



Notice of meeting of

Decision Session - Executive Leader

To: Councillors Waller (Executive Member)

Date: Tuesday, 5 October 2010

Time: 4.15 pm

Venue: Guildhall

AGENDA

Notice to Members – Calling In

Members are reminded that, should they wish to call in any item on this agenda, notice must be given to Democracy Support Group by:

10.00 am on Monday 4 October 2010 if an item is called in before a decision is taken, or

4.00pm on Thursday 7 October 2010 if an item is called in after a decision has been taken.

Items called in will be considered by the Scrutiny Management Committee.

Written representations in respect of items on this agenda should be submitted to Democratic Services by 5.00pm on Friday 1 October 2010.

1. Declarations of Interest

At this point Members are asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have in the business on this agenda.

2. Minutes

(Pages 3 -
6)

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2010.

3. Public Participation

At this point in the meeting, members of the public who have registered their wish to speak at the meeting can do so. The deadline for registering is **5:00pm on Monday 4 October 2010**.

Members of the public may register to speak on:-

- an item on the agenda;
- an issue within the Executive Member's remit;
- an item that has been published on the Information Log since the last session. Information reports are listed at the end of the agenda.

4. Government Consultation on the Future (Pages 7 - 34) Direction of Skills Policy

This report presents a recommended response to the Government's consultation "Skills for Sustainable growth", issued by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in July this year and asks the Executive Leader to endorse the response.

5. Urgent Business

Any other business which the Chair considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972

Information Reports

No information reports have been published on the Information Log for this session.

Democracy Officers

Catherine Clarke and Louise Cook (job share)

Contact details:

- Telephone – (01904) 551031
- Email catherine.clarke@york.gov.uk and louise.cook@york.gov.uk

(If contacting by email, please send to both Democracy officers named above).

For more information about any of the following please contact the Democracy Officer responsible for servicing this meeting:

- Registering to speak
- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports

Contact details are set out above.

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Would you like to speak at this meeting?

If you would, you will need to:

- register by contacting the Democracy Officer (whose name and contact details can be found on the agenda for the meeting) **no later than 5.00 pm** on the last working day before the meeting;
- ensure that what you want to say speak relates to an item of business on the agenda or an issue which the committee has power to consider (speak to the Democracy Officer for advice on this);
- find out about the rules for public speaking from the Democracy Officer.

A leaflet on public participation is available on the Council's website or from Democratic Services by telephoning York (01904) 551088

Further information about what's being discussed at this meeting

All the reports which Members will be considering are available for viewing online on the Council's website. Alternatively, copies of individual reports or the full agenda are available from Democratic Services. Contact the Democracy Officer whose name and contact details are given on the agenda for the meeting. **Please note a small charge may be made for full copies of the agenda requested to cover administration costs.**

Access Arrangements

We will make every effort to make the meeting accessible to you. The meeting will usually be held in a wheelchair accessible venue with an induction hearing loop. We can provide the agenda or reports in large print, electronically (computer disk or by email), in Braille or on audio tape. Some formats will take longer than others so please give as much notice as possible (at least 48 hours for Braille or audio tape).

If you have any further access requirements such as parking close-by or a sign language interpreter then please let us know. Contact the Democracy Officer whose name and contact details are given on the order of business for the meeting.

Every effort will also be made to make information available in another language, either by providing translated information or an interpreter providing sufficient advance notice is given. Telephone York (01904) 551550 for this service.

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Yeteri kadar önceden haber verilmesi koşuluyla, bilgilerin terümesini hazırlatmak ya da bir tercüman bulmak için mümkün olan herşey yapılacaktır. Tel: (01904) 551 550

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Informacja może być dostępna w tłumaczeniu, jeśli dostaniemy zapotrzebowanie z wystarczającym wyprzedzeniem. Tel: (01904) 551 550

Holding the Executive to Account

The majority of councillors are not appointed to the Executive (40 out of 47). Any 3 non-Executive councillors can 'call-in' an item of business from a published Executive (or Executive Member Decision Session) agenda. The Executive will still discuss the 'called in' business on the published date and will set out its views for consideration by a specially convened Scrutiny Management Committee (SMC). That SMC meeting will then make its recommendations to the next scheduled Executive meeting in the following week, where a final decision on the 'called-in' business will be made.

