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**Decision Session – Executive Member for  
Economy and Strategic Planning**

**28 September 2021**

Report of the Assistant Director, Education and Skills

**York’s 10-Year Skills Strategy**

**Summary**

1. This report updates the Executive Member about the development of York’s 10-Year Skills Strategy, delivered through the city’s Skills and Employment Board, and presents that final draft strategy for endorsement by the Executive Member.
2. The York Skills and Employment Board - which was created in response to the emerging impact of the pandemic on the city’s economy - is a partnership made up of representatives from Further and Higher Education providers, independent training providers, York employers, employee and business representatives, the Local Enterprise Partnership and Local Authority. Since its inception in September 2020, the board has actively driven the development of *York’s 10-year Skills Strategy*.
3. The *One-year plan: Skills for Employment in York*, endorsed by the Executive Member at his Decision Session in March 2021, forms the first phase of the 10-year strategy to support residents and businesses as we move into a new phase of the recovery from coronavirus.
4. Building on the commitments made in the one-year plan, the strategy evolves the role of skills in the city from a position of ‘*Helping people through change*’ to supporting ‘*21<sup>st</sup> Century jobs*’.
5. Both the one-year plan and 10-year strategy are underpinned by a comprehensive evidence base which includes feedback gathered through direct engagement with businesses, Elected Members and other stakeholders.
6. Over the past year, more than 250 businesses have contributed to the development of the strategy through sector round tables, the Talent and Skills Event as part of York Business Week, *Our Big Conversation*, *The*

Lord Mayor's Hospitality Summit and in-depth interviews with University of York student research teams.

7. Engagement with those not directly involved in writing the strategy remains core to the approach and will continue post-publication. Ongoing and planned engagement will help inform the partnership's implementation plans, including how green skills and the voice of business will be embedded in skills planning.
8. This planned engagement includes specific opportunities with residents, Secondary School Head Teachers, high employment sectors such as hospitality and leisure, and high growth sectors including rail, IT and digital. It will involve the Council's Skills and Economic Development teams working with members of the Skills and Employment Board and other stakeholders such as, Citizens Advice, York Secondary School Head Teachers, rail and construction industry partners and the Hospitality Association York.
9. In addition to the planned Economy and Place Scrutiny Forum on 28 September 2021, it is proposed that an annual review of progress on the skills strategy will be taken to the Executive Member's Decision Session.

## **Recommendations**

10. The Executive Member is asked to:
  - i. note the content of the report;
  - ii. endorse the final draft of *York's 10-Year Skills Strategy*, recognising the strong partnership approach taken to understand, reflect and respond to local priorities.
  - iii. note the ongoing engagement with stakeholders to continue to shape delivery of the strategy.

Reason: To continue to help support people and businesses through change and begin developing the skills infrastructure that will support inclusive and sustainable growth in York.

## **Background**

11. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted individuals and businesses, with an increased need to support people of all ages into work, to progress or change careers, and to ensure that businesses can access the skills and talent they need to diversify or grow.
12. From the early stages of the first lockdown, skills and education partners across the city have worked together to help people through

change. This has involved aligning, adapting and communicating the support available to both individuals and businesses.

13. At his Decision Session on 22 September 2020, the Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning received a paper setting out the key skills and employment related issues facing York as a result of the pandemic. It highlighted the need to strengthen the city-wide partnership approach, to respond to the emerging needs of residents and businesses and begin developing the skills infrastructure to support York's longer-term economic recovery.
14. This included receiving the terms of reference of the city Skills and Employment Board, comprising representatives from the city's colleges and universities, independent training providers, local employers, the Federation of Small Businesses, West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce, DWP, TUC, the council and Local Enterprise Partnership.
15. In addition, the associated communications plan and framework for developing a one-year plan to 'Help people through change' and a 10-year strategy for '21st Century Jobs' were agreed.
16. As reported in the 'Skills and Employment' and 'Skills Strategy' updates provided at the Executive Member's Decision Sessions in December 2020 and April 2021 (respectively), the city's Skills and Employment Board has continued to meet monthly to:
  - drive development of York's 10-year Skills Strategy, with a clear focus on the priorities for the first five years
  - drive development and commence delivery against the one-year plan, which was endorsed by the Executive Member at his decision session in March 2021.
  - consider the developing evidence base including, stakeholder feedback, emerging themes, national and regional policy changes and the drivers of the local labour market in supporting inclusive growth.
17. This has led to a skills strategy aimed at helping residents and businesses to experience fully the benefits of York's enterprising, resilient and inclusive economy.

10-year Skills Strategy - Vision

*"Pioneering provision aligned to the needs of the city, its people and its businesses developed and delivered in partnership to support economic growth and attract, retain and develop talent."*

18. The vision is under-pinned by eight principles, which place people, businesses, partnerships, technology and the city's Net Zero ambitions at the heart of the strategy.
19. York has an ambition to be a net-zero carbon city by 2030. This aim impacts many sectors including (but not limited to) construction, engineering, transport and energy and will require green skills to be embedded across all areas of learning.

Building on this, is an evolution of the shared commitments introduced in the one-year plan and the partnership's priorities for the next 2-5 years:

- **York works – skills support for individuals**

Work within and across communities to provide access to skills for employment and self-employment for all

Priorities

- Support entry-level and basic skills (includes maths, English, digital skills, employability, transferable skills)
- Enhance skills opportunities and Information, Advice and Guidance for entrepreneurs and those seeking self-employment, with a focus on hard-to-reach communities
- Utilise talent more effectively so that people from all backgrounds get better chances to access good jobs

- **Empowered employers – skills support for businesses**

Support local businesses to increase productivity and build resilience through training and upskilling their workforce

Priorities

- Invest in the sectors that drive prosperity in York (see section 5 of the strategy)
- Support businesses to access talent, tailored provision and support for upskilling
- Focus on helping small and micro businesses to thrive

- **Pioneering provision – productive partnerships**

Work in partnership to create a flexible city-wide skills system that responds to local needs

Priorities

- Use the partnership to join up provision across the city to deliver a united and streamlined skills offer

- Ensure provision is aligned to future growth sectors and skills needs in the city
- Embed the business voice into provision and planning by fostering more links between Further Education, Higher Education, Independent Training Providers and businesses
- **Education to employment and self-employment – York’s pipeline**  
Through high-quality provision and a culture of lifelong learning, ensure a pipeline of talent that meets business needs and attracts, trains, retains and retrains people in the city.

Priorities

- Focus on occupations in highest demand e.g. nurses, caregivers, software developers and help people who are underrepresented in high-value professions to enter them
- Increase Apprenticeships especially at higher levels and in STEM industries
- Ensure talent pipeline of graduates and people with higher-level and green skills is enhanced and aligned with priority sectors

The strategy provides more detail on each commitment, the rationale for each priority and how partners across the city plan to respond.

20. At its meeting on 16 September 2021, the Skills and Employment Board considered the recent revisions that had been made to the draft strategy as a result of stakeholder feedback. The Board identified opportunities to strengthen key messages, including the importance of working with schools to provide careers education, information, advice and guidance that reflects the needs of the local labour market.
21. All feedback received to date has been considered in developing the ‘final draft’ strategy (Appendix A). Feedback from the Executive Member’s Decision Session and Economy and Place Scrutiny Forum on 28 September 2021 alongside any other stakeholder feedback received will inform final publication of the strategy.

**Next Steps**

22. Once the 10-year strategy is finalised for publication, the Skills and Employment Board will no longer meet on a monthly basis. However, the city-wide partnership approach will remain key to implementing and delivering the strategy.

23. As set out in its Terms of Reference, the Skills and Employment Board forms part of the city's economic response structure. As the city moves its focus onto post-pandemic recovery, the Board understands the need for this structure to evolve.

### **Consultation**

24. The Skills and Employment Board comprises education and skills providers, local employers and representatives, employee representatives, the Local Enterprise Partnership and City of York Council. The meeting on 16 September 2021 was the Board's ninth meeting since December 2020, with members providing input to the strategy during and outside of meetings.
25. Feedback provided via the Executive Member's Decision Sessions in September and December 2020, and March and April 2021 has been taken into account by the partnership when developing the strategy. The one-year skills plan was also a key agenda item at the commissioned joint scrutiny session (Economy & Place and Children, Education & Communities) on 1 February 2021. In addition, the 10-year Skills Strategy is being considered at the Economy and Place Scrutiny Forum on 28 September 2021 and will feature as an appendix to the developing Economic Strategy.
26. Employer voice has helped to build the local evidence base and shape the strategy. Examples of targeted engagement include: Make it York Business Survey (Q2 2020), Sector Roundtables, York Business Week Skills Event, Business Leaders group, Hospitality Summit (July 2021), the council's "Our Big Conversation" survey and qualitative interviews.
27. Engagement with those not directly involved in writing the strategy remains core to the approach and will continue post-publication. Ongoing and planned engagement will help inform the partnership's implementation plans including, how green skills and the voice of business will be embedded in skills planning.
28. This planned engagement includes specific opportunities with residents, Secondary School Head Teachers, high employment sectors such as hospitality and leisure, and high growth sectors including rail, IT and digital. It will involve the Council's Skills and Economic Development teams working with members of the Skills and Employment Board and other stakeholders such as, Citizens Advice, York Secondary School Head Teachers, rail and construction industry partners and the Hospitality Association York.

### Council Plan

29. The Council Plan identifies eight priorities, four of which are relevant to this work:

- Well-paid and an inclusive economy;
- A better start for children and young people;
- Safer communities and culture for all;
- An open and effective council.

### Implications

30. The following implications have been considered:

- **Financial** – no implications.
- **Human Resources (HR)** – no implications;
- **One Planet Council / Equalities** – no implications
- **Legal** – no implications;
- **Crime and Disorder** – no implications;
- **Information Technology (IT)** – no implications;
- **Property** – no implications.

### Risk Management

31. No specific risks identified.

### Contact Details

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**Report**  **Date** 17 September 2021  
**Approved**

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** List information for all  
None

**Wards Affected:** [List wards or tick box to indicate all]

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:**

None

**Annexes**

Final Draft York's 10-year Skills Strategy

**List of Abbreviations Used in this Report**

None