

INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE MEETING OF THE ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MEETING TO BE HELD REMOTELY DUE TO COVID-19 AT 10.00 AM
ON WEDNESDAY 19 JANUARY 2022**

THIS MEETING WILL BE LIVESTREAMED HERE:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaziNSGpgZZT41Vibn2ZK9A/live>

A G E N D A

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**
- 3. POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**
- 4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER
2021**
(Pages 1 - 6)
- 5. CHAIR'S COMMENTS AND UPDATE**
- 6. RURAL ISSUES**
(Pages 7 - 18)
- 7. HOUSING PLEDGE AND POWERS**
(Pages 19 - 24)
- 8. COVID-19 ECONOMIC RECOVERY**
(Pages 25 - 36)
- 9. ECONOMY SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**
(Pages 37 - 52)
- 10. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING - 9 MARCH 2022**

Signed:



**Managing Director
West Yorkshire Combined Authority**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2021 AT COMMITTEE ROOM 6/7, LEEDS CIVIC HALL

Present:

Councillor Richard Smith (Chair)	Kirklees Council
Councillor Stephen Baines (Deputy)	Calderdale Council
Councillor Aneela Ahmed	Bradford Council
Councillor Jonathan Bentley	Leeds City Council
Councillor Kayleigh Brooks	Leeds City Council
Councillor Dawn Collins	Leeds City Council
Councillor Bob Felstead	Bradford Council
Councillor Tony Hames	Wakefield Council
Councillor Andrew Hollyer	City of York Council
Councillor Zafar Iqbal	Bradford Council
Councillor Manisha Kaushik	Kirklees Council
Councillor Olivia Rowley	Wakefield Council
Councillor Audrey Smith	Calderdale Council
Councillor Harpreet Uppal	Kirklees Council
Councillor Tony Wallis	Wakefield Council

In attendance:

Brian Archer	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Khaled Berroum	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Peter Glover (Minute 8)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Ian Smyth (Minute 8)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Zafar Iqbal, Manisha Kaushik, and Olivia Rowley.

The meeting was confirmed as quorate, with 12 members present out of 11 needed for quorum.

2. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

3. Possible exclusion of the press and public

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

4. Notes of the inquorate meeting held on 22 September 2021

Resolved: That the notes of the inquorate meeting held on 22 September 2021 be noted and entered as public record of what was discussed.

5. Scrutiny and governance arrangements

The Committee considered a report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer outlining membership changes since the last meeting and amendments to Scrutiny Standing Orders section on substitute rules to be proposed to the Combined Authority on 9 December.

The Chair welcomed new members Councillors Tony Hames and Tony Wallis, representing Wakefield Council, to the committee.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

6. Chair's update and comments

The Committee received a verbal update from the Chair on his activity since the last meeting and a number of matters, including:

- The three Scrutiny Chairs have written a joint letter with Mayor Tracy Brabin to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Local Government, Michael Gove, asking him to consider lowering statutory quorum requirements for combined authority scrutiny and allowing remote or hybrid meetings.
- Meeting with Mayor Brabin 1-1 to discuss the economy scrutiny workplan and the committee's plans for the year. The Mayor outlined her own plans and expressed support for scrutiny's critical friend role. The Chair reiterated that non-partisan nature of scrutiny and his desire that it focus on outcomes and performance rather than making policy or acting as an opposition to the mayor. The committee's concerns on rural issues, housing/planning, mayoral powers and mayoral economic pledges were also discussed.

Resolved: That the Chair's verbal update be noted.

7. Economy Scrutiny Work Programme 2021/22

The Committee considered a report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer outlining the 2021/22 Work Programme which was based on the discussion held at the previous inquorate meeting and subsequent conversations with directors and heads of service.

The Chair confirmed he would like to go ahead with a workshop in February focusing on Inward Investment strategy and activity, with a focus on Channel 4 as a case study.

Members suggested that the COVID economic recovery item involve some discussion on the growth of the green sector, in particular solar and renewable energy, and difficulties in recruiting people with the right skills.

Resolved:

- i) That a virtual workshop focusing on Inward Investment strategy and activity, with Channel 4 bid as a case study, be arranged for mid-February 2022.
- ii) That the appended 2021/22 Work Programme be approved.

8. COVID Economic Recovery Plan

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Economic Services and Director of Policy & Development providing an overview of the current COVID Economic Recovery Plan, considered and approved by the Combined Authority at its last meeting, and a general update on current economic data and trends.

Discussion took place, and points were raised, around the following topics:

- **Business support schemes – advice, planning and networking:** Business Growth Managers, based in the partner councils, act as ‘business GPs’ and a first port of call for businesses to receive a diagnosis before being directed to the right place amongst a suite of support avenues. Many businesses would benefit from a level of support for long-term planning e.g. growing sustainably, finding people with the right skills etc. A peer learning and networking for businesses is currently in operation, where more experienced businesses can advise growing ones. There are other programmes which target that level of support, in advice, or finding premises/staff, rather than just funding.
- **Access to funding:** This remains one of the biggest challenges and barriers facing both new and growing businesses and existing and established businesses. Most of the schemes and programmes seek to provide funding in some capacity from smaller cash grants to larger capital loans. A lot of the COVID stop-gap schemes were delivered through LEPs and combined authorities’ business support schemes and teams. Another issue is banks, which are private entities, and began restricting credit and loan facilities at the height of the pandemic crisis. Some work was undertaken by local stakeholders, like the LEP Chair Roger Marsh to lobby banks to be more understanding. Ultimately, the newer and smaller ‘challenger’ banks saw a market opportunity to provide this funding and this caused the bigger banks to respond. There is a need to explore locally owned and managed sources of funding, to lower reliance on international banks.
- **Entrepreneurship Programme – target audience and promotion:** There is a concern that self-employment options are pushed for target delivery reasons in place of more stable and long-term employment options, which can be harder to find and attain. There are well understood ‘success factors’ to entrepreneurial routes and the programmes seeks to target people who have multiple factors, but

just need support on one or two. Schools are often resistant, but for many students, the subjects they excel in might be the right to be successful in business – with the right support and advice, no different to any other career. More success is gained convincing schools when business skills are more strongly related to taught subjects, such as maths and accounting/audit, or English literature/language to advertising/marketing.

- **Fair wages and working conditions:** Although different people have different requirements in work, and flexible (or 'gig') work might suit many, there are reports that some employers exploit self-employed status for their workers. It is difficult to identify exactly which companies are engaging in such practices, but work is underway on a 'Fair Work Charter' and fair pay promotion across the region. There is also a new focus on cooperatives, as it is a key mayoral pledge – alongside developing creative and culture sector. These are the kind of areas where mayoral soft power can be deployed and make an impact.
- **Retired workers re-entering work force:** The possibility of people who had retired early, or are fully retired, re-entering the work force to fill shortages. Data currently shows the rate of return to employment after redundancy is low. More data is required to understand exactly why, but there are reports of barriers to reemployment and discrimination against older applicants as being 'overqualified', as well as workers being pressured into early retirement. Ultimately, a recently unemployed person can also access re.boot and other programmes to help them re-enter the workforce or reskill.
- **Disadvantaged communities and inclusion:** There are two elements to inclusive approaches, targeting individuals and groups directly or targeting communities in a place-based approach. Interventions should be evidence led and the focus on inclusivity is framed in terms of economic growth as it is not considered possible to increase inclusivity in the economy without growing it. The expression 'hard to reach communities' implies certain communities are resistant to being reached rather than not being reached out to. Consultations and policy development exercises often attract organisations that are well versed in participating in them – similarly to some businesses which are fluent in the processes for accessing funding and support, compared to others. Work is underway to ensure that everyone has access to business and skills programmes/support and that economic growth benefits everyone.
- **Climate action vs economic growth:** Tension between need to grow the economy and carbon emission reduction targets E.g. in the debate on road and airport expansion. The Combined Authority's purpose is to drive economic growth and so all strategic analysis and business cases must make a case for economic growth factors. Recently, a carbon impact assessment tool to use to assess schemes

has been commissioned and should be deployed in the near future – but the overall impact requires further data and analysis.

- **Growth of green jobs/skills:** The definition of green jobs is key. A definition that is too broad might suit target achievements and ‘greenwashing’ efforts but would not properly address the current deficit in green skills supply vs growing demand in the region (and country). The Combined Authority has established a ‘Green Task Force’ to determine suitable criteria for a ‘green job’ amongst other things – and could report back to a future meeting – alongside a broader ‘audit’ on the research side of the region’s skills base and requirements. The possibility of supporting reskilling people into in-demand growing green sectors, through AEB influence, is being considered i.e., mechanics upskilling to be able to repair electric vehicle engines. Electric cars are being promoted and use is increasing in both public transport and in cars and bikes, but repair capacity is not rising in proportion.
- **Region’s assets and infrastructure (in energy and supply routes):** The possibility of using the region’s natural assets in the generation of renewable energy, such as the feasibility and of using the waterways system to produce and store hydroelectric power. The potential of the Humberside Freeport to become the ‘Rotterdam’ of England could have a positive effect on West Yorkshire in supply terms, and if certain strategic infrastructure improvements are made along the route – including on waterways. Could look at what other regions with similar asset profile are planning. It was noted that any local energy policies must adhere to national government guidelines, which define the scale of different types e.g. nuclear is still defined as ‘small scale’ despite the large infrastructure requirement and cost.
- **Research, development and intelligence:** There is close work ongoing between the Combined Authority and universities, through an appointed individual, to coordinate the region’s assets and experts to help answer questions to inform policy development and services. Most recently this network is aiding in the development of the COVID economic recovery plan. In general intelligence gathering the Research & Intelligence team produces regular monitors and have begun an annual ‘state of the region’ with the goal of having a comprehensive picture of developments in economic and social data.

Members asked for additional data on number of people affected by reduction in Universal Credit / working tax credits being in work vs those not in work and the Chair reiterated his hope that the Committee focuses on the delivery and achievement of the Mayor’s Pledges.

Resolved: That the report be noted and the Committee’s feedback and conclusions be considered further.

9. Date of the next meeting – 19 January 2022

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Report to: Economic Scrutiny Committee

Date: 19 January 2022

Subject: **Rural Issues**

Director: Liz Hunter, Interim Director of Policy and Development

Author: Justin Wilson, Head of Strategic Networks

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Committee on the rural context for West Yorkshire and highlight some of the main policy challenges and delivery programmes which are taking place in the region's rural areas.
- 1.2 The report includes a focus on digital infrastructure and how that is delivered in rural areas. It also covers the support currently available to businesses in rural areas and to farming businesses.

2. Information

Context

Policy Context

- 2.1 The Combined Authority's Strategic Economic Framework contains a portfolio policy and strategy documents that outline the Authority's vision, objectives, and response to key issues and opportunities. Rural issues are recognised in a range of different ways depending on the policy area and the type of response required.

Spatial Context

- 2.2 The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Rural Urban Geography classifications are based on the physical settlements and related characteristics within small geography areas. This dataset is already used to define where rural programmes can operate e.g. delivery of rural broadband. Some headline contextual information is provided below based on these datasets:

Table 1: Contextual Information

Area ¹	Rural km ²	Urban km ²	Total km ²	Rural %	Rural Population	Urban Population	Rural Population %
West Yorkshire	769	1,261	2,029	38%	203,675	2,103,360	9%

2.3 West Yorkshire's is a predominantly urban area and its rural population is relatively small but still significant in absolute terms; with more than 200,000 people living in rural locations, equivalent to 9% of the total population of the region. Although this overall proportion is smaller than the national average of 18% the figures vary at local authority level, ranging from 5% in Bradford and Leeds and up to 17% in Wakefield.

2.4 There are different types of rural area with potentially differing needs from a policy perspective. Seven per cent of West Yorkshire's population is classified as residing in "Rural town and fringe" with 2% classed as "Rural village and dispersed". In Calderdale 6% of the population falls into the latter rural category.

Table 2: Population profile by Rural Urban Classification

Area type	Bradford	Calderdale	Kirklees	Leeds	Wakefield	West Yorkshire
Rural town and fringe	5%	11%	8%	4%	14%	7%
Rural village and dispersed	0%	6%	2%	1%	3%	2%
Urban city and town	17%	8%	5%	7%	43%	15%
Urban major conurbation	78%	76%	85%	88%	40%	76%

Source: *Mid-year Population Estimates, 2020, ONS*

2.5 Turning to employment, around 62,000 jobs in West Yorkshire, equivalent to 6% of the total, are based in workplaces that are located in rural areas as compared with the national average of 14%. Four per cent of jobs are in "Rural town and fringe" areas and a further 2% in "Rural village and dispersed".

¹ These areas are based on DEFRA Rural Urban Geographies 2011.

Table 3: Profile of employment by Rural Urban Classification

Row Labels	Bradford	Calderdale	Kirklees	Leeds	Wakefield	West Yorkshire
Rural town and fringe	3%	7%	6%	2%	5%	4%
Rural village and dispersed	0%	2%	1%	1%	8%	2%
Urban city and town	17%	8%	4%	4%	45%	13%
Urban major conurbation	80%	83%	89%	92%	43%	81%

Source: Business Register and Employment Survey, 2020, ONS

- 2.6 The prevalence of rural employment differs across West Yorkshire's local authorities, ranging from 3% in Bradford, 4% in Leeds to 9% in Calderdale and 12% in Wakefield. The industry sectors with the highest proportions of employment in rural areas in West Yorkshire include Agriculture, forestry & fishing, Transport & storage and Construction. The sectors with the highest rural employment in absolute terms are Health, Business administration & support services and Manufacturing.
- 2.7 Approximately 9,000 businesses in West Yorkshire, or 9.4% of the total, are based in rural areas within the region, compared with a national average figure of 21%. The proportion of rural businesses ranges from 7% in Leeds to 16% in Calderdale.

Table 4: Profile of businesses by Rural Urban Classification

Row Labels	Bradford	Calderdale	Kirklees	Leeds	Wakefield	West Yorkshire
Rural town and fringe	8%	11%	10%	5%	12%	8%
Rural village and dispersed	0%	5%	0%	2%	0%	1%
Urban city and town	18%	8%	5%	6%	41%	13%
Urban major conurbation	73%	76%	85%	87%	47%	78%

Source: Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR), ONS

- 2.8 Rural businesses are predominantly small: 88% have 0 to 9 employees compared with 82% of the overall business population of West Yorkshire. There are only around 5 large businesses (250+ employees) located in rural parts of West Yorkshire.

Policy and Delivery Areas

Digital Infrastructure and Broadband

- 2.9 The City Region's Digital Framework outlines our aspirations for digital across the region. The Framework includes 5 outcomes for activity and investment and provides a collective narrative/ambition for 'digital' in the region. The

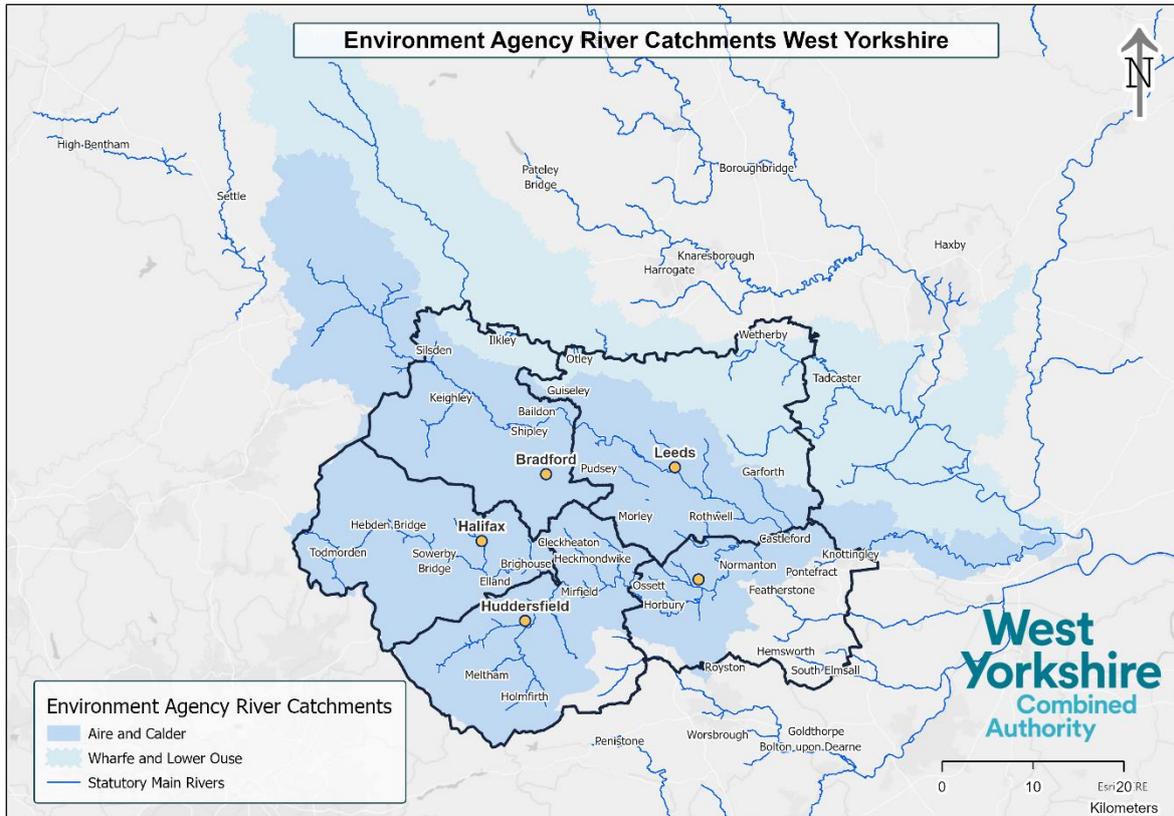
Framework is aligned with national ambitions for 100% coverage of gigabit-capable broadband infrastructure.

- 2.10 Our digital infrastructure delivery programmes are generally focused on supporting delivery in hard to reach areas which are not commercially viable. These are more prominent in rural areas as costs to deliver connectivity increase due to lower development densities and increased distances from the fibre broadband network. However, there are pockets of poor connectivity in urban areas e.g. where new development has been delivered or an area which has not been connected by a previous roll out programme.
- 2.11 Current roll out programmes include the West Yorkshire and York Superfast Broadband Programme (Contract 3), Digital Enterprise and Wakefield Gigabit Vouchers. These programmes operate alongside the £5bn Project Gigabit which is a national programme led by DCMS. Project Gigabit is expected to start delivery in 2022/23 and target an estimated 125,000 premise across West Yorkshire (including parts of neighbouring areas) with investment between £128-218m (subject to a future procurement exercise). Significant commercial delivery is also taking place by organisations such as City Fibre, Openreach and Virgin Media.
- 2.12 To deliver 100% coverage of gigabit-capable broadband infrastructure significant levels of public investment will be required in rural areas. So far the government has committed funding to deliver about a quarter of what is required in the final 20% areas under Project Gigabit. Therefore the Combined Authority and local partners will have a role in addressing this gap and engaging with government to do more.

