

NORTH AND WEST YORKSHIRE BUSINESS RATES JOINT COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 7TH OCTOBER, 2019

Present: Councillor T Swift (Calderdale MBC) - Chair
Councillor S Hinchcliffe (City of Bradford MDC), Councillor P Box (City of Wakefield MDC), Councillor R Cooper (Harrogate BC), Councillor J Blake (Leeds City Council), Councillor K Aspden (City of York Council), Councillor C Les (North Yorkshire County Council) and Councillor S Siddons (Scarborough Borough Council).

In Attendance: M McRae (City of Wakefield MDC), R Tuddenham (Calderdale MBC), M Greene (Scarborough Borough Council), G Fielding (North Yorkshire County Council), J Gedman (KMC) T Cooper (KMC) A Taylor (WYCA), M Pexton (LCC), R Ellis (LCC) and J Grieve (LCC)

10 APPEAL AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

There were no appeals against the refusal of inspection of documents.

11 LATE ITEMS

The Chair accepted the inclusion of a late item onto the agenda "Options for Business Rates Pooling in 2020/21" (Minute No.21 referred). Members were informed that the information contained within the submitted report was not available at the time of agenda publication/ circulation and it was in the best interests of the Joint Committee and other parties concerned that the matter be considered without delay. The Chair also accepted the inclusion of an additional Appendix in respect of Agenda Item No. 9 - North and West Yorkshire Business Rates Pool Financial Report, which was accepted as Supplementary Information (Minute No.18 referred)

The Chair also acknowledged the receipt of an email from a York Citizen who had raised a number of issues in respect of the report relating to "Welcome to Yorkshire". The Chair requested that the email be circulated to all Members of the Joint Committee and asked that a draft response be prepared by officers.

12 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 2012, 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 follows:-

Appendix 1 & 2 to Agenda Item No.8 (Welcome to Yorkshire), Appendix C to Agenda Item No. 9 (North and West Yorkshire Business Rates Pool Financial Report and the Late Item (Options for Business Rates Pooling in 2020/21) in all cases these reports/ appendices were designated as exempt under Access to Information Procedure Rules 10.4 (3) because it contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) Minute Nos 17,18 and 21 referred.

13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S Pandor (Kirklees MC)

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Although there were no declarations of any pecuniary interest made at the meeting, Councillors: R Cooper and C Les brought it to the attention of the Joint Committee that they were Board Members of Welcome to Yorkshire, as Local Authority Funders. Councillor P Box informed the Joint Committee that he was a prospective Member of the Welcome to Yorkshire Board.

15 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 27th June 2019, were approved as a true and correct record

16 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no issues raised under Matters Arising

17 Welcome to Yorkshire

The Chief Executive, Kirklees Council submitted a report which sets out:

- a) The background to North and West Yorkshire Business Rates Pool Joint Committee funding of Welcome to Yorkshire (WtY).
- b) The current position of Welcome to Yorkshire and the key issues
- c) A report from the interim Chair of the Board of Welcome to Yorkshire
- d) A recommendation for future funding of Welcome to Yorkshire

In the discussion that followed Members were of the view that the region needs a successful strategic destination marketing organisation, but it must be one that upholds the same values and governance enshrined in the principles of spending public funds.

It was the view of the Joint Committee that it would only continue to support Welcome to Yorkshire if it was satisfied that significant progress had been made to strengthen its accountability, transparency and governance of public resources.

Members acknowledged and thanked Keith Stewart as interim Chair of Welcome to Yorkshire Board.

RESOLVED – That approval be given to the release of Business Rates Pool funding for £1m in 3 tranches in October, December and February conditional on:

- (i) That a public report on progress of implementation of the recommendations be brought back to the Joint Committee in advance of future funding tranches being released
- (ii) Recruitment to the Welcome Yorkshire Board be carried out immediately and the interim Chair arrangements cease with immediate effect, and for a period of 12 months, a public sector appointee becomes interim Chair and the new Board is in place no later than the end of the financial year.
- (iii) A Chief Executive is recruited as soon as possible through a clear and transparent process.
- (iv) Until the recruitment of a Chief Executive is complete, Jacqui Gedman, Chief Executive, Kirklees Council be requested to provide strategic support to Welcome to Yorkshire, including authority to draw down the approved Business Rates Pool funding, as required.
- (v) Reports designated as exempt in respect of this item, be made available for public inspection, with the commercially sensitive information being removed in the first instance.
- (vi) That a four month consultation process, led by the public sector, about the future of regional tourism be carried out.

18 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) An allocation methodology for the remaining balance;
- d) Applications from member authorities, supporting the allocation of funding;

RESOLVED –

- a) To note the latest estimated income to the Pool for 2019/20 at Paragraph 2 and Table 1 of the submitted report

- b) To approve the commitments listed at Paragraph 3.2 and summarised in Table 2, noting the remaining estimated balance;
- c) To approve the method used in allocating the remaining balance, as identified at Paragraph 4.2 and Appendix A of the submitted report;
- d) To note the application process described at Paragraph 4.3 and Appendix B;
- e) That the applications submitted by member authorities, referenced at Paragraph 4.4 and set out at Appendix C be agreed in principle, with final approval being delegated to the Chair

19 CLIMATE EMERGENCY EVIDENCE BASE

The Chief Executive, West Yorkshire Combined Authority submitted a report which sought approval for the allocation of £100,000 from the North and West Yorkshire Business Rates Pool for the project Climate Emergency Evidence Base, to be managed by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority in consultation with the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP

In the discussion that followed Members were supportive of the proposal suggesting the project was worthwhile, but it may be beneficial if the projects were prioritised as a collective “doing it together could add value”

RESOLVED -

- (i) To approve the allocation of £100,000 from the North and West Yorkshire Business Rates Pool to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority for the North and West Yorkshire Climate Emergency Evidence Base.
- (ii) That following consultation with Members authority’s project be priorities with a view to achieving the largest benefits
- (iii) To endorse the proposed governance arrangements outlined in Appendix 1 of the submitted report

20 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

That the date and time of the next meeting be arranged in consultation with the Chair.

21 OPTIONS FOR BUSINESS RATES POOLING IN 2020/21

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

- a) The current position with regards to the future of pool's piloting 75% business rates retention of funding;
- b) The characteristics of the 50% business rates retention scheme;
- c) Options available to authorities for pooling in 2020/21;
- d) Actions required if member authorities wish to change the Pool membership.

RESOLVED –

- (a) To note the actions and timescales required in Paragraph 6 of the submitted report
- (b) Members accepted that further consideration was necessary, but in view of the urgency required, final approval be delegated to the Chair following discussions with Members to identify an option for Business Rates Pooling in 2020/21