
Report to: Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership Board (LEP Board)

Date: 28 April 2021

Subject: COVID-19

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1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide the LEP Board with an update on developments around the COVID-19 crisis, including the delivery of products and services in response.

2. Information

- 2.1 Since the last LEP Board meeting in February 2021, the local authority areas of West Yorkshire have moved into the second step of the UK Government's roadmap out of lockdown, with restrictions due to be in place until at least 21 June. Regulations published by the Government in March provide for the possibility that some areas of England could find themselves in different steps, depending on the circumstances regarding virus prevalence.
- 2.2 Against this uncertain backdrop, the LEP, and the five local authorities of West Yorkshire, continue to support residents and businesses in West Yorkshire, and the following sections outline some of the support available and the progress made, before turning to issues of economic recovery and some further issues for the roadmap out of lockdown.

Business Support and Engagement

- 2.3 Government support to individuals and businesses has been made available through each stage of the pandemic, and this section outlines the progress made on delivering that support since the last LEP Board meeting. The support available brings together both nationally and locally funded projects, ensuring comprehensive support for businesses.
- 2.4 At a Leeds City Region level, delivery continues on a number of schemes, with the table below detailing the progress.

Project	Funding	No. of Businesses Supported	Delivery Partners
Local Authority Grants (Nov 20 onwards – end linked to ongoing restrictions)	£200m actual	70,000 payments	Local Authorities
Additional Restrictions Grant	£20m actual	6,000 payments	Local Authorities
COVID-19 Recovery Grants (ERDF & LGF)	£1m actual £2.8m committed	1114 actual	Umi Commercial
Digital Resilience Vouchers (up to £5,000)	£1.06m	400 actual Project complete	Leeds City Council
Peer Learning Project	£90,000	60 actual	University of Leeds Business School
Small Business Membership Scheme – allowing access to legal, HR, financial and wellbeing support	£300,000	1350 actual	W&NY Chamber, Mid-Yorkshire Chamber, FSB
Cyber Security Support Scheme	£100,000	160 actual	North East Business Resilience Centre
Business Resilience Webinars	£15,000	180 actual	Biskit

2.5 Businesses across the City Region are also being impacted by the need to adjust to the new requirements brought about by the end of the transition period of the UK's exit from the European Union at the beginning of the year. The LEP and Combined Authority has put in place a wide range of support for businesses, all of which was in place to 31 March 2021, the progress of which is summarised in the table below. A number of the schemes will continue to deliver for the second quarter of 2021.

Project	Number of Businesses Supported	Timeline	Delivery Partner(s)
EU Transition support service (regional service across Yorkshire and Humber, commissioned by the CA/LEP)	278 (delivery began 11/01/21, extended to end of July 21)	31/07/21	Enterprise Growth Solutions (EGS), & other Y&H LEPs

Telemarketing outreach service (Leeds City Region, Y& NY)	324 referrals 1322 survey completions (delivery began 11/01/21)	31/03/21	Blueberry Ltd
EU Exit legal advice & support (Leeds City Region, Y&NY)	8 (delivery began 22/01/21, extended to end of April 21)	30/04/21	Squire Patton Boggs
Series of EU Transition webinars (Yorkshire and Humber)	119 (delivery began 18/01/21)	31/03/21	Greenborough Management Ltd
Series of webinars to help businesses internationalise their marketing activity (Yorkshire and Humber)	211 Additional 1:1 support – 22 (delivery began 23/02/21)	31/03/21	UMi Commercial
Trade related documentation support and advice through the EU Transition (Leeds & Bradford, plus Y&NY)	224 (delivery began 18/01/21)	31/03/21	Chamber International
Trade related documentation support and advice through the EU Transition (Wakefield, Calderdale & Kirklees)	129 (delivery began 22/01/21)	31/03/21	Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce

Employment and Skills Support

2.6 The Combined Authority and LEP continues to support individuals to better equip them in the labour market as part of our economic recovery activity, including through the £13.5m strategic employment and skills package agreed by the Combined Authority on 27 November 2020. Since the last LEP Board meeting the following progress has been made:

- **Employment Hub:** There has been ongoing discussion and planning with each individual local authority about how they could effectively utilise the extension of the Employment Hub provision which has caused some start delays (although the delivery of the repurposed offer continues). Funding Agreements are currently being finalised with each Local Authority.
- **ReBoot:** Along with the funding allocated by the Combined Authority to extend ReBoot, there is also regional bootcamp funding to support training offers to individuals. A procurement process will identify lead providers against key themes which will allow us flexibility to procure responsive provision. The procurement went live at the end of March.
- **Marketing** of the offer is being procured to create a high impact/focused campaign driving traffic/enquiries to the FutureGoals portal.

