

Meeting Decision Session - Executive Member for
Economy and Strategic Planning

Date 26 April 2022

Present Councillor Waller

Apologies

40. Declarations of Interest

At this point in the meeting, the Executive Member was asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest or other registerable interest that he might have in respect of business on this agenda, if he had not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests. None were declared.

41. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on the 28 February 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Executive Member.

42. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

43. Inclusive Growth Update

This report summarised City of York Council's developing narrative for York in the context of the Government's Levelling Up white paper. The report also provided an update on the actions set out in the Inclusive Growth Fund, as agreed by the Executive Leader at his Decision Session on 18th September 2019, and more broadly on recent data on the York economy as set out in Annex A. The Economic Growth Manager was in attendance to present the report and respond to questions.

Key points raised during the presentation of the report included:

- The Inclusive Growth Evidence Base had been updated and updates on the 8 projects of the Inclusive Growth Fund were included in the report.
- York's GVA per hour worked and wages were the strongest in the region, however these levels were only average compared to performance in the South East of England.
- Levelling Up ought to be judged by the comparison with the richest parts of the UK, not York's immediate neighbours.
- The Independent Retail Growth Fund had been a large factor in York's recovery from the pandemic, and the end of government funds had made it even more important.
- Engagement on the York Economic Strategy was currently underway with a focus on hard to reach groups of the population.

Comments from the Executive Member included:

- He emphasised the economic challenges facing the UK, including cost of living and fuel pressures, which he expected to have a significant both nationally and locally.
- He thanked officers for their work in channelling government grants to businesses as quickly as possible during the pandemic and for recognising the significant number of small businesses in the city.
- He stated that Community Hubs were an invaluable resource during the pandemic, and argued that the community centre closure programme ought to be reversed.
- That it would be useful to hold another round of round-table meetings with the traders' associations in York around the Independent Retail Growth Fund.

Resolved:

- i. That the developing narrative on Levelling Up in York be noted.
- ii. That the progress that has been made on the agreed Inclusive Growth Fund projects.

Reason: So that the Council nurtures a pipeline of projects that positively address inclusive growth and Levelling Up in the City of York.

44. Apprenticeship Update

The Executive Member considered a report which provided an update on apprenticeships in the city. The Skills Team Manager was in attendance to present the report and respond to questions.

Key points raised during the presentation of the report included:

- New apprenticeship starts were up 3% in 2021 on the year prior.
- There were around 180-200 apprenticeship vacancies within a 15 mile radius of York per week. These included a number of entry-level (Level 2) vacancies for various industries in the city.
- Around 40% of vacancies were for Level 3 apprenticeships, which were more geared towards those seeking a career change.
- Social media campaigns, events and other communications to raise awareness around apprenticeships were discussed.
- Higher level technical, STEM and green roles were being prioritised, and City of York Council were looking to work with local businesses to fund them.
- The new framework was simplified for businesses, shaped by experience of supporting businesses with levy transfer over the past year and aligned to the 10-year skills strategy.

Comments from the Executive Member included:

- That he was pleased to see the strong links established with businesses and that £160,000 of support was being invested in local residents through apprenticeships.
- That there were 79 apprentices currently working for City of York Council.
- It was important to emphasise that while many apprentices may be aged 16-18, people can become apprentices at any point in their working life and at any age.

Resolved:

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

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 residents.

- ii. That the updated framework through which local employers can apply to receive a transfer of the council's unallocated levy funds to support new apprenticeship starts within their organisation.

Reason: To support inclusive growth by aligning the framework with the priorities set out in York's 10-Year Skills Strategy.

CLLR A WALLER, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 10.03 am and finished at 10.28 am].