City of York Council

**Decision Session Executive Member for
Culture, Leisure and Tourism**

29 January 2016

Report of the Assistant Director (Communities, Culture and Public Realm)

York Learning Self Assessment Report 2014/15

Summary

1. This report presents York Learning's self assessment report (SAR) for the academic year 2014/15. The self assessment report is part of the service's quality improvement arrangements and is presented as part of the governance arrangements for the service.

Background

2. York Learning is a council service which delivers a range of learning programmes to support people into employment, to improve their skills and to support their personal development. The service is required to implement quality improvement arrangements as part of a regular annual cycle. The self assessment report is at the heart of this process and is thus a key document. It will be presented to Ofsted as part of any inspection arrangements.

3. The reports attached as Annex 1 are in a new format. This is the first time that the service has used this format in an effort to streamline the SAR and make it more accessible. Performance data is contained in Annex 2, 3 and 4. This information is subject to verification by the Skills Funding Agency in March 2016, when the national statistics for all further education providers are published. This information will be updated at this point if there are changes.

4. The SAR leads to a quality improvement plan (QIP) for each area of the service. Attached as Annex 5 is the leadership and management QIP. Each curriculum area of the service also produces a QIP, but these are not included for the sake of brevity. QIPs are very detailed documents

which are regularly reviewed as part of the service's quality improvement cycle.

SAR Report and Analysis

5.   The SARs attached are summary reports from 8 curriculum areas and the main leadership and management report which is a summary of the main strengths and areas for improvement across the service. Curriculum reports contain substantial detail and are used by managers to make improvements in specific areas. They are produced from more detailed information and evidence, for example from classroom observations, end of course evaluations and managers feedback from staff and learners. This evidence is gathered throughout the year.

6.   Performance data is included in Annex 2, 3, and 4. Annex 2 contains information relating to qualification-bearing courses, including English, Maths and ICT, Annex 3 is performance data related to Apprenticeship provision and Annex 4 is for community learning. These reports follow a national format and are reported in Subject Sector Areas (SSA), which do not necessarily match with way the service is organised and managed. This makes matching data with specific SARs quite complex and means that managers have to analyse the data carefully to understand the detail with which they are presented with. Course by course data is available for managers to support this process.

7.   Overall service performance shows a slight drop compared with previous years. This is mainly due to an emphasis in 14/15 of working with those learners with significant challenges and targeting those learners with significant needs. Primarily this was learners who were mandated by the job centre to attend programmes as part of "skills conditionality" in 2014/15 and amounted to some 100 learners. Attendance and completion of programmes by this cohort of learners was inconsistent and is therefore reflected in a drop in success rates. Previous years' performance included significant numbers of learners who were studying more general qualifications and whose achievement and success was better.

8.   Closer analysis of performance in 14/15 reveals that the main issue is retention of learners on programmes. Retention is a shorthand way of describing whether learners complete a programme. Compared with 13/14, retention is down by 5%, but achievement (those learners who successfully pass the qualification once they get to the end of the course) is only down by 1.5% overall. Thus achievement is still good and the drop

in achievement equates to about 15 learners out of the whole cohort of nearly 1000 learners.

9.   Whilst success rates in 16-18 have reduced compared with previous years, there are a number of underlying factors that mitigate and explain these reductions in performance. The first is the increase in the number of learners on full-time programmes. Previous programmes were much shorter, learners attended for fewer hours each week and qualifications were less challenging. The change to full time programmes has huge benefits for the young people in consistency, improvement in social skills, confidence and work readiness. However, there follows a risk of non-completion of programmes as a result of some of the challenges these young people face.

10.   In addition to the main factor identified above further detailed analysis and investigation of success rates for 16-18 years olds, has concluded that success rates have also been affected by a combination of factors, including some retention issues as described above, (both learners leaving and being asked to leave the programme), performance in English and maths and, rather more surprisingly, performance in ICT or functional computer skills.

11.   The relative performance in comparison with previous years is also partly due to increased requirements for learners to achieve an English and Maths qualification. For example, some learners who did not achieve a grade C in English and Maths whilst at school are expected to achieve a grade C within the one year that they attend the York Learning programme. This is clearly challenging, given the timescales, the expectations of the learners and the nature and range of young people attending the programme. This is not a problem unique to York Learning and is affecting many further education providers, including colleges and other local authority adult learning services.

12.   A number of practical and more fundamental changes have been implemented that will improve success rates for the current academic year. These include some redesign of the curriculum, some further support for students studying Maths and English and some changes in the way the groups are configured. Early indications are that this is having some impact but this still remains very challenging.

