

BUSINESS, ECONOMY AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

**MEETING TO BE HELD AT 2.00 PM ON TUESDAY, 12 JULY 2022
IN LARGE MEETING ROOM, WELLINGTON HOUSE, 40-50
WELLINGTON ST, LEEDS, LS1 2DE**

A G E N D A

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**
- 3. EXEMPT INFORMATION - POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**
 1. To highlight Appendix 1 to Agenda Item 12 which officers have identified as containing exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and where officers consider that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons outlined in the report.
 2. To consider whether or not to accept the officers' recommendation in respect of the above information as set out in paragraph 7.1 of Agenda Item 12.
 2. If the recommendation is accepted, to formally pass the following resolution:-

RESOLVED – That in accordance with paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Appendix 1 to Agenda Item 12 on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.
- 4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 29 MARCH**
(Pages 1 - 4)

- 5. CHAIR'S UPDATE**
- 6. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**
(Pages 5 - 14)
- 7. ECONOMIC REPORTING**
(Pages 15 - 20)
- 8. INVESTMENT PRIORITIES**
(Pages 21 - 28)
- 9. FUTURE BUSINESS SUPPORT MODEL**
(Pages 29 - 34)
- 10. INNOVATION ACTIVITY**
(Pages 35 - 40)
- 11. DIGITAL SKILLS PLAN**
(Pages 41 - 94)

For Information

- 12. GROWING PLACES FUND**
(Pages 95 - 100)

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'BAM', with a horizontal line underneath it.

**Managing Director
West Yorkshire Combined Authority**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
BUSINESS, ECONOMY AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY, 29 MARCH 2022 AT LARGE MEETING ROOM,
WELLINGTON HOUSE, 40-50 WELLINGTON ST, LEEDS, LS1 2DE**

Present:

Andrew Wright (Deputy Chair)	LEP
Councillor Alex Ross-Shaw	Bradford Council
Councillor Naheed Mather	Kirklees Council
Councillor Jane Scullion	Calderdale Council
Richard Paxman	Paxman Coolers Ltd
Simon Wright	Yorkshire Bank
Sandy Needham (Advisory Representative)	Chamber of Commerce
Lee Viney (Advisory Representative)	Innovate UK
Derek Whitehead (Advisory Representative)	West Yorkshire Consortium of Collegues

In attendance:

Liz Hunter	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Sarah Bowes	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
James Flanagan	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Mitchell McCombe	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Thomas Purvis	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Henry Rigg	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Ben Kearns	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

23. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Pandor, Councillor Waller, Councillor Byford, Councillor Pryor, Amir Hussain, Mandy Ridyard, Martin Booth, Mike Danby, Karl Oxford, Phillip Wilson, Peter O'Brien, Sue Cooke, Simon Mellon, and Neville Young.

24. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests at the meeting.

25. Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no items that required the exemption of the press and public.

26. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 October

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 October be approved.

27. Notes of the last meeting held on 5 January

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 January be agreed as an accurate record.

28. Economic Reporting

Members considered a report that provided an update on the latest economic and business intelligence.

Members discussed the following:

- That covid remained a challenge for businesses especially around staff absences.
- That inflation was forecast to reach 7-8%% in April 2022 with significant increased costs in energy and commodities.
- That new bank accounts had been trending downwards with declines in Accommodation and Food Services and Construction.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

29. Monitoring Indicators

Members considered a report that set out plans for future monitoring indicators and reporting.

A set of socio-economic monitoring indicators would be chosen and would be used to check progress at each meeting of the Committee. The proposed indicators were listed at appendix 1 of the submitted report.

The indicators would be incorporated into the State of the Region report and a dedicated sub-report on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion which would analyse key socio-economic indicators by individual characteristics.

Members were supportive of the metrics and asked for additional monitoring around skills development and apprenticeships, as well as the possibility of using an indicator on happiness.

Members asked for sight of other committees' monitoring indicators and that theirs was shared as many of the indicators would overlap between committees.

The need for data on West Yorkshire as opposed to Yorkshire and the Humber in Government data sets would be important to provide more granular and meaningful data

Resolved: That the report be noted

30. Fair Work Charter and Community Wealth Building

The Committee considered a report that provided an update on the development of the Mayor's proposed Fair Work Charter.

A summary on the development of the charter set out the establishment of an expert steering group and the launch of a public consultation which was

scheduled to run until Easter.

It was vital that the consultation reached as many people as possible and had input from a variety of interest groups and sectors. Discussion particularly centred around how best to engage small and medium-sized enterprises given that the Fair Work Charter could present greater challenges for them as opposed to larger businesses with HR functions. Members called for a streamlined approach which could succinctly outline areas for recognition and improvement targeted for SMEs, including the possibility of separate asks for large employers and SMEs. The board noted that emphasis had been placed on targeted consultation with SMEs and that a co-designed approach would continue to be favoured.

Members also received an early-stage update on the Mayor's commitment to promote the growth of community wealth building and alternative business models and a more detailed update would be brought to a future meeting.

Resolved: That the report be noted

31. Manufacturing Taskforce and SMARTY Action Plan

Members considered a report that provided an update on the work of the Manufacturing taskforce and sought endorsement for the Smart SMEs for Industry 4.0 Action Plan.

The Task Force was working towards developing an action plan for the region which was expected in Summer 2022. Subgroups had been established to look at topics of importance to the manufacturing sector, including productivity and innovation, and skills and apprenticeships.

Members noted that the SMARTY Action Plan contained 3 actions: the development of an innovation framework, an innovation challenge competition pilot, and an industry 4.0 hub.

Resolved:

- (i) That the update on the manufacturing taskforce be noted.
- (ii) That the SMARTY action plan be endorsed, and approval of any further amendments be delegated to the Head of Business, Innovation and Skills Policy.

33. Business Support

Members considered a report which provided an update on the delivery of business support services.

Members noted that the business productivity programme had entered delivery and that the business accelerator fund would be launched on the 9 June 2022.

The enterprise programme was underway and had a significant focus on equality, diversity, and inclusion and some targets embedded within the programme.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

34. Trade and Investment

Members considered a report that provided an update on trade and inward investment activity.

Members noted that the accelerator strand of the Creative Catalyst programme was now in delivery.

The West Yorkshire Trade Strategy had been approved at the Combined Authority on 17 March and would provide a framework for the next five years.

Members noted that the High Commissioner of India had visited the Leeds City Region, with Alibaba business roundtables and a visit from the Director-General of Hong Kong also forthcoming.

Resolved: That the report be noted.



Report to: Business, Economy, and Innovation Committee

Date: 12 July 2022

Subject: **Governance Arrangements**

Director: Angela Taylor, Director, Corporate and Commercial Services

Author: Caroline Allen, Head of Legal and Governance Services

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To advise the Business, Economy, and Innovation Committee of the governance arrangements approved by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (the Combined Authority) at the Annual Meeting on 23 June 2022 in respect of the committee.

2. Information

- 2.1 At the Annual Meeting the Combined Authority resolved to appoint the Business, Economy, and Innovation Committee on the **terms of reference** attached at **Appendix 1** to this report.
- 2.2 The **quorum** of the Committee is 3 voting members to include 2 Combined Authority members or Local Authority co-optees.
- 2.3 The Combined Authority also appointed Councillor Shabir Pandor as Chair of the Committee and LEP Board Member Andrew Wright as deputy.

- 2.4. A table showing the Committee’s membership is attached as **Appendix 2**, the new members are highlighted in red. The table also sets out the voting arrangements across the different sectors of membership.
- 2.5. Members will note that a number of new private sector representatives have joined the committee. This follows a recent recruitment exercise led jointly by Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs with officer support.
- 2.6. The Combined Authority also agreed meeting dates for the Committee, as follows:
- 12 July 2022
 - 19 October 2022
 - 24 January 2023
 - 29 March 2023

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 The terms of reference require this, and all committees, to promote tackling the climate emergency implications in its actions.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 The terms of reference require this, and all committees, to promote inclusive growth in its actions.
- 4.2 It is proposed that each decision-making committee continues to designate an Inclusivity Lead. This will ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is fully embedded in the objectives of the committees.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 The terms of reference require this, and all other committees, to consider equality and diversity in its actions and decision making.
- 5.2 The diversity of the committee will be kept under review and steps will be taken, in future recruitment campaigns, to ensure as far as possible that the membership is representative of the population we serve.

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 Business, Economy, and Innovation Committee notes the governance arrangements approved by the Combined Authority at the Annual Meeting on 23 June 2022.

11. Background Documents

None.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference for the Business, Economy, and Innovation Committee

Appendix 2 – Table of the Committee's membership

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Part 3

Section 2.3 - Terms of Reference

Business, Economy and Innovation Committee

The Business, Economy and Innovation Committee is authorised:

1. To carry out any Non-Mayoral Function¹ of the Combined Authority relating to **business, the economy and innovation**² including:
 - a) progressing the elements of the Strategic Economic Framework that fall within the remit of this committee, by:
 - approving, amending or revoking any policy, investment priorities, strategy or plan,³
 - delivering, monitoring and reviewing the outcomes and impact of any policy, investment priorities, strategy or plan.
 - b) progressing those elements of the Mayor's pledges that fall within the remit of this committee, ensuring alignment with the Strategic Economic Framework where appropriate,
 - c) submitting bids for devolved and other funding,
 - d) working with key partners to develop and promote a shared understanding, approach and coherent strategies and policies, and
 - e) delivering and overseeing any project or programme in accordance with the Leeds City Region Assurance Framework⁴, including the following where authorised by a bespoke approval pathway and approval route for a scheme (after decision-point 2 only):

¹ Functions in this context are to be construed in a broad and inclusive fashion, and as including the exercise of the ancillary powers under Section 113A of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

² This includes business growth and productivity, business support, innovation, digital, trade and inward investment.

³ With the exception of any major policy, investment priorities, strategy or plan reserved to the Combined Authority - see further Section 2.2 of Part 3 of the Constitution - and subject to any direction by the Mayor that any decision on a policy, investment priorities, strategy or plan be referred to the Combined Authority for determination.

⁴ Or otherwise, where the project or programme does not fall to be considered under the Assurance Framework

- making a decision to progress the scheme^{5, 6} or
- making any recommendation to the Combined Authority⁷ or the Mayor⁸ about progressing the scheme, and
- reviewing the scheme's impact.

with the **exception** of

- any function which requires a Statutory Consent⁹ where that consent has yet to be given¹⁰,
 - any matter related to a Non-Mayoral Function conferred by the 2021 Order, which the Mayor has directed should be referred to the Combined Authority for determination¹¹, or
 - any function which is reserved to the Combined Authority¹².
2. To advise the Combined Authority in respect of any Non-Mayoral Function which relates to, or impacts on, business, the economy or innovation.
 3. To advise the Mayor in respect of any Mayoral General Function¹³ which relates to, or impacts on, business, the economy or innovation.
 4. To liaise with the Employment and Skills Committee to secure good jobs, skills and training and ensure good employment.
 5. To promote, in collaboration with other committees,
 - equality and diversity,

⁵ including determining change requests

⁶ with the exception of any decision which would result in a revised financial approval which exceeds the cumulative total of the financial approval and tolerance threshold agreed by the Combined Authority at decision point 2 (or decision point 3) by more than 25%, in which case the decision must be referred to the Combined Authority.

⁷ or to any other committee or relevant officer with delegated authority to make the decision.

⁸ The Mayor will determine any aspect of a scheme which is a Mayoral Function

⁹ These are specified functions conferred by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (Election of Mayor and Functions) Order 2021 - see further the Access to Information Rules in Part 4 of the Constitution

¹⁰ In relation to any function in respect of which a Statutory Consent has been given, the Committee must exercise their authority in accordance with the terms of any Statutory Consent.

¹¹ The 2021 Order provides that these matters require the support of the Mayor.

¹² The functions reserved to the Combined Authority are set out in Section 2.2 of Part 3 of the Constitution, and include the approval of any major policy, investment priorities, strategy or plan.

¹³ Mayoral General Functions are the functions of the Combined Authority which are exercisable only by the Mayor, other than PCC Functions. These are conferred by the 2021 Order (see further Table D in Section 3.1.1 of Part 3 of the Constitution), or other legislation.

- inclusive growth,
 - tackling the climate emergency, and
 - the strategic alignment of the Combined Authority’s policies, investment priorities, strategies and plans.
6. To respond to any report or recommendation from an overview and scrutiny committee¹⁴.