Climate Change and Flood Risk Management

- 2.13 The [West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan](#) outlines the steps that the region will need to take to become net zero by 2038. This includes a roadmap and policies which set the groundwork for future emission reductions. Many of these areas have a strong rural dimension to them. They will therefore require strong partnerships and engagement with rural areas to support action where it is required. Examples of policies that will require engagement from a rural perspective include: TR08 Shared Mobility; NE02 9 (Land-Use Data and Evidence); NE04 (Regenerative Nature Recovery Schemes); NE05 (Farmer & Landowner Information and Support Service); CR03 (Flood Risk and Drainage). These areas will be explored as the Action Plan is delivered.
- 2.14 Fuel Poverty and domestic retrofit is often flagged as an issue in rural areas because of certain challenges with fuel costs (e.g. off gas grid) and building types. This is a challenge that Combined Authority officers are considering as we develop new strategies and programmes.
- 2.15 Flood risk management activities are undertaken at the river catchment level across the Yorkshire and Humber region. At a West Yorkshire geography the two principal catchments are the Wharf and Lower Ouse catchment and Aire and Calder catchment.

Figure 1: Environment Agency River Catchments West Yorkshire



- 2.16 These catchments span across rural and urban areas with flood interventions varying depending on the characteristics of the locality. There is a general trend of more expensive capital schemes being required in downstream urban areas e.g. physical flood barriers and walls. Natural flood management measures are more suited to upland rural areas. These are comparatively less expensive initially, but generally require more maintenance than capital schemes.
- 2.17 A mix of flood protection measures will be required across a river catchment to slow the flow of rainfall in upland areas and protect premises and urban areas from flooding events. This is illustrated by the West Yorkshire flood programme (2021/22 – 2027/28) which includes a mix of 110 schemes predominately in the urban area and 85 in rural areas. These schemes have a total project expenditure of £330.5m (urban) and £142.1m (rural).

Business Support

- 2.18 A wide range of support is available to new-start and existing SMEs across West Yorkshire and the wider Leeds City Region, and this includes those located in rural parts of the region. The support available directly from the Combined Authority and LEP includes : - advice and grant funding with the development / commercialisation of new products, processes and services, advice and grant funding on reducing energy and water usage and on reducing waste through recycling and re-use models and techniques, devising

and implementing active and sustainable travel activities within business operations, increasing productivity through the adoption of digital technology, developing and implementing strategic growth plans, and advice and funding on setting up new enterprises. Most of this support has been funded to date by a combination of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Local Growth Fund (LGF). Most recently, a new £6m enterprise support package for pre-start, start-up and early-stage firms has been funded via the gainshare devolution monies.

- 2.19 The above activity, and much more delivered by partners across the public, private and third sectors (e.g. Local Authorities, Innovate UK, Department for International Trade, Chambers of Commerce, universities and colleges), is underpinned by the Growth Service. The service, which has been funded directly by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and ERDF since April 2015, is the underpinning infrastructure for business support in the region. It is an integrated 'hub and spoke' delivery model, with 20 SME Growth Managers operating at the district level and employed by the Local Authorities, and a central Business Gateway function handling enquiries from businesses of all sizes, sectors and stages of development. Since April 2015, the Growth Service has supported over 20,000 individual businesses with advice, guidance and funding.
- 2.20 The main national funding schemes for businesses in rural areas, namely EAFRD (EU-funded), LEADER and the Countryside Productivity Fund, are now closed to new applications, although some of the delivery will complete in 2022. At the time of writing (late December 2021), it is not clear if there will be any rural-specific elements included within the forthcoming UK Shared Prosperity Fund. At present, there are no business support schemes in West Yorkshire that are targeted specifically at businesses in rural areas. However, 8% of businesses supported via the Growth Service since April 2015 are in rural parts of West Yorkshire, and if the geography is widened to the former Leeds City Region (includes York, Harrogate, Selby and Craven, and is the geography for most SME support in recent years), the figure rises to 13%. Several businesses in and around the Agri Food sector have recently been supported with advice and funding from the LEP and Combined Authority. This has included with the development of new products and processes via Connecting Innovation, and the innovative collection use of waste by-products via REBiz.
- 2.21 Feedback and anecdotal intelligence from business-facing teams across the Combined Authority and LEP, substantiated from our colleagues in York and North Yorkshire, is that the key issues and challenges facing businesses in rural areas are : - recruiting and retaining staff with the required skills levels (including digital skills), access to finance and cashflow management, broadband connectivity and ongoing uncertainty over importing and exporting rules and regulations linked to EU Exit and the replacement domestic schemes.
- 2.22 There is a range of support available from DEFRA, and its funded delivery partners, specifically for farming businesses (agriculture and horticulture). This

includes the £27m Farming Investment Fund that opened for applications in November 2021, and which consists of the Farming Equipment and Technology Fund (grants of between £2k and £25k for new / advanced capital equipment to boost productivity and improve environmental sustainability) and the Farming Transformation Fund (grants of between £35k and £500k for water management and improving farm productivity).

- 2.23 In addition, Defra, in partnership with UKRI and as part of the Agriculture Transition Plan, recently announced the new £17.5m Farming Innovation Programme. With the three inter-connected components of the 'Industry-led R&D Partnership Fund' (now open to applications), the 'Farming Futures R&D Fund' (open to applications in early 2022) and the 'Projects to Accelerate Adoption Fund' (open to applications in Spring 2022), the programme aims to develop new technologies and practices to help overcome barriers and exploit new technologies, such as artificial intelligence and low-emission machineries. Supported projects will need to demonstrate their positive impact on net zero and on improving productivity e.g. the development of climate-resilient crops. Lastly, advice and guidance for farming businesses is available from the Defra-funded Farming Advice Service. This helps farmers understand and meet the requirements of Cross Compliance, Greening (the Basic Payments Scheme) and the European Directives on both water protection and the use of sustainable pesticides.

Innovation

- 2.24 The Innovation Framework was signed off by the Combined Authority earlier this year and provides a framework for activity and investment across the region. Our vision for innovation for the Leeds City Region/West Yorkshire is:

“A place that is globally recognised for developing an open, inclusive, thriving and coherent innovation ecosystem, where SMEs, budding entrepreneurs and individuals are inspired to innovate, and can easily navigate the support landscape and connect and collaborate with others to create new and better solutions for business growth and societal good”.

- 2.25 There are 12 priority areas for investment and activity: Inclusive innovation – for and by everyone; A focus on Healthtech; Innovation to meet net zero; A strengthened relationship with UKRI; Innovation finance; Innovative start ups; Mission based innovation; Improved HEI-SME relationship; Investing in centres of excellence; Innovation peer networks; Adoption of innovative practices; Connecting the landscape.
- 2.26 The LEP and Combined Authority delivers the Connecting Innovation programme which aims to connect businesses with the right support for their innovation journey. It also provides small grant funding to kickstart activity.
- 2.27 The LEP and Combined Authority facilitates the West Yorkshire Innovation Network which brings together the ecosystem to drive innovation across the region.

- 2.28 The first ever West Yorkshire Innovation Festival was delivered in 2021 (virtually), with plans to run the second in 2022 to raise the profile of the region as an innovation hub. This is expected to be a mix of virtual and physical events across the region.
- 2.29 The region has low levels of R&D investment and innovation activity compared to other areas. Business in the region are also less likely to apply for IUK funding or apply for R&D tax credits. This has a significant impact on the productivity of the region.
- 2.30 Higher Education Institutions are an important source of innovation support in the region but by no means the only offer available. There are a range of local, regional and national providers supporting businesses on their innovation journey – indeed the landscape is very confused and fragmented.
- 2.31 Traditional thinking promotes city centres as hotbeds of innovation – due to the clustering, agglomeration effect and proximity of other businesses and research institutions. So whilst the ‘new to the world innovations’ are perhaps less likely to come from rural firms, there is significant potential outside of these centres to support innovation diffusion/adoption of tech across the business base. However this does rely on the underpinning infrastructure being in place.

Housing and Regeneration

- 2.32 The Mayor’s pledge for delivery of sustainable affordable homes is a stretching target for the region. The Combined Authority has very little direct control over delivery of the pledge so it will be delivered in partnership. It should drive innovation and enhanced partnership working to deliver the overall number but there is not a separate target for delivery of rural housing.
- 2.33 Based on the work done so far with partners to look at projections, delivery the 5,000 homes is possible but the majority will be located in urban extension and/or brownfield sites. Delivery is monitored on a district basis drawn from national monitoring returns and currently does not include a rural/urban split.
- 2.34 The One Public Estate Programme has supported feasibility and technical studies for several rural local authority owned sites (including Harrogate and Craven). Unfortunately Craven withdrew sites from the programme due to various reasons including a review of the asset disposal strategy given potential reorganisation.
- 2.35 More data can requested from Homes England, who invest and manage affordable housing programmes, districts and housing association providers if more specific information was required to understand the current delivery position.
- 2.36 Affordable housing in a rural context can be politically and technically difficult to deliver due to the sensitivity of locations and scarce supply of suitable sites.

Homes England has run specific programmes for rural housing but currently smaller programmes have been consolidated into the £8bn 2021-26 Affordable Housing Programme. The Affordable Homes Programme provides grant funding to support the capital costs of developing affordable housing for rent or sale.

