

POLICY UPDATE

May 2021



West & North
Yorkshire Chamber
of Commerce
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Regional / National

Economy – In response to the coronavirus outbreak the Chamber has created access to relevant information to help businesses through these difficult times, details can be found here www.wnychamber.co.uk/coronavirus

Brexit – The Chamber continues to support businesses get used to new trade procedures following the end of the Transition Period. More information here www.wnychamber.co.uk/europe. The Chamber met with the secretariat of the newly formed [Trade & Business Commission](#) (this is the replacement for the Brexit Select Committee and which is chaired by Leeds MP and long standing Chamber friend Hilary Benn). Subsequently we were asked to field representatives to provide feedback to an evidence gathering session, with Chamber member Verder, a West Yorkshire based engineering firm sharing the challenges they have been facing with moving goods into Europe (the session were recorded and are available [here](#))

COVID – Further progress on reopening the economy took place in May with indoor entertainment venues, hospitality and leisure all now allowed to open. Early feedback is that demand appears to be strong but that many firms are struggling to hire staff with reports of 2-3 week waiting lists to book at indoor venues and 25% vacancy rates amongst employers in hospitality.

Skills – Government published a call for expressions of interest from business representative groups to deliver proposed [Local Skills Improvement Plans](#) (LSIP). This follows lobbying from the Chamber network about a greater role for business in post-16 skills development and delivery and follows up on the 'Skills for Jobs' white paper published in January. The Chamber has submitted bids in to lead LSIP activities in both West Yorkshire and North Yorkshire. We expect to be notified in July if successful, after which more detailed preparations with partner organisations will need to take place.

Devolution – The Chamber [welcomed](#) the election of new West Yorkshire Mayor, Tracy Brabin. Having supported the concept of devolving powers and funding to enable regional strategic planning and decision making since it was first mooted in 2010, we look forward to working with Tracy to deliver on her plans.

Pensions – The Chamber met with the Pensions Regulator to discuss auto-enrolment, the impact of climate strategies and [Project Bloom](#), a government led task force, was set up to tackle pension fraud

Bradford

Property Forum – The Steering Group has been boosted by the addition of four new members. The group now includes Justin Robinson (Hayfield Robinson), Yaseen Mohammed (Y Property), Simon Mydlowski (Knights) and Richard Merrills (Watson Batty).

Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic Committee – Three out of four of the sub-groups have now met to consider the various ways in which the committee can operate and support the wider work of the Chamber. A list of recommendations and potential actions is now being worked through before next steps are determined. The committee is due to meet again on 15 June, when Leeds Council CEO Tom Riordan will meet with and speak to them.

Transport – Plans to introduce a [clean air zone](#) in Bradford will come into force in January 2022 it has been confirmed.

Leeds

Transport – The DFT confirmed that proposed new stations at Thorpe Park and White Rose Office park would both go ahead. Both of these schemes will support further development for employment sites and much needed housing in the city. We continue to push for the go ahead for station plans at Leeds-Bradford Airport which we see as complimentary to the plans for the redesign of the airport terminal building. Full Chamber response [here](#)

City Council –Cllr James Lewis, has been confirmed as Leader of Leeds City Council following the May local elections. James takes over from Cllr Judith Blake, who has stepped down as a councillor following her appointment to the House of Lords.

Economy - Strong signs of economic recovery following the reopening of non-essential retail in April and, more recently, of indoor entertainment, leisure and hospitality have all contributed to increasing footfall in the city centre with Briggate, on May 22nd, recording it's highest single day's footfall since the start of the crisis

York & North Yorkshire

Planning – the long awaited (c.60 years!) York Local Plan is out for consultation and includes green belt modifications. This plan sets out land allocations for employment, housing and infrastructure; it also defines the green belt and is one of the key underlying policies to ensure sustainable recovery and economic growth in the future.

Economy – City of York Council are conducting research which explores the challenges and opportunities businesses face in York city centre post-Covid. The business survey can be found [here](#)

Media Coverage

May: <https://share.coveragebook.com/b/19cc24a4698d4cc6>

Sources of local authority Covid grant support

Local Authority	Website	Contact details
Leeds	https://www.leeds.gov.uk/coronavirus/business#small	
Bradford	https://www.bradford.gov.uk/business/help-for-businesses/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-business/#brr	business.rates@bradford.gov.uk 01274 437744
York	https://www.york.gov.uk/COVIDBusinessGrant	01904 551550
Harrogate	https://www.harrogate.gov.uk/info/20202/business_support/1310/business_rates_coronavirus_grants	01423 500600
Selby	https://www.selby.gov.uk/covid-19-business-grants	01757 705101
Craven	https://www.cravenc.gov.uk/business/business-rates/business-rates-government-grants/	01756 700600
Ryedale	https://www.ryedale.gov.uk/covid-19-2020/support-for-businesses.html	01653 600666
Richmondshire	https://www.richmondshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/coronavirus/support-for-businesses/apply-for-business-grant-covid-19/	01748 829100
Scarborough	https://www.scarborough.gov.uk/home/business-licensing-and-grants/small-business-grant-fund-and-retail-hospitality-and-leisure	01723 232323
North Yorkshire CC	https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/help-your-business-during-coronavirus-covid-19	01609 780780
Hambleton	https://www.hambleton.gov.uk/info/20038/health_and_wellbeing/1043/coronavirus_covid-19/6	01609 779977
Wakefield	http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/business/business-rates/reliefs/small-business-grant	01977 727 121 nndr@wakefield.gov.uk
Kirklees	https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/health-and-well-being/coronavirus-businesses-and-self-employed.aspx#grants	business.rates@kirklees.gov.uk 01484 414941
Calderdale	https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/v2/businesses/business-rates/covid-19-business-support	