Document version control	
Municipal Year:	2022-23
Version:	1 – 22/23
Document approved by:	The Combined Authority
Date:	23 June 2022
To be of effect from:	23 June 2022

¹⁴ That is, any overview and scrutiny committee of the Combined Authority (in accordance with Scrutiny Standing Orders in Part 4 of the Constitution) or of any Constituent Council

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	CA Members (Voting)	Local Authority Co-optees (Voting except for York co-optee)	LEP Board Members (Non-voting except where Deputy Chair)	Private Sector Representatives (Non-Voting)	Advisory Representatives – ex-officio (Non-Voting)
Business, Economy and Innovation Committee	Shabir Pandor (Portfolio Holder)	Bradford: Alex Ross-Shaw (L) Calderdale: Jane Scullion (L) Kirklees: Eric Firth (L) Leeds: Lisa Martin (L) Wakefield: Darren Byford (L) York: Ashley Mason (LD)	Amir Hussain (Creative) Mandy Ridyard (Manufacturing) Andrew Wright (Manufacturing)	Martin Booth (Manufacturing) Fara Butt (Manufacturing) Deb Hetherington (Digital/Property) Asma Iqbal (Professional services) Simon Langdale (Engineering) Karl Oxford (Third Sector) Richard Paxman (Manufacturing) Paul Price (Digital) Bobby Thandi (Digital) Alan Williams (Textiles/Manufacturing) Philip Wilson (Digital) Simon Wright (Digital/Property)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yorkshire Universities; Director (Peter O'Brien) Leeds City Region Universities; 2 reps at Pro-Vice Chancellor level (Prof Nick Plant & Sue Cooke) WY Consortium of Colleges; FE Rep (Derek Whitehead) West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce; Chief Executive (tbc) Innovate UK; Regional Manager (Lee Viney) Health-tech/Digital Health; Rep (Neville Young) Department for International Trade; Regional Director for Yorkshire & Humber (Simon Mellon)
13 Chair: Shabir Pandor Deputy Chair: Andrew Wright					

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Report to: Business, Economy and Innovation Committee

Date: 12 July 2022

Subject: **Economic Reporting**

Director: Alan Reiss, Director of Policy, Strategy and Communications

Author: Thomas Newton, Economic Analysis Team Leader

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the latest economic and business intelligence to the Business, Economy and Innovation Committee.

2. Information

Macroeconomy

- 2.1. **The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted in June to increase the interest rate from 1% to 1.25%.** Members voted 6-3 in favour of the 0.25 percentage-point increase, though it is worth noting that those who voted against did so because they preferred to increase the bank rate to 1.5%. The Bank of England's interest rate has now reached its highest point since January 2009.
- The MPC sets the UK's monetary policy to meet their inflation target of 2%. **Twelve-month CPI inflation reached 9.1% May**, a forty-year high, leading to the Bank of England taking direct action to try and cool price rises across the economy.
 - The biggest drivers of inflation are external to the UK economy. The conflict in Ukraine, and supply-side problems such as reduced energy output, has caused a 53.5% rise in electricity prices and a 95.5% increase in gas prices in the past year. There are also some internal

factors driving inflation, such as the tightening of the labour market and firms' pricing strategies in response to rising input prices.

- 2.2. **Producer input prices rose by 22.1% in the twelve months to May 2022**, up from 20.9% in the year to April. **This is the highest rate since records began in January 1985.** Producer output prices rose by 15.7% in the year to May 2022, showing that, whilst firms are passing on the majority of the price rises they are experiencing onto consumers, there is scope for cost-push inflationary prices to hike prices even further across the economy.
- The key drivers of the input price inflation were metals and non-metallic minerals, up 24.1% over the past 12 months, and crude oil prices, which have increased by 84.6% in the last year. Manufacturing industries are therefore more likely to feel the effects of rising inputs.
 - The impact of output prices, however, are likely to be further reaching. Food products were the greatest contributor to rising output prices, leaving consumers vulnerable to retailers passing on these rising costs in the coming months. This will have a particularly strong impact on low earners, who spend a greater proportion of their income on essentials such as food and energy.

Labour Market

- 2.3. **The region continues to perform well on employment metrics.** Between January 2022 and May 2022, the number of payrolled employees in West Yorkshire increased by 1.1% from 995,630 to 1,006,906. The number of payrolled employees is now 2.8% above pre-pandemic levels, a difference of 27,447 employees. Since January 2022, Leeds has seen the largest increase in payrolled employees (+1.6%), followed by Bradford (+1.1%), Kirklees (+0.9%), Wakefield (+0.7%) and Calderdale (+0.5%).
- 2.4. **Median pay levels have increased, but not as quickly as inflation.** Between May 2021 and May 2022, median pay levels in West Yorkshire increased from £1,837 to £1,932 per month (+5.2%). Wakefield experienced the largest increase in median pay (+5.9%), followed by Bradford (+5.7%), Calderdale (+5.4%), Kirklees (+4.8%) and Leeds (+4.2%). Pay levels lagging inflation has been compounded by the increase in National Insurance Contributions. This pressure on earnings is why the Bank of England is expecting growth to slow, as households cut back on non-essential spending.
- 2.5. **Out-of-work benefit claimants have continued to fall into May 2022.** Since January 2022, the number of out-of-work benefit claimants have fallen by 4,275 (-5.6%) across West Yorkshire. The largest change has been seen in Wakefield (-10.6%), followed by Calderdale (-9.8%), Leeds (-5.7%), Kirklees (-5.5%) and Bradford (-2.6%). Despite this, the total number of out-of-work benefit claimants across West Yorkshire has increased by 28.7% since the start of the pandemic, in part due to the ongoing cost of living crisis.
- 2.6. **In-work benefit claims continued to rise into April 2022.** The number of in-work claims across West Yorkshire rose by 1% from January 2022 to April 2022,

with all local authorities except Wakefield (-0.3%) seeing an increase in in-work benefit claims. Calderdale (+2.1%) saw the largest rise, followed by Leeds (+1.7%), Kirklees (+1.1%) and Bradford (+0.1%). Part of this increase is because policy changes have allowed people with higher earnings than previously to be eligible for Universal Credit, however, this does show that despite improved employment figures, the labour market still has fragilities.

- 2.7. **Online vacancies across West Yorkshire rebounded in all five local authorities during May, following declines in April.** Calderdale (+19%) saw the largest rise in job postings, followed by Bradford (+8%), Leeds and Wakefield (both +6%), and Kirklees (+3%). Programmers and software development professionals were the most in-demand employees in West Yorkshire during May, seeing an increase in demand of 15% on April.

Footfall

- 2.8. West Yorkshire Combined Authority has been working with Citi Logik to analyse footfall trends across 13 zones within the region¹. The data provided will cover periods which include Covid-related restrictions, as well as after restrictions were lifted. Alongside journey numbers, the data will cover journey times, distance travelled and travel purpose.
- 2.9. Monthly journey numbers in December 2021 were 31% greater than they were in March 2021 (7.1m vs 5.4m). Monthly home-work, work-home journeys were 11% higher in December, compared with March (863k vs 780k). Journey numbers declined from September to December, which could be explained by seasonal effects or concerns over the Omicron Variant. Overall visits declined between September and December from 7.4m to 7.1m and home-work, work-home visits declined from 950k to 863k.
- 2.10. The footfall data shows different levels of recovery and resilience across West Yorkshire. Below is a table showing how monthly footfall levels changed across seven locations with March 2021 as the baseline.

	March	June	September	December
Crown Point	100	143	176	101
White Rose	100	190	182	219
Bradford	100	129	123	110
Halifax	100	109	114	113
Huddersfield	100	128	126	124
Leeds	100	180	206	192
Wakefield	100	118	124	118

Culture

¹ Bradford; Crown Point Retail Park; Dewsbury; Halifax; Hebden Bridge; Keighley; Huddersfield; Ilkley; Leeds; Pontefract; Wakefield; Wetherby; White Rose Shopping Centre

- 2.11. Seasonally adjusted employment in the *Arts, entertainment and recreation* sector saw little change between December 2021 and March 2022. As of March 2022, it remains 59,000 or 7% lower than in March 2020.
- 2.12. According to ONS' flash estimate, productivity in *Arts, entertainment and recreation* was 4% in Q1 2022 than Q1 2020. This compares with growth of 2% across the whole economy for the same period.
- 2.13. Average weekly earnings in *Arts, entertainment and recreation* fell by 7.4% year-on-year in nominal terms in April 2022. Average weekly earnings for *Arts, entertainment and recreation* are, at £430, 29% lower than the *Whole Economy* average.

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. According to research by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, inflation for the poorest 10% of households is 10.9%, whilst state benefits increased by 3.1% in April 2022. One of the main drivers of this inflation is energy prices, which have increased most for those on pre-payment meters, who are more likely to be poorer households. Fuel poverty in West Yorkshire is already above the national average, so this could widen that gap.
- 4.2. Another item that has put pressure on inflation is the increasing cost of food. Wheat prices have increased significantly, which has caused prices to increase. There are also ongoing supply chain problems, which have contributed to price increases for food. In January 2021, research was done by the University of Sheffield which showed the level of potential food poverty (these figures will likely be worse now). In Bradford, Calderdale and Kirklees, 12% of people were worried about having enough food. 10% of people in Wakefield thought this, and 8% in Leeds.
- 4.3. Whilst it is good news that equity deals are increasing in the region, it is important that businesses outside of Leeds can access this type of finance. Equity finance is a very useful tool for high growth potential companies to grow. These companies often provide high quality jobs, which are incredibly important with the ongoing cost of living crisis.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1. National data shows that there has been an increase in the likelihood of over 50s becoming economically inactive throughout the pandemic. Reasons for becoming economically inactive were wide-ranging from retiring early to needing to take up additional caring responsibilities. There is a risk that this

economic inactivity will remain putting additional pressure on the cost of living for this age group, especially those on fixed incomes.

- 5.2. A recent survey conducted by the Office for National Statistics showed that 77% of people in Great Britain are worried about the rising cost of living. In Yorkshire and the Humber, this figure was slightly higher at 80%, and women (81%), disabled people (82%) and Asian people (90%) are all relatively more worried than the average person in Great Britain. This could hint at their relative economic insecurity. Unsurprisingly, worries about the cost of living also increase as you move down the income distribution. 69% of those earning £50,000 or more expressed worry, compared with 81% of those earning £10,000 - £15,000. Renters (84%) are also more likely than homeowners currently paying off a mortgage (78%) to be worried about cost of living increases, highlighting a relative volatility in rent costs compared to mortgage costs.

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. The Committee are asked to note the latest intelligence around the West Yorkshire economy and how it relates to ongoing future work plans.

11. Background Documents

[Covid-19 Economic and Transport Recovery Monitor.](#)

12. Appendices

None.

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Report to: Business Economy and Innovation Committee

Date: 12th July 2022

Subject: **Investment Priorities**

Director: Liz Hunter, Director Policy and Development

Author: Sarah Bowes, Policy Manager

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1. To provide Committee members with an update on work to develop the Committee’s investment priorities following on from the workshop at the last meeting. This priority setting includes interventions on innovation and Business West Yorkshire, which we will be expanding on in other papers to this Committee.

2. Information

Investment Priorities

Background

- 2.1 Our investment priorities are driven by what is required in the current business environment and how this might evolve in the future. A separate paper to this committee outlines the current business environment. Our aim when developing our priorities is to understand these, particularly the challenges around recruitment, trade, price inflation and the changing nature of demand.
- 2.2 The Combined Authority agreed an updated West Yorkshire Investment Strategy in June 2022. This paper is concerned with Investment Priority One: business growth and innovation.

- 2.3 The Combined Authority has already agreed to invest £20 million into business growth and innovation from the Single Investment Pot of devolved funding. In addition, there are other funding sources this prioritisation exercise will feed into, including the Shared Prosperity Fund.
- 2.4 All investment will be driven by consultation with the business community and other relevant stakeholders (including this committee). It also builds on our existing strategies and plans, including the Productivity Framework, Trade Strategy, Healthtech Strategy, Innovation Framework and Digital Framework.
- 2.5 At the last meeting, Committee members discussed their investment priorities for the forthcoming year. These were consolidated into a table and circulated following the meeting. Limited additional comments were received but those that were have been incorporated into the priorities in the appendix.
- 2.6 These priorities have been socialised and discussed District Partners and the West Yorkshire Innovation Network.

Draft priorities

- 2.7. The table of investment priorities can be found at appendix 1 for formal endorsement.
- 2.8. As agreed at the last meeting, officers have been progressing work on two of these areas: item 9 (Business West Yorkshire) and item 10 (Innovation Programmes). These will be discussed separately during the meeting.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 Tackling the climate emergency and protecting our environment is one of the Mayoral pledges and a cross-cutting theme across our investment priorities. Supporting businesses to decarbonise and improve their environmental sustainability was a key theme of the previous workshop. This is reflected in the programmes being proposed in the appendix with a particular programme aimed at business support.
- 3.2 Previous schemes have been successful in supporting businesses and lessons will be learnt about the best approach for future interventions. For example, the REBiz programme offers help to businesses to become more resource efficient and adopt circular business models and practices and 542 businesses have been engaged through the programme.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1. In delivering the pledge around supporting local business, specific focus will be given to the importance of community wealth for inclusive growth. This includes considering the development of the Fair Work Charter as part of the future pipeline, and how that will interact with wider business support interventions. The pipeline is also expected to bring forward proposals around

the business support needs of alternative models of business ownership, including cooperatives and social enterprises.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1. Ensuring our business support offer is accessible to women, BAME communities and those with disabilities is a central component of our new proposed approach. New programmes will include stretching targets to ensure a greater diversity of businesses can be supported through the support. New programmes will be designed with a greater range of input to ensure barriers to engagement are not inadvertently put in place.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. Funding routes will be agreed for each programme as they develop and are assured through the assurance framework.

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. Consultation has taken place with District Officers, West Yorkshire Innovation Network and this Committee.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1. That the Committee formerly endorses for further development the investment priorities agreed at the workshop.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Investment priorities

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Annex A: Investment Priorities for Business and Innovation

The below table outlines our current proposed approach for investment of funding on business and innovation. This has been developed in conjunction with the Business, Economy and Innovation Committee and other programmes (including the recent Manufacturing Task Force).