Transport and Mobility

- 2.37 The West Yorkshire Connectivity Infrastructure Plan outlines the region's transport vision for a clean and connected region with walking and cycling at the centre of everyday journeys.
- 2.38 The Combined Authority submitted a response² to the Department for Transport's 'Future of Transport: Rural Strategy' call for evidence. The response highlights some of the transport issues facing rural areas. This includes a higher dependency on private car use, the decline in commercial rural bus services and access to key services/employment.
- 2.39 Since bus deregulation, bus operators have assessed the commercial viability of services on a route and journey by journey basis. 85% of the total bus miles in West Yorkshire are run on a purely commercial basis, with the remaining 15% of bus miles delivered under contract from the Combined Authority. These contracted / tendered services tend to be on less commercial routes including those in rural areas. The fact that the Combined Authority, if it wishes to continue to see services being delivered on these routes, is required to fund the services as they are less commercially attractive demonstrates that the current model of delivering bus services is not working, especially for those outside of the larger urban areas.
- 2.40 Bus reform, whether it is via a Bus Enhanced Partnership or Bus Franchising, provides the opportunity to address the issues of a lack of connectivity for local communities via the bus network. Both mechanisms enable more local control to be taken on decisions relating to where and how the bus network delivers for local people. They also allow a more holistic approach to be taken to the delivery of the bus network rather than one which is driven to a large part by commercial decisions.
- 2.41 The Combined Authority is also considering other models for delivering public transport in rural areas. This includes consideration of Demand Responsive Transport (DRT). The Combined Authority are currently running a trial DRT scheme in the East of Leeds and there are emerging proposals for a further 5 DRT areas through the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

Future Funding

- 2.42 The Combined Authority's funding and programmes are delivered across both urban and rural areas. There have however been some specific rural

² [Future of Transport: Rural Strategy Call for Evidence - West Yorkshire Combined Authority Response](#), (WYCA, 2021)

programmes and funding opportunities in the past. This includes the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), part of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) which is set to be replaced by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. What is not yet clear is the extent to which the Rural Growth Programme will roll into the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund or whether there will be another specific rural grant programme – if the latter is the case it will be important to ensure the wider business support offer is made clear across West Yorkshire for the benefit of all businesses. Work is ongoing to work with Government and partners to try to influence the shape, structure and quantum of the Fund with clear messaging that any new Fund needs to adequately address rural issues as well as urban, coastal issues for example across the UK.

2.43 Other specific funding opportunities from government departments have also been made available, including the Rural Broadband Initiative (RBI) provided by DEFRA.

2.44 In addition the Authority now has greater flexibility on how it uses other local and flexible funding e.g. gainshare, through the Single Investment Fund which supports the delivering of the West Yorkshire Investment Strategy.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

3.1 Tackling the Climate Emergency is identified as one of the overarching goals of the Strategic Economic Plan. The report highlights a number of strategies and policy areas which support this objective. Rural areas have the potential to support this ambition directly e.g. by supporting the delivery of natural flood management and peat restoration.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

4.1 Inclusive Growth is identified as one of the overarching goals of the Strategic Economic Plan. The report highlights a number of strategies and policy areas which support this objective.

4.2 It is recognised that inclusive growth includes all areas of West Yorkshire which means it cannot be delivered in full without supporting rural areas.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

5.1 All Combined Authority policies, funding decisions and delivery programmes are developed with regard to equality, diversity and inclusion issues. This includes consideration of any spatial dimension to equality and diversity issues which may require some of specific interventions to address the rural areas highlighted in this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Staffing Implications

8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

10.1 That the Committee notes the report and provides any comments.

11. Background Documents

None.

12. Appendices

None.

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Report to: Economic Scrutiny Committee

Date: 19 January 2022

Subject: **Housing Pledge and Powers**

Director: Liz Hunter, Director of Policy and Development

Author: Alison Gillespie, Head of Place and Environment

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 Scrutiny Committee has asked for a report outlining early work on fulfilling mayor's pledge on affordable housing.

Committee wants to understand:

- 1) The MCA's current housing powers in the absence of spatial strategy and other previously agreed planning powers in devo deal – and how CA's functions are expected to change in the future.
- 2) How the CA can enable housing development – and fulfil the Mayor's Pledge – within current powers while housing remains an LA function.
- 3) How any CA activity is linked with Local Plans.
- 4) What steps are being taken to ensure that affordable housing ambition can be met within the CA's current powers

2. Information

Combined Authority Role in Housing

- 2.1 Housing is a council responsibility, but the Combined Authority supports the delivery of new homes, including affordable homes, through investment programmes and partnership working with Local Authorities, Homes England and Registered Providers. As well as supporting delivery of new homes the Combined Authority has a role in driving quality and sustainability of homes including promoting green technologies and improving the quality and carbon footprint of existing homes through retrofit. The design of homes and neighbourhoods is also an important focus, playing a key role in the health and wellbeing of residents.

- 2.2 The Combined Authority was allocated £3.2m in revenue funding through devolution to develop a pipeline of housing sites to an investment ready position. Revenue is providing extra capacity and resource both at regional and local level.
- 2.3 The Combined Authority was also allocated £67m Brownfield Housing funding post devolution in line with other MCAs. It will support the delivery of 4500 homes by 2025 on sites requiring significant investment to unlock, as well as capacity to develop complex projects with marginal viability. An estimated 1900 affordable homes could be delivered through this programme.
- 2.4 In addition to the funding outlined about the Combined Authority through devolution now has powers (to be used in agreement with local authorities) to acquire land for housing including using Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) where assembling or acquiring strategic sites. These powers have not been used to date as capital investment would be required to support the CPO process. Districts and Homes England have similar powers.

Affordable Housing Pledge

- 2.5 The mayoral pledge on housing is to: Build 5000 sustainable homes including council houses and affordable homes. Affordable and sustainable homes are primarily delivered by three routes:
1. Direct delivery by Local Authorities (Council Houses)
 2. Section 106 Agreements on market sites (so through the planning system)
 3. Direct delivery by Registered Providers supported by Homes England affordable housing programmes
- 2.6 The pledge is a stretching regional target to drive innovation and partnership working to deliver more well-designed good quality affordable homes. Based on the work done so far with partners to look at projected delivery, 5000 affordable homes is possible. Looking at past delivery rates though we need at least an additional 1000 homes on top of past delivery rates.
- 2.7 The Combined Authority relies on strong partnership relationships to ensure delivery of the pledge. The pledge will be delivered through working closely with our district housing and planning colleagues, Housing Associations, Homes England and private sector developers. We are in the process of refining an action plan covering all 3 of the above listed routes to delivery.
- 2.8 Key areas of activity include:
1. Develop a WY Housing Strategy
 2. Pursue additional funding for developing the West Yorkshire Housing Pipeline and boosting delivery
 3. Apply the aspiration of the Pledge to all CA capital and revenue funds (deliver as many affordable units as possible within the restrictions of these funds).

4. Deepen the partnership with all WY Councils, Homes England and Registered Providers.
5. Consider ways in which collectively we can achieve higher levels of sustainable development.

2.9 More targeted activity for each delivery route includes:

Delivery of Council Houses:

- Explore and understand the stock position of each Local Authority to inform WY Housing Strategy.
- Apply any learning from the recently drafted Leeds Affordable Housing Challenge document to the wider WY partnership.
- Explore the use of Joint Venture vehicles to accelerate the delivery of Council Houses and Affordable Homes.
- Consider use of public assets to accelerate delivery of higher levels of sustainability through design and construction.

Delivery through Section 106:

- Explore a shared viability framework for use in planning by all WY authorities.
- Explore ways to increase capacity for Development Management.
- Build evidence on the viability gap specifically relating to affordable housing to pursue funding options (both internally and with government).
- Host a developer forum / summit event to raise awareness of WY expectations and build consistency in our approach.

Delivery by Registered Providers:

- Build on the partnership with Homes England to maximise delivery through Affordable Homes Programme.
- Development of a WY Action Plan and joint housing pipeline for West Yorkshire in partnership with Homes England.
- Greater collaboration with WY Housing Partnership to establish and unlock barriers to delivery – seek opportunities for innovation.
- Work with Leeds City Council to support actions from the emerging Leeds Affordable Housing Delivery Partnership Plan and seek to apply in other districts where suitable.

Combined Authority Role in Planning

- 2.10 The West Yorkshire Combined Authority is not a Planning Authority and currently has no powers relating to spatial planning. However, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority supports Local Authorities on strategic planning matters.
- 2.11 As a partnership we have mature arrangements in place to address strategic, cross boundary issues on plan-making and development management. These are set out in the [Planning Review Recommendations \(2021\)](#), our [Statement of Common Ground \(2020\)](#) and [Developer Advice Note \(2020\)](#).
- 2.12 Planning activity by the Combined Authority 2020/2021 has included:

- A joint response to the planning White Paper promoting local accountability, public engagement and a need for urgency with regard to tackling the climate emergency.
- Over 100 planning application responses last year (2021) with the potential to secure 8.4million in income through planning gain for delivery of transport infrastructure.
- Joint evidence has been prepared on employment land and property to help inform our approach to building an inclusive economy.
- Agreed a refreshed set of Spatial Priority Areas (SPAs) across West Yorkshire that now include Towns Fund locations as priority locations for regeneration.
- A response to Bradford's Draft Local Plan confirming strategic alignment and technical support to Wakefield Council throughout their Local Plan examination on economic growth forecasts.
- Maintaining the [Place Narrative](#) document. It provides a single narrative, and a consistent but flexible evidence base to underpin our plans and strategies, and those of our partners. It includes evidence on our spatial challenges and details of our infrastructure investment plans.

2.13 The national planning reforms will re-shape the next iteration of Development Plans at a local and strategic level. However, the purpose and shape of these Plans, especially at a strategic level has not yet been defined by Government. It is therefore not yet clear what Government's vision is for strategic planning and what role Combined Authorities will be expected to play in that.

2.14 Planning powers were included in the 'minded to' West Yorkshire devolution deal but due to the national reforms to the planning system these were not carried forward in the devolution Order. A letter from the Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government proposed that these powers (or equivalent) will be conferred 'when the position is clearer'. The functions not taken forward related to a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) and a Strategic Infrastructure Tariff (SIT).

2.15 On the preparation of a strategic plan (or Spatial Development Strategy) the Combined Authority and Local Authority partners see merit in looking across West Yorkshire on strategic issues such as infrastructure and acknowledge that a strategic plan could add value in helping to tackle cross-boundary challenges such as the climate emergency and in delivering a mass transit system for West Yorkshire. However, it is essential that any approach to strategic planning is specific to our needs locally and compliment's rather than duplicates our Local Plans.

3. **Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications**

3.1 Our work on the housing pledge includes considering the sustainability of future homes and is linked to the ambitions set out in the [West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan](#). As noted in paragraph 2.15 a strategic plan for West Yorkshire could add value in helping to tackle the climate emergency by setting clear, consistent policies on spatial planning matters.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 Ensuring residents of West Yorkshire have access to affordable housing options is integral to achieving our ambitions on inclusive growth.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 Consideration of equality and diversity matters forms part of our evidence base on affordable housing and therefore is informing our policy response. Information on our current evidence is found in the [Leeds City Region Housing Affordability and Need Study \(2020\)](#). This report states long term economic shifts and processes of decentralisation and suburbanisation (both of population and jobs) have resulted in widening inequalities and in part explain the emergence of housing affordability issues, which are not characterised by very high housing costs – in other words, income and cost of living (including transport costs) contribute to housing unaffordability. This evidence is being used in the context of our work on housing and connectivity.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Staffing Implications

- 8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

- 9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 That the Committee notes the report and provides any comments.

11. Background Documents

None.

12. Appendices

None.

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Report to: Economy Scrutiny Committee

Date: 19 January 2022

Subject: **COVID-19 Economic recovery plan**

Director: Brian Archer, Director of Economic Services
Liz Hunter, Director of Policy and Development

Author: Alex Clarke, Business Growth & Resilience Policy Manager

1. Purpose of this report

1.1 To provide an update to the Committee on the current economic situation in the region as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the work of the Combined Authority and LEP with regards to economic recovery planning and implementation.

2. Information

2.1 The COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a central factor in the lives of the people of West Yorkshire. Particularly since the emergence of the Omicron variant at the end of 2021, there is an increased focus on the potential spread of the virus and the need to boost immunity through vaccination and to readopt some levels of restrictions to reduce close contact.

2.2 At the time of writing in January 2022, West Yorkshire has experienced its highest numbers of COVID-19 cases since the beginning of the pandemic, however hospital patients with COVID-19 remains below the peak in January 2021. Plan B restrictions introduced by the UK Government are in place, and this has impacted particularly on sectors such as hospitality and leisure. Uncertainty over the future direction of the pandemic and the need for further restrictions is critical to the economic recovery in West Yorkshire in 2022, alongside the wider factors of rising inflation, increases in energy costs and continued challenges around supply chains.

2.3 In the following sections we cover the latest economic intelligence regarding the impact of the pandemic on the economy and then an update on the current status of implementation of the plan in delivery. A verbal update may also be given at the meeting on latest developments as required.

Economic Reporting

- 2.4 The latest COVID-19 fortnightly insights report on economic intelligence will be available on '[the COVID-19 economic & transport recovery monitor](#)' page on the website¹ (link below under 'Background documents') from 20 December 2021 and the most up to date interactive [COVID-19 Economic-Transport Dashboard](#). Overall, the economic recovery shows signs of gathering pace following the lifting of restrictions. However, the re-opening of the economy has exposed a range of significant supply-side constraints including labour shortages and supply chain disruption, which seem to be intensifying and which threaten the sustainability of the recovery.
- 2.5 The **employment** situation in the region continues to improve. The number of payrolled employees in West Yorkshire recorded on PAYE Real Time Information systems, increased by around 1% between October and November 2021 to 1,003,500. Employment in the region is now 3% above the pre-pandemic level seen in February 2020 and 5% higher than its lowest point in the pandemic in November 2020. This means that the number of payrolled employees has increased by 50,000 between November 2020 and November 2021. All local authorities in West Yorkshire have returned to their pre-crisis levels of employment. Bradford, Leeds and Kirklees have seen the strongest growth in their payrolled employee counts
- 2.6 The **claimant count** has continued to fall but there is still a very large number of people on out-of-work benefits. The latest figures show a 2% fall in the count between October and November 2021 to 83,000 in West Yorkshire. The claimant count is now 24% lower than its peak in March 2021, but it is still 47% higher than pre-pandemic figures in February 2020. There are variations at local authority level. For example, the claimant count remains 54% higher than its pre-pandemic level in Bradford, compared to 35% in Calderdale. The claimant count unemployment rate for West Yorkshire is 5.6%, higher than the national average of 4.7%.
- 2.7 The **Job Retention Scheme** ended on 30 September 2021. At the end of September, 35,000 jobs were still furloughed in West Yorkshire. Local data is not available on what has happened to those 35,000 jobs but the national data suggests that most have returned to work. Of those furloughed across the UK at the end of the scheme, 65% returned to work on the same number of hours, 16% returned to work on reduced hours and 6% returned to work on increased hours.
- 2.8 **Recruitment** activity remains above pre-pandemic levels with all local authorities within West Yorkshire experiencing strong growth in job postings throughout November 2021. Leeds registered the strongest growth rate with job postings climbing by 34% between October and November. There was also a substantial increase in job postings across all occupational categories. Health Care, Clerical and Administrative and Hospitality, Food and Tourism recorded the largest growth in job postings across West Yorkshire. These

¹ <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/documents/economic-monitor/> - Link also available under 'Background Documents' section at the end of the report.

sectors were significantly damaged as a result of the pandemic. Job postings in the week ending 11 December fell by 8% across West Yorkshire and nationwide. This may reflect the introduction of Plan B and it will be monitored closely.

- 2.9 The latest data shows that **business liquidations** have climbed in recent weeks. There was an average of 407 business liquidations per week in the most recent four-week period up to the 7 December, an increase of 10% from the previous four-week period. All local authorities in West Yorkshire have seen an increase in business liquidations from the previous four-week period. In the first quarter of 2020, business liquidations averaged 328 per week.
- 2.10 In October, the Government published the **2021 Spending Review** to set out spending plans for the next three financial years. There were a series of announcements designed to help businesses innovate and grow, including:
- £1.4 billion Global Investment Fund to invest across the UK in life sciences, offshore wind and the automotive sector.
 - £1.6 billion to support a series of regional investment funds, including £660 million for the second Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund.
 - An increase in funding for Innovate UK's core programmes to around £1 billion.
- 2.11 The Bank of England has revised down **growth projections** and revised up **inflation expectations**. Growth across the UK economy is now expected to be lower in Q4 2021 than first forecast. This is primarily due to the presence of Omicron and it is also expected to weigh down on growth in Q1 2022. Inflation is now expected to hit 6% in April 2022, three times the Bank of England target of 2%. Energy and labour costs are expected to put upward pressure on inflation. To combat rising inflation, the Bank of England increased interest rates to 0.25%.

Implementation of the Recovery Plan

- 2.12 This section outlines the progress made on delivering the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan² since the last economic scrutiny meeting in November 2021. This includes delivering support and programmes funded by national COVID-19 interventions, but also regional schemes being delivered from resources allocated from the West Yorkshire Single Investment Fund to economic recovery.

Business Support programmes

- 2.13 The table below provides a summary of business support grants and advice programmes being delivered as part of the response to COVID-19.

² The [West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan](#) was updated at the Combined Authority meeting in September 2021, and will remain under review to respond to evolving situation.

Project	Funding	Businesses Supported	Delivery Partners
Local Authority Grants, including Restart Grants (since Nov 20)	£365m	*130,000 payments	Local Authorities (lead)
Additional Restrictions Grant (since Nov 20)	£45m	21,000 payments	Local Authorities (lead)
COVID-19 Recovery Grants (ERDF & LGF)	£2.8m	1114	LEP-commissioned Umi Commercial
Digital Resilience Vouchers (up to £5,000)	£1.06m	400	LEP & Leeds City Council
Peer Learning Project	£120,000	110	LEP-commissioned University of Leeds Business School
Small Business Membership Scheme (access to legal, financial HR & wellbeing support)	£220,000	1350	LEP-commissioned W&NY Chamber, Mid-Yorkshire Chamber, FSB
Cyber Security Support Scheme	£100,000	160	LEP-Commissioned North East Business Resilience Centre
Business Resilience Webinars	£15,000	180	LEP-commissioned Biskit

**Note some firms will have received more than one grant under the area restrictions grant scheme as well as non- area restricted schemes at the start of the pandemic.*

- 2.14 The majority of the schemes in the above table have now completed and were linked to time-limited Government funding. However, £1bn of additional financial support, in the form of grants to businesses, for the Hospitality and Leisure sectors was announced by the Government in late December 2021. Although the detailed guidance on these is expected in early January 2022, the headline features are that the grants will again be delivered by the Local Authorities, and that there will three levels of 'one-off' payments linked to the rateable values of premises (£2,700, £4,000 and £6,000) to businesses that have been directly impacted by the additional 'Plan B' restrictions introduced in early December 2021 e.g. work from home where possible, face coverings on public transport, advice for caution on social gatherings and evidence of vaccinations or COVID-19 tests for some venues and large events.
- 2.15 Other parts of the £1bn package include the reintroduction of the Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme to support employers facing heightened levels of sickness absence due to the pandemic. This involves SMEs (businesses with under 250 employees) being able to claim statutory sick pay costs related to COVID-19 for two weeks per affected employee. There will also be an additional £100m of the discretionary Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) funding for those businesses affected by the 'Plan B' restrictions but that are not directly in hospitality or leisure (e.g. suppliers to the sectors). £30m of

further funding for the Culture Recovery Fund was also announced as part of the new package, which will be targeted at such organisations as theatres, museums and orchestras up to March 2022.

- 2.16 In addition to the above, the Government released guidance on the new COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) in late December 2022. The £1.5bn fund will provide business rates relief for the 2021/22 year for businesses outside of retail, hospitality and leisure, and air travel / ground operation, that have been adversely impacted by the pandemic. The guidance points towards a significant amount of discretion in how Local Authorities deliver individual relief schemes in their districts. As a result, the Local Authorities in West Yorkshire and the Combined Authority met in late December 2021 to commence the development of a delivery framework to provide some consistency across the region.
- 2.17 There is also a wide range of business support available from the Combined Authority and LEP that is contributing to the economic recovery. This includes advice and funding for the development of new products and processes, advice and funding on net zero-related interventions for employers (e.g. reducing energy use and cost, recycling and re-use of materials, and implementing sustainable and active travel), developing and implementing strategic growth plans and, most recently, setting up a new enterprise (see below for more details). In addition, delivery of the Combined Authority's new £20m Business Accelerator Fund will commence in early 2022. This will provide SMEs with clear high growth potential with equity and loan finance from £50k of up to £2m to facilitate their continued expansion within the region.
- 2.18 The above support, and much more delivered by our partners across the public sector (e.g. exporting support from the Department for International Trade and the two Chambers of Commerce in the region, access to finance available from the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund, Start-Up Loans Company and Finance Yorkshire, and innovation support from InnovateEdge and its partners), is accessed via the LEP Growth Service. This is the Government-funded Growth Hub for the region and utilises an integrated 'hub and spoke' delivery model, with a central Business Gateway function delivered by the Combined Authority, and a team of 20 SME Growth Managers employed by the Local Authorities with Combined Authority funding. The Growth Managers provide more intensive account-management support for SMEs in each district, and collectively assist circa 1500 per year to access the right support at the right time in their growth cycles. Since the Growth Service was launched in April 2015, it has supported over 20,000 individual businesses, created/safeguarded over 12,000 jobs and leveraged over £420m of private sector funding.

Employment and Skills Support

- 2.19 The Combined Authority and LEP continue to support individuals to better equip them in the labour market as part of economic recovery activity,

including through the £13.5m strategic employment and skills package agreed by the Combined Authority on 27 November 2020.

- 2.20 The **Employment Hubs**, delivered by local authorities and delivery partners, support people into work, training/retraining, or self-employment. The original ESF funded programme, established to support in the main 15–24-year-olds, has now come to an end. However, through devolved gainshare funding, the service has been expanded to support people of ages across West Yorkshire seeking help with finding training or retraining, or to identify, apply for and secure employment or self-employment. Face to face delivery is starting to happen across the region (and will continue to depend on government guidance and restrictions). The all-age programme aims to support a further 5,500 people by April 2023.
- 2.21 Final data for the ESF funded programme will not be available until Spring 2022. However, performance to 14 December 2021, indicates the following:
- Engaged 5679 15-24 year-old participants against a programme profile 6294 (90%). Of these:
 - 1861 participants, against a profile of 800 (233 %), were recorded as being from ethnic minorities
 - 1101 participants declared they had disabilities against a target of 566 (195%)
 - 1754 participants are recorded as having no basic skills qualifications against a target of 1384 (127%)
 - 236 participants were from a single adult household with dependent children against a target of 252 (94%)
 - Of the participants starting the programme 1910 have been supported with finding education/ training, employment or self-employment against a target of 2706 (71%).
- 2.22 **Employment Hub 2** contracts for delivery (gainshare funded) began on 1 August 2021 and will run until March 2023. Data on performance on Employment Hub 2 is limited to date as local authority delivery partners have concentrated on the final quarter delivery of Employment Hub 1. However, provisional data shows 666 participants have been engaged during October and November 2021 against an overall programme profile of 5,500.
- 2.23 The West Yorkshire Combined Authority and the LEP have launched free **Skills Connect** training courses to help adults gain skills for job roles in the digital, construction, health and social care, and environmental sectors. futuregoals.co.uk/skillsconnect
- 2.24 All courses have been designed by local employers to align with local skills needs and job vacancies. Anyone over the age of 19 and living in West Yorkshire can sign up for a course. There will be opportunities for participants to learn directly from industry and business professionals with guaranteed post-training interviews available in some courses, linking them directly to current vacancies. The first courses available will boost digital skills including Cyber Security, Digital Marketing, Data Analytics and many more. Over the

coming weeks, there will be many other courses available in health and social care, construction, and green jobs.

Entrepreneurship Programme

- 2.25 In June 2021, the Combined Authority's Investment Committee approved a new £6 million Entrepreneurship Programme to be being delivered as a major contribution to the West Yorkshire (WY) Economic Recovery Plan. The programme is focused on a 'ladder of enterprise support' across three inter-connected workstreams that will help individuals in the region to explore and establish new businesses. A primary focus of the programme is Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and clear 'minimum floor' targets have been set to ensure that the support available is taken up by females, people from BAME backgrounds and people with disabilities, as well as people from our more disadvantaged communities and localities (see below for more details).
- Workstream One - promoting enterprise as a career option (i.e. is enterprise / business start-up right for you?)
 - Workstream Two – a universal business start-up support programme to help anyone who has made the decision to start a business. There is a primary focus on engaging people from equality groups and from the more disadvantaged communities of West Yorkshire.
 - Workstream Three – support for innovative entrepreneurs by providing intensive and targeted support for those with the potential to become successful, innovative and investable entrepreneurs and businesses. Societal and environmental impact of the new-starts will be a primary consideration in the support made available, as will the diversity of the entrepreneurs participating to ensure that they reflect the West Yorkshire population.
- 2.26 Following recent open tender exercises, preferred suppliers have been selected to deliver a £350k Exploring Enterprise programme (on Workstream One) and a £1 million Business Start-Up programme (on Workstream Two). Both commenced delivery in late September / early October 2021 and will be delivered for 18 months, with options to extend for the same periods subject to performance, outcomes and policy priorities.
- 2.27 The Exploring Enterprise Programme is delivering one-to-many support through online training, events, workshops and seminars. It is expected that a minimum of six hours of support will be delivered per participant. The support package covers key areas to help consider starting a new enterprise and how to overcome any barriers that would prevent people from doing so. Programme content includes: - identifying the need/market research, creating an idea, networking, understanding different types of businesses, including social enterprise and cooperatives, and legal and financial support. Underrepresented groups, and those most adversely impacted by the pandemic, are being targeted to engage with the programme as follows: - 50% of participants will be women and 20% will be from BAME backgrounds. In

addition, the provider has offered CV support for those that decide not to start a business and to seek employment instead.

- 2.28 Workstream Two's Business Start-Up programme (Enterprise West Yorkshire) is now providing new-start and start-up businesses up to 12 months old with a blended package of support covering the key topics required to establish and develop a new enterprise. This includes: - business and financial planning; business structure and tax; sales and marketing (including social media); access to finance and recruiting staff. There are no sector or growth-related restrictions and there are also clear 'minimum floor' targets in place to support new firms that are led by individuals from BAME backgrounds (20%), women (50%) and people with disabilities (3%).
- 2.29 Furthermore, five Start-Up Managers (two currently in post) are being recruited by the West Yorkshire Local Authorities to work alongside the existing SME Growth Managers. These posts are coordinating enterprise support activity at the district level and delivering some direct one-to-one support to early-stage micro firms with growth potential. The posts are focussing on the high street renewal agenda and, as a result, are working mostly with business-to-consumer operators where the impact of the pandemic has been most severe, and where criteria associated with current funding schemes has restricted support for many firms in retail, leisure and hospitality. The managers are also focussing on the most disadvantaged parts of their districts and on ensuring that new and early-stage micro firms that have not previously been supported by publicly funded schemes, are engaged and assisted. Approximately 1,500 pre-start / start-up / early-stage firms will be supported through Workstream Two's activities.
- 2.30 Workstream Three issued a tender in late November 2021 for a programme of high intensity, tailored support for Innovative Entrepreneurs – in this context, the term refers to individuals or teams with potentially unique ideas that address a problem with a large market, and that has the potential to develop, scale and be financially sustainable. The tender welcomes responses encompassing innovative approaches to delivery and from consortia bids. 'Soft market testing' with a range of key stakeholders in the 'seedcorn' finance and 'accelerator support' marketplace took place over the summer and autumn of 2021, and this has informed the current open tender opportunity. This strand will also have clear and stretching targets to engage equality groups in the provision, and to engage with people from more disadvantaged parts of the region who have not previously accessed support. It also focusses on new ventures that have clear potential to positively impact on societal and/or environmental challenges and opportunities. The tender closes to application on 14th January 2022 and delivery on this strand is expected to commence in the spring of 2022.
- 2.31 A range of routes to market are in place, and in development, for all three workstreams, with a strong focus on engaging underrepresented groups, more disadvantaged parts of West Yorkshire and those that have not previously engaged with public sector support (directly delivered or funded). This includes working with several well-established community-based organisations and

enterprise support agencies to both deliver support, and to make it more visible and accessible to a diverse range of people and businesses e.g. Airedale Enterprise Services in Keighley, Barca-Leeds, the Paddock Community Trust in Huddersfield, Inspired Neighbourhoods in Bradford and Aspire-igen in Wakefield and Leeds.

- 2.32 In addition, the programme is engaging with several networks and key influencers within business communities at the local and district level to raise the profile of the support available and increase take-up. These include the Yorkshire Asian Business Association (working with the Asian Standard) and the BAME Committee of West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce. The Combined Authority/LEP already works with several key influencers in the enterprise support space to increase take-up amongst BAME-led and Women-led enterprises, and these strong working relationships will also be utilised for this programme. Taking the support available to other community settings, such as faith groups, enterprise centres and childcare providers, will also be a focus of activity to broaden reach and increase take-up, as will the use of role-models and mentors from diverse backgrounds that reflect the population of the region. Lastly, promoting the programme to target audiences via such vehicles as the Asian Standard publication and radio stations such as Sunshine Radio, Peoples' FM and Fever FM, will also be considered as this has previously worked well in terms of increased engagement levels.
- 2.33 The programme was officially launched by the Mayor of West Yorkshire, Tracy Brabin, on 3 November 2021 at an on-line event with over 150 attendees. The event was hosted by local social entrepreneur and LEP Board Member, Kamran Rashid, and also featured case study presentations from several people from diverse backgrounds who have established successful enterprises in West Yorkshire. It also included the Mayor being interviewed by a student from Batley Girls High School on the importance of diversity and enterprise in the region, and a discussion between Sir Roger Marsh OBE DL and Heba Bevan, the Chief Executive of Utterbury, an advanced manufacturing business that is in the process of establishing a significant new venture in Leeds. Within 48 hours of the launch, the website for the programme ([Enterprise West Yorkshire - LEP | Business support and finance \(the-lep.com\)](https://www.the-lep.com)) had over 400 hits, which has since risen to over 1,000.
- 2.34 To date, over 100 referrals have been made to Enterprise West Yorkshire, mostly from Ad:Venture and the Growth Service Gateway, but also from several local partners in the public and private sectors (see below for examples). Over 40 clients have been signed up to the support, just under half of whom are female and 35% of whom are from BAME backgrounds. The first round of webinars are being delivered in December 2021, and at the time of writing (mid-December 2021), over 30 diagnostic meetings have been arranged for January 2022. Although the take-up at this early stage from people from BAME backgrounds is 15% above the target, it is important to continue to identify and implement more effective routes to market and delivery methods. For example, promotion through local trusted networks and community leaders (including successful local business people), tailored messaging, language and branding for different target groups, and more

innovative approaches to customer journeys capable of overcoming barriers to engagement. The delivery of 'in person' events - when safe to do so - across a wide range of community settings, including in some of our most disadvantaged areas, will contribute significantly to the above.

- 2.35 Following the launch of the programme, the Combined Authority and LEP continues to engage with the Lloyds Banking Group Black Entrepreneurs Board. This has involved the team presenting on the new enterprise programme at the West Yorkshire Black Entrepreneurs Conversation event on the 18 November 2021, and also to the Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches and Self Employment Coaches on 9 December 2021. Both presentations and events have already resulted in referrals being made into the programme from people who have not previously engaged with the Combined Authority and LEP, particularly the start-up support available via Workstream Two. It is anticipated that this will increase significantly from January 2022 onwards, particularly from Jobcentre Plus clients.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 Tackling the Climate Emergency is identified as one of the overarching goals and golden threads of the Economic Recovery Plan. It also includes a dedicated chapter outlining the Combined Authority's efforts to reach net-zero carbon by 2038 and creating 1,000 green jobs for young people.
- 3.2 In developing and delivering the future interventions as a result of implementing the plan, schemes will be required to demonstrate how they specifically contribute positively to Tackling the Climate Emergency, whether that be through green skills and jobs, reducing emissions of buildings or contributing to wider climate resilience.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 Inclusive Growth is embedded as an overarching goal in the Economic Recovery Plan. The impact of the pandemic on inequalities make the ambitions for inclusive growth around wellbeing, good work and relevant and transferable skills critical to a fair, just and lasting recovery. The plan also includes specific deliverable activity that is shared with the West Yorkshire Inclusive Growth Framework, such as the Fair Work Charter.
- 4.2 The Economic Recovery Plan recognises that a lasting recovery needs to be felt across both towns and cities, and villages and rural areas. Each of the actions and co-investment propositions identified will need to be designed and delivered in a way that recognises that each and every place presents distinct opportunities in terms of jobs, businesses and infrastructure.
- 4.3 The plan also identifies the importance of Social Value to inclusive growth, and achieving this in delivery of the plan will include setting out how social value will be enhanced through contracts, including that any businesses that receive grants from the products delivered as part of the plan would be

required to contribute to Inclusive Growth actions and outcomes via their funding agreements.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 The Economic Recovery Plan recognises the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on certain groups within West Yorkshire, and in its vision for a fair and just recovery plans to make sure its interventions respond particularly to the needs of those most disadvantaged. By focussing particularly on the role of our response interventions, it is also important to recognise that many of the inequality challenges faced prior to the pandemic remain, and therefore should not be lost when responding to the additional effects of the pandemic.
- 5.2 Specific interventions delivered in connection to this plan will be expected to set targets about how equality and diversity will be achieved, for example in the entrepreneurship programme, employment hub and adult skills framework outlined in this paper, targets for BAME and female led businesses are being written into delivery criteria.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Staffing Implications

- 8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

- 9.1 No specific or official external consultations have been undertaken in relation to this report. However, it has been informed by ongoing dialogue and consultation particularly with the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Board but also with LEP members and a wide range of partners, including universities and colleges, business representative and membership bodies, and direct with some individual businesses.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 That the Committee notes the updates on the current economic situation in the region as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the work of the Combined Authority and LEP with regards to implementation of the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan, and provides any comments.

11. Background Documents

[Transport and Economic Insights Report \[on COVID-19 economic & transport recovery monitor page\] – latest report published on 20 December 2021](#)

[COVID-19 Economic-Transport interactive Dashboard](#) (last updated 8 November 2021)

12. Appendices

None.



Report to: Economy Scrutiny Committee

Date: 19 January 2022

Subject: **Economy Scrutiny Work Programme 2021/22**

Director: Angela Taylor, Director of Corporate & Commercial Services

Author: Khaled Berroum, Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To note the Economy Scrutiny Work Programme for 2021/22.
- 1.2 To consider any additional agenda items, formal referrals to scrutiny, reviews, call in, and any other tasks, issues or matters the Committee resolves to undertake or consider further.

2. Information

Scrutiny Work Programme

- 2.1 The Work Programme outlines the work the Committee has resolved to undertake, investigate further and focus on in the current municipal year (June 2021 – June 2022) within the resources, remit and powers available to it.
- 2.2 The work programme is set at the beginning of the year and, as a live document, is considered at each meeting where it can be amended and changed as the year progresses.

Referrals to scrutiny

- 2.3 Under Scrutiny Standing Order 7, any Scrutiny Member, any Combined Authority Member or any elected Member of a West Yorkshire council (or the City of York Council) may formally refer a matter to the Committee for consideration. The referral must be in writing to the Statutory Scrutiny Officer. The Committee must then consider and discuss the referral and respond to the referrer explaining whether or not it will consider the matter further and why.
- 2.4 There are no formal referrals for this committee to consider.

Agenda items and topics for consideration 2021/22

- 2.5 At the first committee meeting of the year in September, members considered the Combined Authority's corporate priorities and plan alongside the Mayor's Pledges and, following further questions and discussions with senior officers, discussed a number of possible topics and items to consider further this year.
- 2.6 The resultant work programme was adopted at the previous meeting in November and is attached at **Appendix 1**. The document also includes the topics to be considered by the other two scrutiny committees so that scrutiny members are always aware of what work the other scrutiny committees are undertaking.

Key decisions and call in

- 2.7 Scrutiny members may call in any decision of the Mayor, Combined Authority, a decision-making committee and any key decisions taken by an officer (with the exception of urgent decisions). Key decisions are defined as any decision incurring a financial cost or saving of £1 million or more, or a decision likely to have a significant effect on two or more wards.
- 2.8 Decision-makers have two days to publish notice of a decision, at which point scrutiny members have five working days to call in the decision, delaying its implementation, and formally requiring the decision maker to reconsider.
- 2.9 Any five scrutiny members – including at least one member from two different constituent councils (West Yorkshire) – may call-in a decision by notifying the Statutory Scrutiny Officer in writing by 4.00 pm on the fifth working day following publication of a decision notice. The relevant scrutiny committee then has 14 days to meet and scrutinise the decision and make any recommendations. Further information is set out in Scrutiny Standing Order 14.
- 2.10 The latest key decisions and forward plans of key decisions are published and available for viewing on the [key decisions section of the Combined Authority's website](#).

Actions for the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

- 2.11 As outlined in Scrutiny Standing Order 17, the statutory scrutiny officer provides support to a scrutiny committee's work programme and all scrutiny members in exercising their scrutiny duties and fulfilling their objectives.

Changes in membership since the last meeting

- 2.12 Since the last meeting, the following changes in membership have occurred:
- Cllr Susan Press (Calderdale, Labour) has been appointed to fill the vacancy left by Cllr Dot Foster (Calderdale, Labour) who was moved to Transport Scrutiny.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

3.1 There are no climate emergency implications directly arising from this report.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

4.1 There are no inclusive growth implications directly arising from this report.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

5.1 There are no equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Staffing Implications

8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

10.1 To note or amend the Scrutiny Work Programme.

11. Background Documents

None.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Joint Scrutiny Work Programme 2021/22

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Scrutiny Work Programmes 2021/22

Summary of main topics (*subtopics and objectives outlined within*)

Committee	Topics	Meetings
Corporate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Partnerships and mayoral soft power 2. Budget and business planning 3. Overall strategic and financial decision-making 4. Workforce and corporate systems 	19 November 2021 (MQT) ?? December 2021 – budget workshop 21 January 2022 11 March 2022
Transport	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Buses (franchising and improvement plans) 2. Behaviour change in decarbonisation 3. Freight (incl waterways) 4. Road management and policy 5. Rail reforms 	18 November 2021 20 January 2022 (MQT) 10 March 2022
Economy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. COVID-19 recovery: growth, jobs and skills 2. Impact of inward investment (Incl. Channel 4 & culture) 3. Rural issues 4. Housing pledge and powers 	17 November 2021 19 January 2022 ?? February 2022 – Inward Investment/Channel 4 workshop 9 March 2022 (MQT)
<i>All Committees</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (Relevant) Mayors Pledges 2. Work programme 	9 July 2021 – induction intro workshop

41

Contents

Corporate Scrutiny Work Programme	page 2
Transport Scrutiny Work Programme	page 5
Economy Scrutiny Work Programme	page 8

Corporate Scrutiny Committee

Summary:

1. Partnerships and mayoral soft power
2. Budget and business planning
3. Overall strategic and financial decision-making
4. Workforce and corporate systems

Topic	Sub-topics	Objectives	Meetings	Notes and tracking
Partnerships and mayoral soft power	West Yorkshire partnership	<p>Understand how well the CA works with the five authorities and York in all matters – incl. possibly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • officer liaison, • knowledge sharing, • policy development, • project management, • service delivery, • communications / engagement, • and any other cooperation <p>Explore quality of current relationships between CA + councils and between councils and potential areas for improvement in joint working.</p>	TBC	
	External partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand what is being done to strengthen relationships with other Mayors/MCAs (on pan-northern and cross-border things) and central government (and other key stakeholders such as operators). • Understand what other partnership opportunities are being identified and how they are pursued. 	TBC	

	Communications & Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the Mayor / CA's comms/marketing/engagement strategy to raise their profile. Explore how well the CA engages with elected members and the public (particularly consultation on schemes) 	TBC	
Budget and business planning	Budget setting and business planning 2022/23	Explore the biggest pressures and risks and possible mitigations in budget setting (2022/23).	January 2022 December 2021 Workshop	
	Budget performance 2021/22	Monitor budget performance in the current financial year (2021/22).	Standing Item	
Overall strategic and financial decision-making	Gainshare, strategic investment framework and other spending priorities	Understand and explore how the Mayor / CA decide what to invest in – particularly Gainshare (E.g. Strategic Investment Framework.)	January 2022 December 2021 Workshop	
	Sources of funding	Understand what possible extra funding sources are available to the CA – including government funding, business rates and precepts.	January 2022 December 2021 Workshop	
	Strategic prioritisation and consistency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how strategic priorities are determined. Explore how conflicts between priorities are resolved and which priorities had to be left out. 	January 2022 December 2021 Workshop	
	Impact and performance assessment	Understand the process and methodology of performance and impact assessment and how it is considered during decision making (E.g. carbon impacts, EDI)	January 2022 December 2021 Workshop	
	New governance and scrutiny structures	Monitor the effectiveness of the new governance and scrutiny structures	March 2022	

		established after the Mayor's election – and review as appropriate.		
Workforce and corporate systems	Workforce planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how the workforce has evolved since the MCA was established – and future expectations. • Explore current preparations and any challenges or areas of concern (such as funding, resources, and delivery capacity). 	TBC	
	Recruitment, retention and apprenticeships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how well the CA attracts, recruits, utilises and retains talent – (local talent in particular) and explore current challenges in these areas. • Understand the current position with regards to apprenticeships within the CA. 	TBC	
	Upgrade of corporate systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand plans to upgrade internal systems. • Explore the capacity for greater harmonisation of systems across the five member authorities and CA e.g. in finance, HR, ICT and project management. 	TBC	
	Cyber security and ICT resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the CA's current position re: cyber security and ICT resilience. • Explore current risks and how the CA will evolve now the pandemic exposed increasing reliance on technology and system/information security vulnerability. 	TBC	

Transport Scrutiny Committee

Summary:

1. Buses (franchising and improvement plans)
2. Behaviour change in decarbonisation
3. Freight (incl waterways)
4. Road management and policy
5. Rail reforms

Topic	Sub-topics	Objectives	Meetings	Notes and tracking
Buses <i>(in parallel with behaviour changes)</i>	Bus franchising	Understand ambitions for bus franchising and the statutory process (including lessons learned from Greater Manchester)	November 2021 March 2022	
	Bus improvement plans: 1. network coverage – rural and urban 2. connectivity and integration with modes (e.g. Rail, cycling and walking) 3. reliability and frequency of services (including use of technology) 4. costs and ticketing 5. partnership working (with transport operators and councils)	Understand the current position of the bus network in WY and explore bus improvement plans – with a focus on the subtopics and connectivity with other modes of travel including rail and active travel.	November 2021 March 2022	
Behaviour changes (and inclusion) in decarbonisation	Research, data and general understanding	Explore current understandings in the transport sector about:	November 2021 January 2022	

45

<i>(in parallel with bus improvement plans)</i>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. why people travel how they do e.g. cycling, buses, cars 2. how habits changed over time 3. what changes habits 		
	'Seldom heard groups'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the challenges faced by 'seldom heard groups' (e.g. disabled, neurodiverse) in using transport and how well they are engaged in consultations. • Explore if their needs are being taken adequately into account. 	November 2021 January 2022	
	Youth engagement	Understand current engagement with young people and explore what more could be done to engage them on using public transport and cycling etc.	November 2021 January 2022	
	Unlikely transport users	Understand how unlikely users of certain transport modes (e.g. buses, rail, cycling) are defined, identified, considered and engaged.	November 2021 January 2022	
Freight (incl. waterways)		Understand current position on freight and explore how assets such as waterways/canals have been considered as decarbonisation and commercial/economic opportunities.	Possible workshop	
Road policy and management		Understand current position on roads and explore how roads and highway policy/management is harmonised and coordinated across the region and policy areas (such as connectivity with active travel) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. how it works now, 	TBC	

		2. why it wasn't changed with devolution 3. how it could work in future		
Rail reforms		Monitor national plans and reforms in the rail sector and explore possible implications for West Yorkshire and impact on the CA's existing plans.	TBC	

Economy Scrutiny Committee

Summary

1. COVID-19 recovery: growth, jobs and skills
2. Impact of inward investment (Incl. Channel 4 & culture)
3. Rural issues
4. Housing pledge and powers

Topic	Sub-topics	Objectives	Meetings	Notes and tracking
COVID-19 recovery: economic growth, job creation, skills, and other opportunities	Data and intelligence	Understand economic picture, what economic/social data is analysed and how it influences CA activity.	November 2021 January 2022	
	Influence and impact of CA/LEP activity – outputs, outcomes & additionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand what levers the CA has to make an impact on the economy. • Explore return on investment and whether a) targets are being achieved and b) if this constitutes additionality. 	November 2021 January 2022	
	Jobs and skills strategy – short and long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand job creation strategy and explore outcomes. • Understand how CA can help plug short term demands (such as shortages in HGV drivers, agricultural workers, service, retail, hospitality and security staff etc) 	November 2021 January 2022	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore long term AEB strategy and how local labour needs and are calculated and considered. 		
	Local growth – strengths and assets vs weaknesses and gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand region’s unique assets/opportunities and ‘growth engines’ and what other strengths could be developed and utilised to drive growth – particularly long term and ‘future proof’ sectors. Understand the region’s economic weaknesses (e.g. productivity and innovation) what gaps there are in the current recover/growth strategy and explore possible mitigations. 	November 2021 January 2022	
	Other post-pandemic opportunities	Explore potential post-pandemic opportunities e.g. rise in ‘entrepreneurship’ as alternate ‘job creation’ and local ‘community economies’.	November 2021 January 2022	
	Partnership working – partner councils	Understand current joint working with partner councils to avoid duplication and fit in with local strategies.	November 2021 January 2022	
Impact of inward investment	Return on investment and additionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore whether targets are being met and 	Possible workshop February 2022	

	(Channel 4 as a case study)	<p>whether there is an appropriate return on investment vs resources dedicated to supporting incoming enquiries and outgoing proactive bids.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore level of – and evidence of – additionality and whether investment makes a difference in relocations and leads to economic outputs. • Understand implications of possible competition between areas within WY and between MCA areas. • CASE STUDY: Explore if Channel 4 investment delivered promised outcomes – immediate (number of jobs created) and strategic (catalyst for growth in local creative sector). 		
Rural issues	Strategic gap	Understand how well rural-specific issues have been considered in wider strategies/plans, analysis and support services – in particular, agricultural/food business in the context of local supply chain resilience,	January 2022	

		skills shortages and business support/grants.		
	Digital connectivity	Explore current activity aiming to improve digital connectivity in rural areas.	January 2022	
Housing pledge and powers	Powers – current and future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand CA's current housing powers in the absence of spatial strategy and other devolution planning powers – and how CA's functions are expected to change in the future? • Understand how CA can enable housing development within current powers while housing remains an LA function. 	January 2022	
	Delivering pledge and coordination with partner councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore steps which could be taken to ensure homes are affordable and targets are met. • Understand how local plans will be taken into consideration. 	January 2022	

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