13.   In apprenticeship provision success rates for 2014/15 also show some disappointing reductions. Some reduction in success rates was anticipated due to new requirements, once again for improvements in English, Maths and ICT. These new requirements have been challenging for the whole sector delivering apprenticeships. The requirement to

demonstrate improvement in functional computer skills, has led to some particular difficulties, given the nature of some of the apprenticeship provision, mainly in care. Those working domiciliary care often do not have regular patterns of working and thus cannot attend regular programmes to improve their computer skills. The service is implementing a blended, personalised approach to deal with this and is confident that this will lead to significant improvements in this area.

14. In addition to the issues identified above, some learners are completing the vocational elements of their programme and gaining their diploma or certificate, but not fully completing the apprenticeship framework, including the English, Maths or ICT elements. Thus they often get the qualification they require to progress at work, but this means that they do not achieve the full framework. There is now a clear strategy in place to make the necessary improvements and it is anticipated that success rates for 2016 will be much improved. There have also been some performance management issues in this area. These have now been resolved.

15. Annex 4 contains performance statistics for the service's main part-time community learning programmes. These programmes consist of a huge range of part-time day and evening programmes across a range of subject areas. Some of these programmes are now running at full cost recovery, meaning that fee income collected covers the costs of running the programmes. Performance in this area of the service is generally consistent year on year, with variations only occurring to the total numbers attending each programme.

Quality Improvement Plan

16. Actions within the quality improvement plan are drawn from those judgements in the SAR deemed to be "areas for improvement". These are the main areas for service improvement and are judged to have a significant impact on service performance. QIP plans are regularly reviewed as part of a performance management framework during one to one discussions and significant leadership and management actions are shared at senior management meetings. The leadership and management QIP is attached in Annex 5.

17. The service uses the traffic light system to show progress against actions, which is a quick visual reminder of when actions have been completed and where further action needs to be taken. QIP plans cover the academic year but are in effect rolling quality improvement plans. Managers are encouraged to add actions to the plans as issues arise during the year, so that the documents become very dynamic in nature.

This means actions are taken in a timely manner and quality improvement becomes an embedded and continuous process.

Consultation

18. The plan is presented for consultation and approval. It has gone through some internal service consultation with senior managers and is in part as a result of a rigorous self-assessment process which is ongoing. It will also be considered by a group of "peer" partners as part of an external challenge.

Options and Analysis

19. The attached plan is presented for member comment and approval.

Council Plan

20. The SAR responds to council objectives in as much as it is an analysis of service performance which is aligned with the new council plan.

Implications

Financial (Contact – Director of Resources)

21. Any actions or financial implications of the SAR are contained with service budgets already set for 2015/16. This service operates on an expected outturn of zero cost to CYC. Variations in expenditure and income will be reported through the usual management financial reporting arrangement

Human Resources (HR)

22. There are no HR implications.

Equalities

The report has no equalities implications that arise directly from the attached SAR, although some of actions will be subject to equalities impact assessments. Service managers are fully aware of duties under the equalities legislation and implement equalities actions as part of a regular cycle of quality improvements and actions.

Legal

23. There are no legal implications

Crime and Disorder

24. There are no crime and disorder implications

Information Technology (IT)

25. There are no IT implications other than those noted in the report.

Property

26. There are no direct property implications in the report. However one of the service actions is to reduce costs associated with its 16-18 programme and this may have property implications in the future.

Other

27. There are no other implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

28. There are no direct risks associated with the SAR and QIP. However, within some of the actions there are some inherent risks associated with contract delivery and HR. The service is always seeking ways to mitigate these risks and where they do arise these will be noted and shared with the Executive Member.

Recommendations

29. The Executive Member is asked to consider the attached Self Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan and subject to any changes, recommend it for approval. Regular updates on progress on the Quality Improvement Plan will be reported to the Executive Member.

    Reason: To strengthen the Service's governance arrangements in light of Ofsted requirements.

Contact Details

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Report Approved	✓	**Date**	*21 January 2016*

Specialist Implications Officer(s)
None

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*   **All** ☑

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

Annex 1 – York Learning SAR 2014/15
Annex 2 - Data Tables – Qualification based courses
Annex 3 - Data Tables – Apprenticeships
Annex 4 - Data Table - Community Learning
Annex 5 - Leadership and Management Quality Improvement Plan

Abbreviations used in the report and annexes
CYC- City of York Council
EHCP- Education Health Care Plan
ESA- Employment and Support Allowance
FS- Functional Skills
GCSE- General Certificate of Secondary Education
HE- Higher Education
HR- Human Resources
IAG- Information Advice and Guidance
ICT- Information and Communication Technology
ILP- Individual Learning Plan
IT- Information Technology
JCP- Job Centre Plus
JSA- Job Seeker's Allowance
OTL- Observation of Teaching and Learning

NIACE- National Institute for Adults Continuing Education
QIP- Quality Improvement Plan
SAR- Self Assessment Report
SSA- Subject Sector Areas