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**Children, Education and Communities Policy and  
Scrutiny Committee**

**21 July 2022**

Report of the Assistant Director, Education and Skills

**York Skills and Employment Board Update**

**Summary**

1. The purpose of this report is to update the members of the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee about the York Skills and Employment Board.
2. The York Skills and Employment Board is a partnership made up of representatives 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. Since 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 *Skills for Employment: York's 10-year Strategy* (Annex 1).
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 actively represented the Council on the Board. The Council's democratic decision-making processes also provided opportunities for partners, residents, Elected Members and businesses to help inform the Board's work. Officer involvement has enabled alignment with the Council Plan and emerging strategies (such as the Economic Growth, Climate Change and York and North Yorkshire Adult Learning and Skills Engagement strategies).

6. Having approved the skills strategy in autumn 2022, the Skills and Employment Board has not needed to meet monthly. Members have instead harnessed the citywide partnership approach to support implementation, with the Board retaining oversight of delivery.
7. At the Annual Council meeting on 26 May 2022, Councillor Andrew Waller (now Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education) and the Assistant Director for Education and Skills were reappointed as Council representatives on the York Skills & Employment Board.
8. On 24 June 2022, the York Skills and Employment Board met to review its Terms of Reference (Annex 2) – taking account of planned changes in individual representatives, considering opportunities to broaden the range of voices and reflecting the shift in the focus from strategy development to implementation and delivery.

### **Recommendation**

9. Members are asked to consider the information in this report, and how the Scrutiny Committee may wish to receive future updates on delivery of the commitments under the 10-year Skills Strategy.

Reason: To keep the committee updated and inform the scrutiny work plan.

### **Background**

10. At his Decision Session on 22 September 2020, the Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning supported the Terms of Reference and remit of the York Skills and Employment Board as well as endorsing a framework for developing a new Skills Strategy for the city.
11. Updates on the work of the Board and opportunities to help inform York's one-year skills plan and 10-year Skills Strategy were provided via public Executive Member Decision Sessions (December 2020, March 2021, April 2021 and September 2021), a jointly commissioned Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee, and Economy and Place Policy and Scrutiny Committee (1 February 2021), Economy and Place and Scrutiny Committee (25 May 2021 and 28 September 2021 (Informal meeting) and Executive meeting (17 March 2022).
12. *Skills for Employment: York's 10-year Strategy* was endorsed by the Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning at his decision session in September 2021. At its meeting in March 2022, the Executive supported the Council's continuing role in the city's partnership approach

to delivery of the strategy, and ongoing approach to consultation on skills via the emerging Economic Growth Strategy and sector delivery plans.

### **Skills for Employment: York's 10-year Strategy**

13. 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 does, or will, take place across the city but focuses on those areas where the skills partnership can add the greatest value.
14. 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).
15. 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 opportunities such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and devolution.
16. 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.
17. Under the Government's 'Way to Work' scheme, people who are capable of work are 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.
18. 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.
19. 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.

## Implementation and Delivery

### Commitment Groups

20. The work of the commitment groups, established under the one-year plan, has progressed and the priority projects have evolved to support the longer-term commitments of the 10-year strategy.
21. Each commitment group is led by a different partner, with representatives from each organisation and other relevant stakeholders actively engaged.
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| <p><b>Commitment 1 - York Works for individuals</b><br/>Work within and across communities to provide access to skills for employment and self-employment for all.</p> <p><b>Commitment 2 - Empowered Employers</b><br/>Support local businesses to increase productivity and build resilience through training and upskilling their workforce.</p> <p><b>Commitment 3 - Pioneering Provision</b><br/>Work in partnership to create a flexible city-wide skills system that responds to local needs.</p> <p><b>Commitment 4 - York's Talent Pipeline</b><br/>Through high-quality provision and a culture of lifelong learning, ensure a pipeline of talent that meets business needs and attracts, trains, retains and re-trains people in the city.</p> |
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23. Group 1 (led by York College) and Group 2 (led by University of York) are collaborating to develop models (proposals) for a skills hub – to support businesses and provide localised skills and employment information, advice and guidance, particularly to people in community settings.
24. Group 3 (led by York St John University) is focussed on developing pathways across the city to support individuals and businesses to access provision and progress across institutions. This group aims to develop a shared and inclusive approach in areas such as leadership of partnerships, quality assurance, student support and joint accreditation.
25. Group 4 (led by Askham Bryan College) is collating and tailoring resources and developing a common language to help engage local SMEs in different types of placements (T-Levels, Traineeships, Apprenticeships, Internships, Graduate Placements, Supported Internships and Work Experience for all ages).

26. Communications Group (led by City of York Council) is focussed on 'communicating the offer' to promote the skills and training opportunities available to residents and businesses. Partners are also working together to communicate the city's partnership approach and opportunities for stakeholders to support delivery.

