

LEEDS CITY REGION BUSINESS RATES JOINT COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, 29TH MARCH, 2019

Present: Councillor T Swift (Calderdale MBC) - Chair
Councillor S Hinchcliffe (City of Bradford MDC), Councillor S Pandor (Kirklees MC), Councillor R Cooper (Harrogate BC), Councillor J Blake (Leeds City Council) and Councillor I Gillies (City of York Council)

In Attendance: J Gedman (Kirklees MC), R Tuddenham (Calderdale MBC), A Reiss (WYCA), E Campbell (WYCA), T Riordan (LCC), D Meeson (LCC) C Jolly (LCC) and J Grieve (LCC)

1 APPEAL AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

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

2 LATE ITEMS

The Chair suggested that in light of recent events concerning Welcome to Yorkshire it was appropriate that a statement be made on behalf of this Committee. Members were supportive of the suggestion (Minute No. 8 referred)

3 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 C & E to Agenda Item No.8, Business Rate Pool Progress Report was 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 No.9 Referred.

4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Box

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of any pecuniary interest made at the meeting.

6 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th July 2018 were approved as a true and correct record.

7 MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no issues raised under Matters Arising

8 Welcome to Yorkshire

The Chair said Members will be aware of the recent problems associate with Welcome to Yorkshire which resulted in the resignation of their Chief Executive.

Whilst recognising the work of the organisation in promoting the Yorkshire Brand, the Chair said he was now seeking an urgent meeting with the new Chief Executive and the Welcome to Yorkshire Board to discuss the governance and accountability arrangements and to seek assurances around an independent review, the timing of that review and how its findings would be made public.

The Committee were aware that there were some significant events taking place in the near future and with the support of staff would these events would continue as scheduled.

9 LEEDS CITY REGION BUSINESS RATES POOL PROGRESS REPORT

The Chief Officer Financial Services, Leeds City Council submitted a report which provided an update on progress of the Leeds City Region Business Rates Pool, in particular:

- a) The current position of the LCR Pool, including an overview of the 2017/18 final financial position and the latest income projections for the LCR Pool 2018/19;
- b) The current spending commitments for 2018/19;
- c) An update on the financial arrangements with Welcome to Yorkshire (WTY), with confirmation that the third (and final) instalment of grant in 2018/19 has been paid;
- d) Options to utilise the projected additional income in 2018/9;
- e) An update on the successful application by North and West Yorkshire Authorities to pilot 75% business rates retention, including actions required by LCR Member authorities;

- f) A request to approve an amended 2018/19 Governance Agreement, to allow the accountable body to continue to make payments after the Pool is revoked.

The meeting went into closed session to receive further details about a number of schemes as referred to in confidential appendices C & E

RESOLVED –

- a) To note the final outturn levies for 2017/18 as set out in paragraph 2 of the submitted report
- b) To note estimated pool income to be generated by the 2018/19 100% retention pilot at paragraph 3;
- c) To note the existing spending commitments for 2018-19 and the estimated funds available as a result of the business rates pilot in 2018-19, discussed in paragraph 4;
- d) That in respect of the agreed schemes which involve spending beyond the 31st March 2019, to agree that this funding is transferred to the appropriate, sponsoring member authority in 2018/19, who would then be responsible for delivering the funding for the schemes in accordance with the original approval.
- e) To note the update on funding provided to Leeds Bradford Airport and agree that the funds be held by Leeds City Council to ensure state aid compliance
- f) To agree the revised application from Bradford with respect to the Bradford Literature Festival scheme at paragraph 4.9 and Appendix D;
- g) To note the position in relation to funding for Welcome to Yorkshire as set out in paragraph 5;
- h) With reference to paragraph 6.6, to agree utilising projected additional income to fund Screen Yorkshire (one year only). The remaining surplus being allocated to member authorities and be subject to further discussion at a later date
- i) To note the success of the application to pilot 75% business rates retention in a North and West Yorkshire Business Rates Pool, and

ensure that each authority puts in place appropriate approval and governance arrangements to move into this new Pool, as set out in paragraph 7;

- j) To approve an amended 2018/19 Governance Agreement, to allow the accountable body to make payments on behalf of the LCR Pool after the Pool is revoked, as set out in paragraph 7.2.

10 LCR Business Rates Pool (BRP) - Monitoring of Delivery Update

The Head of European Structural and Investment Funds, and Future Funding Policy, West Yorkshire Combined Authority/ Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (the LEP) submitted a report which provided an update on the delivery progress of the 27 projects approved by the Joint Committee at its last meeting on 13th July 2018.

Members were informed that the majority of projects remained on track and were moving forward.

RESOLVED – That the progress on project delivery be noted and welcomed.

11 Any other Business

Members were informed that Doug Meeson, Chief Officer – Financial Services, Leeds City Council was retiring from the Council after a long and distinguished career.

Members joined the Chair in expressing their thanks, appreciation and best wishes to Doug on his forthcoming retirement.