

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND PUBLIC
POLICY PANEL HELD ON TUESDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2018 AT COMMITTEE
ROOM A, WELLINGTON HOUSE, LEEDS**

Present:

Councillor Shabir Pandor (Chair)	Kirklees Council
Councillor Barry Collins	Calderdale Council
Councillor Debra Coupar	Leeds City Council
Councillor Cathy Scott	Kirklees Council
Nicola Greenan	Private Sector
Mike Hawking	Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF)
Professor Liz Towns-Andrews	Leeds City Region Universities

In attendance:

Britta Berger-Voigt	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Khaled Berroum	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
James Flanagan	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Liz Hunter	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Ben Still	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Steve Barnbrook	Calderdale Council
Paul Hayes	Wakefield Council
Kate McNicholas	Kirklees Council
Alex Watson	Leeds City Council

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Peter O'Brien, Rob Webster and Councillor Denise Jeffrey.

It was noted that Wakefield Council are in the process of changing their nomination to the Panel from Councillor Denise Jeffrey to Councillor Darren Byford.

2. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

No interests were declared.

3. Possible exclusion of the press and public

There were no items requiring the exclusion of the press and public.

4. Governance arrangements

The Panel considered a report on the governance arrangements agreed by the Combined Authority and invited the Panel to comment on the terms of reference and membership of the Panel. It was noted that there would be an opportunity, once the work programme of the Panel had been established, for membership to be reviewed.

Members expressed the need for future members to bring a new perspective and to come with a high profile to act as inclusive growth champions.

It was noted that the terms of reference were necessarily broad as the nature of the inclusive growth agenda cuts across many policy streams and the Combined Authority's intention is for the Panel to be wide ranging in the topics it considers.

Resolved:

- i) That the governance arrangements for the Inclusive Growth and Public Policy Panel, approved by the Combined Authority at its annual meeting on 28 June 2018, be noted.
- ii) That membership of the Panel be reviewed at a future meeting. It was noted that additional members should include a Voluntary Community Sector representative and a representative from Grant Thornton.

5. Achievements of the Inclusive Growth project

The Panel considered a report summarising the achievements of the inclusive growth project to date.

Members welcomed and noted the various achievements to date of partners across Leeds City Region in delivering Inclusive Growth activities. The need to understand the overall scale and complexity of the challenge, and maintain the focus on delivery in order to create a more socially inclusive economy, was also recognised.

Resolved:

- i) That the Panel notes the achievements of the inclusive growth project and within each partner authority and the Combined Authority.
- ii) That the Panel notes the scale and complexity of the challenge and the need for partners to maintain the focus on delivery in order to create a more socially inclusive economy.

6. Embedding Inclusive Growth across the City Region

The Panel considered a report providing information on how inclusive growth is being embedded across the emerging Policy Framework.

Discussions included:

- How inclusive growth is at the heart of the City Region's emerging wider policy framework. Members suggested adding a reference to the voluntary sector and considering the entire lower quartile of wages, not just the lowest and median wages, in order to determine a more accurate picture of wages.
- Re-shaping Combined Authority and LEP services and projects in order to drive inclusive growth, for example by changing the assessment criteria for the award of Business Growth Programme grants to encourage inclusive growth. It was suggested that any report on the impact of changes to criteria, and any new proposed changes to other grant programmes, should be brought to a future meeting.
- Panel members noted that under ERDF funding regulations businesses from the service and retail sector are not currently eligible for funding and expressed that future funding arrangements should be less restrictive and extended to all business growth programmes. However, concerns were raised about grant criteria might deter smaller businesses from applying. It was suggested that a report on the impact of grant criteria be provided at a future meeting. The Panel expressed a desire to revisit the grant criteria once their impact has been assessed. The Panel also requested that it should be consulted, along with the Business Innovation and Growth Panel, on potential future grant criteria.
- Inclusive growth activities being funded via the Business Rates Pool. It was suggested that any future impact analysis of the projects should be brought to a future Panel meeting.

