

Executive

17 March 2022

Report of the Assistant Director, Education and Skills
Portfolio of the Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning

York's 10-Year Skills Strategy

Summary

1. This report updates the Executive on the development of *York's 10-year Skills Strategy* through the city's Skills and Employment Board and seeks support for the Council's continuing role, as a key partner, in delivering its shared priorities.
2. The York Skills and Employment Board - initially formed out of Higher York in response to the emerging impact of the pandemic on the city's economy - is a partnership made up of representatives (Annex 1) from Further and Higher Education providers, independent training providers, York employers, employee and business representatives, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Local Enterprise Partnership and Local Authority.
3. Following its inception in September 2020, the Board (chaired by Lee Probert, Principal and Chief Executive at York College) met monthly to actively drive the development of the *One-year plan: Skills for Employment in York* and *York's 10-year Skills Strategy* (Annex 2).
4. This included building an evidence base - taking into account stakeholder feedback, emerging themes, national policy changes, regional (YNY LEP) research and strategies, and the drivers of the local labour market in supporting inclusive growth.
5. The Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning and the Assistant Director for Education and Skills represent the Council on the Board. The Council's democratic decision-making processes have provided opportunities for partners, residents, Elected Members and more than 250 businesses to help inform this work. Officer involvement has enabled alignment with the Council Plan and emerging strategies (such as the Economic Growth, Carbon Reduction and York and North Yorkshire Adult Learning and Skills Engagement strategies), with continuing opportunities for stakeholders to help shape these in the coming months.

6. Subsequently, the Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning endorsed the *One-year plan: Skills for Employment in York and York's 10-year Skills Strategy* at his decision sessions in March 2021 and September 2021 (respectively).
7. *York's 10-year Skills Strategy* sets out the city's partnership approach to developing the skills infrastructure that will support inclusive and sustainable growth in York. It therefore does not reflect *all* of the skills activity that has, or will, take place across the city but focuses on those areas where the skills partnership can add the greatest value.
8. With Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) and York's Further Education Colleges actively engaged in its development, the strategy presents York's perspective ready for inclusion in the area's Local Skills Improvement Plan (as set out in the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill).
9. It also acts as a guide for partner organisations across York and North Yorkshire, businesses, communities and residents to help identify opportunities to work together more effectively on York's skills priorities and prepare for new opportunities such as devolution.
10. One particular area is community outreach, with partners such as York Learning acting as a vital gateway to help connect people with upskilling and reskilling opportunities.
11. With the recent introduction of the Government's 'Way to Work' scheme, people who are capable of work will be expected to search more widely for available jobs from the fourth week of their claim, rather than from three months as was the case. Increasingly, people will be looking to move sectors to access roles with immediate starts and not limit their search to a chosen field.
12. As the first Good Business Charter city, York is committed to supporting good jobs that meet employer need and helping residents to access them. Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) linked to the local labour market is therefore key, to support sustained employment and access to life-long learning.
13. *York's 10-year Skills Strategy* puts in place the vision and steps to achieve a city workforce that is equipped, to not only weather the storms of economic shocks such as a global pandemic but to thrive and grow.

14. In March 2022, Higher York partners will consider a proposal to co-fund the resource needed to coordinate partnership activity. This will include managing and monitoring delivery against the skills strategy.
15. This report outlines the Council's continuing role in helping to shape that delivery, which in turn supports core outcomes in the Council Plan.

Recommendations

16. The Executive is asked to:
 - i. support the Council's role in the city's partnership approach to delivery of York's 10-year Skills Strategy.
 - ii. support the approach to ongoing consultation on skills via the emerging Economic Growth Strategy and sector delivery plans.

Reason: To continue to develop the local skills infrastructure that will help residents and businesses to experience fully the benefits of York's enterprising, resilient and inclusive economy.

Background

17. York's 10-year Skills Strategy puts in place the vision and steps to achieve a city workforce that is equipped with the skills needed, not only to weather the storms of economic shocks such as a global pandemic but to thrive and support future sustainable growth.

10-year Skills Strategy - Vision

"Pioneering provision aligned to the needs of the city, its people and its businesses developed and delivered in partnership to support economic growth and attract, retain and develop talent."

18. The vision is under-pinned by eight principles, which place people, businesses, partnerships, technology and the city's net zero ambitions at the heart of the strategy.
19. York has an ambition to be a net-zero carbon city by 2030. This aim affects many sectors including (but not limited to) construction, engineering, transport and energy and will require green skills to be embedded across all areas of learning.

Building on this, is an evolution of the shared commitments introduced in the one-year plan and the partnership's priorities for the next 2-5 years:

- **York works – skills support for individuals**

Work within and across communities to provide access to skills for employment and self-employment for all

Priorities

- Support entry-level and basic skills (includes maths, English, digital skills, employability, transferable skills)
- Enhance skills opportunities and Information, Advice and Guidance for entrepreneurs and those seeking self-employment, with a focus on hard-to-reach communities
- Utilise talent more effectively so that people from all backgrounds get better chances to access good jobs

- **Empowered employers – skills support for businesses**

Support local businesses to increase productivity and build resilience through training and upskilling their workforce

Priorities

- Invest in the sectors that drive prosperity in York (see section 5 of the strategy)
- Support businesses to access talent, tailored provision and support for upskilling
- Focus on helping small and micro businesses to thrive

- **Pioneering provision – productive partnerships**

Work in partnership to create a flexible city-wide skills system that responds to local needs

Priorities

- Use the partnership to join up provision across the city to deliver a united and streamlined skills offer
- Ensure provision is aligned to future growth sectors and skills needs in the city
- Embed the business voice into provision and planning by fostering more links between Further Education, Higher Education, Independent Training Providers and businesses

- **Education to employment and self-employment – York’s pipeline**

Through high-quality provision and a culture of lifelong learning, ensure a pipeline of talent that meets business needs and attracts, trains, retains and retrains people in the city.

Priorities

- Focus on occupations in highest demand e.g. nurses, caregivers, software developers and help people who are underrepresented in high-value professions to enter them
- Increase Apprenticeships especially at higher levels and in STEM industries
- Ensure talent pipeline of graduates and people with higher-level and green skills is enhanced and aligned with priority sectors

The strategy provides more detail on each commitment, the rationale for each priority and how partners across the city plan to respond.

Implementing the strategy

20. Having approved the skills strategy in autumn 2022, the Skills and Employment Board no longer meets every month. Members are instead harnessing the citywide partnership approach to support implementation, with the Board retaining oversight of delivery.
21. This includes further development of the commitment groups established under the one-year plan (*One-year plan – Skills for employment in York* report considered by the Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning on 23 March 2021), with partners from Askham Bryan College, York College, University of York, York St John University, the Council and York Learning continuing to lead priority areas.
22. As detailed in the *10-year Skills Strategy* report (Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning’s Decision Session on 28 September 2021), engagement with those not directly involved in writing the strategy is helping to inform the partnership’s implementation plans, including how green skills, the voice of business and success measures are embedded in skills planning.
23. An example of this is the coordinated work between Higher York partners, the National Skills Academy for Rail (NSAR) and the Council’s Economic Development and Skills teams to engage more than 20 industry stakeholders in shaping the local skills delivery plan for the rail sector.
24. In line with the priorities set out in *York’s 10-year Skills Strategy*, sector partners have identified a shared ambition for York to become a centre of excellence for rail skills, with initial areas for partnership delivery being:

- **Pioneering partnerships** - developing local pathways to the higher level digital and technical skills
- **Inclusive Routes into rail** - including pre-apprenticeship programmes
- **Showcasing the sector** - collaborating around careers engagement and communications

25. The three rail roundtable meetings (so far) convened by the Council's Economic Development Team and ongoing partnership work, are ensuring employers are at the heart of local development plans for this sector – not shaping skills provision in isolation but also collaborating on areas such as innovation and attracting the Great British Rail (GBR) Headquarters.
26. This integrated way of working is proving effective and the Economic Development Team is exploring how a similar approach could support development of other key sectors in York.
27. Over the past 18 months, members of the Board's Task and Finish Group (comprising employees from within Higher York institutions and Council Officers) have co-ordinated meetings and commitment group activities, supported development of the evidence base and strategy, and managed engagement activities, such as the rail skills roundtable.
28. Whilst these individuals will continue to support implementation of the strategy through their substantive roles, no one partner has capacity to provide the dedicated resource needed to effectively manage and monitor delivery on behalf of the partnership.
29. Key Officers within the Skills, Economic Development, Communications and York Learning teams will support implementation of the strategy and their work will contribute to its delivery.
30. As well as working in partnership to develop, implement and measure sector delivery plans, the regular activities of the Skills Team will support engagement with young people, schools, Post-16 providers and partners to align careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) with the current and future opportunities within York's labour market. Examples of existing activity include:
 - the work of the Specialist Learning and Employment Advisers to support young people with specific identified needs to achieve ambitious, realistic and informed learning and employment goals
 - facilitation of the Careers Leaders network in York

- development of localised CEIAG resources and targeted programmes (thematic e.g. STEM, year group or specific need)
 - York Apprenticeship Hub including the York Apprenticeship Offer, provider network, taster days and recruitment events.
31. Colleagues across the council will also support the Skills Team to raise awareness of the strategy and identify interdependencies / opportunities to align engagement or delivery activity (e.g. green skills).
32. As agreed in September 2021, an annual review of progress against the skills strategy will be taken to the Executive Member's Decision Session.

Consultation

33. The Skills and Employment Board comprises education and skills providers, local employers and representatives, employee representatives, the Local Enterprise Partnership and City of York Council. The Board met nine times between December 2020 and September 2021, with members providing input to the strategy during and outside of meetings.
34. Feedback provided via the Executive Member's Decision Sessions in September and December 2020, and March and April 2021 has been taken into account by the partnership when developing the strategy. The one-year skills plan was also a key agenda item at the commissioned joint scrutiny session (Economy & Place and Children, Education & Communities) on 1 February 2021 and oversight and reporting of the Skills Board was discussed at the Economy and Place Scrutiny Forum on 25 May 2021. The 10-year Skills Strategy was also considered at the Economy and Place Scrutiny Forum on 28 September 2021 and will feature as a complementary strategy to the forthcoming Economic Growth Strategy.
35. Employer voice has helped to build the local evidence base and shape the strategy. More than 250 businesses contributed to the development of the strategy through sector round tables, Talent and Skills Events as part of York Business Week, Our Big Conversation, The Lord Mayor's Hospitality Summit and in-depth interviews with University of York student research teams.
36. Engagement with those not directly involved in writing the strategy remains core to the approach and will continue post-publication. Ongoing and planned engagement will inform partnership implementation plans.

37. This has already involved the Council's Skills and Economic Development teams working with members of the Board and other stakeholders such as, Citizens Advice, community learning partners, rail industry partners and the Hospitality Association York.
38. Planned engagement includes working in partnership to develop skills delivery plans for priority sectors and targeting specific groups such as students, careers leaders and secondary school head teachers.

Council Plan

39. The Council Plan identifies eight priorities, five of which are relevant to this work:
- Well-paid and an inclusive economy
 - A greener and cleaner city
 - A better start for children and young people;
 - Creating homes and world-class infrastructure
 - An open and effective council.

Implications

40. The following implications have been considered:
- **Financial** – The council's share for funding the resource needed to coordinate partnership activity is estimated at between £10k to £15k for 12 months. This would be funded from existing Education & Skills budgets. Higher York partners will be meeting later to consider proposal to co-fund these costs.
 - **Human Resources (HR)** – Higher York partners would determine the approach to recruitment.
 - **One Planet Council / Equalities** – Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) provided as a background paper
 - **Legal** – Any issues which may arise and require support will be discussed with Legal Services as and when necessary
 - **Crime and Disorder** – no implications;
 - **Information Technology (IT)** – no implications;
 - **Property** – no implications.

Risk Management

41. Without funding, it will not be possible to assign a dedicated resource to manage and monitor delivery on behalf of the partnership.

Contact Details

Author:

Alison Edeson
Skills Team Manager
Education and Skills
Tel: 07768124792

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Maxine Squire
Assistant Director, Education and Skills

Report Date 01 March 2022
Approved

Specialist Implications Officer(s) List information for all
Finance – Richard Hartle

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

- Covid Recovery Skills Strategy and communication plan (EMDS 22 September 2020)
- Skills and Employment update (EMDS 22 December 2020)
- One-year plan - Skills for employment in York (EMDS 23 March 2021)
- Skills Strategy update (EMDS 27 April 2021)
- York's 10-Year Skills Strategy (EMDS 28 September 2021)
- Equality Impact Assessment – York's 10-Year Skills Strategy

Annexes

Annex 1 – Skills and Employment Board Membership
Annex 2 – Design Draft York's 10-year Skills Strategy

List of Abbreviations Used in this Report

CEIAG – Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance
ERB – Employer Representative Bodies (a business membership organisation that is independent of Government and whose primary purpose is to serve the needs of employers and businesses)
HY – Higher York (a partnership of Askham Bryan College, York College, University of York, York St John University and City of York Council)
IAG – Information, Advice and Guidance
NSAR – National Skills Academy for Rail
YNY LEP – York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership
STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics