

Meeting:	Economy and Culture Decision Session
Meeting date:	Tuesday 22 October
Report of:	Pauline Stuchfield Director Housing and Communities
Portfolio of:	Councillor Kilbane Executive Member for Economy and Culture

Decision Report:

York Learning Strategic Plan 2024-2025

Subject of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to gain approval to the submitted Strategic Plan for this academic year (2024-2025) for York Learning. The report sets out how we will respond, and our targets within that, to the agreed Accountability Statement which reflects the needs of the local environment as determined by the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP).

Benefits and Challenges

2. This report forms part of the service's governance reporting arrangements, which are crucially important for the service in demonstrating to Ofsted that it has secure and robust governance arrangements in place.

Policy Basis for Decision

3. The strategic direction of the service is informed from, and decisions based on, the following strategies.
 - 10 Year York Skills Plan (<https://www.york.gov.uk/YorkSkillsPlan>).
 - York's Economic Strategy 2022-2032 (<https://www.york.gov.uk/performance-policies/york-economic-strategy>)

- York and North Yorkshire - Local Skills Improvement Plan 2023 (Annex c)
https://www.wnychamber.co.uk/app/uploads/2023/08/LSIP_York_and_North_Yorkshire_2023.pdf
- York Learning's funding enables the service to provide a wide offer that helps us to tackle inequalities by providing a wide range of learner support to those most in need whether that is financially to support their access onto courses or with additional support within classes as needed to enable successful achievement of goals.

Financial Strategy Implications

4. The service is fully funded via external contracts and grants. The budget remains challenging, and the service will continue to seek additional income streams to allow us to meet the needs of those who are furthest away from accessing skills and employment.
5. The service operates within the funding received from the ESFA and supplements income through fees paid for accessing a large proportion of our provision.

Recommendation and Reasons

6. The Executive Member is asked to consider the attached Strategic Service Plan and approve it subject to any suggested changes.
Reason: To help monitor the service and provide sound governance arrangement for York Learning Services and to show agreement that the funding we receive aims to meet resident's needs.

Background

7. 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 and wellbeing. The service is funded exclusively from external contract funding and fee income.
8. This report, which is for the academic year 2024/2025, is an important element in enabling the service to demonstrate to Ofsted that it has secure and robust governance arrangements in place.

9. The LSIP was written and published in July 2023 by an approved Employer Representative Body (ERB), for York and North Yorkshire; the West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce being the designated ERB.
10. The York and North Yorkshire LSIP report is a strategic document identifying clear priorities for skills in the local area. It includes the necessary key changes needed (or indeed what should be retained) to make post-16 technical education and training more responsive to the skills needs of employers in the area. The LSIP covers a fixed period of 3 years.
11. The Department for Education (DfE) describe the Accountability Agreements, introduced for the first time in the 2023 to 2024 academic year, as setting the overall expectations of providers (including local authorities delivering more than £1 million of post - 16 provision) in return for funding. The agreement focusses on what colleges, designated institutions and local authorities deliver in the year ahead and how they intend to support local, regional, and national needs. These annual Statements should in all cases be informed by providers' longer term strategic plans and ambitions. The DfE stipulate that documents produced by local authority providers must have Executive approval.

Consultation Analysis

12. The plan has been consulted with the York Learning management team and York Learning Improvement Board), it is based on the Accountability Statement (set within the guidelines of the LSIP) which has previously been agreed by Executive. It has been shared with the Improvement Board who approved with the additional points I.
13. The plan is presented for consultation and approval.

Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

14. York Learning has to be seen to be successfully meeting its funding requirements and purposes. To meet the strategic directions set to us successfully we need to plan our offer / curriculums to engage with residents on the multi facet needs of York residents and employers with an approach that targets those who are furthest away from being economically active. The steer

towards that is the Accountability Statement previously agreed that has been designed around the various key strategies.

15. The Strategic Plan set out in Annex A forms out commitments towards the targets set out in the Accountability Statement. Recognising our starting points and strengths will enable the service to have a marked impact on the local economic needs and support a greater range of individuals to meet their potential.
16. Our passion for adult learning continues to drive us to deliver effective programmes of learning to a range of adults with a particular focus on those from disadvantaged and marginalised communities. We want to offer inclusive services with high quality learning provision and support, which works well across the spectrum of need, whilst meeting the needs of our local economy fully in line with 'One City, for all' we aim to deliver in a way that sets strong ambitions to increase opportunities for everyone living in York to live healthy and fulfilling lives.
17. We are ambitious within York Learning to be able to stress the significant impact that adult learning can have to meet these commitments. Using creativity, innovation and our community roots we can utilise our Adult Skills funding to:
 - Increase opportunities for people to manage their finances – through understanding waste, energy bills, practical hints and tips with embedded core numeracy, literacy and digital skills.
 - Increase the levels of independence in adults with disabilities to take personal responsibility for health and wellbeing.
 - Encourage residents to work, learn and relax together – delivering green ambitions, use of the city and cementing the connection with arts and heritage.
 - Increase opportunities for residents to be motivated to manage and support their own wellbeing through a range of physical and creative activities and access available to the most disadvantaged via social prescription opportunities.
 - Support combined pride in and understanding of our wide and welcoming common heritage.

