

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

11 September 2018

Report of the Assistant Director (Communities and Equalities)

**York Learning – Strategic Plan Update and Progress Report 2017/18**

**Summary**

1. This report presents the end of academic year performance data for York Learning. This is the second report to scrutiny for the academic year 2017/18, the first report presented in November 2017.
2. Normally at this time of year the service also presents initial findings from its annual Self Assessment Report (SAR), prior to this being presented to the Executive Member in October 2018. Unfortunately the timescale for the production of the SAR has slipped this year and whilst the service is still on schedule to produce the SAR in a timely manner, initial findings are not available for this meeting.
3. These two reports form part of the service’s governance reporting arrangements which are crucially important for the service in demonstrating to Ofsted that it has secure and robust governance arrangements in place.

**Background**

4. 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. The service is funded almost exclusively from external contract funding and fee income. For the academic year 2018/19 this will be in the region £3.1m, an increase of about £300k on the previous year. The majority of increase in funding is for 19-25 year olds high needs personalised learning programmes. The majority of this funded is “passported” to partner organisations, primarily Blueberry Academy, Choose2Youth and United Response.

5. Annex 1 presents the final summary performance report for the academic year 2017/18. Achievement for the year is included but this is subject to change as not all the exam results were available at the time of publication. Some information is not available at the time of writing, but will be tabled at the meeting should it be available.
6. Annex 2 is a detailed breakdown of income streams for the service. This is now part of the update report. This is primarily a financial year income report but should not vary considerably for the academic year.

### **Strategic/Service Plan 2017/18**

7. The services latest Strategic plan for 2018/19 is due to be signed off by the executive member in September 2017. The plan identifies a number of new opportunities and threats for the service as follows:
  - a) Increasing pressures as a result of the substantial bureaucratic requirements for audit contract compliance. This was identified in the 2017/18 plan and continues to be a pressure.
  - b) Funding for High Needs SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) learners is increasing substantially for 18/19 as the service responds to the development of a local offer. The service secured exceptional growth funding in 17/18 which has secured numbers for 18/19. This pattern of growth is expected to continue into 19/20 academic year.
  - c) The increase in learners with complex emotional, mental health and socio-economic needs. This places a significant strain on staff both in terms of the time and emotional strain to support learners. This is partly as a result of the change in the demographic of the learners that the service is working with. This is mirrored across the sub-region as unemployment decreases and new people are drawn into the labour market.
  - d) A sharp increase in Apprenticeship numbers particularly 16-18 learners. This is partly in response to incentive payments to employers who take on apprentices. However apprenticeship delivery and the increasing demands of English and maths requirements continue to put significant strain on achievement for apprenticeships resulting in a downward trend for outcomes in apprenticeships.

- e) A continuing challenge in some areas of provision in maintaining good achievement for learners, especially where the learners have multiple disadvantage. Not achieving good outcomes can lead to some punitive measures taken by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.
  - f) New pressures for the service to hit funding targets. Whilst funding levels remain broadly similar, it is increasingly difficult to attract learners to provision. Most of the targeted provision is aimed at improving English, maths and ICT skills along with more general preparation for employment. There are fewer learners seeking to improve these skills as a greater percentage of the population is now in work.
  - g) Over the past 12 months York Learning has been working with North Yorkshire County Council and East Riding County Council. This was formalised during the academic year with the Head of Service being seconded to North Yorkshire for 0.5 of the week to support service developments and to enhance collaboration. Opportunities for further collaboration and the sharing of good practice have been identified, including; quality monitoring, shared staffing, shared exam board registration, bidding for external resources and sharing some staff.
8. The threats and opportunities outlined above will be incorporated into an action plan which will be monitored by Scrutiny Committee. They will also be included in regular management updates and monitored through internal service quality improvement processes.

### **Options**

9. This report is for discussion and comment. There are no options to consider.

### **Council Plan**

10. Any plans and strategies developed are set within the context of the council plan but also respond to a number of sub-regional, regional and national policy objectives.

## Implications

11. **Finance:** The service is fully funded via external contracts and grants. Whilst the service has robust procedures in place to ensure the services maximises income this is not without some risks.
12. The report has no Human Resources, Equalities, Legal, Crime and Disorder, Information Technology, Property or other implications.

## Risk Management

13. There are no risks to consider that arise from this report.

## Recommendations

14. Members are asked to:
  - Comment upon the performance of York Learning and seek clarification on any areas of concern
  - Comment on the issues identified for the new academic year in paragraph 8 in advance of the strategic plan being signed off by the Executive Member.

Reason: To help monitor the service and guide managers and ensure robust and accountable governance arrangements.

## Contact Details

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### Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

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Report  
Approved

Date 31/08/2018

All

### Wards Affected:

For further information please contact the author of the report

## **Background Papers**

None

## **Annexes**

1. Strategic/Service Plan update 2017/18
2. Service Income projection for financial year 18/19

### Abbreviations used in report:

SAR          Self Assessment Report

SEND        Special Educational Needs and Disability