There are a number of further areas that are being explored on this agenda alongside other committees. These have been excluded from the table but we are still keen to ensure that this committee provides input into these as they develop.

This includes:

- **Investment in enterprise and management skills** – which we are exploring in conjunction with our skills and employment work.
- **Investment in net-zero, decarbonisation and the growth of Green Business** – a series of proposals are being developed in conjunction with the Place and Environment Committee. In addition, this priority is also embedded in the wider programmes below (for example, the new business support model will try and help businesses navigate support to improve environmental efficiency and energy use).
- **Cultural Catalyst** – The Culture, Sports and Cultural Industries Committee is working to develop a new culture framework which will in part look at skills and business growth for the creative industries.

In all the above areas, we will look to bring papers to the Business, Economy and Innovation Committee on these issues as they develop.

The overarching ambitions for business support and innovation investments include:

- ongoing work to better identify and target the businesses who would most benefit from support and a strong EDI focus for all programmes
- expanding our reach to help more businesses navigate the complex landscape of opportunities, including working with sector bodies
- focussing on where there are gaps in required provision, recognising the wider ecosystem

Short term (develop, deliver and announce asap)	Medium term (development and delivery from 2023 to 2025)
<p>Business support model to evolve the growth manager model in local authorities and the region. This will provide better coordination and connection of businesses to support at the local and regional level. As part of the proposed model, we will be exploring how to support diversity of the business population, decarbonisation as well as alternative business model support. <i>A separate paper to this</i></p>	<p>Innovation co-investment with Innovation UK – We are working on a potential proposal to partner with Innovation UK to coinvest in Knowledge Transfer Partnerships between universities and researchers and businesses. This might be focused on short interventions, Women in Innovation and number of other potential areas.</p>

<p><i>committee provides more detail on our emerging model.</i></p>	
<p>Productivity Programme that builds on the Productivity Pilot and Business Growth Programme and is a programme to provide grants that support productivity improvements across businesses. <i>A business case for this programme has already been approved through the Combined Authority Assurance Processes</i></p>	<p>Enterprise programme (post Adventure) – this will compliment our existing Enterprise West Yorkshire offer by providing support to ambitious growth focused early stage businesses.</p>
<p>Regional innovation support programme – a service to stimulate business innovation. This will take lessons learned from the connecting innovation programme. It will provide overarching information and branding, signposting businesses to support across the region and provide funding opportunities. This will also include a Mayoral Innovation Prize and oversight of the West Yorkshire Innovation Fund and West Yorkshire Innovation Network. <i>A separate business case to this committee provide more detail on our emerging model.</i></p>	<p>Digital transformation (post Digital Enterprise) – This will provide support to businesses wishing to invest in improving their productivity through digital innovations. Our new programme will be developed by building on the learnings from existing digital transformation support to a range of businesses, adding value to other provision eg Help2Grow</p>
<p>Export support – As outlined in the recently adopted West Yorkshire Trade Strategy, we are aiming a heightened level of support for exporters. This is in response to a more complex trading environment following EU Exit. This aims to provide support to businesses to export. We will aim to work with existing providers and partners in the region to discuss the development of this programme.</p>	<p>Seedcorn finance for innovative entrepreneurs – to provide support for entrepreneurs to access early stage investment to invest in initial ideas and proof of concept. <i>The innovation paper to this committee provides a bit more detail on this proposal and potential next steps.</i></p>
<p>Inward investment – funding to support strategic inward investment opportunities. This will be focused across the region and potentially linked to place marketing opportunities such as the years of culture being planned across the region.</p>	<p>Access to finance and investment readiness – We are planning to do further work to explore of gaps in the market. Particularly those that have evolved as the business conditions have changed in recent years. We will look to use this evidence to provide a model of further support in this area for West Yorkshire.</p>
<p>Call for projects – innovation and business. Open to all to for projects aligned to strategic priorities. This might also include work to support the growth</p>	<p>Longer term capital support – For example, in line with the healthtech strategy to improve investment and productivity in the region.</p>

in alternative business models and community wealth building.	
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Report to: Business, Economy, and Innovation Committee

Date: 12th July, 2022

Subject: **Future Business Support Model**

Director: Liz Hunter, Director of Policy and Development

Author: Jennifer Robson, Policy Manager

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1. To update the Committee on progress towards reshaping and reinvigorating the Growth Service (Growth Hub), following identification of this by the Committee as a priority action at its meeting on 29 March 2022.
- 1.2. To seek further input, advice, and guidance from the Committee on the ongoing development and redesign of the Growth Service for delivery from April 2023 onwards.
- 1.3. To seek endorsement from the Committee for the Growth Service to continue to progress through the Combined Authority's Assurance Framework.

2. Information

- 2.1. The Growth Service is the underpinning infrastructure for business support in West Yorkshire and since July 2015 has supported over 20,000 different businesses. It is one of 38 Growth Hubs in England and is widely regarded as an exemplar model of integrated 'hub and spoke' support, with the Gateway

Service delivered by the Combined Authority and the team of 20 SME (Small and Medium Enterprises) Growth Managers funded by the Combined Authority and embedded within Local Authority delivery teams.

- 2.2 The Growth Service provides the key access point into what remains a complicated business support landscape. The Gateway and Growth Manager functions support this by providing access to the right support, at the right time, to support SMEs' growth and resilience plans. An independent evaluation of the service in 2022 highlighted that customer satisfaction with the service is very high, with 87% of businesses satisfied or very satisfied. Satisfaction has risen considerably from 61% in 2015/16 when the Service was first evaluated. Please see infographic in section 11 – Background Documents – for more of the recent evaluation findings.
- 2.3 The recent evaluation featured examples of businesses that had benefitted from support, including: -
- A Kirklees based food and drink manufacturer said, *“Over the last few years, we have received a range of support from the Local Enterprise Partnership and our Growth Manager. They have helped us with access to resources, grant support and specialist advice, as well as training on business planning and marketing. We really value the support we have received and how it has helped us to sustain and grow our business, create more jobs, and better engage with our local schools and community.”*
 - The CEO of a small creative and digital business said, *“The service is crucial in helping businesses access much needed support which they otherwise would not be aware of. For our company, this support meant the difference between survival and failure during the pandemic.”*
- 2.4 In 2021, an unpublished independent economic impact evaluation by ADD consultants found that firms supported by the Growth Service created considerably more jobs (an average of 1.98 increase) than the average across the region (average decrease of 0.12 jobs). The research team that undertook the study concluded that the Growth Service represents excellent value for money with a Benefit Cost Ratio of 22:1.
- 2.5 To date, the core Growth Service has been predominantly funded by the Government via the Department for Business, Economy, and Industrial Strategy – BEIS). It has also accessed some funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the region's Local Authorities, that employ and host the Growth Managers. BEIS reduced Growth Hub for 2022/23 by 50% (with two days' notice) and ERDF funding finishes at the end of 2022/23. This sudden and unexpected cut in BEIS funding was mitigated by the CA planning ahead for all possible scenarios, which has enabled the service to continue this financial year.
- 2.6 Ongoing uncertainty about the future of BEIS support for Growth Hubs, coupled with the current vacuum in relation to national policy on business support, means that local / regional solutions to the funding of the service, and

the range of products that businesses can access from it, was identified by the Committee as a key priority at its meeting in late March 2022.

2.7 A revised delivery model has been in development since the Committee identified the importance of supporting the core business support infrastructure in West Yorkshire. The core model consisting of a central gateway function and Growth Managers hosted by West Yorkshire Local Authorities has been consistently supported by independent evaluators and regional stakeholders. However, to build on the successes of the current delivery model and meet the changing needs of the region and its businesses, the following key themes are being considered:

- **Access** – A clearer single access point, which recognises recent geographical and organisational changes, for SMEs to access the support they need to grow and / or become more resilient.
- **Reach and Inclusion** – To increase the reach of the service to a wider and more diverse SME audience, and across all communities in West Yorkshire through clearer identity, messaging, communications, and a revised approach to events which will focus on more disadvantaged areas and underrepresented groups .
- **Effective Targeting** – A data-driven approach involving market segmentation and targeting underpinned by innovative technologies, new communication channels and a new CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system and website.
- **Private sector engagement** - a refreshed approach to engagement with the professional services sector to expand the reach of the service and partnership approach to fill gaps in provision.
- **Flexibility** – A flexible delivery model enabling the service to respond effectively to new economic challenges and potentially to increase provision according to future demand and to address emerging priorities (eg. alternative business ownership models and EDI (Equality Diversity and Inclusion) initiatives based on data on the reach and take-up of services).

2.8 The revised delivery model, at a headline level, is being taken through the initial stages of the Combined Authority’s Assurance Framework process. The first stage, the Strategic Assessment, was considered at a meeting on 30 June 2022. Following that meeting a more definitive ongoing timescale will be confirmed and a more detailed business case will be developed incorporating input, advice, and guidance from the Committee.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

3.1. The current increases in energy costs has resulted in significant interest from SMEs in measures that can reduce costs. Growth Managers currently play a key role in supporting SMEs to incorporate energy-saving measures as part of wider plans to grow or become more productive. The new Growth Service model is being considered in close consultation with the development of a new programme of Climate Readiness measures (currently going through CA

assurance processes), which involves a package of SME support to tackle the climate emergency.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 Area-based deprivation data is analysed against the locations of the businesses supported by the Growth Service. Early indications show that 33% of businesses supported were from the 20% most deprived parts of the region. More analysis will be undertaken to refine this data which will also help to target future interventions.
- 4.2 A revised approach to events will be implemented with the objective of engaging businesses across the whole of West Yorkshire, particularly those in more disadvantaged areas and those that are outside of the main towns and cities.
- 4.3 The Service is the entry point into grant funding provided by the Combined Authority and its partners. Businesses that receive grant funding from the CA are asked to make Inclusive Growth commitments that are proportionate to the value of the grants received.
- 4.4 The service has been exploring how best to support businesses to fully understand the range of business structures available to them, including cooperatives and social enterprise. The Co-operative Economy 2018 report states that 80% of co-operative businesses survive the notoriously challenging first five years, compared to 44% of other businesses. It is, therefore, important to ensure that our businesses fully understand, and have the opportunity to explore, the range of business models available to them.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1. Since May 2022, more detailed data on Equality and Diversity has been captured by the Growth Service. The service will be able to utilise this data to determine the extent to which take-up of support is proportionate to the communities of the region. Where take-up is proportionately low, interventions will be designed and implemented to address the situation and to ensure representation.
- 5.2 The service has existing relationships with several key stakeholders (eg Yorkshire Asian Business Association, Yorkshire Enterprise Network, the BAME Committee of the West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce and the Women in Business initiative), and will work with these stakeholders to ensure the design of the service, and the products available from it, better meet the needs of our business community through enhanced inclusivity and accessibility. This will inform the ongoing targets for engaging with females and people from ethnic minority groups that are key decision makers in the businesses supported by the service.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. Finances for the service for three years from 2023/24 are being sought from the CA through the Assurance Framework process. Some level of BEIS funding for 2023/24 remains a possibility, however, given the delay in confirmation of the current year's funding, and the reduced funding level, this cannot be relied upon. The intention, therefore, is to secure more reliable and sustainable funding from local / regional sources, and to then utilise any Government funding if it becomes available to either replenish the local / regional funds, and/or, undertake additional activities.
- 6.2 It is anticipated that the West Yorkshire Local Authorities will continue to contribute 25% towards the cost of the SME Growth Manager function, which is in line with their current contributions.
- 6.3 A greater focus on relationships with the corporate sector is expected to lead to potential financial, or in-kind, support to broaden the reach of the service and to fill gaps in support e.g. investment readiness.

7. Legal Implications

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

8. Staffing Implications

- 8.1. The new delivery model is currently at a development stage and will be refined as it progresses through the Assurance Framework process. Any subsequent changes to the staffing resource will be undertaken in line with the Combined Authority's current policies and procedures.
- 8.2 It is anticipated that Growth Managers would continue to be employed by the West Yorkshire Local Authorities, who would contribute 25% towards their costs.

