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

**Date:** 30 November 2021

**Subject:** **Committee Update Report**

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## 1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide the LEP Board with a brief update from the six Thematic Committees at the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Any substantial items from the committees will be brought to the LEP Board as separate agenda items for comment and feedback.

## 2. Information

### Thematic Committee Updates

#### 2.1 Business, Economy and Innovation Committee

- 2.1.1 The Committee considered its forward work programme and in particular how it would direct the work of the Mayor's Business Pledge. The Committee welcomed opportunities to cross collaborate with other Committees and in particular draw strong connections between their work and employment and skills, particularly recognising the short and medium term needs of businesses in economic recovery from COVID-19 and the challenges around current recruitment and progression of skills. The committee particularly welcomed the opportunity to participate in joint 'deep dives' into specific topics outside of the formal committee meetings as part of the policy and programme development process.
- 2.1.2 The Committee received updates on existing business support activities and trade and investment activities, and particularly welcomed the new activity coming forward. This includes the £6 million Entrepreneurship programme being delivered as part of the West Yorkshire (WY) Economic Recovery Plan. It is focused on a 'ladder of enterprise support' across three inter-connected workstreams that will help individuals in the region to explore and establish new businesses. The delivery of the first two of those workstreams were formally launched at an event 3 November, which was promoted to the Committee.

- 2.1.3 The Committee also considered the current challenges for the stability and resilience of the Business Support Eco-system in the region caused by the ending of a number of funding streams including from European Structural Funds and the Local Growth Fund, and there is no detail yet on the replacement funds. This has the potential of reducing capacity in the short term, which the Committee agreed would be damaging at a time when supporting business productivity would be key to economic recovery.
- 2.1.4 The Committee also considered two new strategies, on Trade and Healthtech, which were recommended to be brought forward to the LEP Board. They also considered the new Business Productivity Programme and recommended that this be brought forward to the LEP Board for consideration following a positive discussion on the need for this programme.

## **2.2 Climate, Energy and Environment Committee**

- 2.2.1 The Committee approved the West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan at its first meeting on the 19 October 2021. This approval supported the approval of the Plan by the Combined Authority on the 22 October 2021. The Plan is the Mayor's and Combined Authority response to tackling the climate emergency, protecting the environment and achieving a net zero West Yorkshire.
- 2.2.2 The Mayor is committed to bring forward a Climate and Environment Fund and to securing the £85m funding needed for the actions for the Combined Authority. The Combined Authority will work with partner local authorities to design the delivery mechanisms for this fund. So far, £800,000 has been committed by the Mayor and Combined Authority to a Net Zero Region Accelerator programme to bring forward finance and funding for climate and environment projects that support delivery of the West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan. The next stage is to identify potential funding sources for the Fund, including the Single Investment Fund.
- 2.2.3 The Committee also approved the White Rose Forest Action Plan 2021 - 2025. The White Rose Forest is the community forest covering West and North Yorkshire and forms part of the Northern Community Forest. The White Rose Forest is the community forest for North and West Yorkshire and part of the Northern Forest. It is the partnership delivery vehicle for tree planting across the region. By 2025 the aim is to have planted 7 million new trees covering 3,500 hectares with an ambition of 160 million by 2050, increasing tree cover from 11% to 19%. The funding streams to make this happen are diverse drawing on national government and agencies (Forestry Commission England), local authorities, charities (Woodland Trust) and private sponsorship (Northern Gas Networks). The Mayor will be launching the Plan on the 17 November 2021.
- 2.2.4 A summary of the upcoming UN Framework Convention on Climate Change was provided. The conference and negotiations have now concluded. The reception to the 'Glasgow Climate Pact' has been mixed, and you can read it for yourself here [Decision 1/CMA.3 \(unfccc.int\)](https://unfccc.int/decision-1/cma.3). One thing that COP26 did

prove is that the Paris Agreement is working. Since its inception, the world has moved from a near 4C warming trajectory to near the 2C threshold of the Ambition set back in 2015. More is needed, but the Glasgow Climate Pact has proven that 1.5C is the “north star” for political and societal movements.

## **2.3 Culture, Arts and Creative Industries Committee**

- 2.3.1 Due to an administrative error, elected members were not invited to the committee and the meeting was inquorate. Although the Committee was inquorate, the meeting took place as an informal meeting to enable those in attendance to provide input into the future workstream of the Committee. Members noted the terms of reference and, using the remit of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport as a baseline, reviewed the sectors it is seeking to cover. Members suggested that gambling and telecoms would not be a priority, but that the Committee should take a strong interest in the role of culture and heritage in supporting tourism.
- 2.3.2 The Committee reviewed the evidence base underpinning its work and asked for further consideration of understanding the role of freelance practitioners and the retention of graduates within West Yorkshire. Members also want to understand constraints to growth of both businesses and participation in the sector, and where there is a lack of cultural, sporting and heritage opportunities within communities.
- 2.3.3 In considering its role in delivery of the Mayoral pledges and, in particular, the Creative New Deal, members asked to focus on effecting long term change, developing leadership within the sector and sustainable approaches to improving the socio-economic, disability and ethnic diversity of both practitioners and participants. Members supported the focus on towns and the central role of theatre and emphasised that any Town(s) of Culture approach must seek to unite communities and support them to share best practice.
- 2.3.4 The wide-ranging input provided by Committee members, alongside evidence of the impact of Covid-19 on the sector, will inform a review of the Leeds City Region Cultural Framework, which was considered by the LEP Board in draft in February 2020.

## **2.4 Employment and Skills Committee**

- 2.4.1 The five Local Authorities, working with their local FE Colleges, have commenced work on a proposed approach to the future commissioning and allocation of AEB that aims to recognise the strategic as well as the delivery role of Local Authorities. The detail of the proposed approach is being developed and an update will be presented to the Committee in January.
- 2.4.2 The Committee received an update and endorsed the approach to the development of the Mayoral Pledges of ‘1000 skilled green jobs for young people’ and ‘prioritise skills and training so that everyone has access to good work’. The Committee welcomed opportunities to cross collaborate with other Committees on development of remaining pledges, particularly noting the Fair

Work Charter. It was suggested that there is an opportunity for colleges to collaborate with the Committee on the Digital Skills Academy sub pledge, and through possible future rounds of funding for an Institute of Technology.

- 2.4.3 The Committee reviewed and agreed the forward plan and prioritised skills brokerage and support for businesses for further exploration.
- 2.4.4 The Local Digital Skills Plan vision and high-level priorities were endorsed with commendation from private sector employers, in particular. The full plan will now be developed by the Local Digital Skills Board and presented to the Committee for endorsement in the new year.
- 2.4.5 The Committee noted an update on the Adult Education Budget, acknowledging that West Yorkshire has prepared for AEB devolution faster than any other Combined Authority and is already using the powers and autonomy address local issues, such as a shortage of bus and HGV drivers.
- 2.4.6 The Committee considered a proposal submitted by the TUC to request funding for the Union Learning Fund (ULF). The ULF was withdrawn by government in March 2021 and re-focussed toward on college budgets. Around 200,000 workers were supported into learning or training with union support. The committee was asked to consider sources of funding for £170k towards a coordination post for two years. The Committee was supportive of the proposal should funding be available.
- 2.4.7 The Committee noted an update on the progress of employment and skills programmes, including:
- Over £1.8 million has been pledged to date through the **Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Service**.
  - £13m of devolved funding has been invested to support people adversely impacted by the covid 19 pandemic through the **Employment Hub** brokerage service and an **Adult Skills Training** Framework.
  - The launch of **Enterprise West Yorkshire** in November 2021 comprising a 3 step “ladder” of support

## **2.5 Place, Regeneration and Housing Committee (6 September 2021)**

- 2.5.1 **Governance Arrangements** - To advise Place, Regeneration and Housing Committee of the governance arrangements approved by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (the Combined Authority) at the Annual Meeting on 24 June 2021 in respect of the committee.
- 2.5.2 **Housing Pledge** - To set out the opportunities and challenges of the Mayor’s pledge to support the delivery of 5,000 affordable homes in West Yorkshire over the next three years.
- 2.5.3 **Brownfield Housing Fund Update** To provide members of the committee with an update on delivery of the Brownfield Housing Fund

2.5.4 **Planning Review Recommendations** - To update and seek approval of the revised Strategic Planning Review Recommendations.

2.5.5 The meeting of the committee on 25 November was held after the publication of this paper and will be reported at the next LEP Board meeting

## **2.6 Transport Committee**

2.6.1 The Combined Authority was awarded £830m as its City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement in the Government's spending review. Details are being developed with Department for Transport officials, to utilise this funding to enable the Combined Authority to start developing its plans for a mass transit system and progress plans to improve the bus network with bus priority with more zero-emission electric buses and to support sustainable and active travel.

2.6.2 The submission of the region's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) has been a key issue for the Transport Committee. Government required all Local Transport Authorities to submit a BSIP by the end of October setting out the region's ambitions for its bus service. The Combined Authority set out a plan to provide.

- An enhanced and more cohesive bus network – which takes people where they need to go, when they need to go.
- Clear and simple fares – to make paying for bus travel more affordable, easier, convenient and flexible.
- Improved, more inclusive customer service and support – so passengers have the tools to travel with confidence and the help they need if their journey does not go to plan.
- Priority for buses on our road – so journeys by bus are quicker, with less time spent stuck in traffic, and are a viable alternative to the private car.
- More green and better vehicles – to improve the onboard experience and make bus the sustainable choice for travel in West Yorkshire.

Government is expected to announce funding to support the BSIP early in 2022.

2.6.3 The Transport Committee received an update in September on transport decarbonisation activity. The Combined Authority had declared a climate emergency in June 2019, and at the same time committed to becoming carbon-free by 2038, with significant progress due to be made by 2030. The West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan was approved as the Mayor and Combined Authority's response to the climate emergency at the October meeting of the Combined Authority. The Transport Committee also considered preliminary work on developing a new Rail Strategy and updating the Future Mobility Strategy.

### **3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications**

- 3.1 There are no climate emergency implications directly arising from this report. Any implications from reports will have been addressed at the respective meeting of that Thematic Committee.

### **4. Inclusive Growth Implications**

- 4.1 There are no inclusive growth implications directly arising from this report. Any implications from reports will have been addressed at the respective meeting of that Thematic Committee.

### **5. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 5.1 There are no equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report. Any implications from reports will have been addressed at the respective meeting of that Thematic Committee.

### **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report. Any implications from reports will have been addressed at the respective meeting of that Thematic Committee.

### **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report. Any implications from reports will have been addressed at the respective meeting of that Thematic Committee.

### **8. Staffing Implications**

- 8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report. Any implications from reports will have been addressed at the respective meeting of that Thematic Committee.

### **9. External Consultees**

- 9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

### **10. Recommendations**

- 10.1 That the LEP Board notes the updates from the Thematic Committees.

### **11. Background Documents**

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

## **12. Appendices**

There are no appendices to this report.