

**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.