

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