



Yorkshire Leaders Board

Annual Report July 2020 to June 2021

















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From 53,730 in Ryedale to 793,139 in Leeds

AREA

the largest 7th region in England



15,408 square kilometres

LANDSCAPE





Urban

Home of 3 of the 10 largest cities in the UK



Rural

2 national parks



Coastal

Several ports

EMPLOYMENT

Working age population (16-64)

3.4m

in employment

Top employment categories

14.1% Wholesale & retail trade

13.6% Human health & social work

10.7% Manufacturing

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Yorkshire & Humber at a glance

Source: Office for National Statistics

BUSINESS



Almost 190k

businesses

88%
of them are
classed as
micro
(between 0-9 employees)

ECONOMY

Average full time earnings

£538.90

per week

(UK: £585.50)

Gross value added

£21,426

per head

(UK: £27,555)





As Leaders of two different types of councils, from two different parts of our region, and from two different political parties, it is our joint privilege and pleasure to co-chair the Yorkshire Leaders Board and introduce this annual report.

There are many things to celebrate about our region, its communities and its local authorities, and this last year has clearly demonstrated those. The pandemic has given us the opportunity to think differently about how we work and what we provide, and has galvanised partnership working – not just between councils, but within our local places partners have stepped up to work together to protect our places from the worst of the impacts.

This report demonstrates the innovation, collaboration and commitment that has been achieved in the last twelve months, giving us a great springboard to go forward as a group, both in tackling long lasting challenges and making the most of coming opportunities. Despite the challenges faced, we are proud of what we have achieved together over this past 12 months.

As we head into this new year, our promise is to build on and to continue this track record of partnership and achievement for the benefit of all of the places and communities across Yorkshire and the Humber. Our region has a proud heritage and huge strength, and going forward with shared ambitions we hope to help make better lives for all, levelling up both for this and future generations.







4 Lephun Noughton

Clirs Carl Les and Stephen Houghton *Co-Chairs, Yorkshire Leaders Board*

It's been a privilege to lead the Yorkshire and Humber Chief Executive group through this last year. Who of us know how to lead and manage the response to a global pandemic? There certainly was no playbook. At times the complex and diverse challenges of this extraordinary year tested all of our accumulated wisdom, experience and skills. But we stuck together and our sector stepped up magnificently. Our politicians and workforce were at the heart of support to communities.

I want to say a huge thank you to all of my fellow Chief Executives. It's been a great time for collaboration, with much mutual support, standing together and shared problem solving. A particular thank you must go to Sarah Norman, Chief Executive of Barnsley, who chaired the influential Regional Covid Coordination group and to colleagues across our sub regions - Richard Flinton, Robin Tuddenham, Matt Gladstone and Andy Burton - who have played a lead role for local authorities in the world of local resilience for and who have been central to the partnership response within the region.

Despite the inevitable reprioritisation of our work in 2020/21 we made important progress and contributions in other areas which are covered in this report. As we enter this year we are as committed as ever to support our political leaders and to make common cause as we rebuild prosperity with and for the communities we serve.



Korsten Englid.

Kersten England

Chair, Yorkshire and Humber Chief Executive's Group















Introduction







In 2020, the Yorkshire Leaders Board made a commitment to strengthen collaborative working across the Yorkshire and Humber region, with the full support of Government Ministers, recognising that, done well, this type of partnership across local authorities, and working with partners, could allow the region to influence policy development that allows problems to be solved at scale.

With this in mind, Leaders set out an overarching strategy for 2020/21, setting out key principles for working together, priorities and objectives, and identifying key partners who could assist councils to deliver sustainable change across our region.

The Board identified a number of priority areas to focus on, which were set out in the Yorkshire and Humber Business Plan 2020/21. These were:



Zero carbon/climate change. Work together to achieve ambitious carbon reduction targets, using our influence to ensure everyone from individuals to large business is committed to reducing their own footprint. Make significant progress by 2030 with the aim of being overall net carbon zero by 2038.



Tourism, retail, hospitality. Restore and rebuild the hospitality, leisure and tourism offer in our places; furthering collaborative working and co-ordination of resource around tourism and culture, using our assets to capitalise on a thriving visitor economy and ensuring this reflects the diverse needs of the region.



