business support proposals</li> </ul> |

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|  |   | business community, at all geographies   | <p>scheme promoted to local businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- £40k of funding made available from CYC budgets to support FSB and Chamber-led business activity locally</li> </ul>  |   |
| Work with York BID to further develop its business support offer for levy-payers | City centre businesses able to access targeted support and new networking opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased support for city centre businesses</li> <li>- City centre businesses being part of a strong business community</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pop-up space initiative on College Green to enable people to consume food and drink from small businesses with otherwise limited space to accommodate customers</li> <li>- Assistance offered to local businesses applying to the Council for road closures, footstreet enhancements</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussions ongoing with the BID and key business support partners around how the city further supports businesses trading B2C (including those based in the city centre)</li> </ul> |

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|   |  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>and pavement café licenses</li> <li>- Signposting businesses to relevant guidance on Covid-19 safety and business support grants</li> </ul> |  |
| Facilitate better connections between CYC's Communities team and local employers to support community initiatives across York | Supporting businesses to play a stronger role in their local community through volunteering and participation in community initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased community cohesion and resilience</li> <li>- Increased civic pride amongst residents and businesses</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Signposted York businesses to the city's IT reuse scheme to support vulnerable residents to access IT equipment</li> </ul>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internal discussions to be had around how the Council can facilitate stronger links between local businesses and community initiatives</li> </ul> |

| Priority Area: Targeted Support                             |  |  |   |   |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| Action  | Description  | Outcome  | Progress to Date  | Activity to be Delivered  |
| Lobby for new start-up support through Government & LEPs    | New businesses emerging post-Covid able to access targeted support to develop and thrive                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase in business start-up rates</li> <li>- Increase in business survival rates</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LCR LEP Ad:venture programme for high growth start-ups and early stage businesses predominantly trading B2B promoted to local businesses</li> <li>- Two business start-up programmes launched by Y&amp;NY LEP with 66 York businesses supported to date</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- York-based start-up support offer in development with the University of York and key partners</li> </ul> |
| Lobby to extend public support to businesses that trade B2C | Key B2C sectors such as retail, hospitality, tourism, health and wellbeing and foundation services able to access targeted | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased support for York's retailers, hospitality, and tourism businesses</li> </ul>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New B2C business support programmes launched by Y&amp;NY LEP</li> <li>- Business support webinars delivered by Y&amp;NY LEP</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The delivery of a York-based business support voucher scheme (due to complete March 2022)</li> </ul>     |

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|  | support to survive and thrive   |   | covering a wide range of important themes<br>- Allocation of £500k of ARG funding to support a business support voucher scheme  |  |
| Develop new business start-up accommodation in the historic Guildhall building with complementary support services | Providing employment space for new and developing businesses in a central location, with access to York's business support services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase in business survival rates</li> <li>- SMEs able to access a wide range of business support and advice</li> <li>- Additional city centre footfall</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guildhall redevelopment work due to be completed in early 2022</li> <li>- Lease agreed with University of York to run the Guildhall as serviced office space, co-working and events space</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guildhall to open, with business services co-located there</li> <li>- Support the development of additional start-up and small business accommodation across York to service existing demand</li> </ul> |



| Priority Area: Sector Development   |  |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| Action  | Description  | Outcome  | Progress to Date   | Activity to be Delivered  |
| Produce sector development plans for York's economy, as defined by the 12 business intelligence sector groups | Supporting the growth and resilience of York's economy through business engagement, targeted support, and sector development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Businesses supported to be resilient, innovative and prosperous</li> </ul>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Three rounds of sector roundtable meetings took place between May 2020 and September 2020</li> <li>- York Hospitality Summit held in July 2021 in response to labour market challenges raised</li> <li>- Rail sector roundtable held in October 2021</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue sector roundtable meetings to help inform sector development plans</li> <li>- Creation of sector development plans with SMART objectives</li> </ul> |
| Work with local employers and the LEPs to encourage supply chain collaboration                                | Enabling the development of more localised supply chains to retain business spend within York and the wider region           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A greater amount of business spend retained locally and regionally</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- £500k of ARG funding allocated to a business support voucher scheme that connects York business seeking support with locally-based providers of</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delivery of the York business support voucher scheme (due to complete March 2022)</li> </ul>   |