### Sector Delivery Plans

27. York's 10-year Skills Strategy recognises eight priority sectors. This does not mean that they are the *only* sectors that offer good employment opportunities or can support inclusive growth in the city. However, the evidence base and work of the Board determined that focussing on these sectors would have the greatest impact.
28. The first sector delivery plan being developed is with the rail sector. The Rail Skills Working Group, comprising industry and skills partners (including NSAR), continues to collaborate on three priority areas:
- Inclusive Routes into rail - including pre-apprenticeship programmes
  - Pioneering partnerships - developing local pathways to the higher level digital and technical skills
  - Showcasing the sector - collaborating around careers engagement and communication
29. This group does not meet in isolation and is part of the Council's integrated approach to sector development, being led by the Council's Economic Development Team. Examples of outputs include promoting existing skills provision to employers and supply chain, helping to shape York's GBR Headquarters bid, exploring the opportunity to tailor future Government funded 'Bootcamps' for the sector and collaborating on a 'Railway Futures' event ([Railway Futures | National Railway Museum](#)).
30. The council's Skills Team continues to share and promote the 10-year strategy with the networks it facilitates (e.g. York Apprenticeship Provider Network, Careers Education Network), and opportunities to work with stakeholders to develop Adult Health & Social Care and Hospitality sector delivery plans are being explored.

### Management and oversight

31. The Skills and Employment Board includes representatives from, and reports back to, the Higher York Board. The Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education (from June 2022) and the Assistant Director for Education and Skills represent the Council on the Board and maintain connections with the Council's democratic structures.

32. To date, members of the Board's Task and Finish Group (the Council and University of York) 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.
33. Whilst these individuals 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.
34. Work is therefore underway to prioritise areas for delivery and to recruit a co-funded Project Manager - who will take the lead in developing delivery plans that address both the needs of specific sectors and cross-cutting themes such as 'transferable' and 'green' skills.
35. Accountability for the delivery of the strategy remains with the governance structures of individual partners, since each partner has made commitments within the plan (not limited to the Commitment Groups).
36. 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.
37. As well as working in partnership to develop, implement and measure sector delivery plans, the regular activities of the Skills Team supports 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)
  - Supporting higher level skills and apprenticeship take up via the school apprenticeship programme and levy transfer process.
  - York Apprenticeship Hub including the York Apprenticeship Offer, provider network, taster days and recruitment events.
38. 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).

## **Consultation**

39. 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 9 times between December 2020 and September 2021, with members providing input into the strategy during and outside of meetings. At the tenth meeting on 24 June 2022, the Board committed to continue to meet every 6-8 weeks and plans to review the frequency towards the end of 2022.
40. 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. The 10-year Skills Strategy was considered at the Executive Member's Decision Session and Economy and Place Scrutiny Forum on 28 September 2021 and will feature as a complementary strategy to the developing Economic Growth Strategy.
41. The Council's continuing role in the city's partnership approach to delivery and ongoing consultation on skills via the emerging Economic Growth Strategy and sector delivery plans were supported by the Executive at their meeting on 17 March 2022.
42. Employer voice 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 during York Business Week, Our Big Conversation, Lord Mayor's Hospitality Summit and in-depth interviews with University of York student research teams.
43. Engagement with those not directly involved in writing the strategy remains core to the approach and is continuing post-publication. Ongoing and planned engagement will inform partnership implementation plans.
44. 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,

Hospitality Association York, schools, Careers Education Network and York's Apprenticeship Providers Group.

45. At its most recent meeting, the Board committed to broadening the range of voices that help shape delivery, to include secondary education partners, relevant sector skills bodies and more industry representatives.

### **Council Plan**

46. 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**

47. The following implications have been considered:

**Financial** – as agreed by Executive 17 March 2022

**Human Resources (HR)** – Officers will continue to support implementation and delivery of the Skills Strategy within the remit of their substantive roles

**One Planet Council / Equalities** – no implications

**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**

48. Delay in the partnership recruiting a dedicated Project Management resource could affect the pace of implementation and delivery.



## Contact Details

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### Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Maxine Squire  
Assistant Director, Education and Skills

Report  
Approved



Date 01 July 2022

## Specialist Implications Officer(s)

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)
- Oversight of Skills Board and Reporting Mechanisms / Skills Strategy Update (E&P Scrutiny Committee 25 May 2021)
- York's 10-Year Skills Strategy (EMDS 28 September 2021)
- York's 10-Year Skills Strategy (Executive 17 March 2022)

### Annexes

Annex 1 – *Skills for Employment: York's 10-year Strategy*

Annex 2 – York Skills and Employment Board TOR DRAFT v3 – June 2022

### List of abbreviations and key terms used in this report

**BOOTCAMPS** - Free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks for adults aged 19 or over who are either in work or recently unemployed and live in England

**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 Rail

**SMEs** – Small and Medium Enterprises

**YNY LEP** – York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership

**STEM** – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics