

**Decision Session – Executive  
Member for Economy and Strategic  
Planning**

**27<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

## **Annex 1 - York Economic Strategy and Skills Plan Engagement Activity**

### **Summary**

1. This report sets out proposals for engagement with businesses, residents and partners to inform the development of a new Economic Strategy and Skills Plan for York.
2. A twin track approach will be taken to our Economic Strategy and Skills Plan – to 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 our economy. These two priorities will be underpinned by two cross cutting themes: the notion of 21<sup>st</sup> 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. The Council's low-carbon commitments, York's long and vibrant track record in transport innovation and nationally-significant bio-economy and agri-tech innovation assets will be key in developing the future economy.
3. A progress update provided to the Executive Member for the Economy and Strategic Planning's January 2021 Decision Session saw a revised economic evidence base presented alongside outline plans for engagement activity. Work has taken place to ensure that engagement activity places York's residents and businesses at the heart of plans to build an inclusive economy and aligns with the Council-wide Resident Engagement Strategy. A coherent engagement approach has been developed to address the overlapping themes of York's economy, carbon reduction plans and the city's local transport plan, reflecting a joined-up approach to policy development that will ensure consistency and alignment of our ambitions for the city.

4. In developing York's new Economic Strategy and Skills Plan, our approach will aim to secure engagement with a cross section of York's population and deepen understanding of the different factors which influence employment choices and aspirations. We will also seek to secure engagement for all of York's economic sectors, deepening understanding of perceptions and opportunities of York as a place to do business, understanding the changing requirements for space, infrastructure, skills and workforce, and the support requirements for recovery and longer-term growth.
5. Planned engagement on York's economy will be both ambitious and inclusive, building upon the direct relationship that City of York Council (CYC) has with its communities. Our approach will utilise a wide range of engagement mechanisms to stimulate conversation, aid evidence gathering and ensure that all stakeholders can play a role and share in both short-term recovery and long-term prosperity of the city.
6. Engagement activity will commence in late May and run until October 2021. Plans are in place to transition the current Business Leaders Group into the role that was initially envisaged for the York Economic Partnership, with this Group playing an important role in the development and ownership of a new Economic Strategy for York.
7. A new Economic Strategy and Skills Plan will be brought to the Council's Executive for sign-off in December 2021.

## **Recommendations**

8. The Executive Member is asked to:
  - 1) Note the contents of the report;
  - 2) Approve Council plans for public engagement on York's economy.

Reason: To support the development of a new, inclusive Economic Strategy for York.

## **Report**

9. City of York Council's current Economic Strategy was launched in 2016 and covers the period 2016-20. This was supplemented in July 2020 by a one year Covid economic recovery strategy. The Executive has committed

to renewing and adapting the strategy, with a new focus on inclusive growth, to develop a new Skills Plan, and to launch a new York Economic Partnership, which will include a diverse range of voices and perspectives.

## Our Approach

10. A comprehensive report on work towards a new Economic Strategy and Partnership for York was taken to the Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning's October 2020 Decision Session.
11. Our approach to engagement will place residents and businesses at the heart of plans to build an inclusive economy, making sure growth in York is both fairer and greener. To achieve this, we will do the following:
  - Secure engagement with a cross section of York's population, including all communities of identity and socio-economic groups;
  - Deepen understanding of different factors which influence employment choices and aspirations – so we can support residents to get higher paid, flexible 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs
  - Secure engagement for all of York's economic sectors, ensuring that small and independent businesses are well represented;
  - Deepen understanding of:
    - i. Perceptions and opportunities of York as a place to do business;
    - ii. Changing requirements for space, infrastructure, skills and workforce;
    - iii. Business support requirements for recovery and longer-term growth (including green growth).
12. Our Economic Strategy Engagement Plan outlined under Annex A provides further information on how we will engage with residents, businesses and partners in an inclusive way. Our approach includes three stages of city-wide engagement and consultation on the development of the Strategy, reflecting the Local Government Association's Engagement Spectrum and Public Participation framework:
  - Inform – deliver a communications campaign across York that lets all audiences (including commuters and business owners) know that City of York Council is keen to hear their views, promoting this

through case studies, animation, social media polling and other conversational communications tactics;