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|   |  |   | advice and expertise   |   |
| In conjunction with the LEPs, promote help for businesses to reduce their environmental impact, supporting the city's climate ambitions | Supporting businesses to reduce their environmental impact through support programmes and national/regionally-developed incentives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduced industry emissions</li> <li>- Improved bottom line for businesses due to a reduction in energy costs/capitalisation of waste products</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotion of LCR LEP's Resource Efficiency business support scheme</li> <li>- Promotion of Y&amp;NY LEP's Circular-Economy: 6 benefits to business guides</li> <li>- York Business Week 2021 business sustainability event</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing activity ongoing</li> </ul> |

| Priority Area: Workforce Skills and Training   |   |  |   |   |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| Action   | Description   | Outcome  | Progress to Date  | Activity to be Delivered  |
| Work with local employers to identify staff at risk of/facing, redundancy, and support them to find alternative employment | Helping residents back into employment through appropriate training and support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unemployed residents supported back into employment</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Redundancy flyer created with DWP and York Learning</li> </ul>   | -   |
| Promote York's skills and training offer to local employers through the York Business Hub, linking jobs to communities     | Supporting workers and local residents to upskill                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Businesses provided with the skills they need to prosper</li> <li>- Residents supported to access new employment opportunities</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make it York website updated during 2020 to include a wide range of publically-funded skills support offers</li> <li>- Public sector-funded skills offers promoted to businesses through the Council's weekly business bulletin</li> <li>- City of York Council's website</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inaugural meeting of the York Skills business engagement forum, supporting best practice amongst skills providers operating in York</li> </ul> |

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|   |  |   | <p>updated with the various public sector skills offers available to York businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- City of York Skills Partnership delivered four skills events during York Business Week 2021 to help businesses access the support they need</li> </ul> |   |
| <p>Through York's Skills Board, work with our universities and colleges to develop training that supports local businesses to prosper</p> | <p>Ensuring that local training provision is business-led, addressing skills needs and succession planning</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Businesses supported with skills needs and succession planning</li> <li>- Strong pipeline of local talent developed</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Three-week hospitality (kitchen skills) SWAP pilot in partnership with DWP and York College</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rail Skills Roundtable to take place early December with the National Skills Academy for Rail and skills partners</li> </ul> |

### **Longer-term Recovery Actions**

In addition to the four key themes that make up the Council's One Year Business Support Strategy, a number of additional interventions were identified that would support the city's medium to long-term economic recovery, including a renewed focus on innovation (capitalising on city strengths), inward investment (following the confirmation of infrastructure funding for the York Central development), trade and export support (especially in light of EU exit) and tourism. Taken together, these actions are intended to support York's longer-term recovery from Covid-19, ensuring that the Council, together with its partners, help create a strong, sustainable and inclusive economy for the future.

During the early stages of the pandemic it was forecasted by economists that the UK's economic recovery would be slow and take a number of years to recover the ground lost. The actual pace of growth has been a lot speedier than first predicted, with GVA in York forecasted to exceed pre-pandemic levels in 2021.<sup>1</sup> In light of the city's economic recovery, what we initially termed to be longer-term actions should now be brought forward to aid the city's economic recovery and stimulate short to medium-term growth.

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<sup>1</sup> Oxford Economics October 2021 forecasts

| <b>Longer-term actions</b> |  |   |  |
|----------------------------|--|---|--|
| <b>Focused Areas</b>       | <b>Indicative Activities</b>   | <b>Progress to Date</b>   | <b>Activity to be Delivered</b>  |
| Innovation                 | <p>Establish a business accelerator in York</p> <p>Work with local businesses and our universities to help tackle industry challenges and develop innovative solutions</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stakeholder research on a York business accelerator completed</li> <li>- Agreement in place with an operator with a first cohort being targeted for 2022</li> <li>- Promotion of the Product and Process Innovation (PAPI) project, supporting local SMEs to develop innovative new products</li> <li>- Promotion of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) amongst local businesses, and other Innovate UK innovation support offers</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delivery of the first business accelerator cohorts and evaluate impact</li> <li>- With York's rail sector and key partners, explore plans for a York-based rail centre of excellence</li> </ul> |

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| <p>Inward Investment</p> | <p>Produce an Inward Investment Strategy for York</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- City of York Council now responsibility for inward investment following the new SLA in place with Make it York and the return of Make it York Business Team to the Council</li> <li>- York Central Prospectus in development</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Trade and Investment position within the Economic Growth team to be filled (position previously held at Make it York)</li> <li>- Trade and Inward Investment Strategy for York to be developed</li> </ul> |
| <p>Trade and Exports</p> | <p>Work with the LEP and DIT to widen international trade links and support businesses to export</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- DIT Export/internationalisation business support programmes promoted</li> <li>- Business networking events held with guest speakers from DIT</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key York market analysis to be produced as part of Trade and Investment Strategy</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Tourism</p>           | <p>Produce a Tourism Strategy for York that focuses on sector development and place promotion</p>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make it York's Tourism Advisory Board reconstituted to support intelligence gathering</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tourism Strategy to be produced for York</li> </ul>  |