Organisational Impact and Implications

18. There will be impacts on curriculum manager time and focus in researching ways to meet these requirements. The impact will be

that there are clearer pathways from entry point for post 24 SEND learners and other emerging skills areas.

19. York learning will need to research into owned premises where designated spaces\equipment can be left safely and where the curriculum offer does not cause disruption for other learners and tenants.
20. The newly established Local Growth Plan priorities, set out by the Mayoral Combined Authority, have made clear the importance of skills and innovation to fuel the local and regional economy. Investment in skills is required in a range of target economic sectors, including bio-science and engineering, MedTech, creativetech, railtech, construction and green energy skills. The ambitious Local Growth Plan recognises that these opportunities are for adults as well as school leavers, who in some cases are likely to be hidden or underutilised talent as have not previously worked in these target economic sectors. To support the Local Growth Plan it is anticipated the Adult Learning and Skills offer will need to expand, and to do so will require additional premises. Therefore, as there are currently insufficient venues in York to support both the increased offer and the needs of the provision itself, particularly for the more hands-on development pathways in green construction for example. Working collaboratively with the region, a business case will be developed aiming to secure capital funding that will support the estate requirements of the annual strategic plan.

Implications:

- **Financial**, The strategic plan highlights that there is a need for investment in order to deliver additional capacity. This will require additional funding and the service will seek external funding to achieve these aims. Any requirement for new investment will require a costed business case to be fully considered.
- **Human Resources (HR)**, - The office of the Head of HR report no HR implications contained within this report.
- **Legal**, The office of the Head of Legal Services states that York Learning's strategy reflects a comprehensive approach to identifying priorities and outcomes, engaging with key stakeholders and collaborating with local providers to meet

community needs and align with local skills and economic strategies. It is in compliance with Section 52B of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, as amended by the Skills and Post 16 Education Act 2022. The service also aligns with the Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 by promoting inclusivity, advancing equality and fostering good relations. By targeting disadvantaged communities and providing tailored learning opportunities, the initiatives meet the legal obligations of the Equality Act.

- **Procurement**, - The Chief Finance officer has stated that there are there are no direct procurement implications arising from this report.

Health and Wellbeing, Learning and skills development make a positive contribution to health and wellbeing both directly, through improving aspects of physical and mental health, and indirectly, for example by improving better job opportunities and financial stability. In addition, the learning funded through this agreement prioritises groups whose health and wellbeing outcomes often fall short of those enjoyed by others in the city.

- **Environment and Climate action**, The Director of Transport, Environment and Planning does not feel there are any environmental or carbon implications linked to the accountability statement and therefore also this report.
- **Affordability**The skills and learning driven and funded through this agreement directly contribute to improving life chances and job skills. Where there are low cost and free courses such as those for digital skills the impact on those struggling during the cost-of-living crisis is likely to be positive where online support and services become accessible as a result.
- **Equalities and Human Rights**, this report is primarily formed and based on the Accountability Agreement in which equalities were adequate assessed. A fresh EIA is not needed as one was created with the Accountability Agreement early this year.

- **Data Protection and Privacy**, - Data protection impact assessments (DPIAs) are an essential part of our accountability obligations and is a legal requirement for any type of processing under UK data protection and privacy legislation. Failure to carry out a DPIA when required may leave the council open to enforcement action, including monetary penalties or fines. DPIAs helps us to assess and demonstrate how we comply with all our data protection obligations. It does not have to eradicate all risks but should help to minimise and determine whether the level of risk is acceptable in the circumstances, considering the benefits of what the council wants to achieve. The DPIA screening questions were completed on the Accountability Agreement and there is no personal, special categories or criminal offence data being processed for the options set out in this report, there is no requirement to complete a DPIA at this time. However, this will be reviewed where required, on the approved options from this report.
- **Communications**, The Head of Communications stated that there are no specific comms impacts/interventions required from the Accountability Agreement and therefore also not from this report.
- **Economy**, The Head of City Development states that as set out in the report, the work of York Learning contributes to positive economic outcomes & benefits and supports the delivery of the York Economic Strategy.

Risks and Mitigations

21. There are no known risks.

Wards Impacted

22. All wards are covered by the aims of this report

Contact details

For further information please contact the authors of this Decision Report.

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Background papers

- [Local skills improvement plans - statutory guidance publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- 10 Year York Skills Plan (<https://www.york.gov.uk/YorkSkillsPlan>).
- York's Economic Strategy 2022-2032
<https://www.york.gov.uk/performance-policies/york-economic-strategy>
- York and North Yorkshire - Local Skills Improvement Plan 2023
https://www.wnychamber.co.uk/app/uploads/2023/08/LSIP_York_and_North_Yorkshire_2023.pdf

Annexes

All annexes to the Decision Report must be listed.

- Annex A York Learning Strategic Plan 2024-2025