- Stage 1: Consult – Public Attitude Survey to understand the public perception of working in York, doing business in the city, skills, pay and quality of life together with links to transport and the green economy. This will be aligned with and form an integral part of the evidence gathering for both the Local Transport Plan and Carbon Reduction Action Plan. The online survey will be supplemented with multiple entry points targeting different audiences and their values/starting position;
- Stage 2: Inform and Involve – Targeted engagement sessions such as sector roundtables, workshops comprised of community groups, partners and target audiences based around demographics, and/or Facebook Live Q&As focussed on themes.
- Stage 3: Consult and Refine: City-wide consultation as an opportunity to comment and refine the draft Economic Strategy. This stage will also act as an opportunity to inform the consult and refine stages for the Local Transport Plan and Carbon Reduction Action Plan.

13. Our proposed approach to engagement is both ambitious and inclusive, and builds upon the direct relationship that City of York Council has with its communities to develop a people-centred Economic Strategy and Skills Plan. Over the last year, our direct relationship with our communities across York has helped to keep Covid-19 infection rates low, get support to those that need it the most and inform the Council's approach to the city's economic recovery.

14. Engagement activity will commence in late May and run until October 2021, with a new Economic Strategy brought to the Council's Executive for sign-off in December 2021. Regular updates on progress will be provided through future Executive Member Decision Sessions.

### **Economic Partnership**

15. The development of a new Economic Strategy for York will go hand in hand with the creation of a new, inclusive, Economic Partnership to oversee the process and ensure that there is a city-wide focus and response. A Skills Board has already been established to take on this role for the Skills Plan.

16. At present, the city's Business Leaders Group established during the COVID outbreak is fulfilling the role that was initially envisaged for the Economic Partnership, but work is taking place in conjunction with the Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning to ensure that this group is inclusive, reflective of our ambitions on Economic Strategy, and plays an important role in development of a new Strategy for York.
17. In addition to the above, the key business support agencies in York – Make it York, York Business Improvement District, Indie York, York and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses, University of York, the Institute of Directors and City of York Council, continue to meet on a regular basis to share intelligence and support collaboration. These partners will play a key role in supporting engagement activity on Economic Strategy, utilising their collective networks to ensure that we reach as many businesses as possible through our engagement work.

## **Consultation**

18. Our approach to engagement on Economic Strategy and Skills Plan aligns with the Council-wide Resident Engagement Strategy, and places York's residents and businesses at the heart of plans to build an inclusive and greener economy.
19. A coherent engagement approach is being taken to the overlapping themes of York's economy, carbon reduction and the city's local transport plan, with insight gathered supplemented by information from other planned engagement activity, including My City Centre and the Council's Skills Plan, as well as recent engagement activities such as Talk York, My Castle Gateway / My York Central, the Future of Acomb Front Street, the Council's micro grants evaluation and City Centre Access.

## **Council Plan**

20. Our work addresses the following outcomes from the Council Plan:
  - Good health and wellbeing;
  - Well-paid and an inclusive economy;
  - A better start for children and young people;
  - A greener and cleaner city;
  - Safe communities and culture for all; and,
  - An open and effective council.

## Implications

- **Financial** – no new financial commitments.
- **Human Resources (HR)** – no implications;
- **One Planet Council / Equalities** – our work positively supports the Council’s equalities objectives;
- **Legal** – no implications;
- **Crime and Disorder** – no implications;
- **Information Technology (IT)** – no implications;
- **Property** – no direct implications.

## Risk Management

There are no specific risks identified in respect of the recommendations.

## Contact Details

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### Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

**Tracey Carter**  
**Director of** Housing Economy and  
Regeneration

**Report**  **Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021  
**Approved**

**Wards Affected:** List wards or tick box to indicate all

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

## Background Papers:

### Annexes

Annex 2: Economic Strategy Engagement Plan

## List of Abbreviations Used in this Report:

**N/A**