Scrutiny Committees

The purpose of all scrutiny and ad-hoc scrutiny committees appointed by the Council is to:

- Monitor the performance and effectiveness of services;
- Review existing policies and assist in the development of new ones, as necessary; and
- Monitor best value continuous service improvement plans

Who Gets Agenda and Reports for our Meetings?

- Councillors get copies of all agenda and reports for the committees to which they are appointed by the Council;
- Relevant Council Officers get copies of relevant agenda and reports for the committees which they report to;
- Public libraries get copies of **all** public agenda/reports.

City of York Council

Committee Minutes

MEETING	DECISION SESSION - EXECUTIVE LEADER
DATE	7 SEPTEMBER 2010
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS WALLER (EXECUTIVE MEMBER)

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Executive Leader was invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interest he might have in the business on the agenda. He declared a personal non prejudicial interest as he is a member of the York Credit Union.

6. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Decision Session of the Executive Leader, held on 6 July 2010 be approved and signed by the Executive Leader as a correct record.

7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

8. FUTURE PROSPECTS - ANNUAL REPORT AND DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN

The Executive Leader considered a report that advised him of the outcome of the work of Future Prospects for the last year and he was updated on the preparation of a new Business Plan to take forward this service.

Officers gave an update and stated that Future Prospect had achieved outstanding results over the last year and had helped a large number of individuals find paid employment. The Executive Leader commended Future Prospects on the work they had done and was confident they would continue to deliver a commendable service for the public to use.

The Leader discussed the annual report and expressed his concerns regarding other central government agencies duplicating this type of work and requested officers arrange a meeting with the Department of Work and Pensions to resolve this.¹

The Leader commented on the financial figures and stated that the 2011/12 figures must be considered as part of the budget setting process.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the annual report for Future Prospects be approved.
- (ii) That the draft business plan for Future Prospects be noted and the Executive Leader's comments be taken into consideration.
- (iii) That a meeting with the Department of Work and Pensions be arranged.
- (iv) That the 2011/12 figures be considered under the budget setting process.

Reason: To support the economic objectives set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Strategy.

Action Required

1. Arrange a meeting with DWP

RR

9. CORE FUNDING TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS 2011/2012

The Executive Leader considered a report that informed him of the applications received for financial support from the City Council's voluntary sector funding budget for 2011/2012.

Officers gave an update and confirmed that option 2 was the preferred option as this would allow more time for a clearer funding commissioning strategy to be agreed.

The Leader questioned the current grant funding process and officers confirmed that currently an open bidding process was in operation but a review of the application process would be taking place. The Leader requested that the Equalities Advisory Group be involved when allocations were being made.¹

In answer to the Leaders questions, officers confirmed that each organisation had received an annual review and the Leader agreed that all the Charities should continue to demonstrate what they had achieved with the resources they had received.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the existing annual funding arrangements as defined in option 2, at paragraph 12 of the report, be maintained.
- ii) That the Equalities Advisory Group be kept informed.

Reason: To provide continuity to the current providers until a clearer funding and commissioning strategy for the voluntary sector has been agreed.

Action Required

1. Officers are to keep the EAG informed.

AH

10. POLICING IN THE 21ST CENTURY: RECONNECTING POLICE AND THE PEOPLE

The Executive Leader considered a report that requested his response to the Home Office's report for consultation 'Policing in the 21st Century: Reconnecting police and the people'.

Officers gave an update and confirmed that the CSP (Community Safety Partnership) had agreed the consultation paper, after officers had confirmed a query they had regarding costings.

The Executive Leader confirmed he supported the CSP response and advised officers to include a statement explaining the need for adequate financing to support the new responsibilities.¹

RESOLVED:

i) That the Executive Leader noted the report and advised officers on the content of the response to the consultation paper.

ii) That the CSP response be endorsed and that the views of the City of York Council be the same as those of its partner organisations.

Reason: To provide a response to the Home Office within the consultation deadline.

Action Required

1. Include the Executive Leaders comments into the Consultation paper

AH

11. UPDATE ON CAPABLE GUARDIAN SCHEME

The Executive Leader considered a report that updated him on the progress of the Capable Guardian scheme.

Officers gave an update and stated that the pilot scheme had been very successful in the Westfield Ward and was being implemented into other wards with high incidences of anti social behaviour. The scheme encouraged partnership working and was supported by the neighbourhood police.

