



<b>Report to:</b>	The West Yorkshire Business Board
<b>Date:</b>	29 November 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Economic Strategy and Digital Blueprint</b>
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## 1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 To provide members of the Business Board with an overview and update on the development of the West Yorkshire Economic Strategy.

## 2. Information

### Objectives

- 2.1 Members are asked to feedback on the approach, and comment on emerging themes in advance of a more detailed set of priorities being developed.

### Background

- 2.2 Proposals for a new Economic Strategy to reflect the vision and missions of the [West Yorkshire Plan](#) were discussed at the June meeting of the LEP Board. Since that meeting the following actions have been undertaken:

- Commissioned external research on emerging opportunities for high growth clusters in West Yorkshire aligned to existing areas of strength with a focus on net-zero.
- Published a consultation questionnaire on regional strengths and opportunities. A total of 170 responses were received and analysis of the qualitative data is being undertaken.
- Published a call for evidence through the Yorkshire Policy and Engagement Network (Y-PERN) on childcare, the informal economy, and the future of work. Wide ranging research responses were received and are being analysed by Y-PERN academics and discussed with local authority officers. During a workshop with private sector Committee Members, thematic areas of the Call for Evidence were discussed to support interpretation and application of the evidence as it emerges.
- Updated key West Yorkshire economic indicators and begun development of a economic narrative.

- 2.3 A programme of stakeholder engagement is being undertaken to ensure that a wide perspective of voices contribute to the development of the Economic Strategy. Key events since the last committee include:
- A session led by Asma Iqbal, BEIC member and LEP Board Diversity Champion. During an insightful and wide-ranging discussion, contributions were welcomed on ways of deepening engagement with communities across the region, reflecting and celebrating the full range of sector strengths in West Yorkshire, and maximising the use of the existing evidence base.
  - A session considering the needs and opportunities of rural communities and effective engagement channels for these issues considered the role of place in the Economic Strategy and the impact that rural communities can make.
  - Ongoing discussions and meetings with local authority colleagues to align regional and local priorities.
  - A session to explore the relationship between the Combined Authority and Business Representative bodies and good practice models.
  - A focus group with Yorkshire Sport on physical activity and the economic benefits of improved health.
- 2.4 Further engagement sessions are planned building on the emerging evidence and thematic discussions. This includes events with universities and voluntary and community groups.
- 2.5 The Mayor along with Professor John Wright (Bradford Institute for Health Research) recently launched the West Yorkshire Scientific Advisory Group (WYSAG). The WYSAG will support joint working between the Combined Authority and the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership to highlight the best evidence on health inequalities and how this impacts upon the West Yorkshire Economy. Emerging lessons from this group will be used to inform the development and implementation of the Economic Strategy.

### **Next Steps**

- 2.6 Once the evidence has been collected and initial consultation is complete a series of workshops will be undertaken to shape priorities. This will form the basis of a draft document to be shared for further engagement. The use of external facilitators to support this approach is being explored. Input from members of the Committee would be welcome on prioritisation workshops approach.
- 2.7 Building on previous good practice of the development of the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and Local Industrial Strategy (LIS), an expert panel is being convened to scrutinise evidence and peer review the application of evidence into policy priorities.

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

- 3.1 The West Yorkshire Combined Authority has made a bold and ambitious target to reach Net Zero by 2038. This will be a key theme of the Economic Strategy setting out opportunities for net zero in West Yorkshire, alongside actions to support businesses and people to adapt.

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

- 4.1 Mission one of the West Yorkshire Plan is for an inclusive economy which will be a guiding principle of the Economic Strategy.

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

- 5.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is embedded across each of the missions of the West Yorkshire Plan and will be a guiding principle of the strategy. This is reflected in the approach to consultation which is seeking to work with a diverse range of stakeholders.

### **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 A programme of consultation is being developed with stakeholders across the region.

### **10. Recommendations**

- 10.1 That Board members note progress and framing of the Economic Strategy and provide feedback on the proposed approach and further opportunities for engagement.

### **11. Background Documents**

None.

### **12. Appendices**

None.