

POLICY UPDATE

January 2021



West & North
Yorkshire Chamber
of Commerce
British Chambers of Commerce
Accredited

POLICY UPDATE : JANUARY 2021

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

Devolution - The Chamber working with other organisations is planning to deliver a mayoral hustings in late March / early April. The first session will be in partnership with CBI and FSB on March 23rd, the second session in partnership with Centre for Cities on April 1st.

CJRS (Furlough scheme) –The Chamber network continues to lobby for an extension to the furlough scheme for as long as any kind of restrictions remain in place. In addition we have stated that we would not want to see any kind of tapering of support leading to additional costs to business.

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 most common questions being raised relate to Rules of Origin, but other concerns over VAT payments and transition documents. The BCC have given evidence to the international trade select committee and the House of Lords EU Goods Committee.

Skills – The release of the Government's Skills for Jobs White Paper in January references the potential role of accredited Chambers in working with businesses to ensure future provision of post-16 skills are aligned with supply. The full Chamber response is available [here](#). Details of the Skills for Jobs report are available [here](#).

COVID restrictions – The Prime Minister is expected to set out his plans and a route map out of restrictions to the country on February 22nd

Transport – West Yorkshire Combined Authority have released plans for a mass transit scheme and wider transport upgrades across the county. The Chamber has [welcomed these plans](#), calling them ambitious. Full details of the plans can be found [here](#)

Bradford

Covid-19: Lateral Flow Testing for businesses -Manufacturers and others unable to have many staff working from home have taken part in a pilot project to distribute testing kits into the workplace. Although the Government has just offered this activity nationally to businesses with more than 50 staff the local pilot remains available to offer its service to other, smaller employers. The Chamber worked closely with the Council and public health representatives to roll out the pilot, and continues to liaise with them via a weekly Testing Working Group.

Green Streets Project - The Chamber has been approached to assist and support a local initiative to improve the environmental credentials of retailers in Bradford, looking at low energy products, supply chains and consumer trends.

Planning - A consultation is currently underway in Bradford on future spatial planning, including land use for commercial and residential allocation and development. A Property Forum event on 2 March will consider the details, and Steering Group members have already raised concerns over the anticipated shortage of land identified.

Leeds

Transport – Consultations are taking place to review the Leeds Transport Strategy, details [here](#). The Chamber Transport Group will be responding to this.

Town Fund – The Chamber has been working with Leeds City Council to put together a bid into the Government's Town Fund Deals fund on behalf of Morley. The final bid was submitted at the end of January and includes proposals fund projects totalling up to £25m, the full Chamber response is available [here](#)

York & North Yorkshire

Devolution – The Chamber has publicly backed proposals for the abolition of North Yorkshire District Authorities in order for a devolution settlement to be put forward which will see City of York Council and the new North Yorkshire unitary authority be able to form a Combined Authority. A CA is a requirement in order to devolve powers from Whitehall. A competing proposal to abolish City of York Council and create two unitary authorities split east-west along the route of the A1 we felt would not serve the economy as well. More information can be found here <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/about-devolution>

Planning – The Chamber has responded publicly to plans by the City of York Council to downgrade the role of Assistant Director of Planning. The Chamber feels that planning is a critical function and that to lower the status of the function within the council, especially at a time when the city is still trying to get its Local Plan approved is deeply flawed. Full response here <https://www.wnychamber.co.uk/news/representation-from-york-property-forum/>

Media Coverage

January: <https://share.coveragebook.com/b/1e746e470fd25043>

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	