The Leader informed officers that the police had been in touch with him regarding the Hull Road and Heworth schemes. The police expressed their support and stated that the meetings, that had been developed under the capable guardian banner, were continuing with a positive and supportive input from all agencies and members of the community.

The Leader confirmed that joint working was an efficient use of resources and was working well. He supported the roll out and agreed that there was no substitutive way of working as every area had different needs. He discussed the importance of involving the public and stressed that officers must ensure the general public completely understand what the scheme was achieving. He welcomed an update on the progress of the roll outs and commended officers on the positive achievements made so far. ¹

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Reason: To keep the Executive Leader informed of the progress of the Capable Guardian Scheme.

Action Required

1. Keep the Exec Leader updated on future roll outs

AH

Cllr Waller, Chair

[The meeting started at 4.15 pm and finished at 4.40 pm].



Decision Session – Executive Leader**5 October 2010**

Report of the Director of City Strategy

Government consultation on the future direction of skills policy**Summary**

1. This report presents a recommended response to the Government's consultation "Skills for Sustainable growth", issued by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in July this year.
2. The report has a good strategic fit with the long term aspirations of the city, particularly in relation to the Learning City and Thriving City themes within the Sustainable Community strategy, but also with strong links to those related to the Inclusive City and Sustainable City.

Background

3. The consultation paper issued by the Government sets out their emerging vision and thinking for skills. A full strategy for skills will be published after the Autumn Comprehensive Spending review. This will set out in more detail how the Government intends to support learning and skills priorities. Attached to this report is a recommended response to the Government's consultation set out on the consultation response form.

Consultation

4. The recommended response has been prepared following consultation with Higher York. The Learning City Partnership have also been consulted and any further comments will be reported at the meeting.

Options

5. The options are to accept the recommended response to the Government's consultation or to make any amendments to this.

Corporate Priorities

6. The actions in this report support the Learning City and Thriving City elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Council's Corporate Strategy.

Implications**Financial**

7. There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

Human Resources (HR)

8. There are no direct HR implications arising from this report.

Equalities

9. There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

Legal

10. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Crime and Disorder

11. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

Information Technology (IT)

12. There are no strategic IT implications.

Property

13. There are no direct property implications.

Risk management

14. There are no direct risks arising from the recommended response to the Government's consultation.

Recommendations

15. That the Executive Leader endorses the recommended response to the Government's consultation on "Skills for Sustainable Growth".

Reason: To support the learning city and thriving city strategic objectives as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Contact Details

Author:

Roger Ranson
Assistant Director, Economic Development and Partnerships
01904 551614

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Bill Woolley
Director of City Strategy

Report Approved ✓ **Date: 22 Sept 10**

Wards affected – All

Specialist implications officer - None

For further information please contact the author of the report.

Annex: Recommended response to the Government's consultation on "Skills for Sustainable Growth"
Annex 2: Updated version, tabled at the meeting. Recommended response to the Government's consultation on "Skills for Sustainable Growth"

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Innovation & Skills

**SKILLS FOR SUSTAINABLE
GROWTH**

Consultation response form

JULY 2010

Skills for Sustainable Growth response form

If you are unable to use the online comments boxes to record your responses, please complete the questionnaire below and send it to:

Atif Rafique
 Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
 1 Victoria Street
 London SW1H 0ET

Phone: 020 7215 1910
 Email: skills@bis.gsi.gov.uk

The Department may, in accordance with the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, make individual responses available on public request.

The closing date for this consultation is 14 October 2010.

Name: Roger Ranson

Organisation (if applicable): City of York Council/Learning City York

Address:
 City Strategy
 9 St. Leonard's Place, York, YO1 7ET

Please tick the option below which best describes on whose behalf you are responding:

<input type="checkbox"/>	General Further Education College
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sixth Form College
<input type="checkbox"/>	Charity or social enterprise
<input type="checkbox"/>	Training Organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Government
<input type="checkbox"/>	Individual
x	Local Government
<input type="checkbox"/>	Large employer (250+)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium employer (50 to 250 staff)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Small employer (10 to 49 staff)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade union or staff association
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please describe):

Principles for a skills strategy

1. We welcome views on these principles and whether there are others we should consider.

Qualifications do not always equal skills or increased productivity. There is a need to capitalise on those who already have invested in training but are not productive, e.g. unemployed/under-employed graduates.