Members were also asked to consider potential inclusive growth priorities and issues which could form the basis of a work programme. It was noted that the work programme should focused on delivery that is in the control of districts and the Combined Authority. The following issues and opportunities were raised and discussed:

- Driven by financial efficiency requirements, businesses and institutions are increasingly providing more of their services either partially, or wholly, online. The example of ongoing bank closures was cited and the adverse social impacts were noted for individuals without access, or the skills to access, service online. It was noted that the issue of getting everyone online had been highlighted as a key issue in the emerging Leeds City Region Digital Framework.
- A common 'good employers' framework was needed for public sector employers, covering business leadership, poverty standards, living wage pay, elements of the low pay charter and other commitments such as around offering specialist skills through volunteering. It was noted that this would help to refocus the debate away from economic output (i.e. number of jobs created) more towards the quality of jobs.
- Inclusive growth through a healthy workforce – economic growth and living standards are intrinsically linked to peoples' health. Preventing ill-health with the help of employers and public health partners is thus seen as a crucial element of inclusive growth.

In addition, Panel members express an interest in supporting emerging ideas such as the Inclusive Growth Corridor project that is currently being established by the Combined Authority. It was clarified that the "Inclusive Growth Corridors" are holistic approach that goes beyond individual transport connections. It was noted that the West Midlands are working on a similar idea with JRF and it was agreed that JRF would help to establish contact between officers from the two combined authorities. Members raised queries about planned corridors in their districts and officers suggested bringing back a more detailed item on Inclusive Growth Corridors for discussion to a future meeting.

The Panel agreed there was a need to establish a clearer evidence base of the scale and nature of the regional challenge of stubborn deprivation and economic growth not being inclusive enough. It was also suggested that the Combined Authority and other partners (e.g. local authorities, universities, colleges and schools) could usefully undertake an 'audit' of their work to establish a benchmark against which their future contribution to inclusive growth can be measured. To support this process, relevant indicators could be identified, with support from the higher education sector, for example on understanding the social return on investments made.

The Panel agreed to apply a strategic focus to its work. It was suggested that districts should report on their strategies and policies related to inclusive growth for the Panel to determine what can be up-scaled, supported or championed at a regional level. It was suggested that districts could provide inclusive growth updates at future meetings to assist the Panel's assessment.

Resolved:

- i) That the Panel notes the summary of how inclusive growth is embedded across the emerging Policy Framework and the projects that will drive inclusive growth.
- ii) That the Panel's initial suggestions for inclusive growth opportunities and issues should be considered at a future meeting as the basis of a work programme.
- iii) That an audit of the Combined Authority contribution to inclusive growth is undertaken and reported to a future meeting.

7. Business and inclusive employment

The Panel considered a report outlining existing work programmes and academic research into how businesses drive inclusive growth.

The Panel suggested that any work around improving productivity needs to also ensure good work as an outcome. Members mentioned the Poverty Truth Commission as a good way to identify the scale of the problem and as a means to engage businesses and workers to gain a better insight into lived experience at work.

The Panel agreed that it was vital to ensure that local authorities lead by example and certain core inclusive growth principles are embedded and realised by the authorities before they can be advocated wider. It was noted that other combined authorities (such as Greater Manchester and London) are already leading by example and developing 'Good Employment Charters' to promote to the region's businesses for them to agree to, sign up to and fulfil. An exercise that is made easier with the availability of elected Mayors and their 'soft power'.

Resolved: That the report be noted and the Panel's suggestions be considered further.

8. Forward Plan

The Panel considered the forward agenda plan and work programme.

It was agreed that facilitated informal workshops could allow wider input from partners, including from local communities, in order to shape and drive the work programme.

It was agreed that Bill Adams from the Trade Union Congress (TUC) be invited to a future meeting to present a discussion about the TUC's 'Great Jobs' aspirations for local authorities.

Resolved: That the Forward Plan be noted and amended as requested.

9. Date of the next meeting – 4 December 2018