
Meeting	Decision Session - Economic Development and Community Engagement
Date	1 August 2017
Present	Councillors Aspden
Apologies	Councillors

25. Declarations of Interest

The Executive Member was asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests that he might have in respect of the business on the agenda. None were declared.

26. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the last Decision Session held on 7 February 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Executive Member.

27. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme

28. York Skills Plan 2017-2020

The Executive Member considered a report on the York's Skills Plan 2017-2020 which set out how the Council and its partners would work together over the next four years to contribute to two key priorities for the city as set out in the York Economic Strategy, 2016 – 2020 and City of York Council Plan 2015 - 2019:

- Developing and Retaining Talent in York to support the growth of local businesses.
- A Prosperous City for All - where local businesses can thrive, residents have the opportunity to get good quality and well

paid jobs and everyone in York is supported to achieve their full potential, making sure 'no-one' is left behind.

Officers explained that the final version of the York's Skills Plan 2017-2020 had been updated following the close of the consultation period. They are advised that there were two subtle but significant changes to focus on the immediate skills gaps and shortages in specific sectors. These were:

- The needs of the rail industry, as part of the construction and infrastructure sector
- The Cultural Offer, as part of the hospitality and tourism sector.

Officers advised that the Executive Summary also highlighted IT and digital skills as a generic skills gap to support all sectors in York, as well as the need to address high level skills shortages to support the digital, software & technology sector in its own right.

In response to a question from the Executive Member regarding high value and low paid jobs and why only 4 sectors have been identified for immediate focus, Officers explained that whilst the skills needs and job opportunities of every employment sector in York were important, evidence highlighted the importance of addressing immediate skills gaps and vacancies of the sectors identified which accounted for circa 46% of employment in the city.

Officers also explained that sectors such as hospitality, care, rail and construction, which were often perceived as only offering low paid entry level jobs, offered opportunities to develop a variety of skills and career progression through to high value, well paid specialist and managerial jobs, for which there were shortages.

In regard to the Executive Member question concerning current recruitment challenges for high value IT and Technology businesses, Officers reported that the technical skills needed in that sector were not always well connected to the courses available in further and higher education. Furthermore, the pull of higher salaries in other cities, the need for candidates with transferable skills, a reducing number of IT courses available at pre 16 were all factors affecting recruitment in IT specific jobs. It was also highlighted that there was a skills gap in IT teaching in schools which would be included as a challenge to be

addressed as part of the mapping of progression routes through to digital technology jobs.

The Executive Member asked whether there would be more sector specific careers fairs and skills interventions to raise awareness and drive take up of jobs in the sectors highlighted and others. Officers confirmed that in addition to the twice yearly council-led general 'all age' Jobs Fair and Apprenticeship Recruitment Events targeting 16-24 year olds, sector specific careers fairs in digital technology and construction were being explored. There had already been a joint NHS and care careers fair in March 2017, led by York Hospital Trust, and there would be a further one in September. There had also been some focused events led by the Hotelier network working with Job Centre Plus to support skills shortages in the Hospitality sector - in particular chefs and housekeeping vacancies.

The Executive Member asked how the York Skills Plan 2017-2020 would be communicated internally and externally. Officers advised that internally, the plan would be communicated and adopted through the Council management group - Learning Together, and to external partners. The first launch would be communicated through the economic strategy review event in September. It had also been included in a briefing for Headteachers and various other partnership networks, such as the Health and Wellbeing Board and Higher York. The key message was that the Skills Plan, its priorities and 'asks' were everybody's business. There was no one organisation or employer that could deliver all the interventions required to develop, retain and attract talent to support local business growth, making sure that all residents can secure good quality, well paid jobs and that no-one was left behind. It was noted that the Council needed to work in partnership with all stakeholders to realise the city's ambitions for businesses and people.

The Executive Member asked whether the press could do a feature on the York's Skills Plan 2017-2020 and officers confirmed that they would speak to the communications team about this.

The Executive Member was asked to approve the final draft of the York Skills Plan 2017-20 for publication.

Resolved: That, after consideration, the Executive Member approved the final draft of the York Skills Plan 2017-20 for publication.

Reason: The plan had been consulted on with a wide range of partners across the city, who had informed the development of the plan. It was now ready to be widely shared and adopted.

Cllr Aspden, Chair

[The meeting started at 2.10 pm and finished at 2.29 pm].