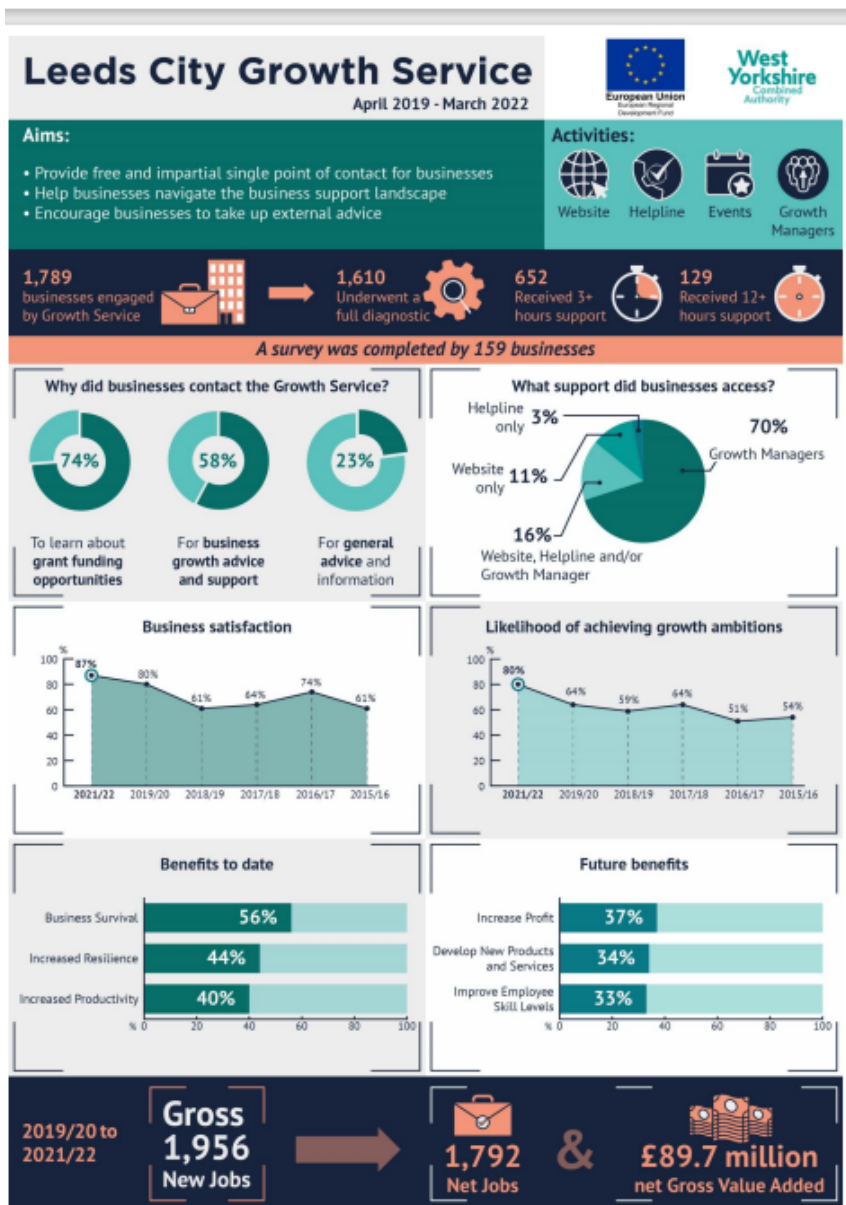
9. External Consultees

- 9.1. No external consultations have been undertaken, although the proposed refined delivery model has been discussed with several key stakeholders, including those on the CA's Business Communications Group. It has also obviously been discussed with this Committee, specifically at the March 2022 meeting.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1. That the Business, Economy, and Innovation Committee endorses for the Growth Service to continue to progress through the Combined Authority's Assurance Framework.
- 10.2 That the Business, Economy, and Innovation Committee notes the updates and provides further input, advice, and guidance on the ongoing development and design of the Growth Service for delivery from April 2023 onwards.

11. Background Documents



12. Appendices

None



Report to: Business Economy and Innovation Committee

Date: 12th July 2022

Subject: **Innovation activity**

Director: Liz Hunter, Director Policy and Development

Author: Sarah Bowes, Policy Manager

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1. To provide an update on current activity and development on future programmes for innovation support in the region.

2. Information

Innovation activity

West Yorkshire Innovation Network

- 2.1. The West Yorkshire Innovation Network (WYIN) was established in 2020 on the back of the devolution negotiations. The network brings together the innovation support ecosystem to identify opportunities to collaborate, improve the provision of service to businesses and raise the profile of innovation and the assets we have in West Yorkshire.
- 2.2. Chaired by Mandy Ridyard, the network was formerly launched in October 2021 by the Mayor. Members include IUK, IUK Edge, KTN, a number of Catapults, Yorkshire Universities, Bradford University, Leeds University, Huddersfield University, Leeds Beckett, Leeds Trinity, WYCC, RTC North etc.

- 2.3 Current work being developed by the network includes an emerging innovation narrative/ story for the region. A draft proposal will be brought to a future meeting of the BEIC committee later in 2022.

West Yorkshire Innovation Festival

- 2.4 The West Yorkshire Innovation Festival (WYIF) was created by the West Yorkshire Innovation Network in 2021. The purpose of the festival was to bring people together to promote networking amongst the region's businesses and share best practice to provoke innovation and productivity growth. Over 40 events ran during the week of the festival, all at that time entirely virtual. The Combined Authority acted as convener for the festival but individual organisations were responsible for running their own events under the WYIF umbrella.
- 2.5 The West Yorkshire Innovation Network and the Mayor aspire to run this event annually and planning has started on a 2022 festival. This will take place on the week beginning October 3rd and will build and expand on the learning from the innovation festival that took place in 2021. This event will be focused on *Inclusive Innovation* and *Showcasing Impact*. These event priorities have stemmed from our Innovation Framework and the Mayor's priorities.
- 2.6 The working group for the WYIF 2022 has been established and events management expertise is currently being commissioned to help manage and coordinate the whole week and organise CA led events. Committee members are invited to get involved in the festival to help promote, shape and participate in the scheme.

Connecting Innovation

- 2.7 The current CA programme offering innovation support to existing businesses – Connecting Innovation, is progressing well and with much success to report to date, but is not without challenge. At the time of its creation and launch in April 2020, CI was fully fit for purpose, offering intensive support and guidance to businesses wanting to increase their capability and capacity to innovate, together with up to 50% match funding for projects working with research intensive organisations to date.
- 2.8 At the time of writing, CI has engaged with over 400 businesses across the region, with applications received for funds totalling £1,612,183. However the landscape of support has fundamentally changed since CI's launch, and therefore the ability to offer valued support to businesses in the innovation area has been squeezed, due to the emergence of other support programmes. Most notably but not exclusively, that of Innovate UK's 'Edge' programme, which in places duplicates the CI offer.

Future programmes

Regional Innovation Programme proposal

- 2.9 The Combined Authority is currently working with partners to develop its investment priorities for future delivery. Item 8 at this committee sets out the list of indicative investment priorities as discussed and agreed at a workshop following the last committee meeting in March. This list includes a regional innovation programme as a short-term priority.
- 2.10 This programme will aim to support businesses to innovate in the region. We propose that we build on the learnings from the Connecting Innovation programme. Funded by ERDF, Connecting Innovation is the LEP/CAs current innovation offer, due to close in June 2023. As the interim evaluation of Connecting Innovation sets out, since the programme was established the innovation support landscape has shifted significantly. Our new approach will be innovative and focus on what is proven to work from the previous programme.
- 2.11 Many businesses in West Yorkshire require that capacity building support with the ability to de-risk their financial investment before moving onto accessing larger amounts of financial and non-financial sector specific; supply chain; new market development opportunities and support, such as those on offer from IUK and the IUK family (Eg Innovate UK Edge grants to work with RO and catapults).
- 2.12 This proposal for a new regional programme seeks to address this through the creation of a new streamlined innovation offer focused around diagnostics, signposting and funding incentives to drive up industry engagement with innovation capability and expertise.
- 2.13 The previous scheme of Connecting Innovation has been proven to add distinct value in the provision of **grant funding and signposting** (rather than advice to businesses) and appeals to both micro and smaller size enterprises on the SME spectrum due to the differing levels of grants on offer, dependant on the maturity of the innovation development.
- 2.14 The new Innovation programme would provide:
- **A diagnostic and signposting service for businesses** to enable access into appropriate provision across West Yorkshire (for both Combined Authority Provision and wider provision). Through this diagnostic, the team will support businesses to engage with the correct support across the landscape.
 - **Innovation finance** to encourage, incentivise and stimulate innovation in all businesses across West Yorkshire. This will be focused on smaller businesses as a means of them taking the first step into innovation. Higher value grants could be available to businesses in the health innovation or net zero innovation space to prioritise and target activity to these sectors.
 - **Vouchers for businesses** to buy in appropriate support and expertise from a range of research and support organisations including (but not limited to) Higher Education Institutions, consultancy firms, technology development experts.

- **A dedicated Comms and marketing resource and digital platform** (included as part of Business West Yorkshire). This will help businesses access the right innovation support and navigate the hugely fragmented landscape.
- 2.15 The Combined Authority team will also manage stakeholder relations with the ecosystem through the West Yorkshire Innovation Network and manage other regionally commissioned programmes such as the Mayors Innovation Prize which is currently out to tender.

Regional Seedcorn Fund

- 2.16 A further area of proposed investment in a regional seedcorn fund. The lack of early-stage finance across West Yorkshire continues to reduce opportunities for innovative founders to commercialise, grow and scale. Seedcorn or pre-seed finance refers to the earliest equity funding round, typically between 50k-250k. This is used to validate the idea, evidence market need, establish Intellectual Property and develop a scalable commercial model. For many start-ups this is the only way to move innovative ideas forward. This is also a key milestone to de-risk the proposition for follow on investors; Venture Capitalists and other institutional investors who expect a well-defined business case even at 'Seed' stage, which is the first official fundraising round between £250k-5m.
- 2.17 The data shows that seed investment in the region are well below the UK average and a fraction of the seed investment in London and the Golden Triangle. This imbalance is featured in NESTA's report [The Missing £4bn](#) highlighting the low rates of R&D funding that is accessed across Yorkshire.
- 2.18 Intervention options are currently being assessed in consultation with the market, equity organisations and entrepreneurs who are facing or who have been through some of the challenges described above. Acknowledging that an 'equity' approach is not always favoured by a founder, we are also exploring 'loan' and 'convertible loan' options alongside co-investment funds.
- 2.19 A co-investment model would be designed to stimulate and share the risk with private investors, increase the pool of local investors as well as return the initial investment with profits to create the next fund. There is also opportunities to focus the scheme around sectors, clusters or even challenges i.e. Net Zero, depending on how the investment thesis is structured to align to regional objectives and values.
- 2.20 This programme is in early development and any feedback from the committee would be welcome, as well as any members who are keen to get involved in the development of this proposal.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1. All businesses will need to innovate to reduce their overall carbon impact and help achieve the region's net zero ambitions. The proposals being developed in this paper will provide an opportunity to support a number of innovations to help address the climate emergency through this programme. This includes the development of large grants focused around net zero opportunities.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1. Any new programmes to support innovation will include targets to ensure geographical representation across the region and within some of our most deprived communities. The WYIF, with a focus on inclusive innovation, will work with local authority partners to ensure reach and representation across these communities.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1. Equality and diversity will be at the heart of our new approach. Innovation is about ideas and a diverse regional population of entrepreneurs and businesses owners will help promote new ideas through the cognitive diversity it will bring.
- 5.2. Our Innovation Festival will try to reach a diverse audience and provide a diverse range of representation of speakers and participants at all events.
- 5.3. As for the Enterprise West Yorkshire Programme, all new innovation programme will have clear targets around engagement with diverse businesses. All programmes will build in a solid evaluation framework to allow us to evaluate and replicate what works to promote diversity in the business sector and innovation.

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. Discussions have taken place with District Partners, Yorkshire Universities and the West Yorkshire Innovation Network.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1. That the Committee notes the activity currently underway

10.2. That the Committee comments on and endorses for further development the proposals for a regional innovation programme and seedcorn fund.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

None.



Report to: Business, Economy, and Innovation Committee

Date: 6 July 2022

Subject: **Digital Skills Plan**

Director: Liz Hunter, Director of Policy and Development

Author: Marianne Hewitt, Policy Officer

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1. To provide the Committee with an update on the West Yorkshire Digital Skills Partnership, including the Digital Skills Plan and the next steps towards its publication and its launch.
- 1.2. We will progress the digital skills plan for final endorsement at the Combined Authority. This will include an assessment of the scale of the challenge and impacts of the plan on the economy and our digital skills base. We will also look as part of this process to develop targets alongside any investments made regionally in improving digital skills.
- 1.3. To seek the Committee's views on the Digital Skills Plan.

2. Information

Local Digital Skills Plan

- 2.1 The Local Digital Skills Partnership (LDSP) was created as part of the West Yorkshire Devolution deal. The LDSP brings together skills provision, acts as a test-bed for offers, and is a conduit to bring together stakeholders and partners to add value to the region's digital skills growth.

2.2 The LDSP's aspirations support the Mayoral pledges to:

- Prioritise skills and training to ensure everyone in West Yorkshire has the skills they need to secure work
- Support local businesses and be a champion for our regional economy

2.3 The Digital Skills Plan will support the development of these Mayoral pledges and deliver the agreed priorities in the Combined Authority's Economic Recovery Plan.

2.4 The Digital Skills Plan also supports the delivery of Employment and Skills Framework and its cross-cutting themes as well as the Digital Framework, particularly the 'digital skills for all' priority.

2.5 There has been wide consultation and engagement with stakeholders - Employment and Skills Committee; LDSP Board; workstream members from community, private and public sector organisations and senior Local Authority officers to develop the plan.

2.6 At the Employment and Skills Committee meeting in October 2021, there was enthusiastic support for the plan's vision and priorities.

2.7 The vision statement for the Digital Skills Plan is:

"Creating a fully inclusive society and a thriving economy through the growth of digital skills for all."

This means making West Yorkshire a region where:

- **There are no barriers** to people taking up, progressing and succeeding in learning and work, a place where they are supported into "good" jobs through the provision digital skills learning
- **Where no individual is left behind** and all are supported to engage in an increasingly digital society through accessible and inclusive provision of digital skills training
- **SMEs realise the potential** of digital to transform our economy and build economic resilience and growth
- **Where people are inspired** and driven to engage in STEM learning to succeed and progress to be the workforce of the future into the "jobs of the future"
- **That works collaboratively** to create and deliver digital skills provision that is both accessible and meaningful to all.

2.8 Since the last meeting, the four thematic workstreams of the LDSP have continued to develop the four agreed priorities with an action plan:

Social Digital Inclusion - The growth/provision of digital skills and supporting the resolution of data poverty and the ongoing challenge of accessibility and connectivity.

Workforce for the Future - To grow digital skills – ensuring greater alignment between business and education to support growth in skills and promoting career ambitions.

SME and Third Sector Growth - The growth of Essential Digital Skills and increasing resilience and sustainability of organisation and supporting the growth of skills to support the digital sector.

Simplifying the Digital Offer - Understanding current provision and current and future needs, in addition to ensuring provision is easy to access for all residents.

2.9 The Committee is asked to consider the following questions:

- Which of the actions do you consider priorities?
- What, if anything, would you add to the Action Plan?
- To review and comment on the plan's 'next steps'.

2.10 Pending endorsement from the Employment and Skills Committee and the Business, Innovation and Economy Committee, the Digital Skills Plan's next steps are to refine further before taking the plan to the Combined Authority and LEP Boards for endorsement.

2.11 The Digital Skills plan will provide direction and set priorities for action in current delivery activity for digital for all West Yorkshire partners, including through the Combined Authority's activity. Adult's skills programmes such as Skills Connect digital bootcamps, as well as Adult Education Budget flexible provision and take up of the digital entitlement will deliver many of the outcomes required to achieve the ambitions in the plan.

2.12 The Digital Skills plan also sets a clear direction of action for investment through the employment and skills pipeline of interventions. Through the mapping activities of the plan there is a clear evidence base for action and designing the right interventions with our partners to ensure that everyone in West Yorkshire is digitally included.

2.13 A dashboard of digital skills activity will be developed and presented to the Committee at its next meeting to demonstrate our delivery in this area, and any future commissioned activity as a result of the recommendations in the digital skills plan.

Local Digital Skills Partnership Update

2.14 The IBM Skills Build platform has been developed and will be live on www.futuregoals.co.uk during the week commencing 13th July. The platform supports individuals to access a range of careers support tools, learning pathways and access to training. The platform uses machine learning to build a personalised pathway for individuals to achieve their career goals

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

3.1 The Digital Skills Plan will support growth of digital skills and therefore movement into “better jobs” and more productive jobs within the region. This will include growth of skills across the region to enhance innovation across green sector to support climate challenges.

3.2 The Digital Skills Plan will also support ‘digital first’ business growth through greater social digital inclusion provision. This will support climate challenges by enabling customers to make first contact online, reducing the need to travel.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

4.1. Supporting digital skills development will positively contribute to recovery from the impact of the pandemic.

4.2 Delivery of the regional Digital Skills Plan will support inclusive growth across West Yorkshire. We expect to demonstrate progress in the following areas set out in the *Strategic Economic Framework*:

- Percentage qualified below level 2
- Unemployment rate
- Percentage of employees in quality work
- Apprenticeship starts
- Jobs paying below Real Living Wage
- Employment rate gap for disadvantaged groups
- Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

5.1 In 2022, 23% of the adult population within Yorkshire and the Humber lacked essential digital skills for life, and 7% of these are digitally excluded, meaning they cannot complete a single ‘foundation’ digital skill such as turning on a device, using a mouse/keyboard, browsing the internet. 4% of people in Yorkshire and the Humber remain offline.¹ This is despite West Yorkshire’s above-average internet infrastructure.²

5.2 The pandemic has accelerated the rate at which our lives have moved online, increasing our reliance on access to digital services. The close association between digital exclusion and other dimensions of inequality exposes the urgent need for greater digital inclusion.

5.3 The Digital Skills Plan seeks to directly address socio-economic inequalities facing our population. Digital Inclusion is a central tenet of the plan, to be achieved through the growth/provision of digital skills and supporting the

¹ This data is from the Consumer Digital Index 2021, by Lloyds Bank, which provides these breakdowns at regional levels.

² This statistic is from ThinkBroadband, correct as of 5.5.22, which analyses broadband coverage (Full Fibre, Gigabit and Superfast) by local authority area.

resolution of data poverty and the ongoing challenge of accessibility and connectivity.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. To deliver the actions in the digital skills plan will require funding. It is proposed that digital skills and the interventions outlined in this plan will be added to the Employment and Skills pipeline for development and as outline in the Investment Pipeline paper.

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. A range of stakeholders including Local Authority Skills Officers, universities, college, training providers, employers and third sector have been consulted on the plan's development.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1. The Committee is asked to comment on the Digital Skills Plan.

11. Background Documents

- 11.1 None.

12. Appendices

- 12.1 Appendix 1: Digital Skills Plan

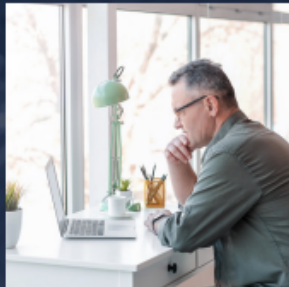
- 12.2 Appendix 2: List of LDSP workstream members who attended the Action Plan Consultations/Board Meeting

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West Yorkshire Digital Skills Plan

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Foreword from The Mayor

PHOTO OF TB

Equipping the people of West Yorkshire with the right set of digital skills is one of my key priorities as Mayor. Only through addressing digital skills can we successfully build an inclusive and prosperous West Yorkshire.

Our new plan for digital skills contributes to two of the pledges I made when I became Mayor: prioritising skills and training to ensure everyone in West Yorkshire has the skills they need to secure work; and supporting local businesses and championing our regional economy. It also has benefits for my other pledges as only with effective digital know-how will we tackle the problems relating the climate and environment and make our transport system fit for the future.

We have the opportunity to be one of the leading UK regions that is equipping our people with the right and proper digital skills. We want to create more stories like Person A's, who used 100% Digital to stay out of prison and flee domestic violence. We want more stories like those who took part in Digital Skills Bootcamps who were hired by Dedalus. And we want more stories about prize-winning businesses who upskill their workforce and become more digitally-enabled. And it will be easier to get there if we secure further devolution of digital skills - following the success of our devolved Adult Education Budget and the Digital Entitlement.

Foreword from The Mayor

We will double down on our efforts to provide everyone in West Yorkshire with digital skills. Since the beginning of the pandemic, digital skills have never been more important. To help us to create a more inclusive society, all of our residents need these skills. Whether they are at work, home, or school, being able to use digital skills allows everyone – including those who may be otherwise discriminated by age, gender, language, socioeconomic status, disability, educational needs, or isolation - access to fun, education, and jobs.

There has never been a more important time for us to focus on growing digital skills - to support everybody, from the residents who want to use digital to connect with their families, to the businesses looking to grow in our region, to the people looking for opportunities to work in our thriving tech sector.

Our Local Digital Skills Partnership will convene our public, private and community voices in the digital skills arena and will aim to provide:

- opportunities for everybody to be able to engage in the modern digital society
- digital skills for the workforce of the future
- support for digital transformation and basic adoption across businesses and our Third Sector
- cohesive and structured digital skills provision

This Digital Skills Plan is our footprint for delivery and will support the implementation of the pledges which I was elected upon. I can't wait to continue this journey and lead our region's digital skills evolution.

Councillor James Lewis, Chair of the Employment and Skills Committee

PHOTO OF CLLR
LEWIS

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Our long-term prosperity depends on having people with the right skills to get back into work and be ready for new opportunities.

West Yorkshire has the fastest growing digital economy, outstripping the national pace of growth. This makes the development of digital skills a key focus to ensure we support the growth of this sector.

We will utilise the strengths of our partners to drive delivery through the excellent Higher Education Institutions, Further Education Providers and Independent Sector.

Our focus on digital skills to support all sectors will be key to developing a resilient economy and enhanced productivity by ensuring that we have the skills that employers need. We will reduce the number of low paid roles, raise the levels of qualifications across the region, support employer and employee training, encourage the Third Sector to hire, and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce.

We recently launched our new Employment and Skills Framework, which was designed to promote skilled people, good jobs and strong businesses across West Yorkshire and Digital Skills are a vital and cross-cutting theme throughout our Employment and Skills aspirations.

Foreword from the Co-Chairs

Mandy Ridyard,
Finance Director of Produmax and
Chair of Space Hub Yorkshire



The Digital Skills Plan must equip business leaders with the tools they need to transform their businesses into more productive, agile and prosperous organisations. This will allow businesses to attract the best and brightest talent, retain and retrain existing people, provide more diverse and inclusive workspaces, and allow businesses to be more flexible and interactive with their customers.

SMEs who struggle to access digital skills or have low digital engagement will be a focus, because encouraging them to transform their digital capabilities and upskill their staff will provide greater opportunities for these businesses to grow. I believe that providing support for employees to develop their digital skills will accelerate growth opportunities and future-proof businesses, paying dividends and increasing productivity for years to come.

Providing the future workforce with skills required for the workplace is key, not only for the development of learners, but for the economic output of the region as a whole. We must continue to strive to ensure all students have the digital skills they need to actively participate in modern society, and to progress to high-skilled employment outcomes. A key aspect of this is continuing to inspire students to engage with STEM learning. This, naturally, includes a strong focus on inclusive provision and a diverse pool of learners.

More generally, we must make sure students are provided with holistic career provision, which focusses on giving students an awareness of the numerous opportunities for employment within our region. Additionally, students must be given a greater awareness of how digital skills will shape the jobs of the future. It's key that, within this, we engage with our vibrant SME community as the backbone of our regional economy, ensuring SME voices are prominent throughout skills provision.

Bill Jones, Deputy CEO of Luminate
Education Group and Executive
Principal of Leeds City College

West Yorkshire offers a high-end experience for Tech and Digital.
Our digital industry is the fastest growing in the UK, and we contain the UK's number one location for tech scaleups outside of London.

To add: Images of WY's Digital assets.

Digital enables all of West Yorkshire's sectors, including our innovative and high-growth sectors.

To add: Images representing our growth sectors and use of digital within.

Introduction

The growth of digital skills is key to supporting West Yorkshire's thriving digital sector and will also be pivotal in delivering greater digital transformation across other key sectors, such as Manufacturing, Engineering, Green, and Health. We have limitless digital assets and opportunities in West Yorkshire, from our booming innovation and start-up arena, our global reach through our digital private sector companies, and even further, through our work with Space Hub Yorkshire.

The Local Digital Skills Partnership is a strong partnership of advocates and leaders from business, education, local communities and the third sector who have an alignment of shared vision and goals. As a collective, **we are motivated by the prospect of a digitally-skilled society that will enable residents, businesses and communities in West Yorkshire to engage in social, economic, and global opportunities.**

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The region faces challenges presented through areas of deprivation, low-levels of qualifications and low percentage of SMEs that are digitally capable. West Yorkshire has more than its fair share of deprived neighbourhoods, a high skills deficit and too few SMEs are digitally capable. This Digital Skills plan addresses how the partners in the Local Digital Skills Partnership will deliver interventions to change this.

We have **opportunities that we must build on to transform lives through digital technology.**

- the strengths of the empowered voice of the Local Digital Skills Partnership
- the strong digital skills focus across the region, supported by Mayor Tracy Brabin
- the thriving digital environment, which is attracting start-ups and large tech companies
- and leverage the benefits of devolution to grow digital skills to support the growth of the region to increase our numbers of skilled people, good jobs and strong businesses.

Executive Summary

Purpose of the report:

Digital technologies have intrinsically changed how residents, businesses, communities and governments work, learn, entertain and interact. The covid-19 pandemic lockdowns have intensified the value of our abilities to use digital technologies. Digital skills are an enabler for our social and economic growth, for our quality of life, and for efficiency of our businesses.

West Yorkshire has a fast growing digital sector, and a wealth of partnerships and digital assets, convened by one of the UK's 8 Local Digital Skills Partnerships, to deploy the Digital Skills Plan and enable all in West Yorkshire to experience the benefits of engaging with digital technology.

In alignment with the Digital Framework and the Employment and Skills Framework, the Digital Skills Plan sets out to improve four key, inextricable areas that aim to raise the digital skills profile of West Yorkshire - to boost productivity and enable inclusive growth - by prioritising access to skills and training to ensure everyone in West Yorkshire has the skills they need to secure work.

The challenges we face:

Some in West Yorkshire are excluded from participating digitally, for a myriad of reasons, including, but not limited to: poverty and the lack of access to hardware, software, or an internet connection; lack of English language or confidence to learn; disability, neurodiversity or learning difficulties, etc.

Data demonstrates that jobs in digital roles are well-paid and in-demand by employers, but there are significant skills shortages in the marketplace to fill the vacancies in digital roles, and a significantly low number of female participants.

As well as workforce shortages, SMEs and third sector organisations fall behind the private sector in uptake of digital upskilling.

The digital learning space is complex, with many offers with varying eligibility criteria and timeframes. Mapping provision is a long-term, ongoing task - this plan uses a case study methodology to exemplify initiatives for this reason.

Executive Summary

Our four workstreams have identified priority actions and a list of further actions, which will leverage West Yorkshire's assets to alleviate the digital skills challenges we face.

No individual will be left behind as all of our residents will be supported to engage in an increasingly digital society through accessible and inclusive provision of digital skills training. We commit to support the capacity building of community organisations, such as rolling out 100% Digital West Yorkshire across the region to deliver digital inclusion. We will do this by coordinating the regional digital inclusion network through a hub and spoke model of advisors.

We want our **SMEs & Third Sector to invest in digital skills for their workforce** to transform their businesses. To do this, we will promote relevant sector-specific programmes of digital skills provision to SMEs and the Third Sector, especially to underrepresented groups and we commit to providing opportunities for existing workers to retrain by signposting businesses and individuals to existing upskilling provision.

We will start to **reduce the skills shortages and gaps** in roles within the digital sector and in roles that require digital skills. We aim to increase employer engagement with its future workforce, through increased activity in the following areas: curriculum development, interactions with younger employees, careers fairs, careers talks and work experience, real-world digital challenges that align digital careers with young people's interests, work experience, T-Levels, internships, bootcamps and apprenticeships. We will contextualise the different curriculum areas for teachers by creating a toolkit for different subject areas on the future career opportunities within digital.

All of our **residents will understand how to access digital careers guidance and digital skills training** for any stage of life or work. We will create learning and career pathways to enable individuals to self-identify their digital learning needs and access provision, and we will develop a simplified and inclusive signposting toolkit of digital skills support available for practitioners.

What is the Digital Skills Plan?

The Digital Skills Plan will need to set out the priorities and actions needed to support skills growth and digital engagement in West Yorkshire. The plan has been developed in partnership with business, education, the third sector and local government organisations.

The Digital Skills Plan set out to align with the following principles:

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1. **Be bold and ambitious** outlining the actions required to deliver the plan's vision.
2. **Be strategic and practical** in content and design so that it is accessible to key audiences of business, education and individuals.
3. **Be time bound**, with a review after 3 years (with annual updates on progress)
4. **Set out the shared ambitions and priorities** for the region for digital skills.
5. **Provide a blueprint** for stakeholders and partners to integrate their own priorities and delivery and be responsive to emerging needs in the region.
6. **Describe the actions** that can be taken by the Combined Authority and others to deliver the shared ambition and priorities.
7. **Align** with the key Strategic Economic Framework, Digital Framework, Employment & Skills Framework and the Economic Recovery Plan.
8. **Reflect the geographies** of the Combined Authority and ensure that collaborative partnership work continues across the region, complementing existing activity.

What are Digital Skills?

'Digital Skills' is a term that can mean different things in different contexts - which can make talking about them confusing.

To ensure alignment with national government strategy, the West Yorkshire Digital Skills Plan uses the terminology from the [Essential Digital Skills Framework \(EDS Framework\)](#):

- The 'Essential Digital Skills Framework' is the current baseline for digital skills that UK citizens need for work and everyday life.
- The Framework was established in 2018 through a consultation led by the Tech Partnership, Lloyds Bank and the Department for Education, involving over 350 cross-sector organisations.
- It updates the 2015 Basic Skills Framework by adding distinct skills statements for life and work, to demonstrate progression and enable measurement.
- Progress against the Framework is measured annually by the 'Essential Digital Skills Survey', which tracks year-on-year changes in digital skills, run by Lloyds Bank with Ipsos MORI.



The Digital Skills Plan is a vision of region-wide **transformation of lives and livelihoods** through digital skills

The Essential Digital Skills Framework is divided into the following four categories:

Digitally Excluded

Cannot do any of the *Seven Foundation Tasks* independently

Foundation Level Digital Skills

Can perform all *Seven Foundation Tasks* independently

Essential Digital Skills for Life

Can independently perform at least one task within each *Life skill area*

Essential Digital Skills for Work

Can independently perform at least one task within each *Work skill area*

Seven Foundation Tasks

- Use the different menu settings on a device to make it easier to use
- Find and open different applications/programmes on a device
- Update and change a password when prompted to do so
- Turn on a device and log in to any accounts/profiles
- Open an Internet browser to access websites
- Utilise the available controls on a device
- Connect a device to a Wi-Fi network

Life Skills

- Understand the importance of communicating securely
- Set up an email account communicate with others digitally using email and other messaging apps
- Use word processing applications to create documents
- Share documents with others by attaching them to an email
- Communicate with friends and family using video tools
- Post messages, photographs, videos or blogs on social media platforms

Work Skills

- Understand and conform with my organisation's IT and social media policies
- Comply with my organisation's security protocols when accessing my email or working remotely
- Communicate in an appropriate way for my organisation by using email, online and collaborative digital tools
- Use digital collaboration tools to meet with, share and collaborate with colleagues
- Use professional online networks and communities

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The Digital Skills Plan also recognises two additional categories of digital skills

'Essential Digital Skills for Work' recognises a basic, generalist digital capability relevant all work places. However, upskilling beyond the basics can help progress careers, support career changes, fill skills gaps across a variety of sectors, and support the growth of the Digital Sector in West Yorkshire.

Digital Skills for the Digital Sector

The Digital Skills Plan will also reference the digital skills needed to ensure a supply of talent to meet the demands of the region's thriving digital sector, which is now the largest outside London.

e.g. Programming, Web & App Development; Data Science, Analytics, Visualisation, SQL, JavaScript, Cloud Computing; UI/UX Design, etc.

Digital upskilling or re-skilling for any sector

The Digital Skills Plan will also recognise the need to enable people who have already achieved 'essential digital skills for work' to upskill further, or re-skill to support career progression and/or change in any sector.

e.g. Using new digital technologies within business, digital marketing, content creation for social media, website optimisation

Digital Skills Plan: Vision



Creating an
inclusive society &
a thriving economy
through the growth of
digital skills for all

Our ambitions are:

Social Digital Inclusion

To support the growth of digital skills needed for social inclusion, addressing the ongoing challenge of accessibility and connectivity.

Workforce for the Future

To support greater alignment between business and education to enable growth in digital skills and promotion of digital careers to deliver the workforce for the future, ready for the 'jobs of the future'.

SME & Third Sector Digital Growth

To support SMEs & Third Sector increase productivity through the growth of digital skills in their workforce, improving the resilience and sustainability of organisations.

Simplifying the Digital Offer

To demystify the regional provision of digital skills by understanding current provision and future needs, and ensuring provision is easy to access for all residents.



Social
Digital
Inclusion



The close association between digital exclusion and other dimensions of inequality underpins an urgent social and economic need to act.



Build the capacity of community organisations, such as rolling out 100% Digital West Yorkshire across the region. Empower the regional digital inclusion network.



No individual is left behind as all are supported to engage in an increasingly digital society through accessible and inclusive provision of digital skills training.



Workforce
for the
Future



Digital professionals are among the occupations with the highest prevalence of skills shortage vacancies.



Engage digital employers in a range of activities to inspire and educate students. Teachers across all subject areas develop an understanding of the career opportunities within digital.



The skills shortages and gaps are reduced in roles within the digital sector and in roles that require digital skills.



SME & 3rd
Sector



41% of the workforce lack essential digital skills. A quarter of businesses lack the knowledge and experience needed to make their businesses more digital.



Promote relevant digital skills programmes to SMEs and the Third Sector. Showcase opportunities for existing workers to retrain by signposting businesses and individuals to existing upskilling provision.



SMEs & Third Sector value and invest in digital skills for their workforce to transform their businesses.



Simplifying



Those without digital skills are unclear on what training they need, and where and how to access appropriate learning.



Empower individuals to self-identify their digital learning needs and access provision. Develop a simplified signposting toolkit/platform of digital skills support available.



All residents understand how to access digital careers guidance and digital skills training for any stage of life or work.



In line with the **Levelling Up** agenda, all West Yorkshire residents will benefit from the **financial and social benefits** of using digital technologies to enhance their **quality of life** within their communities. Residents **will improve their employment prospects** and **strengthen the recruitment pool** for West Yorkshire businesses.



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Social Digital Inclusion

The Challenge

The Social Digital Inclusion vision will cultivate strong pipelines of residents to engage with the further 3 workstreams. The close association between digital exclusion and other dimensions of inequality underpins an **urgent social and economic need to act that aligns with Levelling Up**. Delivering the right interventions to support those who are digitally excluded will have wider benefits on elements such as health, regeneration and education, thus requiring a collaborative, community-based approach and a resilient third sector.

Building trust and relationships with adult learners - across ages - is vital where learners face considerable social and economic disadvantage, and multiple barriers to learning.

As of 2021, **4% of people in Yorkshire and Humber remain offline**, despite the fact that West Yorkshire's full fibre and gigabit coverage are both above the national average.

23% of adult residents of Yorkshire and Humber don't have Essential Digital Skills for Life 7% of these are digitally excluded, meaning they cannot complete a single 'foundation' digital task such as turning on a device, using a mouse/keyboard, interacting with the home screen on a device, connecting to Wi-Fi, browsing the internet.

Only 59% of people in employment have Essential Digital Skills for Work 9% of these do not have Foundation level skills, which include: using the email address book in their organisation to 'cc' in colleagues; working remotely using a virtual private network (VPN); use document formats such as PDFs; use video-conferencing products. This data is Yorkshire and Humber-wide. An estimated 460,000 of people in employment without Essential Digital Skills for Work live in West Yorkshire.

Nationally, the biggest barrier to digital inclusion is **lack of motivation**, with 42% of people who are offline stating that 'Not interested, I see no need'. 37% of those offline state that they **don't have the right equipment**, and 36% say that it's **too expensive** to be online. 1.3 million non-users across the UK are worried about privacy and security.

As well as social and ethical reasons to add benefit to the community, there is a strong economic case to be made for digital inclusion. It has been estimated that **if everyone in the UK was able to go online would add another £63 billion to the economy.**

Social Digital Inclusion – How we are already tackling the challenge

To access those who are digitally excluded, offline and online place-based support and community networks are integral. Tablet lending (CN), Digital Champions Network, digital support across West Yorkshire's libraries and community networks that reach out to those most in need, supported by national charities such as Good Things Foundation.

CASE STUDY

100% Digital Leeds: Widely recognised as one of the leading digital inclusion programmes in the country, 100% Digital Leeds brings together the third sector, health and care and council colleagues to design and deliver sustainable digital inclusion interventions that are embedded into existing services. Leeds was set up on the premise that the people most likely to be digitally excluded are those who have other challenges that make it more difficult for them to engage, such as disability, learning difficulties, poverty, homelessness, addiction, language barriers, long-term health conditions, social isolation, memory problems or other factors.

“Person A has been in and out of prison for the majority of her adult life for numerous thefts from shops and was a sex worker prior to her most recent sentence. She is also fleeing domestic violence from another rough sleeper with whom she was previously in an abusive relationship. They were on a joint claim for Universal Credit which left Person A dependant on her partner and unable to break away from the abusive relationship. Having a smartphone has allowed Person A to make their own separate Universal Credit claim and the couple have now separated. Person A has a history of not attending probation meetings and getting recalled to prison as a result. Having a smartphone with connectivity has allowed her to stay in active contact with the Probation team and break that cycle.”

100% Digital recipient, via Leeds Housing Options

Social Digital Inclusion – How we are already tackling the challenge

CASE STUDY

Libraries: There are 119 libraries in West Yorkshire, open 3667 hours per week, with 600+ members of staff and volunteers, and almost 6 million visitors per year. The People's Network is the provision of free public access computers throughout the library networks and has had a massive impact for those who would not otherwise be able to get online, such as those who do not have skills/education, for whom the cost of equipment and network connections is preventative, or where cultural/language are barriers.

An example of a local scheme is #Digital121 - First Steps with Digital programme

A programme of First Steps with Digital was held at Seacroft Community Hub and Library in January 2022. The sessions are designed to: support digitally excluded learners to attain Foundation Level digital skills and reach towards Life Essential Digital Skills level; promote use of Leeds Libraries online services and wider #Digital121 support sessions.

Kurt is currently homeless, and uses the library computers to look for housing and to check his Universal Credit page. He's only got a basic phone at the moment, so he also enjoys using the library computers for entertainment and especially to listen to music.

Kurt said, 'It means everything to be honest, because there's no other outlet at the moment for free internet usage.'

Social Digital Inclusion – How we are already tackling the challenge cont.

CASE STUDY

Kirklees Digital hubs. The Hubs provide free Wi-Fi and a space to access technology in a safe and covid-secure environment, as well as a range of free learning courses for anyone aged 19 or over, to suit people of all levels from beginners, to those with more advance skills. Residents can also get online at home with help from a free device or data loan scheme for up to three months. It is envisaged that residents using the loan service will go on to further improve their digital skills and access other learning.

“David was unemployed and the family were short of money and did not have access to a laptop although they had internet access at home. David has some literacy boundaries and need support to complete his CV and get some printed copies to hand out locally. David has always worked and had been made redundant just before Christmas and had been out of work for 9 months when he approached the community centre.

The Digital Hub has allowed a local resident who was made redundant to get an updated CV completed with support from staff. In addition, to print off paper copies to hand out to local employers and to apply for jobs online with some initial IT support and training. He feels more included now he can actively job search without any help.

He has secured long term employment which in turn allows the family to be more financially resilient at a time when we anticipate a ‘cost of living’ crisis just around the corner, with utilities and petrol for example having gone up by 50% within twelve months.

David feels more confident moving forward and will now be looking at what other employment opportunities are available locally to get a better job. He as also learnt new IT skills which make him more independent when applying for jobs online

Kirklees Digital Hub recipient, via Chickenley Community Centre

Social Digital Inclusion – Impact

No individual is left behind in an increasingly digital society through accessible and inclusive provision of digital skills training. All in society have access to gain the skills required in an increasingly digital-first world to help manage their finances, navigate the health system, apply for jobs, access housing and benefits, and enjoy leisure activities and mental wellbeing.

Social Digital Inclusion – How will we achieve this?

Priority Actions

- **Build the capacity of community organisations, such as rolling out 100% Digital West Yorkshire across the region.**
- **Empower the regional digital inclusion network through a hub and spoke model of advisors.**

All Actions

- Scale up the programmes that are delivering positive impact in communities, focusing on those that:
 - Deliver digital skills and digital access to the digitally excluded in local settings.
 - Deliver community-based interventions that increase confidence and motivation to start engaging with digital (such as cyber security training) as secondary learning.
 - Scale up access to a sustainable programme of tablet and device lending and donations.
 - Help disadvantaged communities out of data poverty through broadband or bespoke data packages.
 - Offer people-based, on the ground, digital support to engage those who are digitally excluded or do not/cannot access services elsewhere (English-language, non-internet users) – this includes embedding digital support alongside other services.
 - Signpost the next digital skills opportunity, such as digital entitlement through the Adult Education Budget.
- Work with employers, large and small, to support the digital inclusion agenda through Social Value and Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives.
- Support Third Sector organisations to access funding and advice for digital offers that complement their primary services and connect them with other locally delivered Employment and Skills interventions.
- Build on the success of the devolved Adult Education Budget by expanding the Digital Entitlement and lobby for further devolution of digital skills.

Workforce for the Future



Workforce for
the Future

The Challenge

Over 80% of all jobs currently require the minimum of basic digital skills

Digital professionals are among the occupations with the highest prevalence of skills shortages vacancies. The number of people in digital roles is growing and the evidence shows that employers often cannot hire employees with the required skillset. Microsoft Office and Microsoft Excel are seen as some of the most in-demand skills at the present time for employers. **Digital skills such as Social Media, CRM and Engineering Design are now required across a wide range of disciplines, permeating across the workforce.** From April 2021 to March 2022, in west Yorkshire, Software Developer and ICT Support Specialist roles are the most in-demand digital occupations.

There is growing demand for specialist digital roles in the labour market. Online job postings for digital jobs was 50% higher in March 2022 than pre-pandemic. Employment in digital roles grew 6x faster than overall employment between 2011 and 2021 and more than 40,000 people are employed in specialist digital roles in West Yorkshire, which are skills-intensive and therefore well-paid (median salary of £40,800) roles such as software developers, web developers, telecoms engineers.

Yet, fewer than 10% of pupils take a Computing qualification in West Yorkshire. Around 60% of schools offer Computer Science GCSEs, covering 80% of pupils but entries for computing-related qualifications at Key Stage 4 are low.

15% of young people in the UK who have smartphones have no access to laptop or desktops. Echoing the behaviour of the parents, children from a high socioeconomic status family use the internet more often and on a wider range of devices. **There is clear alignment between what the parents say they want for their children and what their children aspire to themselves.**

Girls are far less likely than boys to study Digital-related courses, but apprenticeships are more diverse Technology-related jobs are more appealing to younger children, young men and those with higher income levels

Compared to girls in West Yorkshire, boys in West Yorkshire are:

- 2x as likely to study Maths at A-Level
- 5x as likely to study Physics at A-Level
- 12x as likely to study Computing at A-Level

Positively, there is an upward trend in Computer Science qualifiers from West Yorkshire's Higher Education Institutions. Computer Science has the highest retention rate of any subject in terms of graduates taking jobs in West Yorkshire 15 months after completing their subjects. These highly-trained graduates stay within the region to work in our well-paid digital sector. But only 15% of qualifiers from Computer Science from West Yorkshire institutions are female.

With 80 percent of the 2030 workforce already in the workforce today, reskilling the existing workforce will be a major challenge between now and 2030.

Workforce for the Future – How we are already tackling the challenge

Large amounts of public and private provision is targeted at education institutions, to encourage, inspire and enable students to learn digital skills and consider careers that rely on digital skills. This includes the 'Teen Tech' initiative, IBM SkillsBuild, Futuregoals' platform and virtual work experience, the West Yorkshire Innovation Festival, the EY and STEM Learning app, Digital Skills Bootcamps, IBM P-TECH model, Digital T-Level provision, Higher Technical Qualifications.

There is also some provision that works with businesses to encourage them to offer employment opportunities to those students/residents who have taken part in digital learning.

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Case Study

During covid lockdowns, Future Goals produced an engaging series of videos, animations and challenges designed to replace the usual face-to-face work experience offer. Students were given challenges from West Yorkshire employers to:

- make students aware of the key skills needed for each sector, including Digital
- explain desired qualifications for each role
- showcase some of the lesser known career opportunities available.

Case Study

Multiple courses at Wakefield College include Digital Skills for Life and Work, Digital User Skills in Microsoft Word & Excel, IT User Skills in Microsoft Office, T-Levels.

Workforce for the Future – How we are already tackling the challenge

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Case Study

Digital Skills Bootcamps: Free, flexible courses for up to 16 weeks. Almost 2000 West Yorkshire residents have applied to take part in these courses, using devolved funding, which were endorsed by local employers (demand significantly outstripped capacity).

I had experience with JavaScript but I didn't have experience with all of the skills on the bootcamp. I learnt all the fundamentals that I needed to be able to use at industry level. They found me a company, Dedalus, and from there I was able to secure an interview. It's probably one of the best opportunities I've ever had in my life, especially with it being a transition from my current role.

- Former Coder's Guild Bootcamp graduate (2021), now Associate Service Delivery Coordinator at Dedalus Group

The modules of the bootcamp were very relevant for what we do. They were all about how WordPress themes work, how you would go about adding plugins and we certainly see that the apprentices come in extremely knowledgeable of what they're going to be doing as opposed to coming in a bit cold footed.

- Leeds-based, micro-business who benefitted from the Software Testing Digital Skills Bootcamp delivered by The Coder's Guild

Workforce for the Future – Impact

The skills shortages and gaps are reduced in roles within the digital sector and in roles that require digital skills. Businesses are able to access local recruits with the skills they need and residents can enter prosperous and progressive careers in West Yorkshire.

Workforce for the Future – How will we achieve this?

Priority Actions

- **Engage digital employers** in curriculum development, interactions with younger employees, careers fairs, careers talks and work experience, real-world digital challenges that align digital careers with young people's interests, work experience, T-Levels, internships, bootcamps and apprenticeships.
- **Teachers across all subject areas develop an understanding of the career opportunities within digital**, e.g. English teachers to understand routes into Digital Marketing.

All Actions

- Increase take-up of STEM learning, digital literacy and GCSE Computer Science, especially for girls and BAME who are under-represented beyond GCSE level learning through academic and technical routes by:
 - Developing greater work experience opportunities for digital skills roles, and digital roles in all sectors, especially for girls.
 - Encouraging the participation in coding clubs, digital badges and extra curricular activities that promote the take-up of digital skills, especially to underrepresented groups (with additional support requirements for underrepresented groups).
 - Supporting schools to fulfil their statutory duties to ensure pupils are aware of technical and academic routes to further learning, including digital apprenticeships, and to embed a digital strategy in all schools, e.g. initiatives such as the EY Stem Learning app.
- Promote, through engaging content, the opportunities that digital skills can lead to (including in non-digital sectors) to students and their parents through locally rooted careers inspiration such as www.futuregoals.co.uk, IBM Skills Build and the West Yorkshire Innovation Festival.
- Leverage the expertise of private provision (e.g. banks) and tailor free provision for West Yorkshire residents and businesses that is accessible and relevant to people's lives.
- Promote clear pathways for adult digital skills provision and funding routes, such as Skills Connect bootcamps, so that adults can upskill or reskill to advance their career (either for the digital or non-digital sector), especially targeting the over-50s to stay in work.

SME and Third Sector Growth



SME & Third
Sector Digital
Growth

The Challenge

41% of the workforce in Yorkshire and Humber lack Essential Digital Skills for the workplace.

Yorkshire and Humber is the region with the lowest levels of high digital capability in England. Only 77% of SMEs within Y&H have high digital capability. The 23% of SMEs with low digital capability are less likely to: have Essential Digital Skills among their staff; offer their own website; use email to communicate with customers; use social media to interact with customers and suppliers; use government services; use Internet Banking; use online accounting software.

2020 data showed that almost a third of mid-sized organisations in Leeds City Region needed to improve their basic IT skills to meet business needs.

In Yorkshire and the Humber, **one quarter of businesses state that they don't have the knowledge and experience needed to make their business more digital.**

38% of business leaders are not confident to lead their organisation in a digital world

35% of businesses don't know or aren't sure where to access information about making their business more digital.

71% of businesses in West Yorkshire do not seek independent advice, either because they did not know where to go or they did not think they needed it. Of the 29% who do seek advice, 39% go to their accountant, 22% go to a bank, 16% go to their Local Authority, and 16% go to other businesses/peers.

In the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector, it is estimated that there are **~12,000** registered and unregistered **organisations and groups** in West Yorkshire, which employs **29,700 full-time equivalent people**. The total economic added value is calculated to be between £3.1bn and £4bn.

SME and Third Sector Growth – How we are already tackling the challenge

Much private provision is aimed at businesses (and particularly SMEs) to support their upskilling needs. This includes Amazon Small Business Accelerator, Digital Boost, Clockwork City, Digital Enterprise, ICS Digital Transformation, Help to Grow: Digital, Made Smarter, Google Garage. There is limited digital skills brokerage support for businesses.

Case Study:

Skills for Growth is a free scheme that helps businesses to navigate the complex skills landscape. More than 600 businesses have been supported to access local talent and/or skills courses since Sep' 2020.

Skills for Growth has been tremendously helpful in supporting our business growth. They introduced us to Leeds Beckett University who supported us to recruit a Marketing Assistant to target customers for our digital sales assistant products across the nation and beyond. As a result, we were nominated and won the prestigious Hermes Creative International Platinum Award in May 2021. – Director of a small, Digital business in Wakefield

Case Study:

Lloyds Bank Academy Business Hub: Free online on-demand learning and webinars on digital skills, to help businesses learn new skills and use technology to improve productivity, increase turnover and understand customers. Lloyds' annual national aim is to help 185,000 business become more productive and resilient.

Case Study:

Workforce Development Service. Bradford Council's Workforce Development Unit offers a range of development opportunities designed to develop the skills, competence and confidence of the workforce. These courses include a wide ICT offering aimed at the development needs of colleagues across the Council, but are also available to partner organisations and businesses external to the Council.

SME and Third Sector Growth – Impact

SMEs & Third Sector value and invest in digital skills for their workforce to transform their businesses and build economic resilience and growth, and offer employment opportunities for WY residents.

SME and Third Sector Growth – How will we achieve this?

Priority Actions

- **Promote relevant digital skills programmes to SMEs and the Third Sector**, including through our networks of diverse digital professionals.
- **Showcase opportunities for existing workers to retrain by signposting businesses and individuals to existing upskilling provision.**

All Actions

- Influence leaders in SMEs and Third Sector organisations to embed digital skills and transformation as a key element of their business strategy, driving greater employment levels, great efficiency, productivity and growth, via business support and professional networks.
- Raise SME and Third Sector organisations' awareness of Essential Digital Skills for Workplace interventions for employees, by working with services that offer skills diagnostics/support for employers.
- Support a regional programme for digital transformation which could include peer-to-peer, cross-sector support for SMEs, including micros and voluntary and community organisations, focused on underrepresented groups.
- Coordinate and promote schemes, including digital capital grants/funding, that support businesses to access digital skills and digital transformation and an inclusive workforce
- Support small employers (and larger companies within the supply chains) who are indigenous or investing in the region to attract diverse talent and skills to thrive in West Yorkshire to strengthen the skills offer.
- Explore opportunities for subsidised digital training targeted at key sectors, to support priority actions.

Simplifying the Digital Offer



Simplifying the
Digital Offer

The Challenge

The digital learning space is complex and fast-moving. There are many offers of courses with varying eligibility criteria, timeframes, costs, modes of study, support levels, and qualification levels.

There is not a single portal that includes all provision from online only providers, state funded colleges and training organisations, universities, large employers in a range of sectors like finance, IT, business and engineering.

To demonstrate the saturation of the digital learning space, one UK-based digital learning provider increased their number of courses from 255 to 1,377 between 2015 and 2021.

Mapping provision is a long-term, ongoing task because new initiatives are added weekly. This plan uses a case study, light mapping methodology to demonstrate current digital initiatives in West Yorkshire for this reason.

Those without digital skills are unclear on what training they need, and where and how to access appropriate learning.

Yet, 2 in 3 of those without digital skills would like to improve their skills if they knew what skills were needed and where they are available. And **64% of people say they would undertake digital skills training if they knew it would aid them with career progression.**

Yet, more than a quarter (26%) of the working age population in West Yorkshire are qualified below Level 2 or hold no qualifications in 2019, compared with 21% nationally. There has been a significant fall in the take-up of digital Further Education courses by adults (25+) and community learning participants since 2018.

Self-taught methods of learning to use online services and develop digital skills are the most used, nationally. Self taught methods are also perceived as the easiest way to develop digital skills. However, those with Low or Very Low engagement with Digital would be more likely to turn to their family and friends alongside self-taught/online method to learn new digital skills.

