

POLICY UPDATE

February 2022



West & North
Yorkshire Chamber
of Commerce
British Chambers of Commerce
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POLICY UPDATE : FEBRUARY 2022

Regional / National

BAME Group - The committee met in February and heard from West Yorkshire Mayor Tracy Brabin, who also brought with her WYCA Managing Director, Ben Still, and her Chief of Staff, Mike Hawking. Tracy again showed an eagerness to engage with and listen to the business community, while the committee agreed to stage another 'Meet the Chamber' event on 10 March.

Transport - Policy team representatives and the Leeds President, Mike Briffett, met with Minister of State for Transport, Andrew Stephenson MP to reiterate our region's strong claims to better infrastructure and investment. Government officials are clearly in fire-fighting mode following the disappointing Integrated Rail Plan announcement, with the Minister sent out to smooth things over. The Chief Executive and Head of Policy also met with members of the House of Commons Transport Select Committee, when they expressed extreme disappointment with the details of the Integrated Rail Plan.

Levelling Up - Representatives also met with Andrew Hood (Special Adviser to Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities) and Andrew Gilligan (Special Adviser on Transport to the Prime Minister). The Advisers stressed that they are still listening to arguments for more investment to fund the Levelling Up White Paper 'missions', but difficult decisions are being made all the time.

Engaging with Schools - The team have been speaking to regional businesses on how, and to what level, they engage with secondary schools. The purpose of the exercise is to eventually improve on the quality of careers guidance being undertaken in schools, in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Bradford

Skills – We are involved in discussions to roll out a 'Bradford Skills Month' during Autumn. Talks currently include Bradford Council and Newsquest Media Group, and Bradford Vice-President Mark Cowgill is heading up for the Chamber.

Economy – Bradford's Economic Recovery Group (created at the beginning of the pandemic) has agreed to continue meeting on a monthly basis in order to monitor business and economic needs as the post-Covid transition continues. (The group has gradually scaled back from weekly, to fortnightly, and now monthly.)

Skills – The Chamber is part of a small group working on developing a programme of events that will see the creation of a 'Bradford Skills Month' in the autumn. The overarching initiative will encompass Bradford's Manufacturing Weeks, Tech Week, and activities relating to health and social care, and culture and literacy.

Leeds

Property Forum – The Steering Group met in February, with actions including inviting representatives from WYCA and the Council to discuss latest skills initiatives with the group. Leeds MP, and current Minister for Housing, Stuart Andrew, is to also be invited to address a full Forum event later in the year.

Manufacturing – Leeds Manufacturing Festival was launched in early February. Now into its fifth year, the programme of events links employers with schools across the city. The policy team has been invited to join the Leeds Manufacturing Alliance steering group which oversees this event, our intention is to provide more input into the wider policy needs of the sector.

Environment – The Chamber attended a meeting with the Leeds Climate Commission and a group of property developers to discuss commercial building retrofitting and the barriers to making this happen.

Skills – The Chamber attended a meeting for the Future Talent Leeds steering group which is developing the city's strategy in tackling skills shortages.

Manufacturing – Members of the team went along to a Leeds Manufacturing Festival event to support the promotion of 'T Levels' to the sector. The two-year qualifications for 16-19 year olds are now available in 20 courses, covering 11 skills areas.

They have been designed with employers, to give them the skilled workforce they need by helping young people develop their knowledge, attitude and practical skills to thrive in the workplace.

Green Economy – The Chamber was present at the launch of the Green Finance Innovation Network in Leeds. The network will organise networking events, challenge competitions and signpost businesses to funding and support opportunities. It will also disseminate best practice, research insights and open datasets from CGFI and the broader UK scientific community.

York & North Yorkshire

Planning – The Chamber has been invited to give evidence to government inspectors in relation to the City of York Local Plan. This is a long standing area of policy work and we hope to see this resolved within the next 12 months.

Skills – The Chamber attended the latest meeting of the YNY LEP Employment & Skills Board, helping the LEP develop future skills strategies and identify and support public sector investment which will give business access to the skills they need to grow.

Education – The Chamber President met with York St John University to explore areas for future collaboration. The discussion covered opportunities for start-up businesses to access Chamber services as part of the university's new incubator unit.

Technology companies – Chamber president has written a paper to explore how the tech sector and the Chamber working with local authorities and the YNY LEP might facilitate greater collaboration and dialogue to help expand the sector both in terms of economic activity but also awareness raising with policy makers.

Media Coverage

February: <https://share.coveragebook.com/b/e673f8ce44693adc>

Stakeholder Meetings

Date	Stakeholder meeting
01/02/22	BMW event – Increase Profitability through Innovation
01/02/22	Leeds Manufacturing Festival – Launch event
01/02/22	Local Skills Improvement Plan update
01/02/22	Great British Railways consultation
02/02/22	Chamber Environment Group
02/02/22	York & North Yorkshire Intelligence Round Table
02/02/22	BCC Policy Call (Levelling Up White Paper)
03/02/22	North Yorkshire LEP Skills & Employability Board
04/02/22	YCTD Employer Board
04/02/22	Leeds Beckett University
07/02/22	Bradford Skills House/Education catch-up
07/02/22	LPF Quality, Places & Spaces Sub-Group
07/02/22	Northern Regional Assembly meeting with Transport for the North CEO
08/02/22	Bank of England – Economic Prospects
08/02/22	BCC Employment & Skills Group
08/02/22	Bulgarian Trade Mission to Leeds update meeting
08/02/22	Bank of China
09/02/22	BAMA Steering Group
09/02/22	BCC Youth Skills Policy Group
10/02/22	LPF Steering Group
10/02/22	Decarbonising Leeds commercial sector
11/02/22	York & North Yorkshire Principals meeting
14/02/22	York Business Intelligence meeting
15/02/22	BAME Committee
15/02/22	Dept for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC)

15/02/22	BCC Clean Air Zone Group
15/02/22	BCC Brexit, Borders & Trade meeting
15/02/22	Wakefield-Selby College
16/02/22	Future Talent Leeds Listening Event
16/02/22	DLUHC Special Adviser Andrew Hood and No 10 Special Adviser Andrew Gilligan
16/02/22	York Business Leader Round Table
17/02/22	Bradford Economic Recovery Group
17/02/22	Leeds Future Talent Steering Group
18/02/22	Teesside International Airport – visit/meeting
18/02/22	Chamber Transport Group
18/02/22	Leeds Rail Programme Board
18/02/22	Phil Witcherley, WYCA
22/02/22	BCC Trade Policy Committee
22/02/22	Andrew Stephenson MP (Minister for Transport)
24/02/22	Bradford Skills Month Focus Group
24/02/22	House of Commons Transport Select Committee (Leeds & Bradford)
24/02/22	Manufacturing Futures Reconvene
25/02/22	Careers & Enterprise Company Employer Standards
28/02/22	Green Finance Innovation Network

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	