

Meeting:	Economy and Culture Decision Session
Meeting date:	27 January 2025
Report of:	Pauline Stuchfield Director Housing and Communities
Portfolio of:	Councillor Kilbane Executive Member for Economy and Culture

Decision Report: York Learning Self Assessment Report

Subject of Report

1. The report presents York Learning's Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for the academic year 2023/24. The full report is attached at Annex 1 with performance data contained within.
2. The report shows how York Learning performs in relation to the 'Education Inspection Framework' and this final report will be sent to Ofsted on the 31st of January 2025.

Benefits and Challenges

3. This helps to form the robust monitoring in place for the service and supports the sound governance arrangement for York Learning Services.

Policy Basis for Decision

4. The performance of the service is aligned to 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.
- This report reflects on York Learning's performance, in the previous academic year, towards the expectations set out in the 'Education Inspection Framework'.

Financial Strategy Implications

5. 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.

Recommendation and Reasons

6. The Executive Member is asked to consider the attached 2023/24 Self-Assessment Report and approve it subject to any suggested changes.

Reason: - To help monitor the service and provide sound governance arrangements.

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.

Consultation Analysis

9. The Self-Assessment report is an amalgamation of themes showing from each curriculum area within York Learning which have separate individual reports. It has been robustly challenged and consulted on with various members of York Learning, a peer challenge from regional providers and the York Learning Improvement Board. This is now presented for final consultation and approval.

Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

10. York Learning is performing well but we are having challenges with achievement in specific targeted areas. Overall achievement is lower than we would wish it to be at 75.5% for Education and Training it is up on last year's, whereas Apprenticeships is 55.3% which is a small drop from last year of 4.3%. There are clear national challenges which are affecting our achievement relating primarily to:-
 - a. Functional Skills, in both English and maths where there are problems with the exams questions not being clear or aimed correctly.
 - b. Early Year's Education (EYE) Apprenticeships where there is a national recruitment and retention challenge in this area.
 - c. ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) where many of the learners do not stay in York for the duration of their course and find housing outside of York or return to their original country.
 - d. Mental health and financial instability is a challenge also with many of our learners who struggle with the commitment and challenge or regular learning and exam taking.
11. The offer continues to be broad with multiply entry points for learners to engage with us. Tutors are well trained and highly skilled in their subject areas and extension activities around transferable skills and employments links are regularly wrapped up within learning.
12. The support learners receive is very good and enables those most disadvantaged to achieve and complete their course/qualification.

13. Learners positively talk about how much they enjoy their courses and the added benefits learning with us give them including improved confidence, improve employment opportunities, finding a job, improved wellbeing, reduced isolation and loneliness, ability to help children with their homework.

Organisational Impact and Implications

14. The attached SAR clearly identifies our strengths and areas for development. Balancing the strengths and areas for development we believe the service is 'Good' in all areas and would like to report that to Ofsted. The areas for development are all well in hand and already showing improvements in helping learners to identify if they are ready to learn which will, we hope, improve our achievement figures for 2024/25.
- **Financial**, The service is primarily funded from external contracts, grants and course fees. This leads to financial challenges and the service continues to seek additional income streams to minimise council contributions to the service. There are no financial implications to this report.
 - **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 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 reflected in this report contributes 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**, An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required as this is a retrospective report. However, the report does evidence the ways in which York Learning has sought to engage those who are furthest away from education and the job market. It also recognises the challenges faced by those groups when entering, and trying to maintain regular attendance in, formal education.
- **Data Protection and Privacy**, - The completion of data protection impact assessment (DPIA) screening questions evidenced there would be no processing of personal data, special categories of personal data or criminal offence data processed, so there is no requirement to complete a DPIA
- **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

15. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy the main risks identified associated with the areas of work covered in this report are operational: affecting delivery of the Council's business objectives and its image and reputation. Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk score has been assessed at 10 which equates to "Low". This is acceptable but means that regular monitoring will be required of the Quality Improvement Plans.

Wards Impacted

16. All wards

Contact details

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Background papers

None

Annexes

- Annex A: York Learning Self Assessment Report 23-24