



West
Yorkshire
Combined
Authority

Tracy
Brabin
Mayor of
West Yorkshire

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CULTURE, HERITAGE AND SPORT COMMITTEE
HELD ON FRIDAY, 26 JANUARY 2024 AT THE LEEDS LIBRARY,
18 COMMERCIAL STREET, LEEDS, LS1 6AL**

Present:

Mayor Tracy Brabin (Chair)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Councillor Sarah Ferriby	Bradford Council
Councillor Jenny Lynn	Calderdale Council
Councillor Aafaq Butt	Kirklees Council
Councillor Jonathan Pryor	Leeds City Council
Councillor Jo Coles	York Council
Nathan Clark	Private Sector Representative
Caroline Cooper Charles	Private Sector Representative
Wieke Eringa	Private Sector Representative
Boluaji Fagborun	Private Sector Representative
Deborah Munt	Private Sector Representative
Sam Nicholls	Private Sector Representative
Ben Walmsley	Private Sector Representative
Dominic Bascombe (Advisory Representative)	Advisory Representative (Equity UK)
Oliver Bray (Advisory Representative)	Advisory Representative (Leeds Beckett University)
Richard Butterfield (Advisory Representative)	Advisory Representative (Historic England)
Nigel Harrison (Advisory Representative)	Advisory Representative (Yorkshire Sport Foundation)
Pete Massey (Advisory Representative)	Advisory Representative (Arts Council)
Professor Dave Russell (Advisory Representative)	Advisory Representative (Yorkshire Universities - Leeds Art University)

In attendance:

Felix Kumi-Ampofo (Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Peter Glover	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Jim Hinks	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Ben Kearns	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Myles Larrington	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Helen Pheby	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Beth Woods	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Yusuf Ukadia	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

1. Chair's Opening Remarks

The Mayor opened the meeting of the Culture, Heritage and Sport Committee by stating that the gathering would be exciting as a workshop was scheduled to take place after the formal meeting had concluded. The Mayor encouraged blue sky thinking from members, entreating them to be ambitious for West Yorkshire.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lynn Masterman (Wakefield Council), Private Sector Representatives, Syima Aslam MBE, Halima Khan, Alan Lane, Leigh-Anne Stradeski, Nicky Chance-Thompson MBE and Advisory Representatives, Helen Featherstone (National Lottery Heritage Fund), Catherine Mitchell (Arts Council) and Paul Reed (Musicians' Union).

3. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests at the meeting.

4. Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no agenda items that required the exclusion of the public and press.

5. Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 October 2023

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Culture, Heritage and Sport Committee held on 27 October 2023 were approved as a correct record.

6. Chair's Update

The Mayor, Tracy Brabin, opened the meeting by thanking Leeds Library for hosting the Committee. The Mayor then invited a representative of the Library, Ian Harker, to provide a brief overview of the Library and the work they do.

Ian Harker welcomed everyone and proceeded to take the Committee through 250 years of history of the Leeds Library. Ian stated that the organisation was founded in 1768, making it the oldest member subscription library in the UK. He mentioned that they had moved into the current building in 1848 due to running out of room for books, and informed Committee members that the room they were sitting in was over 145 years old. Ian observed that the galleries were later added to make room for more books.

Ian explained that since 2008, the organisation had become a charity, and they had been working hard to increase their membership, now having more members than ever. In June 2024, they planned to hold events for Leeds Bookfest and partnering with other organisations such as Leeds 2023 and the Book Trust. He further stated that they were in the process of expansion by buying the adjacent building and were halfway through the project.

This expansion would create a space for culture, arts, learning, and education, making them the oldest cultural education organisation but creating the newest space. Ian also mentioned that Joseph Priestly was a famous alumnus, and highlighted Sarah Dodd as a novelist.

Ian mentioned that Sarah Dodd had launched her book in the same room during the Leeds Literary Festival, which they were hoping would encourage more people to become writers. Ian concluded by expressing his excitement that Leeds Library were able to host the Committee that afternoon. The Mayor thanked Ian for his remarks.

The Mayor observed that an event will be hosted at Leeds Library by the Inclusive Growth Network on 20 February 2024, where West Yorkshire's approach to culture and creative industries had been discussed.

The Mayor commented that the Combined Authority were pleased to announce the appointment of Helen Pheby as the new Head of Culture, Heritage, and Sport. The Mayor mentioned that Helen was joining from the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, bringing with her a wealth of experience in the culture sector. The Mayor then noted that the Northern Creative Corridor was also developing well and asked for interest from members in joining up for specific workshops.

The Mayor mentioned that since the last Committee meeting, representatives from the Combined Authority had been delighted to attend soft launch events for both Wakefield and Calderdale's years of culture programs, which had been inspirational.

