

NORTH AND WEST YORKSHIRE BUSINESS RATES JOINT COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 16TH JANUARY, 2020

Present: Councillor T Swift (Calderdale MBC) – Chair
Councillor S Hinchcliffe (City of Bradford MDC), Councillor S Pandor (Kirklees MC), Councillor J Blake (Leeds City Council), Councillor D Jeffery (City of Wakefield MDC) and Councillor S Siddons (Scarborough Borough Council), Councillor G Dadd (North Yorkshire CC) and Councillor A D’Agome (City of York)

In Attendance: J Gedman (KMC), R Ellis (LCC), C Jolley (LCC), P Box (WTY), J Mason (WTY), D Bowe (NYCC), G Swift (Harrogate BC), I Floyd (City of York), B Archer (WYCA), R Tuddenham (Calderdale MBC), A Baldwin (Wakefield MDC) and D Oldham (LCC)

22 APPEAL AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

23 LATE ITEMS

There were no late items.

24 EXEMPT INFORMATION - POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

That, in accordance with Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2021, the public be excluded from the meeting during Consideration of the following parts of the agenda designated as exempt on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information so designated as follow:-

Agenda Item 8 North and West Yorkshire Business Rates Pool Financial Report – Appendix A of this report was classified as exempt under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 and Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(3) because it contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received for Councillor Richard Cooper (Harrogate Borough Council), Councillor Keith Aspden (City of York), and Councillor Carl Les (North Yorkshire County Council).

26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

27 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th October 2019 be approved as a correct record.

28 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

29 Welcome to Yorkshire Update Report

The Chief Executive, Kirklees Council submitted a report which set out the progress made since the first report, which had been considered at the North and West Yorkshire Business Rates Joint Committee of 7th October 2019.

Members were informed of the progress to date and future requirements:

- Original request was for £1m to be approved in 3 tranches;
- First tranche released in October 2019;
- Peter Box appointed by the Board as Chair of WTY;
- 2 new appointees to the Board who have a strong financial and legal background;
- Second tranche for recruitment to the Board, with the full Board in place by the end of the financial year;
- James Mason appointed as Chief Executive for WTY who took up the post at the start of January 2020;
- Improvements made to ensure robust governance arrangements and more stringent financial management.

In discussions both the Chair and the Chief Executive of WTY thanked the Chief Executive of Kirklees Council for her help in the past few months to 'steady the ship'.

Both the Chair and Chief Executive of WTY recognise the challenges as WTY goes forward and requested that this Committee give them opportunity to work with the new board and stakeholder to ensure WTY delivers on the ambitions for the region.

WTY will look to formalise the mechanism of reporting on investment from the Yorkshire Councils with a stringent accountability, effective performance management and better engagement with the public.

Pride in Yorkshire will remain a strong basis for this organisation with WTY Board being up-beat and optimistic that they can deliver a variety of events for all the diverse communities in Yorkshire.

The Committee were informed that work is ongoing for WTY to improve the private sector contribution to the business. Further details will be provided at the next meeting.

RESOLVED – To:

- a) Agree the release of the remaining two tranches of Business Rates Pool funding with immediate effect, this being based on the noted progress to date and subject to regular financial and performance reports back to the board;
- b) Request a further progress report in April from the new Chief Executive and WTY Board early in the new financial year.

30 NORTH AND WEST YORKSHIRE BUSINESS RATES POOL FINANCIAL REPORT

The Chief Officer Financial Services, Leeds City Council submitted a report which sets out:

- a) The latest income estimate for the North and West Yorkshire Pool in 2019/20;
- b) The existing and proposed expenditure commitments for the Pool;
- c) The projected surplus position for the Pool;
- d) The allocation of projected surplus balances to member authorities;
- e) The position of the North and West Yorkshire Business Rates Pool beyond 31st March 2020.

Members' attention was drawn to Table 1 and 2 of the submitted report and also to Appendix B.

RESOLVED – To:

- a) Note the latest estimated income to the Pool for 2019/20 at Paragraph 2 and Table 1;
- b) Note the commitments listed at Paragraph 3 and summarised in Table 2, noting the remaining estimated balance;
- c) Approve the payment of the second and third tranche due to Welcome to Yorkshire, on approval of the Welcome to Yorkshire Update Report referred to in Paragraph 3.4 of the submitted report;
- d) Note and approve the Screen Yorkshire grant application at Appendix A and to approve the release of funds to Screen Yorkshire as referred to at Paragraphs 3.6-3.10, this release of funds being subject to resolution of outstanding issues by Leeds City Council officers. The Joint Committee agreed to delegate final approval to the Chair of North and West Yorkshire Business Rates Joint Committee, if necessary in consultation with other Joint Committee members;
- e) Note the projected Pool surplus position at Paragraph 4.1 and the potential risks also identified;
- f) Note the projected balances allocated to member authorities including the effect of any variance in outturn on those balances, as referred to a Paragraphs 4.1- 4.4;

g) Note that the North and West Yorkshire Business Rates Pool will be revoked on 31st March 2020, and that any residual benefit or liability will be treated in accordance with the Pool's Governance Agreement, as noted at Paragraph 5 and Appendix C of the submitted report. **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Members noted the potential date for the next meeting as 24th March 2020, at 2pm, this would be confirmed by email.