Much of our data on digital skills needs covers all of Yorkshire and the Humber, rather than granular West Yorkshire statistics.

This is the geography used by many of the secondary evidence sources, e.g. the Department for Culture, Media and Sports and Lloyd's Bank.

Simplifying the Digital Offer – How we are already tackling the challenge

Current provision:

Within West Yorkshire, there are multiple national and regional, private and public platforms, partnerships and provision that aim to help residents to understand and access digital training.

Case Study

The Evolved Adult Education Budget funds any adult over the age of 19. The AEB delivery partnership in WY offers a range of digital courses: from community based non-accredited digital access programmes, to courses for ICT practitioners. Through the Digital Entitlement, the Essential Digital Skills qualification will be fully funded for all individuals aged 19 or older and assessed at below level 1.

Case Study

Calderdale Council signposts regional/national schemes that have a role in Calderdale e.g. Barclays Digital Wings, FutureLearn, Google Digital Garage

Case Study

Leeds' Digital Pathways and Destinations Steering Group. The digital workforce in Leeds is not representative of the demographic in the city. This steering group consisting of representatives from educational institutions, businesses and local authorities works to improve progression and the pathways available for young people into digital-related careers (Reports to Leeds Learning Alliance).

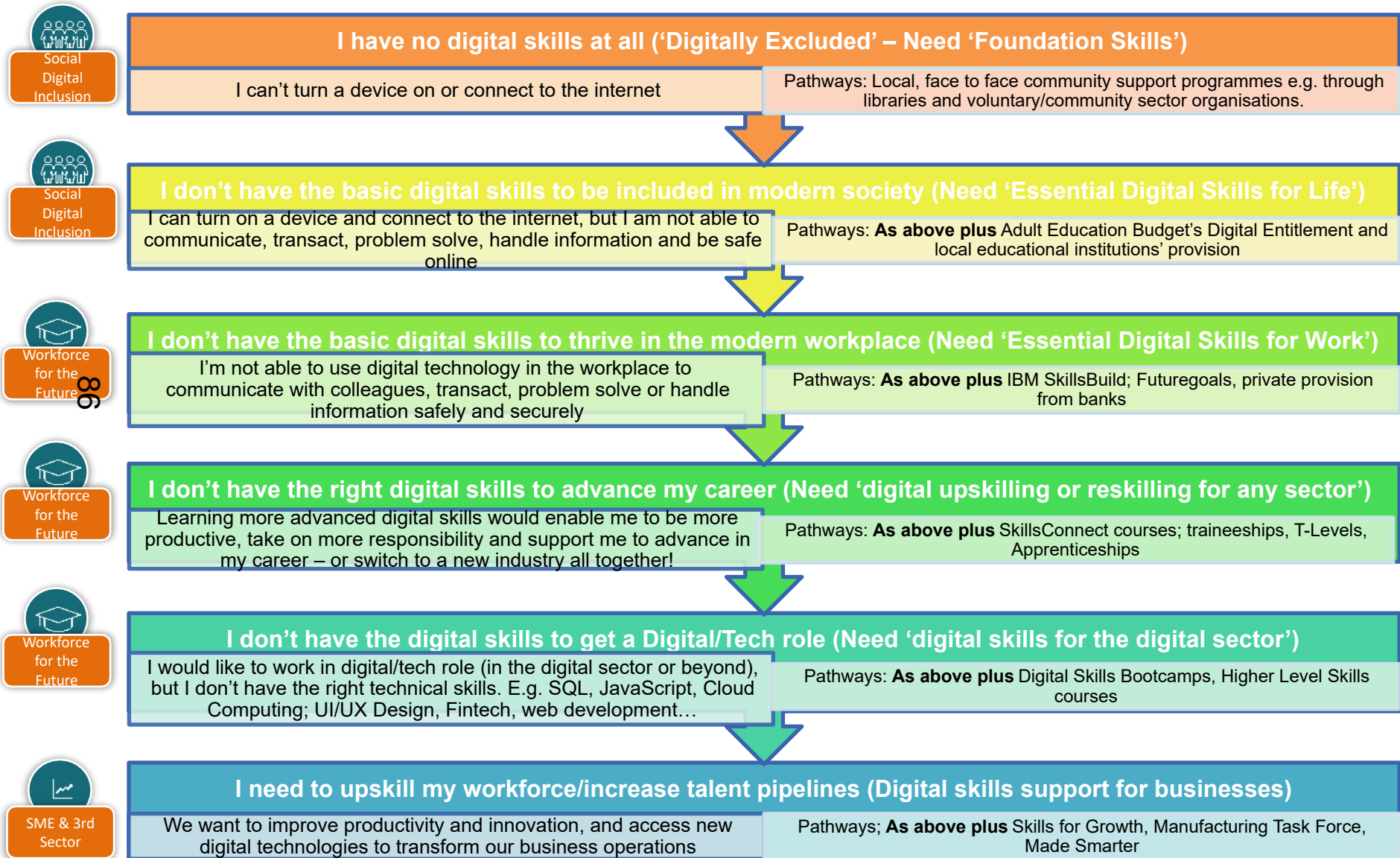
Case Study

Barclays Digital Wings: An online learning tool designed to help users become more tech savvy and keep up-to-date on recent digital trends. It's accessible from anywhere, by anyone, from any device.

Case Study

IBM SkillsBuild for Students and Educators exposes secondary school students (13-18) to the emerging career fields and skills needed for success in the future workforce. A starting point for career exploration, the platform offers free access to product agnostic courses both technical and professional.

Simplifying the Digital Offer – Entry points



Simplifying the Digital Offer – Impact

Residents understand how to access digital careers guidance and digital skills training for any stage of life or work. All residents access this provision and develop their digital skills, for life and work.

Simplifying the Digital Offer – How will we achieve this?

Priority Actions

- **Empower individuals to self-identify their digital learning needs and access provision.**
- **Develop a simplified signposting toolkit/platform of digital skills support available for practitioners,** which can be adapted for face-to-face interactions and in plain English, for individuals. (To encompass all levels from schools, colleges and universities, adult skills and employers.)

All Actions

- Continue the convening, coordinating and influencing role of the Local Digital Skills Partnership of national, regional and local programmes, for local delivery.
- Monitor and measure progress of Essential Digital Skills at West Yorkshire level.
- Undertake an audit of digital skills activity across the region and nationally, including Higher Level Skills for the tech sector. Ringfence a development fund for High Level Skills.
- Work with partners to ensure that digital interventions are meaningfully embedded into the design of all Employment and Skills programmes.
- Listen to the voice of businesses via ongoing engagement to examine the supply, demand and take-up of Higher Level Skills in this area and ensure that all provision is meeting the needs of businesses.
- Business West Yorkshire to provide brokerage of all digital skills and transformation programmes.

What's next?

Firstly, we are working closely with our Local Authority partners to **prioritise and design programmes** based on this plan. This will be critical to delivering the outcomes needed from each workstream.

We are exploring how we can **continue the legacy of the Local Digital Partnership** by broadening the scope as we refresh the wider Digital Framework. The framework ensures digital technologies for all businesses, a strong digital culture, the best, tech for good, world-class digital infrastructure and, of course, digital skills for all.

68 We must make sure that the actions in this plan have a measurable impact. At the first annual review of the Digital Skills plan, we will be able to start **monitoring** progress. In the Simplifying the Offer section, we will be able to start **monitoring** progress. We have created a baseline of data for West Yorkshire.

Continual training in the digital sector will be crucial for us to ensure that those entering the Digital Sector have skills in line with the needs of the market. In the Digital Sector, we will undertake an analysis of the gaps in **Higher Level** skills, opportunities and exploring methods of filling the gaps.

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What's next?

All of the actions from each section of the plan will be reviewed comprehensively, ensuring that the work of each workstream has a knock-on effect on other workstreams, with Simplifying the Offer looping back to Social Digital Inclusion, to ensure that there is **a cohesive pathway**:

- From non-accredited Essential Digital Skills for Life for those who lack fundamental skills,
- To employer-endorsed, accredited or Essential Digital Skills for Work for those who want to upskill or reskill,
- To technical digital courses which teach digital skills for specific roles.

Finally, we will continue to **lobby for further devolution** to better connect the careers and skills in the sector and to ensure long-term sustainability of our programmes. Further devolution of the skills system would allow us to eliminate short-term programmes, instead allowing us to react more quickly to the needs for skills in our high-growth areas which have immediate skills shortages in the digital sector. We, in West Yorkshire, want to be empowered to commission and deliver locally, for the best opportunities and outcomes for our residents.

DRAFT

Contact us

Sources

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- *West Yorkshire Economic Assessment*, West Yorkshire Combined Authority, <<https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/media/5642/west-yorkshire-economic-assessment-feb-20-updated.pdf>> (2020)

Appendix 2: List of LDSP workstream members who attended the Action Plan Consultations/Board Meeting

LDSP Board meeting, May 2022

Chairs: Mandy Ridyard, Produmax;

Bill Jones, Luminate

Francesca Coleman, Good Things Foundation

Peter O'Brien, Yorkshire Universities

Steve Roberts, STEM Learning

Kim Johnston, City Fibre

Faye Van Flute, Lloyds Bank

Nadine Littlewood, Kirklees Council

Zoe Spilberg, British Computer Society

Elise Featherstone, NHS Wakefield CCG

SME and Third Sector Growth

Chairs: Zoe Spilberg, British Computer Society;

Faye Van Flute, Lloyds Bank

Helen Shackleton, Coders Guild

Nadine Littlewood, Kirklees Council

Patrick Bowes, WYCA (Business Support)

Jake Morris, West and North Yorkshire Chambers of Commerce

Jane Green, WYCA (Employment and Skills)

Workforce for the Future

Chair: Annette Valentine, Engineering UK

Tracey Grieg, Leeds Council

Alexandra Wilson, Bradford Council

Chris Snowden, Railway Museum

Frances Burkinshaw, WYCA (Employment and Skills)

James Ghafoor, WYCA (Employment and Skills)

Steve Robert, STEM Learning

Zoe Spilberg, British Computer Society

Jake Morris, West and North Yorkshire Chambers of Commerce

Nadine Littlewood, Kirklees Council

Louise Wood, Leeds Council

Simplifying the Digital Offer

Acting Chair: Kirsty Loftus, Wakefield Council

Erin Mcilhatton, Calderdale Council

Nadine Littlewood, Kirklees Council

Craig Moffat, WYCA (Employment and Skills)

Paul Wilson, Bradford Council

Chris Mowat, Luminare

Social Digital Inclusion

Chairs: Jason Tutin, 100% Digital Leeds;

Francesca Coleman, Good Things Foundation

Sharon Sanders, Bradford Council

Nadine Littlewood, Kirklees Council

Natalie Robinson, Prison and Probation Service

Andrea Ellison, Leeds Libraries

Frances Burkinshaw, WYCA (Employment and Skills)

Grant Soames, Calderdale Council

Kirsty Loftus, Wakefield Council



Report to: Business, Economy and Innovation Committee

Date: 12th July 2022

Subject: Growing Places Fund

Director: Melanie Corcoran, Director of Delivery

Author: Kate Thompson, Head of Economic Implementation

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	3
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To update the Committee on progress in committing loans through the Growing Places Fund (GPF).

2. Information

Growing Places Fund update

- 2.1 The Growing Places Fund (GPF) began in 2012 offering loans to support projects that required additional capital funding to deliver jobs and economic growth and to unlock stalled developments post-recession, within a timescale of five years or less. The fund was open to all businesses and organisations of any size based in or looking to invest in the Leeds City Region. The Fund typically sought private sector leverage on the basis of 1:3.
- 2.2 The remaining capital funding allocation for investment into future GPF/activity is £1.988 million.
- 2.3 Loan repayments are held separately and the LEP Board has approved £21.65 million of returned capital to be reinvested into the new Business Accelerator Fund, managed by the Economic Services directorate.

GPF Capital Position

- 2.4 The capital repaid by GPF loans to 31 March 2022 is £20,498,249.
- 2.5 The GPF balance at 31 March 2022 is £22,486, 249 from remaining capital allocation (para 2.2) and returned capital (para 2.4) and this will invested in the SME Investment Fund.
- 2.6 The capital anticipated to be repaid in 2022/23 is a further £1,286,812.
- 2.7 There are four live loans remaining. The total capital expected beyond 31 March 2023 is £3,021,685. All capital is currently anticipated to be repaid by 9th October 2027.

GPF Projects with Changed Circumstances

- 2.8 The Committee is requested to note that one GPF project has changed circumstances in relation to the repayment of the loan.

Project Ref	Total Loan	Recommendation
209, New Bolton Woods	£248,000	To note

- 2.9 Details can be found in **Exempt Appendix 1**.

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 New Bolton Woods will be a new sustainable urban village that will provide new employment opportunities, key social amenities and over 1000 new homes for local residents.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 As detailed in para 4.1.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The financial implications are detailed in the body of the report and in **Exempt Appendix 1**.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 The information contained in **Appendix 1 is exempt** under paragraph 3 of Part 1 to Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It is considered that the public interest in maintaining the content of the appendices as exempt

outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information as publication could prejudice current and future decision making.

7.2 Legal implications are detailed in **Exempt Appendix 1**.

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 update on GPF repayments and changes to GPF Loan 209 be noted.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

12.1 **Exempt Appendix 1 – Commercial Update**

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