



Report to:	Business, Economy and Innovation Committee
Date:	31 January 2024
Subject:	Development and Delivery
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Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" 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 the committee with information on business support commissioned or delivered by the Combined Authority from April to November 2023, aligned to State of the Region report indicators, to demonstrate the economic impact on the business base of West Yorkshire.
- 1.2 To provide the committee with an update on provision in delivery around Skills and Creative Industries.
- 1.3 To provide an update on developmental activity around enterprise and business start-up in West Yorkshire and to seek views and input from the committee to shape this work.

2. Information

- 2.1 The State of the Region report outlines seven key indicators against which we are able to measure West Yorkshire's status and to compare the region on a national level. Using State of the Region (2022) as the most recent report, Appendix 1 outlines how regional business engagement is contributing to priorities outlined in the report:

- Driving economic growth and innovation to enable good jobs



- Championing culture, sport, and creativity
- Building a sustainable, nature-rich and carbon neutral region

In delivery

Skills support for businesses

- 2.2 Skills, training and education are closely linked to productivity and innovation, and therefore economic growth. State of the Region reiterates that shifting the dial for West Yorkshire's skills deficit requires the local skills system to be responsive to economic needs.
- 2.3 The report specifically highlights digital skills as a significant requirement for people to operate in daily life. However, 40% of people in employment do not have essential digital skills for work.
- 2.4 The Skills for Growth programme was delivered between 2020 and 2023, supporting 544 employers to engage with the full breadth of the education and training landscape via an impartial diagnostic approach. The programme has now closed, and a full evaluation is being undertaken.
- 2.5 Early findings are that businesses supported through the programme have created an average of 5.7 jobs each, of which 41% (or 2.3 jobs per business) could be attributed to the programme. This results in £18.3 million of GVA and represents £10.18 of benefits for every pound spent delivering the programme, representing very high value for money.
- 2.6 Following the success of the Skills for Growth programme, eight Business Skills Advisers have been retained by the Combined Authority to provide impartial advice and support to employers to engage with education, skills, and training in order to create a pipeline of talent and address recruitment challenges. The advisers are fully embedded in the wider business support landscape, and work closely with business-facing staff in Local Authorities, as well as the Local Skills Investment Plan team currently being recruited by the Chambers of Commerce.
- 2.7 Funding of £1.5m has been secured to support emerging skills (particularly digital and green) through co-investment with businesses to March 2026.

Creative Industries, Culture, Heritage, and Sport programme

- 2.8 You Can Make It Here is a package of support for SMEs, freelancers and micro businesses, residents, and graduates, with an aim to support and grow the Creative Industries, Culture, Heritage, and Sport sectors, and diversify the regional talent pool.
- 2.9 This programme consists of several schemes, to be delivered between January 2024 and March 2026:

- 2.10 Freelance and Micro-Business Support will provide training for creative industries freelancers and micro-businesses and offer grants creative freelancer / micro-business networks in each Local Authority area, to support them to diversify their membership and engage a pipeline of Higher Education and Further Education graduates, establishing models to become more self-sustaining.
- 2.11 Building on the success of the Creative Catalyst programme, the Export Accelerator and Music Sector Capacity/Export programme will support creative industries businesses in the region to diversify revenue, grow new audiences, develop new business models and increase exports. The Export Accelerator strand will include an Export Grant Scheme to support businesses to attend international trade delegations and expos. The Music Sector Capacity/Export strand will build capacity in the West Yorkshire music sector by convening music industry professionals in the region to support knowledge sharing activities, identify sector needs, priorities and opportunities to support sector growth, raising awareness of funding, career and business development opportunities within the regional music sector, and signposting to resources. This scheme will also look to attract national music sector activity into the region (conferences and sector events), and represent West Yorkshire at music trade and international expo events.
- 2.12 The Create Growth Programme is a Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) funded package of support for high-growth potential creative industries businesses in the region, to enable them to become investment-ready, develop networks of equity investors, and broker finance opportunities for each participant business. The support will primarily focus on regional sector strengths of Screen/Convergent, Games, Music, and Textiles;
- 2.13 The Mayor's Screen Diversity Programme has been developed based on previous delivery, supporting young people (aged 18-30) who face barriers to entry into the Creative Industries sector, with TV and film production training and work placements;
- 2.14 Last year's Young Poets Laureate pilot was successfully completed and promoted literacy, oracy, and creative careers, along with a competition to find two Young Poets Laureate, supported by National Poet Laureate Simon Armitage. A new programme builds on learning from the pilot and aims to increase the number of schools engaged and raised aspirations and awareness of pathways to the wider creative industries.
- 2.15 West Yorkshire's cultural events and venues can access support to become more accessible to disabled artists and audiences, through a small capital grants fund, accessibility skills training, incorporating a series of face-to-face workshops in each Local Authority area, and provision of accessibility services, such as British Sign Language and audio description.
- 2.16 People who have or are working on Year of Culture programmes across the region will be able to access a new knowledge exchange opportunity, enabling them to share best practice, and learn from each other's findings, local knowledge, and insight.

- 2.17 A business support pilot for Asset-owning Heritage and Sport organisations will provide training and resources on governance, revenue diversification, fundraising, volunteer engagement, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, accessibility, and low carbon heating and retrofitting measures. Support will also be available and tailored for different business models, including Community Interest Companies and non-profits.

In development

Enterprise and business start-up

- 2.18 The Enterprise West Yorkshire programme is due to close at the end of 2024. This programme, funded by gainshare, was launched as part of the Covid economic recovery plan and aimed to unleash an entrepreneurial revolution in the region to support inclusion and growth post-pandemic.
- 2.19 Policy development work is now underway to review start-up provision across the region. This work will assess where gaps in enterprise provision exist and explore options around how these might be addressed, aligned to the emerging ambitions of the Economic Strategy. A workshop session will be held with committee members after the meeting to gather further insight.
- 2.20 As part of the development the Economic Strategy, work is taking place more broadly to explore and understand the wider West Yorkshire business support landscape, including the role of the Combined Authority in supporting a thriving and vibrant ecosystem. Further discussion items will be brought to future meetings.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 This is a cross-cutting theme in all programmes and services; green skills is a focus of the new Skills for Business offer and there are a number of services offering decarbonisation diagnostics for businesses to reduce their carbon emissions.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 This is a cross cutting theme in all regional support services, including those newly funded, and is bolstered by the Mayor's Fair Work Charter. Ten inclusive growth commitments have been made by businesses engaged with support services. Delivery commissioned by the Combined Authority also includes a social value element for suppliers to commit to.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion targets are set for every business support service. To November 2023, progress against targets is shown below.



Group	Target	Actual (Nov 23)
Female	35%	51%
Ethnic minority	25%	27%
Disability	10%	14%

5.2 Focusing on the pre-start-up support in delivery, progress against the more stretching targets is shown below.

Group	Target	Actual (Nov 23)
Female	55%	64%
Ethnic minority	35%	43%
Disability	10%	16%

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 No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

10.1 That the committee notes the contents of the report.

10.2 That the committee assesses the impact of regional business engagement on key State of the Region indicators. Members are requested to contribute insights and recommendations on specific areas of focus, such as skills for business programmes, enterprise support in the creative industries, and the newly integrated flood resilience programme.

10.3 That the committee endorses work to continue to identify gaps and opportunities in support for entrepreneurs and business start-ups in West Yorkshire.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Business Support activity against State of the Region indicators