Local Government Finance. Develop a clear understanding of what the Yorkshire and Humber region needs in terms of funding, taking individual need and areas of conflict into account, using the collective power of a shared voice to highlight our common issues.



Transport and infrastructure. How we can use transport and infrastructure to restart our economy and connect our communities to economic opportunity within the shifting contexts and phases of lockdown release, social distancing and beyond.



Post EU Exit transition. Work towards a place-based approach to inclusive growth, ensuring the opportunities of the post EU environment are considered and addressed for our businesses and communities alongside the twin challenge of the coronavirus pandemic, and opportunities to shape Government policy are seized with a collaborative and strong voice.



Flooding. Implementation of the collaborative work programme around flood management and mitigation, protecting our communities and businesses against future flood events.

Work across priority areas focussed on three key strands of activity:

- ✓ Lobbying. Using our collective voice to influence national policymakers.
- ✓ Capability/capacity. Utilising strong relationships to build capability and capacity within councils and partners.
- ✓ Engagement and communication. Bringing together partners, ensuring the flow of rich intelligence informs our work as a collective but also within our local areas, and understand how we can help others.

It also sets out a shared endeavour to responding to the pandemic through local and national government partnership structures.

12 months on, this annual report sets out the activity and achievements made across the region, despite the challenges around the diversion of resources from wider collaborative working against the Business Plan priorities to support the needs of businesses and communities throughout the current pandemic.





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Covid response

The majority of work undertaken at a regional level over the past 12 months has, rightly, focused on responding to the coronavirus pandemic.

Pandemic work linked to specific priorities will be covered under the relevant section, however the below provides a flavour of the vast array of activity undertaken since March 2020.

<u>Strengthened relationships, engagement and</u> collaboration

- Increased officer engagement to share good practice, discuss concerns and undertake wider sector engagement, particularly Chief Executives and Directors of Public Health. Chief Executives have met weekly/bi-weekly for the majority of the pandemic, alongside the Regional Convenor, Public Health England, Local Government Association, and MHCLG. Topics included elections testing and arrangements, workforce matters, self-isolation support and vaccinations.
- ✓ Establishment of an influential multi-agency coordination group to consider the issues around test, trace and outbreak management. This group contained regional representatives from the Local Government Association (LGA), Directors of Public Health, Directors of Children's Services, Directors of Adult Services, Public Health England, DHSC Regional Programme Team, NHS England and Improvement, Integrated Care Systems, and Local Authority Chief Executives.
- Participation in national engagement vehicles, including: weekly forum for regional lead Chief Executives; vaccination steering group representation; community testing roundtables.
- ✓ Sector wide stress testing exercise undertaken to test the reasonable worst case scenario, in terms of outbreak management and contact tracing.

We have also made a long term ask of government for additional resources to help with localised pressures related to Covid..."

Lobbying and provision of evidence

At a regional level, a lot of effort has gone into providing evidence to Ministers and officials around testing system design and testing issues, regulation and enforcement, business support and self-isolation payments – particularly with regard to the last issue, where multiple submissions have been made demonstrating the additional value and funding local authorities across the region have provided to support people to self-isolate over and above the national grants received.

We have also made a long term ask of government for additional resources to help with localised pressures related to Covid, provided a coherent and agreed view on the reorganisation of Public Health England, and set out the benefits of increased access for councils public health teams to data around infection, testing and vaccinations. We have also utilised our regional forums to rollout good practice around vaccinations.

Peer/sector support approach

The Coordination Group commissioned the LGA to deliver a programme of shared learning activity for Yorkshire and Humber authorities around testing, tracing and outbreak management, including regional webinars jointly delivered with sector partners, case study development and good practice promotion, cascading learning and innovative practice, triaging issues, concerns and key themes with key national partners, and designing and delivering a regional sector-led peer challenge methodology and approach to support local areas in their preparedness.

A peer-support approach has also been developed, piloted, and adapted to reflect on, and learn from, authorities' approaches to and experiences of prevention and outbreak management. To date, two virtual Outbreak Management Peer Challenges have been delivered in North East Lincolnshire and the City of York, with another in the pipeline for North Yorkshire County Council. The peer challenges have provided high level peer feedback across the full scope of a locality's approach to outbreak management.

