

People Scrutiny Committee

8 October 2025

Report of the Assistant Director of Education and Skills

Performance of York Learning on Strategic Plan 2024-2025

Summary

1. This report (Annex A) presents York Learning's end of year performance against their strategic aims for the academic year 2024/25.

Members are asked to:

Comment upon the performance of York Learning and seek clarification on any areas of concern.

Reason: To help monitor the service, guide managers and ensure there is robust and accountable governance arrangements.

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 and wellbeing. The service is funded exclusively from external contract funding and fee income which is in the region of £4.4m

This report, which is for the academic year 2024/2025, is an important element in enabling the service to demonstrate to Combined Authorities and Ofsted that it has secure and robust governance arrangements in place.

Consultation

3. The report has been created through collaboration with the service management team within York learning and the Improvement Board of Governors. The plan is presented for consultation, comments and the opportunity to seek clarification on any areas for concern.

Options

4. This report is for discussion and comment. There are no options to consider.

Analysis

5. *The strategic plan concentrates on our performance in the academic year just gone towards the agreed accountability agreement aims for 2024-2025. Our performance overall is good towards targets. All targets have been improved considerably, with the majority having managed to reach the higher target set.*
 - 5.1. *Digital inclusion has increased its reach and 42.6% of learners (target was 30%) have progressed into formal accredited IT routes with 25.7% of learners progressing into other essential skills routes.*
 - 5.2. *5 courses have been designed and run which were targeted to local skills needs with direct progression into other providers at levels 3 and above, this includes Cyber Security, Computer Aided Design, Supporting Teaching & Learning, Accounting, Childcare and Textiles.*
 - 5.3. *75% of learners progressing from any essential skills course are progressing into higher level learning from their starting point.*
 - 5.4. *35% of Family Learning learners are progressing into further learning which is 10% below our target set. Family learning is delivered in targeted areas of the city which are usually within IMD areas. Engagement is an improvement on the previous year and the offer has had a large turnaround which has increased relationships with 3 more schools and is continuing to create courses that highlight employment pathways and promote other learning opportunities. There is no national benchmark in this area for us to refer to but from regional feedback Family learning has been a difficult area to grow for some years.*
 - 5.5. *19% of the offer is reflective of being 'hybrid/blended' (both in class and online or fully online to ensure we cater for those who struggle to get to class. However, the majority of learners we work with need/request face to face to support for their essential skills development or to support their wellbeing, reduce isolation, improve their life opportunities and/or social connections.*

- 5.6. A variety of courses have been designed to launch which support residents SEMH and employment needs which are already starting to recruit.
- 5.7. Additional funding has been identified which will help to expand the offer and increase our opportunity to identify premises for adult learning.
- 5.8. York Learning had their Ofsted Inspection in the academic year 24/25 and we have retained our Ofsted rating of 'Good'. Ofsted were very complimentary of the management and quality of provision of York Learning and our wide-ranging offer. They agreed that we meet the strategic aims of the city and how well we engaged with local communities and recognising their barriers and challenges in their local area as well as in life. Ofsted said: -
- 5.8.1 'Learners and apprentices value highly the learning experience and support that they receive from tutors. They work in a respectful environment, where they grow in confidence. Learners and apprentices know that tutors genuinely care about their well-being and success.
- 5.8.2 "Learners and apprentices feel safe and very well supported. They know what to do if they have a safeguarding concern and have confidence that leaders and managers will act on concerns".
- 5.8.3 "Leaders and Managers have a clear purpose for the provision that they offer. They provide a wide range of learning opportunities that are relevant to local skills needs and a social prescribing route for referrals from partners for targeted individuals to improve their well-being and mental health."
- 5.8.4 "Tutors appreciate the barriers that many learners and apprentices face in their lives and are proactive in providing support while promoting high expectations."
- 5.8.5 "Tutors provide effective support to learners and apprentices with additional needs. They adapt teaching skilfully to meet learners' and apprentices' needs and use effective teaching strategies to help them learn and remember new knowledge."
- 5.8.6 "Leaders and managers have rigorous oversight of the quality of teaching and assessment, including that of subcontractors."

Our holistic approach came across really clearly and strongly, 'that we fully understood our learners and their needs'.

Unfortunately, we had some legacy issues with achievement in the following areas: -

- 5.8.7 Apprenticeships success was below required levels particularly in childcare at 55.3% (nationally this was at 54.6%), which was primarily due to a high proportion of learners leaving the industry to get other jobs. We have introduced support for employers when recruiting and robust initial assessment to ensure the applicants are equipped to take on their challenging role. Success this year is above required levels at 67% but we are continuing to work on improvements alongside employers in this area to improve this further. The quality lead is supporting the team to work through an action plan which primarily focuses on timescales for learning, more professional discussions and other online learning resources around maths and English.*
- 5.8.8 English (64.7%) and maths (54.8%) which affects all ages of our provision. New bite sized portions of learning have been introduced, which sit outside of the accredited pathways, before allowing a learner to progress where they have identified weaknesses. Teaching methods have been reviewed, and further work is progressing into this year, within this area, relating to coaching, VR/AR and teaching triangles with neighbouring providers. Results at this point are 68.4% for maths and English is 89.9% which for English is excellent and for maths is an improving picture. Functional skills maths is the main problem area where the exam papers are seen as being harder than a GCSE currently which was not their purpose. This is primarily due to the language used in the exam papers which learners are struggling to translate their meaning. We are part of a national group who are feeding information back to Ofqual on this matter and have had the exam board in to hear from tutors direct on their experiences and learner's feedback.*
- 5.8.9 Ofsted also felt that some few learners in the Adults learning provision, the 16-18 programme and the HNS provision did not fully recognise the risk of radicalisation or local risk to themselves relating to Prevent. Whilst they recognised that we teach and integrate this subject fully, they felt learners were still not articulating what those risk was to themselves. We have more work to do in this area*

and an action plan has been agreed to increase meaningful conversations in class and we have invited the regional prevent and terrorism co-ordinator, for the DFE, to speak on local risk to our teams in October.

6. *This year we have created an Impact Report to celebrate all that is achieved by our learners and the team.*

(<https://tinyurl.com/YLimpactreport>) There are many learner stories recorded within it which are very uplifting and reflect what we do day to day. Also below are highlights from Learner's survey responses and some of the wider impacts of learning for Learners:-

- 6.1. *82% of learners felt the overall offer was excellent and 15% felt it was good.*
- 6.2. *93% of learners felt their tutor knowledge was excellent (5% good).*
- 6.3. *94% of learners felt the support they received on their course was excellent/good.*
- 6.4. *3.5% of learners have stated that their learning has reduced their GP appointments in the year.*
- 6.5. *39.7% of learners felt that their learning had improved their mood and wellbeing.*
- 6.6. *6% are going to start volunteering.*
- 6.7. *31.4% felt their learning had improved:- their day to day working life/ helped with changing their career direction / job prospects.*
7. *York Learning has also worked with Public Health to setup and implement an IPS team (Individual Placement Support) to support those in recovery back into employment. We are working closely with the Public Health team and Change Grow Live (CGL) to implement the project and it is working well. CGL make the referrals to the IPS team who will work with the individuals and employers to create employment pathways and keep them in sustained employment. The project only started in October 2024, but targets are being met, and performance is high.*

Council Plan

8. *The service offer aligns with the Council Plan 2023–2027 and its vision of creating a city for all. It contributes to the plan's four priority areas:*

- Equality and Human Rights – by focusing on the needs of the most vulnerable groups and promoting inclusive education.
- Affordability – through initiatives such as poverty-proofing schools and providing families with information and support to help manage the cost-of-living crisis.
- Environment and Climate – by promoting the development of local Enhanced Resource Provisions within mainstream schools, reducing the need for out-of-area placements, and supporting sustainability.
- Health and Wellbeing – by prioritising improved outcomes for children and young people, ensuring they receive the right support at the right time to thrive.

Implications

9.

- **Financial** (*Contact – Director of Finance (s151)*) *There are no direct financial implications of this report, which is for members to discuss and review. The service is funded via external contracts and grants.*
- **Human Resources (HR)** (*Contact – Chief Officer HR and Support Services*) *The report has no Human Resources, implications.*
- **Equalities** (*Contact – Equalities Officer*) *The strategic plan shows how York Learning work across the city to give greater equal access to skills development and improve employability.*
- **Legal** (*Contact – Head of Legal*) *The report has no Legal implications.*
- **Crime and Disorder** (*Contact - Senior Partnerships Support Officer, Community Planning & Partnerships*). *The report has no Crime implications.*
- **Information Technology (IT)** (*Contact – Head of IT*) *The report has no Information Technology implications.*
- **Property** (*Contact – Property*) *The report has no property implications.*
- **Other**

Risk Management

8. *This report contains no known risk.*

Recommendations

10. Members are 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.

Contact Details

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Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Maxine Squire
Assistant Director of Education and Skills

**Report
Approved**



Date 18 September
2025

Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all

All

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For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

- Background paper: *Annex A York Learning Strategic Plan 2024_25*
- Background paper: *Annex B Accountability Agreement 24_25 [Issue - items at meetings - York Learning Accountability Agreement 2024/25](#)*
- *Background paper: Annex C York and North Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan*
https://www.wnychamber.co.uk/app/uploads/2023/08/LSIP_York_and_North_Yorkshire_2023.pdf
- *Supporting Paper - York 10 Year Skills Plan -*
<https://www.york.gov.uk/YorkSkillsPlan>
- *Supporting Paper – York’s Economic Strategy 2022-2032*
<https://www.york.gov.uk/performance-policies/york-economic-strategy>
- *Supporting Paper – York and North Yorkshire Strategic Plan 2022*
 - *Supporting paper – York Learning Impact Report 2023-2025*
<https://tinyurl.com/YLimpactreport>

Annexes

- *Annex A – York Learning Strategic Plan 2024-25*
 - *Supporting paper – York Learning Impact Report 2023-2025*
<https://tinyurl.com/YLimpactreport>

Abbreviations

CGL = Change Grow Live

IPS = Individual Placement support

IMD = Index of Multiply Deprivation