



Briefing note, June 2011

Background

Higher York is a partnership between the Council with the four higher education institutions in York (University of York, York St John, York College and Askham Bryan College). In addition, Craven College is an associate member of HY.

In terms of representation Kersten England currently chair the Higher York Board; John Thompson (CYC 14-19 manager) and Roger Ranson (Assistant Director Economy and Asset Management) sit on the Higher York Executive group.

There is a small team of about 3 FTE who facilitate the partnership. Their role includes opportunity spotting, facilitating links and projects, doing the 'leg work' for many of the collaborative activities to ensure that outcomes are achieved, support both strategic and operational planning of the partnership. They also bring specialist expertise, e.g. information, advice and guidance (IAG) NVQ Level 4 accredited (qualified IAG adviser).

Having started life as a HEFCE funded lifelong learning partnership, Higher York is now a member organisation delivering objectives set by the partnership. The vision and key strands are in Appendix 1.

Higher York's Activities

Higher York supports the aims and objectives of each of the partners. In terms of the Council the following seem particularly relevant:

Shared services – Higher York is leading on a number of activities within this strand. Do date meetings and activities have been organised looking at aspects within the facilities management and estates area. This has included print facilities, fleet management, waste and energy, health and safety training. These meetings have illustrated that there are a number of opportunities to benefit from services across the partners, potentially reduce costs and improve quality. The next meeting will convene procurement leads to look at procurement models. A presentation will be made to the York Asset Board regarding progress made in this area and to open up for other city partners. Shared services will continue to be facilitated through the Higher York partnership as part of the wider initiatives in the city and build on past successes such as the Higher York Access Centre based at York St John University (disability assessment for anyone wanting to attend HE).

Student community relations - This has been a particularly important area of focus for the partnership this year and will continue to be so. A briefing pack is being

organised for Councillors and support has been secured from both radio and press locally. It is suggested that a city-student forum could be set up and administered by Higher York as part of the activity to support positive community relations. It is intended that social media will play a significant part in this initiative. In addition, the Director of Higher York has been supporting work with the Council such as consultation for a recent proposed scrutiny committee topic relating to student and local community relations.

This year another successful Higher York Volunteering Awards took place and this is now an annual event organised through Higher York. Higher York has also established and organise a city welcome annually for international students, usually held in December at Mansion House.

Higher York continues to support the development of volunteering in the city through coordinated student and staff engagement; input and support of the York Volunteering City charter and strategy; leading on the volunteering strand within York @ Large; supporting and facilitating student engagement in council activities such as arts and culture, public art.

Policy development and support – Higher York has supported the Council’s policy development through various events and linking academic expertise to policy makers. This has also included working with the Council to develop student work experience and internship opportunities. This work is on-going.

Employer engagement, jobs and skills - last year Higher York secured £600,000 to support businesses and individuals during the recession. 396 businesses and other organisations have accessed the programme. This includes all organisations that have made enquiries, accessed a taster session, training and/or consultancy. A total of 64 organisations took advantage of the business diagnostic service. Over 350 employees from 243 businesses accessed training. 50 businesses were involved in HEI-lead consultancy projects which focussed on a specific element of their business. A further 60 business attended taster sessions. The total figure (396) also included businesses which have been referred on to other types of provision not included in the project (e.g. postgraduate programme, construction qualifications).

During the programme over 400 individuals accessed careers support through one to one sessions, careers coaching and specific workshops. Careers workshops were offered in a variety of areas including: interview techniques; preparing job applications; the Myers Briggs personality assessment tool, understanding business and enterprise/business start-up. The wider offer included workshops focussed on the specific areas of the creative industries; IT, project management and sports coaching. A total of 271 personal planning interviews took place. 114 careers workshop places were attended. A further 145 individuals affected by the recession benefitted from specific training. Over 250 of the individuals supported were recent graduates; 145 other individuals facing unemployment were supported.

Although the funding for this project is now finished the programme created an important legacy for York which continues to be developed by Higher York. Far more contact and profile has been established with local businesses; careers services are still able to offer recent graduates (3 years graduated and unlimited for

alumni) locally access to careers information on campus. Internships have also been very successful and clearer access and processes have been developed for businesses and organisations seeking to access both internships and volunteers.. Overall, there is a clearer offer to business in York from both universities and colleges and the partnership will continue to work to improve this.

Higher York has led the way in developing the construction skills academy model otherwise known as 'targeted training and recruitment'. This concept supports the engagement of local people in skills development and jobs on major construction sites in and around the city. So far this activity has delivered internships, work experience, training for teaching staff, schools activities to support curriculum, local jobs and access to contracts for local businesses. This has all been coordinated by Higher York.

Progression and access

Progression and fair access remain important activity areas for the partnership. Higher York continues to provide free information via the www.studyork.com website, a variety of downloadable information sheets, training sessions for advisers. More recently specific information has been circulated regarding fees and student finance changes and Higher York is facilitating and organising additional support for local schools, colleges, pupils and parents/carers.

Appendix 1

Mission

- a) Facilitate access to higher-level learning, progression and provision through innovative joint-working.
- (b) Underpin the economic and social agendas of the City of York and adjacent areas.
- (c) Exploit opportunities for mutual benefit between partners.

Key activity strands

Progression and Curriculum: expand the number of learning opportunities available in partner organisations and enable progression between levels of learning;

Skills and Employability: enable those entering and currently in the workforce to be better equipped;

Learner Needs: support learners in a variety of ways to achieve their aspirations and positive outcomes;

Promoting HE in the City: raise the position and profile of higher education and higher level skills in the City and adjacent areas (including capturing the civic contribution of its staff and students);

Internationalisation: seek opportunities to develop collaborative activity relating international student recruitment and education and skills investment.

Collaborative Opportunities: seek efficiencies and great effectiveness through collaboration.