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Meeting	Economy and Place Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	25 May 2021
Present	Councillors Daubeney (Chair), Douglas (Vice Chair), Pearson, D Taylor, Hollyer, Hook and Norman (Substitute for Cllr Kilbane)
Apologies	Councillor Kilbane

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### **Election of Vice Chair**

As Cllr Kilbane, Chair of the Committee had given apologies for the meeting, the Committee unanimously elected Cllr Douglas as Vice Chair for the meeting.

Resolved: That Cllr Douglas be elected as Vice Chair of the Committee for the meeting.

Reason: In order that there be a Vice Chair for the meeting.

### **15. Declarations of Interest**

Members were asked to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests or any prejudicial or discloseable pecuniary interest that they might have in respect of the business on the agenda. The Chair noted his role as Chair of the Learning and Improvement Board. Cllr Pearson noted that he was an apprentice in his workplace. There were no further declarations of interest.

### **16. Minutes**

Cllr Douglas noted that she and Cllr Taylor felt that the information on recycling provided at the meeting held on 25 March 2021 was not sufficient to make a recommendation to the Executive Member. It was agreed that minutes would be amended to reflect that point.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 March approved subject to the inclusion of the above amendment and be signed by the Chair at a later date.

## **17. Public Participation**

It was reported that there were no registered speakers registered under the councils public participation scheme.

## **18. Ongoing Economic Recovery Strategy Update - "Reskilling the workforce"**

In consideration of the update on the ongoing economic recovery strategy, Members, external partners and council officers discussed reskilling the workforce. The following partners from further and higher education were in attendance at the meeting to be participate in discussions:

- Lee Probert (Principal of York College and Chair of Skills Board)
- Amanda Selvaratnam (Associate Director for Research and Enterprise, University of York and Chair of the Skills Board Task & Finish Group)
- Dr Tim Whitaker (CEO & Principal at Askham Bryan College and Member of the Skills Board)
- Professor Robert Mortimer (Pro Vice Chancellor: Research and Knowledge Transfer, York St John University)

They were also joined by the council's Head of Economic Development, Skills Manager (Employer Engagement, Employability and Skills), Assistant Director Education and Skills and Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning. The One-year plan – Skills for employment in York as presented to the Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning at his Decision Session on 23 March 2021 had been provided for background information.

The Skills Manager gave on update on the one year skills plan noting progress against its priorities, within the longer terms skills strategy and the covid response strategy. She explained the structure of the Skills and Employment Board including the Task and Finish Group, which was chaired by the Associate Director for Research and Enterprise, University of York.

The Chair invited the Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning to open discussion. The Executive Member advised that a priority of the Skills Board was to look at the impact of covid on employment and added that the one year skills plan responded to this. He noted the connection with community hubs in the covid response and he thanked staff and Skills Board members for their work.

The Chair of the Skills Board explained that the Board was borne out of the work of Higher York. The Board had looked at the interventions needed as a result of the pandemic and included representatives from education, training, business, employers, providers and the local authority. He reported that over the next 10 years the skills strategy would have three chapters – a one year plan; a 2-5 year medium term strategy; and 6-10 year longer term strategy. The approach had been to include employers, providers, and the local authority and he noted that as Principal, York College were benefitting from input from providers and employers.

The Chair of the Task and Finish Group explained her role in running the group. She explained the four core commitments of the one year skills plan, each one of which had a task and finish group. She added that the one year skills plan and 10 year strategy showed a combined commitment to work together to the same goals. She noted that principles of engagement from employers.

The CEO & Principal at Askham Bryan College noted that the college was one of ten independent land based colleges in England and it worked closely across the city, including a considerable engagement from young people not in education, employment and training, and at Levels 1 and 2.

The Pro Vice Chancellor Research and Knowledge Transfer, York St John University reported that the university had been looking at skills provision and identifying groups of individuals needing support with foundation and digital skills. They had looked at what skills there were, gaps in provision and what skills were needed to allow for education institutions to plan a provision log to fill those gaps.

Members then asked a number of questions to which officers and external attendees responded as follows:

- In regard to the apprenticeship levy, the Chair of the Skills Board noted that this was a tax on organisations as a percentage of their payroll. He noted that the government had been clear that unspent funds from the levy should go towards training apprentices. The process by which employers could spend the apprenticeship levy was explained.
- Regarding the evidence base for the 10 year skills strategy and a sense of projections for jobs in different sectors in different sectors of the economy and particularly green skills, the Chair of the Skills Board explained that there was an issue matching up seed demand and actual demand. York College were talking to the construction sector regarding the need for demand and skills in future but could

not yet stimulate enough demand for provision to be economically viable. He noted concern over reskilling the teacher and trainer workforce. In terms of the evidence base, information was being pulled together a complex range of sources, through LEP and jobcentre plus for short term evidence and long term from the council's economic development team.

- Regarding the shortage of chefs as the city reopened, the Skills Manager noted that the shortage was a national crisis and there was a lack of people going into chefing as a career. The Chair of the Skills Board noted that it was a complex situation regarding what was happening with that workforce but in terms of York College student recruitment to catering and hospitality was still strong.
- Regarding conversations with the CCG and other employers and the increase in healthcare jobs, the Skills Manager noted there had been a lot of immediate starts in that sector and there were pipeline programmes through colleges, jobcentre programmes and the council future goals programme. The Pro Vice Chancellor: Research and Knowledge Transfer, York St John University added that there had been growth in higher level healthcare provision in the city. The Head of Economic Growth noted that challenges regarding training in the sector and the Assistant Director Education and Skills added that it was important to note the joining up of that with the NHS 10 year plan for integrated care locally. She further noted that health professionals were embedded within teams, for example Public Health England. The Chair of the Skills Board added that investments were being made by providers and that York College and York St John University had clear progression ladders for Level 2 upwards.
- Asked how the Skills Board was making plans to address skills across a range of careers, the Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning explained that all communities and levels of jobs would be involved. He noted that during the pandemic there had been greater connectivity between the council and partners.
- Concerning what work had been undertaken to engage with large employers such as Nestle or Network Rail, the discussions held with Nestle were explained. Regarding the railway industries, the Head of Economic Growth reported that the council had been in discussion with the National Skills Academy for Rail. The Skills Manager noted that existing engagement with stakeholders was used for the one year skills plan and with stakeholders and the universities in looking at jobs for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

- In regard to potential capacity issues, the Head of Economic Growth noted that there had been 3000 people out of work since before the pandemic and regarding employers shedding staff, they were looking at reskilling those people that were losing their jobs into changing careers.
- A Member asked what approach there had been from the universities to address the skills gaps of graduates going into employment. The Associate Director for Research and Enterprise, University of York and Chair of the Skills Board Task & Finish Group noted that the University of York knew that graduates wanted to stay in the city and many took jobs that were not at graduate level. The university was engaging with the SME community to recognise the value of graduates. The Pro Vice Chancellor: Research and Knowledge Transfer, York St John University noted the importance of engaging with a range of businesses in sourcing placements. He added that by focusing on SMEs and social enterprises, the university was making sure that it was connecting graduates with the right jobs in business. He acknowledged the issue of affordability in York.
- The CEO & Principal at Askham Bryan College noted that resource investment was needed to respond to the future need for more productive and sustainable food production. He noted that post brexit there was a recalibration in the way that land was managed and it was not known what the policy implication of land management schemes would be. The college would be working closely with industries locally and nationally.

Resolved: That the ongoing economic recovery strategy update and information on reskilling the workforce be noted.

Reason: In order to be updated on the ongoing economic recovery strategy.

## **19. Oversight of Skills Board and reporting mechanisms**

Members considered the oversight of Skills Board and its reporting mechanisms. The Skills Strategy Update, as presented to the Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning at his Decision Session on 27 April 2021 was attached for background information.

The Skills Manager explained that the frequency of the Skills Board meetings. She explained that the skills partnership had secured a consultant to help write the skills strategy, and build an evidence base, which included evidence from the LEPs. She added that work around

government announcements was ongoing. She reported that the economic growth strategy consultation had begun and would run for the rest of the year.

The Chair of the Skills Board noted that the board was accountable to the city and employers and that each partner on the board contributed to the strategy. He added that each board member had their own accounting mechanism back to their own institution. He then advised that as the government rolled out local areas having a local improvement plan, representative bodies would be expected to agree a plan for their area. The Executive Member Economy and Strategic Planning outlined the investment from the government that had come through the LEP, noting the digital training hub at Askham Bryan College as an example of this. In response to a question from the Chair he explained that employers were finding it hard to see into the longer term and the Board as trying to help employers articulate what their needs were now and in the future. He noted that cross cutting themes were seen in creative and digital employers and that the challenge was in the modes of skills acquisition.

A member asked about training and skills for green jobs. The Chair of the Skills Board noted the importance of identifying where skills were needed for green jobs and how this would be slotted into existing education. An example of this was adjusting plumbing courses to take account of future needs such as training for the installation of ground source heat pumps.

When asked about bringing a report back to a future committee meeting, the Chair of the Skills Board noted that York College's accountability was discharged through its governing body. He added that the work of the skills partnership could be reported back through the Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning and council officers. The Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning noted that regarding the 10 years skills plan, the intention was to present this through a joint scrutiny committee meeting involving the committee and the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee. He advised that there was the opportunity to comment on the quarterly economic update at his Executive Member Decision Sessions and that the 10 year strategy would be presented to the Executive in autumn.

A Member suggested that it would be useful to have frequent report on the one year skills plan at future meetings. The Chair suggested that this could be examined as part of the pre decision scrutiny meeting prior to the Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning Decision Sessions.

Resolved: That the update on the oversight of Skills Board and its reporting mechanisms be noted.

Reason: In order to be kept up to date on the work of the Skills Board.

[The external attendees and Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning were thanked for attending and left the meeting at 19:05]

The meeting adjourned from 19:06 until 19:15

## **20. Update on In-Work Poverty Review**

The Chair explained the background and timeline of the review as part of the corporate review into poverty prior to the outbreak of the covid pandemic. He reported that the specific issue of in work poverty, as allocated by the Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee, had not been carried forward by the Committee. He suggested that as a way forward he could find out from the Chair of the Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee if the corporate review was to proceed, and if this was the case, for the Head of Economic Growth to revisit the issue and prepare a report for the committee to consider and form the basis of its submission to the Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee.

The Chair welcomed questions and comments. It was noted that the Chair, and Cllrs Douglas and Hook had met as a sub-committee to look at the review prior to the outbreak. It was suggested that it would be useful to visit the review in light of the changes as a result of the pandemic. It was expressed that an update from the Head of Economic Growth would be welcomed. It was noted that prior its presentation at Executive, the Committee would look at the Quarterly Economic Update at the next committee on 27 July 2021.

Resolved: That the Chair contact the Chair of the Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee regarding revised instructions on the corporate review into poverty.

Reason: In order to find out if the In-Work Poverty Review should be progressed.

Cllr Daubeney, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.20 pm].

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