As an extension and innovation of this work, Hull City Council and Barnsley Council co-designed a bespoke 'twinning' Deep Dive peer support approach. It brought the two authorities together to share learning and provide critical friend challenge around their experiences of, and activities to tackle, high enduring transmission. Through this dialogue, lessons of relevance to national agencies were identified and shared through relevant national channels.

<u>Development of the Yorkshire and Humber strategic framework (roadmap)</u>

On 3 February 2021, a high profile workshop was held with a variety of regional and national partners to help create a "roadmap" to guide local government and partners in some of the planning and decisions that will be needed in 2021; to understand what may happen and when, identify the associated risks and opportunities and to help frame effective responses.

Following discussion against a number of potential scenarios throughout the year, a strategic framework was developed and published on 16 February 2021 to aid more granular, local level discussion and planning, and shared with national government partners to influence associated policy making and decisions.



Zero carbon / climate change

There has been a wealth of activity linked to this agenda over the last 12 months, with some real tangible achievements across a number of themes.

A shared commitment and vision

Members of the Yorkshire Leaders Board have made a shared commitment to work together to achieve ambitious carbon reduction targets, to make significant progress by 2030 with the aim of being overall net zero carbon by 2038.

Fostering stronger partner relations

available knowledge and investment.

As we have sought to develop our programme of work, at the regional level we have begun to

develop stronger relationships with key partners, particularly through the establishment of the Climate Commission. We continue to identify key contacts in central government and at the Local Government Association to understand the opportunities for Yorkshire and the Humber to influence national policy, contribute evidence, and benefit from

Stronger collaborative relations have also been developed with the North East, Yorkshire and Humber Energy Hub which is funded by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, and opportunities for developing energy and low carbon projects at the regional level are being explored.

Members of the Yorkshire Leaders Board have made a shared commitment to work together to achieve ambitious carbon reduction targets..."

The main focus of work in relation to the zero carbon agenda [...] has been the establishment of the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission..."

Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission

The main focus of work in relation to the zero carbon agenda across the Yorkshire Leaders Board for 2020/21 has been the establishment of the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission, which launched on 17 March 2021 and is believed to be the largest of its kind in the country. Seed funding of £40,000 was agreed by the Yorkshire Leaders Board to support the set-up of the Commission.

This was a partnership effort supported by Leaders across Yorkshire and Humber Councils, and was developed with the support of the

Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water, Northern Powergrid, Northern Gas Networks, the TUC, Yorkshire Universities and the University of Leeds. The Commission (which is hosted by the University of Leeds) is chaired by Liz Barber (CEO of Kelda Group and Yorkshire Water), and a senior elected member from each of the four sub regions serves as Vice-Chair to the Commission: Cllr Chris Matthews (Humber); Cllr Richard Cooper (North Yorkshire); Mayor Dan Jarvis (South Yorkshire); Cllr Jack Hemingway (West Yorkshire).

The Commission has four inter-related aims:

- ✓ to foster climate resilience and adaptation to climate risks and impacts;
- ✓ to support rapid progress towards net zero carbon emissions;
- to encourage a just and inclusive transition and climate actions that leave no-one and nowhere behind;
- ✓ to promote sustainability and climate actions that also protect nature and biodiversity.

The Commission will work towards its goals by enabling engagement, supporting constructive debate, strengthening the evidence base, promoting best practice, helping to build capacities for financing and delivery and regularly reviewing progress.

As its main initial task, the Commission will prepare a report on both net zero and climate resilience for Yorkshire and the Humber, to be submitted/presented to the UN COP26 summit in the autumn of 2021.

More information on this exciting venture can be found at: yorksandhumberclimate.org.uk

Policy development

As part of a Yorkshire and Humber submission to the 2020 spending review, a series of zero carbon related policy and finance asks were developed. Further policy asks are currently being developed.

The Circular Economy

A circular economy aims to design waste out of our communities and businesses, keep products and materials in use for as long as possible, and regenerate farmland and natural systems. Work has been undertaken during the year to raise awareness of this across the region, with a potential rollout of the North Yorkshire circular economy initiative anticipated for later in 2021.



Local Government Finance

In what has been a challenging year financially, a recent strategic reset has resulted in concentrated focus on specific areas of local government finance seen as priorities for the months ahead. Key achievements in 2020/21 include:

- A regular reconciliation exercise of the financial position of all authorities in the region was undertaken to establish a Yorkshire and Humber wide position and identify areas of concern, key priorities for collaboration and potential lobbying going forward.
- ✓ Directors of Finance took part in several on line events during the course of the year including a forum in June 2020 to facilitate shared learning on the impact of the pandemic on council finances. The session was also used as a framework for understanding the main issues affecting the region's authorities to feed into the regional lobbying approach and an initial basis for the Yorkshire and Humber spending review submission.
- ✓ A Yorkshire and Humber submission was made to the spending review in September 2020, with key asks covering: financial certainty and freedoms; addressing inequalities in disadvantaged households; support for communities and families at risk of poor outcomes; support for business sustainability; restoration of visitor economy; sustainable social care; enhanced research and development.



Communications and engagement

A key part of our work, informing what we do and actions we should take, is a cross-cutting thread of communications and engagement activity, and increased engagement with our key regional and political stakeholders.

Over the last 12 months the following activities have taken place around communications and engagement:

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environmental
issues".

Engagement

- ▶ Participation in the Regional nine Chief Executives group (R9). The group acts as an informal information network to help councils and central government prepare for big issues such as Brexit and coronavirus response, and act as a sounding board on a range of issues, helping officials across Whitehall better engage with Local Government. Over the course of the last 12 months, Kersten England and Tom Riordan have represented the Yorkshire and Humber region at these weekly sessions.
- ✔ Regular engagement via the MHCLG Local Government Relationships Team, to provide
- sector-wide intelligence, co-produce solutions with local government, and facilitate engagement with wider Government Departments on critical policy priorities.
- Chief Executive representation on a number of other national working groups, including: Shielding stakeholder forum; Vaccine steering group; Equalities group and the Health Bill Working Group.
- Partner agencies have been engaged individually on specific actions/priority areas, such as flooding, tourism, and wider environmental issues.
- ✓ The One Yorkshire Committee was commissioned to facilitate increased partner engagement on behalf of the region, particularly in relation to areas of priority for the Yorkshire Leaders Board. A series of 'Together Yorkshire' events took place in the Autumn and the Committee is currently working with us to host a Yorkshire Reception in Parliament in October 2021.
- ✓ The Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire All Party Parliamentary Group was commissioned to facilitate increased political engagement on behalf of the region, particularly in relation to areas of priority for the Yorkshire Leaders Board. Most recently they have been assisting the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission to establish a national policy group, raising awareness and engagement with politicians and Ministers.
- Greater sector level engagement has been undertaken with Yorkshire Universities, health system colleagues and with the Regional Partnership Team based at the Department of Health and Social Care.

Communications

- ✓ We have established an online presence, both via a website and social media, allowing a clear avenue for engagement and providing information. You can find our website at www.yhcouncils.org.uk. The site will grow as collaborative work programmes increase.
- ✓ We have also created a clear brand for the Board, and wider regional working, which should allow partners and the public to identify our work, and provides a more professional tone to our publications and communications.



Levelling up

Levelling up has emerged during the year as a clear priority for national government, as well as being identified by the region. The following activities have taken place around levelling up:

Work has been begun with Yorkshire Universities (YU) to define what levelling up means for the Yorkshire and Humber region, what action we can take across our sectors locally, and how we can work with government; and how higher education organisations can work with places where there is currently no discreet presence to build better and productive partnerships bespoke to their areas.

has emerged during year as a clear priority for national government, as well as being identified by the region".

✓ Working with the LGA, Yorkshire and Humber councils submitted joint feedback into the Treasury Review of the Green Book.



Elections

A number of discussions took place amongst Returning Officers and their teams across the region to lobby and share best practice, with the aim of ensuring elections went ahead as smoothly and consistently as possible. In particular discussions enabled some consistency of approach in relation to polling day, postal vote opening and the counting of votes and what was required, and joint lobbying led to the introduction of a position and flexibility in terms of provision of Lateral Flow Tests for election staff, additional funding and indemnity for Covid elections for all Returning Officers, and a rethink of the decision to not allow campaigners to deliver leaflets door to door.



Workforce

Over the past year the Yorkshire and Humber Employers Association has been supporting Chief Executives and colleagues across human resources and organisational development, particularly around the workforce impacts of Covid-19, both in terms of immediate responses to a very fluid situation and the wider organisational developments impacts; sharing good practice, advocating consistent approaches, managing and making connections, and influencing at the national level. There has been a considerable scale and pace of change that has been delivered across local authorities, and much of this will inform substantial future changes that will continue to form 'a new normal' of hybrid and more flexible working as we move into a new year.



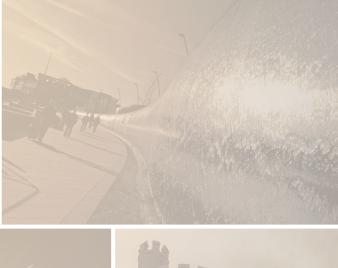
Migration and asylum

Local authorities have worked collectively with Migration Yorkshire on a range of developments to enable the region to deal with and benefit from migration, with the lead Chief Executive for Migration and Cohesion regularly meeting Government departments. Regional working has enabled a more consistent approach, that responds to change faster and more effectively. Key work during the year has included ensuring migrants are included in Covid and related health planning responses, limiting the impacts

Regional working has enabled a more consistent approach, that responds to change faster and more effectively."

of temporary accommodation on asylum seekers and local communities, providing support for vulnerable migrants including unaccompanied children and families resettled from outside the UK, supporting EU migrants to regularise their status, and increasing integration programmes.









2. Forward look for the next 12 months







As already mentioned, due to the pressures of Covid, resources have rightly been diverted to focus on response and recovery efforts during 2020/21, and ensuring that key statutory functions held by local government continued to be undertaken. This means that some of the ambitions held for regional collaboration were placed on pause, or were unable to be progressed as much as originally desired.

Below we briefly set out our collaboration plans for the coming year for key regional priorities.



Covid response

As we move forward and the risks of Covid recede as the impact of vaccinations increase, we hope that it will be possible to scale down our work in this area. However, we will continue to monitor the impact of variants of concern, coordinating support across the region as required and monitor progress with vaccine delivery, sharing best practice on addressing vaccine inequalities and vaccine hesitancy.

We are also working to bring our experience of partnership and collaboration to influence the design of the future public health system, whilst broader recovery work will take place within the wider workstreams identified.

We will continue to monitor the impact of variants of concern, coordinating support across the region as required..."



Zero carbon / climate change

Over the next 12 months we want to focus on the broader objectives originally identified, with some specific areas of policy development currently being explored, building a stronger foundation for shared learning across our region, and supporting the Climate Commission in its primary aim of developing an action plan to submit to COP26. More specifically:

- ✔ Climate Commission. As well as the core focus on net zero and resilience the commission will also support a number of panels that will progress key areas such as Communities, Inclusion and Engagement, the Green Economy including a focus on skills and employment, and Research and Evidence.
- ✓ Circular economy. A series of awareness raising events around the principles of a circular economy will be developed and delivered, which will inform a wider collaborative Circular Yorkshire programme of work.
- ✓ Shared learning and communications. Exploring the networks available to support this work programme and further lobbying and policy development opportunities, and build stronger links between local authorities and with national partners; facilitating the sharing of good practice, awareness raising and wider knowledge/mentoring support.

The work programme will review opportunities to link to the government's 10 point plan for a green industrial revolution..."

✓ **Policy development.** Focusing on a small number of policy development/lobbying asks developed by the group, with a view to informing the multi-year spending review and wider opportunities.

The work programme will review opportunities to link to the government's 10 point plan for a green industrial revolution and the energy white paper to develop a green industrial strategy for the region as part of our 'levelling up' agenda.

We will continue ongoing engagement with local, regional and national partners in the pursuit of our ambitions.



Local Government Finance

Work will be undertaken over the coming year in the following areas:

- Establishing a case for fairer funding around social care to use as a basis for collaborative lobbying.
- Exploration of pressures in relation to community costs and what can be achieved at a regional level.
- ✓ Formulate a submission to the next Comprehensive Spending Review, focussing on 'big ticket' items and delivering a longer term settlement.
- New funding streams to be considered through shared ideas and possible commissioned work.

Our ambition

for 2021/22

remains the

to promote

voice..."

same: to harness

communications

and engagement

the strength of

our collective



Communications and engagement

Our ambition for 2021/22 remains the same: to harness communications and engagement to promote the strength of our collective voice and endeavours to bring about change for our places, help our businesses and communities to recover from the coronavirus pandemic, and look to how we can achieve better outcomes for our region in the future. This will be achieved by:

- Utilising all available government engagement channels and creating new ones where we can.
- Establishing a programme of meetings and engagement events over the next 12 months.
- ✓ Identifying those areas where public communications and messages benefit from a single, coherent voice, and where appropriate working together to develop these.



Levelling up

Over the next 12 months, levelling up will become the key priority for the Yorkshire Leaders Board, with work planned to:

- ✓ Define what levelling up means for Yorkshire as a whole, and develop a set of shared metrics.
- ✓ Develop a 'knowledge-transfer' type approach for greater collaborative working and knowledge exchange between higher education and local government.
- Explore a shared YU/Yorkshire and Humber Councils policy, analysis and lobbying function.
- Develop pilots of local, sub-regional economic and economic inclusion initiatives in partnerships with universities.



Flooding

A detailed work programme, building on the work of the Yorkshire Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC), is now in the process of being finalised, with particular emphasis in 2021/22 being placed on the following issues:

- Considering how best to work together on shared strategic plans including around investment. This will tie in with and complement work by the Yorkshire RFCC to look at how best to maximise partnership funding.
- ✔ Plans are currently underway to host a high-level Flooding Resilience Summit sometime in the autumn this year or early next year in collaboration with One Yorkshire Committee, with a focus on sharing and showcasing collaborative flood risk and water management across the region and the multiple benefits achievable.
- Plans are currently underway to host a high-level Flooding Resilience Summit..."
- ✓ Identifying opportunities for collaboration from the two adaptive pathways trials in the Yorkshire and Humber region.
- ✓ Supporting flood related issues considered by the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission, particularly the 'Climate Resilience' panel.



Tourism, hospitality and culture

Throughout the pandemic, Councils have been doing what they can within their own local areas to support businesses in this sector, arguably the hardest hit sector of all.

At the regional level, we have recently commissioned Policy Yorkshire to undertake a study to understand the impact of Covid-19 on the region's culture, hospitality, leisure and tourism sectors, and to look at their economic potential in the future. While work has begun, the majority of the 'hard lifting' will take place during 2021/22. Once we have proposals for how recovery could be supported, we will look further into how councils can work with partners to play their part.

The work will be undertaken in two stages:

- ✓ Stage one of the research will focus on the impact that the pandemic has had on all of these sectors, providing an evidence base on which to build and identify any gaps in knowledge and understanding, and to identify innovative practice used throughout the pandemic that could have wider applications.
- ✓ Stage two will explore and develop proposals to support recovery.



Transport and infrastructure

Mechanisms have been put in place to take this work forward in 2021/22, led by one of our Mayoral Combined Authorities.

It is envisaged that work will focus on the following:

- ✓ Agreeing strategic transport priorities for Yorkshire and the Humber, focussing on cross-boundary priorities such as rail and the strategic highway network.
- Understanding the benefits of these priorities to enable Yorkshire Leaders to champion their cause, including how benefits are often felt in areas beyond where the money is spent, and strengthening linkages between transport investment and needs of communities for improved social and economic outcomes.
 Understanding the benefits of these priorities to enable Yorkshire Leaders to champion their cause, including how benefits
 ...ensure the is alignment
 between
- ✓ In the context of the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission, ensure there is alignment between strategic transport priorities and broader climate change/environmental ambitions.
- Use the shared priorities and single Yorkshire voice to strengthen our influence within Transport for the North and our position with Government to see these priorities delivered.

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ambitions."



Post EU exit transition

Initial work has been undertaken to begin to scope some of the opportunities and impacts arising from exiting the European Union, and these will be explored further during 2021/22. Areas for development include:

- Opportunities around the supply chain.
- A regional impact analysis, such as on freedom of movement for particular sectors e.g. services and touring companies, and impact on businesses in Yorkshire and the Humber.
- Exploration of customs simplification, in particular for Small and Medium Enterprises.
- ✓ Identification of potential new markets for regional businesses.
- ✓ Responding to relevant consultations such as around the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and methodology for allocation of funding.





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