The Mayor informed the Committee that the Launchpad Conference would be taking place on 1st March 2024, hosted by Leeds Beckett University, and had announced its first speakers, including UK Music Interim CEO Tom Kiehl, Music Managers Forum CEO Anabelle Coldrick. The Mayor stated that panels included How Tech is Shaping the Music Landscape, Northern Investment: Bringing new opportunities to the region, and a Northern Venues Roundtable featuring two of the Committee's members, Nathan Clark and Nicky Chance-Thompson.

The Mayor mentioned that Independent Venue Week would take place between the 29 January and 4 February, with events taking place across West Yorkshire, and that officers would share a link after the meeting.

The Mayor reported that Bradford Live had announced the first events as part of its program in Autumn 24. Additionally, Kaiser Chiefs, Yard Act, and English Teacher had all announced new albums to be released in the next few months.

The Mayor informed members that Bradford Libraries were currently delivering a £250k program of capital investment in 10 libraries across the district. The Mayor noted that most of the funding had come from ACE Libraries Improvement Fund and was being used to make adaptations to library buildings for more flexibility in community and partner use, such as movable shelving, meeting rooms, and 1:1 pods.

The Mayor said that the Committee might also be interested in the publication of a new review of English Public Libraries, and that officers would share a link to the report after the meeting. The Mayor reported that at Leeds Beckett University, Dr Oliver Bray had performed a reading of A Christmas Carol from start to finish in City Square last month.

The Mayor mentioned that the Leeds School of Arts had hosted incredible performances as part of the Transform 23 International Festival.

The Mayor stated that the Leeds Society of Architects, in conjunction with Leeds Beckett University, Leeds Civic Trust, and RIBA, were excited to announce the return of the popular 4 x 4 talk series for 2024. The Mayor added that it was due to be held across four Thursday evenings in February, with conversations about architecture, urban design, the arts, culture, and sustainability.

The Mayor reported that in the world of sport, Rob Burrows and Kevin Sinfield had been awarded CBEs in the New Year's Honours list for their work in fundraising to combat motor neurone disease. The Mayor noted that earlier that month, in December, Kevin Sinfield had completed his '7 in 7 in 7' challenge, in which he ran seven ultramarathons in seven cities across Britain and Ireland in seven days.

The Mayor informed the Committee that as part of Wakefield's Year of Culture, Our Year, there was a Moving Festival including organised walks, bike rides, and a series of sport and physical activity events. The Mayor noted that Active Bradford had launched their district wide 'Every Move Counts' strategy the previous week.

The Mayor reported that Bradford City Community Foundation had also launched a new initiative to support the vulnerable and/or homeless, serving hot food and drinks every Thursday.

The Mayor mentioned that recent Active Lives results, which involved 27,000 children and young people, showed a 6% increase in children and young people activity levels since the baseline of five years ago. The Mayor concluded her remarks by observing that it was a recovery from a reduction during the Covid period, outperforming the national average increase of 3.8%.

7. Delivery Update

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Inclusive Economy, Skills, and Culture, providing an update on the You Can Make It Here programme.

Officers introduced the report which explained that the programme aligns with the Mayor's Creative New Deal, emphasising the Skills and Business themes. Additionally, the report covered wider skills and business support across Creative Industries, Culture, Heritage, and Sport. Officers referred to schemes such as the Events and Venue Accessibility Resource, Freelance and Micro-Business Support, Create Growth Programme, Year of Culture Knowledge

Transfer, Mayor's Screen Diversity Programme, Creative Catalyst, and the Heritage and Sport Asset-Owning Business Support Pilot. The report also highlighted progress on the British Library North project and the ongoing Young Poets Laureate initiative.

Members made the following observations:

- Mayor Brabin encouraged Committee members to suggest venues for You Can Make It Here, particularly those that would benefit from improved disability access. The Mayor also mentioned the Spirit of 2012 funding secured by Leeds and Bradford, aiming to share knowledge across the region.
- Mayor Brabin had previously raised that there wasn't a BBC Writer's Room in the region, and had raised the matter with Director General, Tim Davey on several occasions. The Mayor mentioned that the Combined Authority were working on projects to support writers. The Mayor also suggested hosting a music workshop as the next step and emphasised the need to consult with stakeholders on heritage initiatives.
- A member noted a positive cultural project which advanced with £1 million in grants from the government's Culture Recovery Fund and Historic England. Temple Works, a former flax mill in Holbeck, Leeds would be undergoing major repairs as part of an exciting new chapter in the regeneration of the building and surrounding area. The Mayor also observed that it was a phenomenal project.
- Committee members expressed appreciation for the progress made and welcomed the increased capacity in the Culture, Heritage and Sport team at the Combined Authority.

Resolved:

- i. That the Committee noted the content of the report and feedback provided.
- ii. That the Committee noted the updates on the You Can Make It Here programme and the wider skills and business Creative Industries, Culture, Heritage and Sport support.
- iii. That the Committee agreed to share the Create Growth Programme opportunity in their networks.

8. Local Visitor Economy Partnership Update

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Inclusive Economy, Skills, and Culture, which updated members on the West Yorkshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP).

Officers introduced the report. In July, VisitEngland approved the joint application by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (CA) and the five Local Authorities for LVEP accreditation. The report provided an overview of LVEP developments, including the Destination Management Plan's activities and an emerging funding proposal. Officers explained the key context, emphasising the importance of the visitor economy in the CA's Culture, Heritage, and Sport Framework and the West Yorkshire Investment Strategy. Progress since the last update included the inaugural LVEP Board meeting, discussions with VisitEngland, and a workshop to prioritise Destination Management Plan activities. The LVEP's goals included sustainable tourism, inclusive growth, and equality and diversity considerations. The report highlighted the submission of a business case for £500,000 funding, with final approval expected in March 2024.

Members made the following observations:

- Mayor Brabin emphasised the significance of storytelling through tourism for West Yorkshire and highlighted Culture as an important offering to the public. The LVEP progress report marked a significant milestone for the sector.
- Mayor Brabin also stressed the importance of her role as the chair of the LVEP board and the need for Visit England's support given that West Yorkshire is not mentioned anywhere on their website. She underscored West Yorkshire's strong cultural offer and the potential to package art, sculpture, and sports opportunities.
- A member raised concerns about navigating the broader tourism offer in West Yorkshire, emphasising the need for economic links and marketing as a combined regional offer. The member suggested building regional specialties and focusing on collaboration and resource-sharing. Both the member and officers agreed on the importance of partnerships to maximise impact.

Resolved:

- i. That the Committee noted the contents of the report.
- ii. That the progress of the LVEP scheme be noted.
- iii. That feedback on the prioritisation of the Destination Management Plan (DMP) activities be noted.

9. Economic and Sector Reporting

The Committee considered a report for information from the Director of Strategy, Communications, and Intelligence, aimed at providing an update on the latest economic data related to the sector.

Officers introduced the report, summarising the mixed national economic context. Employment in arts, entertainment, and recreation showed modest growth, but remained below pre-pandemic levels. Information and

Communication employment increased, with strong pay growth, though it appeared to flatten recently. Arts, entertainment, and recreation sector output grew, while vacancies and online job postings declined. The report detailed sector-specific data, including employment, pay, vacancies, online job postings, and business counts in West Yorkshire. Despite growth until the pandemic, the Creative sector since seen some decline in businesses, particularly in IT, software, and computer services.

Members made the following observations:

- A member discussed the impact on connected industries, such as hospitality, experiencing a decline in alcohol sales and disposal income, affecting cultural sectors like music. The member advocated for a lower VAT rate in hospitality. The Mayor asked officers to consider the merits of writing to the Treasury to advocate support for this proposal.
- A member emphasised the financial challenges faced by stadiums and other such venues, citing the example of Huddersfield Giants, and the need for innovative revenue generation.
- A member noted the strain on local government and the potential impact on job availability in the sector due to financial constraints.
- A member highlighted temporary spikes in visual art jobs, citing Bradford 2025's recruitment efforts, which could lead to a false increase in recent months.
- A member highlighted the perpetual recruitment crisis in the subsidised cultural sector.
- A member raised concerns about possible penalties for organisations not achieving outcomes in their bids, considering the fluid nature of creative arts.
- A member mentioned the challenges faced after Covid, with many organisations losing personnel but recovering slowly, and wondered about the impact on the sector now that Leeds 2023 has concluded.

Resolved:

- i. That the Committee noted the content of the report and the feedback provided.
- ii. That the Committee noted the messages from the report.

10. Progress Against Culture, Heritage and Sport Framework

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Inclusive Economy, Skills, and Culture, which provided members with a summary update on progress made against the Culture, Heritage, and Sport Framework.

Officers introduced the report. Approved in October 2022, the framework outlines ambitions and priorities for culture, heritage, and sport in the region. The report presented a table summarising programs delivered across the Combined Authority under the framework themes of People, Place, Skills, and Business. Notable initiatives included supporting our years of culture, and various projects supporting skills development, business growth, and cultural events.

Appendix 1 provided detailed information on specific interventions, with data from Leeds 2023 and Kirklees Year of Music pending further evaluation.

Members made the following observations:

- A member raised concerns about how engagement was being measured, questioning whether they truly reflected real participation or were potentially manipulated. The member urged the use of more accurate assessments. Officers responded by acknowledging the challenge and emphasised the importance of evaluating schemes fairly, considering both underperformance and overperformance.
- Members discussed the emphasis on participant numbers and the need to consider the impact on people's lives, particularly those from diverse groups.
- A member stressed the importance of capturing real success stories nationally through accurate data collection.

Resolved:

- i. That the Committee noted the contents of the report and the feedback provided.
- ii. That the Committee noted the update on work taken to progress the Culture, Heritage and Sport Framework.

11. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Culture, Heritage and Sport Committee was scheduled to be held on 13 March 2024.