Economic Recovery Plan Development and Implementation

- 2.7 As reported previously, the longer-term planning for economic recovery for West Yorkshire is being overseen by a West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Board¹, which is a working group of the Combined Authority and brings together the five West Yorkshire Leaders and LEP Chair with partners from the private sector, trade unions, business representative organisations, public bodies and the third sector, to develop robust plans for the region's recovery and to help build an inclusive and sustainable economy for the future.
- 2.8 At the last meeting of the Combined Authority a refreshed version of the Economic Recovery Plan was endorsed, alongside a fifth distinct proposition on Culture and Creative Industries (see background documents). A summary version, similar to one produced in September, will also be produced. All these documents will remain live and be updated as required. The Combined Authority and LEP will continue to work with the Economic Recovery Board and local authorities to refine as necessary, and to ensure ongoing complementarity to local recovery plans.
- 2.9 Key updates to the plan for LEP Board to note include:
- **Culture and Creative Industries proposition**– recognising the important contribution they make to our places, quality of life and the economy. Key features:
 - Our offer builds on the assets and scale of the creative & cultural sectors in West Yorkshire (employing 47,000 people across 7,000 businesses, which increased by 30% between 2015 and 2018)
 - Links to local commitment – the draft West Yorkshire cultural framework sets a clear ambition for culture in the region, and through devolved funding the Combined Authority has already committed to a number of local projects through a £5m fund.
 - Investment proposals covering:
 - **Maximising Creative Business Potential:** proposes a dedicated network of culture growth managers rooted in local areas, and a mentoring programme, with improved links to mainstream business support including access to finance.
 - **Creative Skills:** proposes a dedicated package focussed on re-imagining opportunities for young people, and ensuring creative industries have the skills to grow. Builds on the wider skills and training support within the Recovery Plan.
 - **Visitor and Citizen Experience:** investing to catalyse large scale festivals and cultural interventions in empty spaces, including through extending the successful Producers Hub and stimulating community led culture groups.
 - **An update of the underpinning evidence** to reflect on progress against the original recovery scenarios in relation to business performance, employment and household income.

¹ Further details on the full membership and terms of reference: <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/erb>

- **Priority 1: Good Jobs and Resilient Businesses.** More focus on the need to support job creation, including through inward investment, following announcements of significant new programmes to work with those out of employment
- **Priority 2: Skills and Training for People.** Updated to prepare for the potential implications of the end of the furlough scheme, and reflecting on a number of additional new government skills and employment interventions, and particularly the need to support young people
- **Priority 3: Accelerating Infrastructure and Capital Projects.** Updated to incorporate further shovel ready flood infrastructure projects, which can help to increase community resilience and stimulate the economy.

2.10 Alongside the recovery plan update, work continues on implementing elements of the recovery plan within existing local and regional resources. With no specific funding for regional recovery plans included in the March Budget, the Combined Authority is continuing to prioritise actions that will have the biggest impact on key issues identified in the Plan.

2.11 At their last meeting, the Combined Authority gave its support in principle to three programmes discussed in detail at the last meeting of the LEP Board in February: on entrepreneurship, a net zero carbon pipeline and on health innovation. These are currently being developed in detail, in line with the Combined Authority approval and the Assurance Framework, to ultimately be formally approved at a future meeting of the Investment Committee. The LEP Board and relevant panels will continue to be engaged in this development.

Issues related to the roadmap out of lockdown

2.12 On 5 April 2021, the Prime Minister announced that the Government's "four tests" for further easing restrictions had been met, allowed England to move to Step 2 of the Government's roadmap on Monday 12 April. This means that outdoor hospitality can now reopen, alongside parts of the indoor economy (including non-essential retail, personal care premises and indoor leisure facilities) and some other outdoor settings (including zoos and theme parks).

2.13 Restrictions around size of gatherings, including the rule of six or two household limit, remain. The Government is also considering and piloting options for longer term restrictions and requirements to allow international travel, as well as larger events and gatherings with less social distancing.

2.14 The LEP will continue to monitor the impact of these changes on businesses in Leeds City Region, and what support is required building from the Economic Recovery Plan.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

3.1 Clean Growth will continue to be supported through the products delivered in response to COVID-19 and is at the heart of the Economic Recovery Plan as an overarching goal.

3.2 Businesses will continue to be supported to apply innovation and digital technologies to adapt their products and services to meet current and future demand and reduce their carbon emissions.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

4.1 Inclusive Growth is embedded as an overarching goal in the Economic Recovery Plan.

4.2 As part of the West Yorkshire Inclusive Growth framework, any businesses that receive grants from the above products would be required to contribute to Inclusive Growth actions and outcomes via their funding agreements.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

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

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report. However, following the March 2021 Budget where no further funding was allocated for local COVID-19 recovery plans, further delivery implementation of the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan will require new sources of funding.

7. Legal Implications

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

8. Staffing Implications

8.1 None arising directly from this report.

9. External Consultees

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

10. Recommendations

10.1 That the LEP Board notes the updates in relation to COVID-19.

11. Background Documents

- 11.1 West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan (refreshed March 2021):
<https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s18944/Item%205%20-%20Appendix%201.pdf>
- 11.2 West Yorkshire Recovery Proposition – Culture and Creative Industries:
<https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s18945/Item%205%20-%20Appendix%202.pdf>

12. Appendices

- 12.1 There are no appendices to this report.