

**Skills and Employment Board – Minutes**  
**21 July 2021 11:00am - 12:30pm**

**Members present**

Organisation	Member	Role
York College	Lee Probert (LP) (Chair)	Chief Executive and Principal
Askham Bryan College	Dr Tim Whitaker (TW)	Chief Executive and Principal
City of York Council - Executive	Councillor Andrew Waller (CAW)	Executive Member - Economy and Strategic Planning
Federation of Small Businesses	Caroline Chapman (CC)	Business Owner and Member Representative
The Skills Network	Mark Dawe (MD)	Chief Executive
West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce	Mark Goldstone (MG)	Head of Policy and Business Representation
DWP	Richard Copley	Representative
York Jobcentre	Wendy Mangan (WM)	Deputy Employer and Partnership Manager, York & North Yorkshire
York St John University	Professor Karen Bryan (KB)	Vice-Chancellor
Simpson York Limited	Amanda Davidson (AD)	HR Manager
City of York Council	Maxine Squire (MS)	Assistant Director - Education and Skills

**In attendance**

Organisation	Representative	Role
City of York Council	Alison Edeson (AE)	Skills Team Manager
Annabel Jelley Consultants	Annabel Jelley (AJ)	Strategy Development Consultant
City of York Council	Simon Brereton (SB)	Head of Economic development
City of York Council	Alison Edeson (AE)	Skills Team Manager
University of York	Amanda Selvaratnam	Associate Director of Research and Enterprise and Head of Enterprise Services

**Apologies**

Organisation	Representative	Role
Independent	Bethan Vincent (BV)	Marketing Director
University of York	Professor Kiran Trehan (KT)	Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Partnerships and Engagement
TUC	Gareth Forest (GF)	Policy and Campaigns
York and North Yorkshire LEP	Jude Knight (JK)	Head of Skills

## **Minutes**

### **1. Introduction**

Lee Probert (Chair) welcomed members to the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Jude Knight (York and North Yorkshire LEP).

### **2. Minutes from last meeting 10 June 2021**

The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting that took place on 10 June 2021.

Update on outstanding actions;

009 - It has now been announced that no local bids for a LSIP trailblazer or Strategic Development Fund have been successful.

017 - ongoing. A suitable date has not yet been identified but it is expected that LP, CAW and SB will meet in the coming weeks to discuss how elected members are best kept informed of YSEB activity.

019 - on going. AJ to follow up with AH on creative and digital sector breakdown.

### **3. One Year Plan Update**

AE gave an update on the One Year Plan which will be published imminently. Final checks are being made on the document and work is going on to select appropriate, diverse images. Members highlighted the importance of maintaining images of York that have not been used in other documents and reflect the themes of the strategy. MD and AD offered to supply images which reflect the skills themes and local initiatives such as the redevelopment work being undertaken by Simpson Construction at Cliffords Tower.

Although there has been a delay with publishing this document it will be launched to align with the Governments Stage 4 roadmap out of the pandemic.

In the interests of time, an update on the Year one priority projects was not given but accompanies these minutes.

### **4. Update on York's economy**

SB gave an overview of recent economic data linked to York's recovery from the pandemic. He explained that it is a mixed picture with some positives (good consumer bounce back and an unprecedented number of Apprenticeship vacancies) and some areas for concern (recruitment difficulties being reported by many businesses, locally and nationally).

- Apprenticeship vacancies totalled 180 in recent weeks which is a reversal of the situation we have become accustomed to in recent years. Vacancies are at all levels and across a range of learning areas. Efforts to attract more people to the vacancies are ongoing.
- The claimant count for people seeking work peaked at 5,000 last year and has been coming down in recent months. The latest figures are for April and show this figure at 4,500 and indications are that this will have fallen further since then.
- The city has adopted the Good Business Charter which is a simple accreditation which organisations in the UK can sign up to in recognition of responsible business practices.
- Inward investment enquiries are coming in with reduction in demand for business space as remote working becomes more prevalent.
- Retail vacancy rates in the town centre have stabilised. Whilst the rate is still high for York historically, it compares favourably with other cities and there is a strong demand for commercial units.
- Some sectors more than others are experiencing recruitment difficulties with hospitality prevalent amongst them. The Mayor of York has organised a Hospitality Summit to take place on 27 July to try to tackle the shortage of skilled staff.
- Jobs fairs will be held in person or remotely in the autumn to help businesses fill vacancies.

Discussion followed SBs presentation with several remarks linked to the mismatch between the number of people seeking work and the vacancies available. Whilst some issues have been around for a long time (migrant labour departing due to Brexit), other concerns are new ones. People in low pay sectors such as retail are switching to new careers where the pay is slightly better (warehousing and logistics).

In addition, people want more flexibility than is offered by some roles and seek a better work/life balance especially when it comes to reducing commuting times. Board members also highlighted the pressure in some sectors to locate near pools of labour (e.g. technology hubs in Leeds).

### **5. 10 year Skills Strategy**

AJ went through the draft strategy which was circulated to members prior to the meeting.

AJ gave a short overview of each section and members commented on each part. Changes were suggested as follows;

- Wording in the Principles section changed to reflect low carbon ambitions aligned better with other strategies and altering the wording of 'prioritise' disadvantaged people to 'positively include'.
- Views on the general style was to make it as accessible to a wider audience as possible and change the language to that it is less for educators and more for stakeholders and the general public.
- KB made a significant point about strengthening the prioritisation of a higher level skills/graduate pipeline. This is set out well in the narrative but is not reflected strongly enough in the priorities for action section. As this is a major driver for the

skills strategy it needs to be reflected clearly in the actions section.

- Members wanted more links and alignment to existing strategies and emerging policies.
- Members discussed the prioritisation of the priorities and suggested having a single overarching aim for each of the four commitments. Whilst there was not an appetite for numbering the priorities, it was thought that the ones at the top of each section may be perceived as the highest priority. Care therefore should be given to which ones these are.
- Reference to Higher York should be made in the Business Training and Education section.
- Bring section 5 (future development opportunities) further up the document to show that the strategy is not just predicated on skills issues but aligning the workforce to meet the needs of investment opportunities.
- Strengthen the need to address retrofit skills needs in the housing sector in the low carbon section and ensure it is aligned with LEP circular strategy.

AJ thanked everyone for their comments and invited members to get in touch after the meeting if they had any further suggestions for the document.

There will be further consultation in the coming weeks with specific groups e.g. at the Hospitality Summit. An updated draft will be circulated prior to the next meeting in September with a view to sign off.

## **6. Future implementation of the strategy**

LP led a discussion on resources and framework needed to make the strategy a reality. The YSEB Board is due to finish once the strategy is complete but that is where the implementation phase starts. LP asked members how they saw the work of the YSEB going forward.

Members of Higher York have resourced the creation of the strategy and partners have supported the work in kind. MG pledged support in kind and AS highlighted the need to monitor the activity going forward. It was agreed that a central resource would be needed to keep the momentum going.

Three actions were agreed for LP to take forward;

1. Gain the view of the Higher York Board on a longer term commitment to implementing the strategy.
2. Consider how the board can sustain the breadth of voices around the table.
3. Consider how best to align this work with other activities in the city.

## **AOB**

AE informed the Board that bids are being submitted to support the supply chain in retrofit activity in the city. Support from partners would be welcome to strengthen the bids further.

## Action Log

No	Action	Who	By when	Date completed
001	Share copy of economic presentation	SB	W/E 8 January 2021	8 January 2021
002	Share copy of Timeline	AE	W/E 8 January 2021	8 January 2021
003	Amend ToR and issue final version	AE	W/E 8 January 2021	8 January 2021
004	Share copy of communications strategy presentation	AE	W/E 8 January 2021	8 January 2021
005	Circulate dates for early 2021 meetings	LP	W/E 8 January 2021	8 January 2021
006	Circulate emerging priorities for comment and set out plan ahead of March 2021	AE, AJ, AS, LP	End January 2021	29 January 2021
007	Share copy One Year Plan presentation	AE	29 January 2021	29 January 2021
008	Raise question of LSIP pilot at Higher York	LP	W/E 5 February 2021	Completed
009	Follow up on LSIP pilot next steps with MG	LP/AE	W/E 19 February 2021	Completed
010	Members to feed into One Year Plan any extra comments	All	W/E 5 February 2021	05 February 2021
011	Members to inform AJ if they wish to join a task and finish group for 2-5 year Plan	All	W/E 5 February 2021	05 February 2021
012	Provide update on Local Skills Partnership Pilots when more is known from DfE	LP		Completed
013	Send any further amendments to the One Year Plan to AE	All	4 March 2021	Completed
014	Share existing LMI and any existing provision mapping	TW and All	15 April 2021	Completed
015	Provide a summary of the main priorities across all four commitments	AS (T&F Group)	15 April 2021	Completed
016	Set up a joint conversation with partners and John Lewis re: skills support package	AE	Ongoing	Ongoing
017	LP, CAW and SB to follow up outside the meeting to ensure that elected members are kept informed of YSEB activity.	LP, CAW and SB	July 2021	Ongoing
018	AE slides to be shared	AE	July 2021	Completed
019	AH to share creative and digital sector work.	AH	July 2021	On going
020	AH and KB to enquire as to whether colleagues at the university could help to define appropriate measures.	AH	July 2021	Completed
021	AJ slides to be shared	AJ	July 2021	Completed
022	AE to arrange meeting for w/c 19 July	AE	July 2021	Completed
023	AE to follow up with MD and AD on diverse images for the strategies	AE	Aug 21	

024	Gain the view of the Higher York Board on a longer term commitment to the implementation of the strategy.	LP	Sept 21	
025	Consider how the board can sustain the breadth of voices around the table.	LP	Sept 21	
026	Consider how best to align this work with other activities in the city.	LP	Sept 21	