Any work on skills needs a complementary programme about working practices by employers, for example creating new vacancies rather than increasing the potential for paid overtime, the negative profile of some sectors such as hospitality and what employers are going to do about raising the profile to attract young people in particular.

We welcome the link between learning/skills acquisition and enterprise and innovation.

Apprenticeships and the new 14-19 Diplomas can be part of a 'credible vocational training offer' but more needs to be done to persuade employers to give them a chance. More work is need to iron out issues of progression e.g. BTEC level 2 to Apprenticeships.

Impartial, Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) is very important but this must include IAG regarding Level 4 and above. All too often the IAG community has neither the expertise, funding or capacity to offer this.

Accreditation of existing knowledge must not be cancelled out completely, often accreditation of in-house training in businesses by universities is one way to encourage more employees to take up the training and to provide progression routes into higher level skills acquisition. Accreditation of prior learning is also very useful as a hook into a wider qualifications.

We welcome the emphasis of employers being encouraged to play their part.

2. How can we further simplify the skills system, including the number, roles and responsibilities of the many organisations working in the system?

Training providers will always have a self-interest.

Independent brokerage and those who can have a strategic view are very important. Customer demand could simply mean that providers end up doing more of what people want whether it fits with the nation's or local area skills needs at all.

3. In view of the current fiscal deficit, what areas of public investment in skills could be reduced and where could private investment be increased? What are the main constraints on changing the balance between public and private investment and how could these be overcome?

Need an increase in employer funded apprenticeship schemes. Individuals investing time and money in training should be offered guaranteed placements/interviews/work trials.

Funding for those who want to engage and are going to be economically productive but might need some new skills e.g. those actively choosing to change career, recent graduates, those made redundancy and having to change careers. Also learning that 'hooks' people in e.g. modular or bitesize accredited or non-accredited learning. This can then be used to enter further learning.

A respected and credible training offer

4. How could the Apprenticeship programme be improved? What can be done to increase the proportion of apprentices progressing to Level 3 and beyond? What and how should employers contribute to Apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships should be sponsored by an employer. Some apprenticeships, e.g. construction, are often never completed because the students cannot find employment or placements.

Progression into of apprenticeships needs to be encouraged further, for example by ironing out issues of those wishing to progress from some BTECS to Level 2.

Higher level apprenticeships could provide a more logical route to higher learning instead of trying to 'shoe horn' progression to some degrees.

Foundation degrees of course could be a crucial element here. Respect of the vocational route can only be achieved through putting it on a par with A levels.

There could be some added elements to some apprenticeships to support progression to HE, such as Maths content for those in engineering.

5. We welcome views on how best to support people who might in time benefit from an Apprenticeship but who do not currently have the skills to begin one.

Confidence building courses should be free of charge for participants. Also employers should be given support to manage employees who are most vulnerable in the labour market.

6. We welcome views about progression from Level 3 Apprenticeships into higher education, including whether there is demand for Higher Apprenticeships at Levels 4 and 5.

It is important to determine the views of employers on Higher Apprenticeships. Training on the job, that is specific to the job, at no cost is probably more appealing. This is probably more productive than day-release or block training.

Higher level apprenticeships could provide a more logical route to higher learning instead of trying to 'shoe horn' progression to some degrees. Foundation degrees of course could be a crucial element here. Respect of the vocational route can only be achieved through putting it on a par with A levels. There could be some added elements to some apprenticeships to support progression to HE, such as Maths content for those in engineering. In other cases support of bridging units would be helpful. There does seem to be demand from some apprentices and employers for progression, but not from others. Some of the reasons why there is not interest – the need for flexible study; higher level skills not perceived as necessary, apprentices wanting to stay in employment and not go onto a full time degree. There is plenty of good practice developed by Lifelong Learning Networks and Aimhigher across England that should be drawn upon relating to progression of apprentices and the development of Higher Level apprentices.

7. How should we ensure that training leads to real gains in skills, knowledge and competence and not just the accreditation of existing skills?

See comments about accreditation above – it is not all bad. Overall training should be tailored to the businesses needs, Businesses often require quick, non-accredited options. The current public funding system does not allow for the non-accredited path except through some one off funding pots which will disappear.

8. How can we incentivise colleges and training organisations to offer a flexible and cost-effective 'needs-led' offer for people who are out of work or at risk of becoming unemployed?

Colleges should be paid on outcomes in terms of qualification gained plus additional payments on 12 weeks employment.

9. How can we encourage colleges and training organisations to make the transition from learning to work as smooth as possible, enabling progression in the workplace, as well as to further learning?

Use independent intermediary organisations to support the learners.

10. How can we better promote enterprise education in further education colleges and throughout the training system?

Use good practice elsewhere for example where universities and schools have embedded enterprise education in the curriculum/qualifications.

Funding and entitlements

11. Should Government continue with an entitlements based approach? How can we ensure that Government money is targeted where it is needed most and where it will achieve most value?

Helping individuals and employers choose the learning they want

12. How can the learning market be made to work more efficiently, effectively and economically and to be more responsive and accountable to demand by individuals and employers, while also delivering value for money?

More courses, at all levels, to be provided as day-release/evening courses and funded by the employer. Whilst remembering that Colleges, Universities, Training providers are essentially businesses too and they need viable cohort sizes or they will have to increase charges to the employer/individual.

13. We welcome views on how best to ensure employers are able to shape the skills system to meet their needs.

As question 12 above.
Developing forums for businesses to get involved and take ownership. We have some good examples in York through the York Business Forum and York Economic Partnership models.

14. We are interested in views on what more might be needed to make the system responsive to employer needs.

More detailed local intelligence provided by local impartial brokers would be useful.

15. Which qualifications have most value for employers and learners? Which do not have value? How do we evolve the Qualifications and Credit Framework so that it focuses on the former and removes the latter?

Requires direct response from employers and learners.

16. How can we improve the accessibility and quality of careers information, advice and guidance services for adults?

Free and independent advice delivered where the clients want it and for all levels including level 4 +
There could be payment by those who can afford it or paid through redundancy packages.

17. We welcome views on the vision for lifelong learning accounts, and their potential usefulness.

This type of programme was previously manipulated by some, unscrupulous training providers. If it is reintroduced it requires policing through compulsory independent advice from a recognised/licensed agency.

18. We welcome views on approaches to informing learners and employers including how better information can be made available while reducing bureaucracy.

Supporting partnerships and umbrella organisations which can synthesise and disseminate information.

Giving colleges and training organisations the freedom to respond

19. We welcome views on our planned measures for simplification and freeing colleges and training organisations.

Freeing up the HE funding for Colleges offering HE would be helpful such as allowing them to offer modular provision which doesn't necessarily lead to a full qualification.

20. How can we enable colleges and training organisations to be more efficient and responsive to the needs of employers, learners and their community but without adding new layers of control by local bodies?

Someone, somewhere has to provide timely and accurate information on employer needs to colleges, training providers and universities (it could be the same body, something like an RDA). A strategic overview in a locality is still important to provide some sort of indication of the 'direction of travel' required to support the economy. Employers (particularly private business) need to contribute views and engage fully with providers more than they do at the moment.

21. What mechanisms could we use to hold colleges and other training organisations to account for their performance in responding to employers' needs and for prioritising training that adds real economic value?

Simple, non-bureaucratic measures. Currently there are different reporting systems between different type of organisations. It might be worth pulling them together.

Incentives to train in priority areas

22. Do we need a framework that will enable and encourage employers and individuals to invest in training in priority areas and for colleges and other training organisations to provide appropriate courses?

Yes! Absolutely crucial!

23. Should we promote training innovation, particularly in rapidly changing or wholly new areas of the economy? If so, how might we do this?

Yes.

24. How can we ensure employers can access high quality labour market information?

By having one service that collects and disseminates it even if it draws upon a number of different sources to do so.

Encouraging a more productive workforce

25. What would enable businesses to use skills as a driver of productivity and business improvement?

Business leaders need to be supported to understand how to manage and deploy their staff along with recognising skills gaps in relation to productivity. This can continue to be provided through leadership training, support with developing workforce development plans, mentoring. However this sort of support is likely to have to be subsidised (not free) to encourage business take up.

26. We welcome views on ways in which businesses can be encouraged to increase the UK's leadership and management capability to create better run and more highly performing businesses.

As above.

Reinvigorating adult and community learning

27. How could we encourage the development of productive partnerships with third sector organisations?

Supporting (inc. some funding) for organisations such as the CVS which are in many local areas to support and help establish more third sector organisations and which play a vital role in encouraging volunteering. There are a number of other umbrella organisation often covering local areas which support training in the third sector organisations too. There are so many, often small, third sector organisations which really benefit from the support of a larger, umbrella type of organisation such as the CVS. E.g. to support smaller organisations to come together to offer services, to support with back office functions and so on.

28. We welcome views on new ways that colleges could be used to support the community.

29. How could adult and community learning be reinvigorated? We especially welcome ideas for how businesses and others could be encouraged to engage in supporting local community learning to help create local ownership and momentum.

Businesses will want to see the financial gain in being involved including raising profile with the view to getting more business. A small number may be interested in pure philanthropy.

Measuring success

30. We welcome views on those indicators of success would be most useful to you or your organisation.

Perhaps focus less on numbers of x or y qualifications but on outcomes e.g. VAT registrations, wealth generated, people in employment, views of employers and individuals on what they gained from training, numbers accessing training . Simply counting the qualifications will not tell us if the nation is informed, empowered, innovative....

Do you have any other comments that might aid the consultation process as a whole?

Please use this space for any general comments that you may have.

Comments on the layout of this consultation would also be welcomed.

Overall there seems to be lack of reference to the role of universities and other providers of higher level skills such as colleges offering HE opportunities. Universities often excellent at supporting enterprise and innovation within the student body and through other engagement with businesses, the public and third sectors.

In terms of employers there seems to be an assumption that this is purely about private business. Of course private business is extremely important in terms of this agenda but the third sector and public sector also need to be seen as important parts of the employer picture despite the cuts in the public sector. Third sector organisations are going to play a key role in implementing the 'Big Society' vision and also in 'picking up the pieces' if some public services are cut particularly to the most needy people in our society.

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UPDATED VERSION tabled at the meeting.
Changes to paragraphs 5, 8, 9, 11, 28 & 29



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Innovation & Skills

**SKILLS FOR SUSTAINABLE
GROWTH**

Consultation response form

JULY 2010

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The closing date for this consultation is 14 October 2010.

Name: Roger Ranson

Organisation (if applicable): City of York Council/Learning City York

Address:
 City Strategy
 9 St. Leonard's Place, York, YO1 7ET

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Training providers will always have a self-interest.

Independent brokerage and those who can have a strategic view are very important. Customer demand could simply mean that providers end up doing more of what people want whether it fits with the nation's or local area skills needs at all.

3. In view of the current fiscal deficit, what areas of public investment in skills could be reduced and where could private investment be increased? What are the main constraints on changing the balance between public and private investment and how could these be overcome?

Need an increase in employer funded apprenticeship schemes. Individuals investing time and money in training should be offered guaranteed placements/interviews/work trials.

Funding for those who want to engage and are going to be economically productive but might need some new skills e.g. those actively choosing to change career, recent graduates, those made redundancy and having to change careers. Also learning that 'hooks' people in e.g. modular or bitesize accredited or non-accredited learning. This can then be used to enter further learning.

A respected and credible training offer

4. How could the Apprenticeship programme be improved? What can be done to increase the proportion of apprentices progressing to Level 3 and beyond? What and how should employers contribute to Apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships should be sponsored by an employer. Some apprenticeships, e.g. construction, are often never completed because the students cannot find employment or placements.

Progression into of apprenticeships needs to be encouraged further, for example by ironing out issues of those wishing to progress from some BTECS to Level 2.

Higher level apprenticeships could provide a more logical route to higher learning instead of trying to 'shoe horn' progression to some degrees.

Foundation degrees of course could be a crucial element here. Respect of the vocational route can only be achieved through putting it on a par with A levels.

There could be some added elements to some apprenticeships to support progression to HE, such as Maths content for those in engineering.

5. We welcome views on how best to support people who might in time benefit from an Apprenticeship but who do not currently have the skills to begin one.

Confidence building courses should be free of charge for participants. Also employers should be given support to manage employees who are most vulnerable in the labour market.

Pre-apprenticeship courses for 16-19 yr olds (25 if LDD) that build confidence and embed basic employability attributes.

The Welfare to work programme should continue to incorporate pre-employment training (which can be sector specific or generic) to pre-prepare those seeking to return to work and encourage employers to screen all new candidates for apprenticeship places, ensuring that they continue to receive training/support to improve and maintain their productivity.

6. We welcome views about progression from Level 3 Apprenticeships into higher education, including whether there is demand for Higher Apprenticeships at Levels 4 and 5.

It is important to determine the views of employers on Higher Apprenticeships. Training on the job, that is specific to the job, at no cost is probably more appealing. This is probably more productive than day-release or block training.

Higher level apprenticeships could provide a more logical route to higher learning instead of trying to 'shoe horn' progression to some degrees. Foundation degrees of course could be a crucial element here. Respect of the vocational route can only be achieved through putting it on a par with A levels. There could be some added elements to some apprenticeships to support progression to HE, such as Maths content for those in engineering. In other cases support of bridging units would be helpful. There does seem to be demand from some apprentices and employers for progression, but not from others. Some of the reasons why there is not interest – the need for flexible study; higher level skills not perceived as necessary, apprentices wanting to stay in employment and not go onto a full time degree. There is plenty of good practice developed by Lifelong Learning Networks and Aimhigher across England that should be drawn upon relating to progression of apprentices and the development of Higher Level apprentices.

7. How should we ensure that training leads to real gains in skills, knowledge and competence and not just the accreditation of existing skills?

See comments about accreditation above – it is not all bad. Overall training should be tailored to the businesses needs, Businesses often require quick, non-accredited options. The current public funding system does not allow for the non-accredited path except through some one off funding pots which will disappear.

8. How can we incentivise colleges and training organisations to offer a flexible and cost-effective 'needs-led' offer for people who are out of work or at risk of becoming unemployed?

Colleges should be paid on outcomes in terms of qualification gained plus additional payments on 12 weeks employment.
Link in to Welfare to Work Provision

9. How can we encourage colleges and training organisations to make the transition from learning to work as smooth as possible, enabling progression in the workplace, as well as to further learning?

Use independent intermediary organisations to support the learners.
Provide on-going (outreach) mentoring support to individual for a period of time
Job clubs within colleges
Follow-up with employer ie: on-going support for both employer and employee.

10. How can we better promote enterprise education in further education colleges and throughout the training system?

Use good practice elsewhere for example where universities and schools have embedded enterprise education in the curriculum/qualifications.

Funding and entitlements

11. Should Government continue with an entitlements based approach? How can we ensure that Government money is targeted where it is needed most and where it will achieve most value?

Priorities do vary by locality. Whilst literacy & numeracy amongst the existing workforce is still a priority, there could be a way to co-ordinate a local entitlement eg: City Region - entitlement to a first or new technical L3. young people / adults with learning difficulties & disabilities have always lost out if they have not achieved a L2 by age 19, they have to start paying for provision. As the cost of supporting these types of learners increases, a change in entitlement would help to open up opportunities with a positive impact on social costs for these learners.

Helping individuals and employers choose the learning they want

12. How can the learning market be made to work more efficiently, effectively and economically and to be more responsive and accountable to demand by individuals and employers, while also delivering value for money?

More courses, at all levels, to be provided as day-release/evening courses and funded by the employer. Whilst remembering that Colleges, Universities, Training providers are essentially businesses too and they need viable cohort sizes or they will have to increase charges to the employer/individual.

Recognise the part that HEIs can play to develop and deliver demand-led provision for employers and reform the system to enable this sector to play a greater role than just Knowledge Transfer Programmes and interns. Local Partnerships (ESBs;LEPs; Learning Partnerships) need to encourage delivery partners to fill gaps and avoid duplication – using robust evidence and local area statements of need (approved by employers) to embed a more effective demand –led system. Look at the process adopted for 14-19 – powerful partnership model.

13. We welcome views on how best to ensure employers are able to shape the skills system to meet their needs.

As question 12 above.
Developing forums for businesses to get involved and take ownership. We have some good examples in York through the York Business Forum and York Economic Partnership models.

14. We are interested in views on what more might be needed to make the system responsive to employer needs.

More detailed local intelligence provided by local impartial brokers would be useful.

15. Which qualifications have most value for employers and learners? Which do not have value? How do we evolve the Qualifications and Credit Framework so that it focuses on the former and removes the latter?

Requires direct response from employers and learners.

16. How can we improve the accessibility and quality of careers information, advice and guidance services for adults?

Free and independent advice delivered where the clients want it and for all levels including level 4 +

There could be payment by those who can afford it or paid through redundancy packages.

17. We welcome views on the vision for lifelong learning accounts, and their potential usefulness.

This type of programme was previously manipulated by some, unscrupulous training providers. If it is reintroduced it requires policing through compulsory independent advice from a recognised/licensed agency.

18. We welcome views on approaches to informing learners and employers including how better information can be made available while reducing bureaucracy.

Supporting partnerships and umbrella organisations which can synthesise and disseminate information.

Giving colleges and training organisations the freedom to respond

19. We welcome views on our planned measures for simplification and freeing colleges and training organisations.

Freeing up the HE funding for Colleges offering HE would be helpful such as allowing them to offer modular provision which doesn't necessarily lead to a full qualification.

20. How can we enable colleges and training organisations to be more efficient and responsive to the needs of employers, learners and their community but without adding new layers of control by local bodies?

Someone, somewhere has to provide timely and accurate information on employer needs to colleges, training providers and universities (it could be the same body, something like an RDA). A strategic overview in a locality is still important to provide some sort of indication of the 'direction of travel' required to support the economy. Employers (particularly private business) need to contribute views and engage fully with providers more than they do at the moment.

21. What mechanisms could we use to hold colleges and other training organisations to account for their performance in responding to employers' needs and for prioritising training that adds real economic value?

Simple, non-bureaucratic measures. Currently there are different reporting systems between different type of organisations. It might be worth pulling them together.

Incentives to train in priority areas

22. Do we need a framework that will enable and encourage employers and individuals to invest in training in priority areas and for colleges and other training organisations to provide appropriate courses?

Yes! Absolutely crucial!

23. Should we promote training innovation, particularly in rapidly changing or wholly new areas of the economy? If so, how might we do this?

Yes.

24. How can we ensure employers can access high quality labour market information?

By having one service that collects and disseminates it even if it draws upon a number of different sources to do so.

Encouraging a more productive workforce

25. What would enable businesses to use skills as a driver of productivity and business improvement?

Business leaders need to be supported to understand how to manage and deploy their staff along with recognising skills gaps in relation to productivity. This can continue to be provided through leadership training, support with developing workforce development plans, mentoring. However this sort of support is likely to have to be subsidised (not free) to encourage business take up.

26. We welcome views on ways in which businesses can be encouraged to increase the UK's leadership and management capability to create better run and more highly performing businesses.

As above.

Reinvigorating adult and community learning

27. How could we encourage the development of productive partnerships with third sector organisations?

Supporting (inc. some funding) for organisations such as the CVS which are in many local areas to support and help establish more third sector organisations and which play a vital role in encouraging volunteering. There are a number of other umbrella organisation often covering local areas which support training in the third sector organisations too. There are so many, often small, third sector organisations which really benefit from the support of a larger, umbrella type of organisation such as the CVS. E.g. to support smaller organisations to come together to offer services, to support with back office functions and so on.

28. We welcome views on new ways that colleges could be used to support the community.

Although York College sits within one area of the city it is keen to respond to all communities. The college has a lot of experience in taking learning to the learner, and has a wealth of talent to draw on from skilled experience full time and part time staff

29. How could adult and community learning be reinvigorated? We especially welcome ideas for how businesses and others could be encouraged to engage in supporting local community learning to help create local ownership and momentum.

Businesses will want to see the financial gain in being involved including raising profile with the view to getting more business. A small number may be interested in pure philanthropy. Adult learning providers can offer tailor made courses with the flexibility to respond to needs of business and of individuals. Good communication is essential to make sure demand and supply are clearly stated and can be accommodated quickly and effectively.

Measuring success

30. We welcome views on those indicators of success would be most useful to you or your organisation.

Perhaps focus less on numbers of x or y qualifications but on outcomes e.g. VAT registrations, wealth generated, people in employment, views of employers and individuals on what they gained from training, numbers accessing training. Simply counting the qualifications will not tell us if the nation is informed, empowered, innovative....

Do you have any other comments that might aid the consultation process as a whole?

Please use this space for any general comments that you may have.

Comments on the layout of this consultation would also be welcomed.

Overall there seems to be lack of reference to the role of universities and other providers of higher level skills such as colleges offering HE opportunities. Universities often excellent at supporting enterprise and innovation within the student body and through other engagement with businesses, the public and third sectors.

In terms of employers there seems to be an assumption that this is purely about private business. Of course private business is extremely important in terms of this agenda but the third sector and public sector also need to be seen as important parts of the employer picture despite the cuts in the public sector. Third sector organisations are going to play a key role in implementing the 'Big Society' vision and also in 'picking up the pieces' if some public services are cut particularly to the most needy people in our society.

