



Higher York Monitoring Report February 2011

This report provides an update on Higher York activities supported by the grant funding from the City of York Council.

Update on Organisation Activities

1. Working with employers: Higher York has further developed its offer to employers/employees. The partnership successfully bid for £300,000 from the Higher Education Funding Council for England to support both businesses and individuals during the recession. This was matched through Yorkshire Forward Single Pot and Enhancement Fund support. The activity started in June 2009 and engagement with both individuals and businesses has progressed well. The project completed at the end of December 2010. The table below summarises the outputs/outcomes.

Project Target	Actual
120 businesses	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A total of 64 organisations took advantage of the business diagnostic service. ▪ Over 350 employees from 243 businesses have accessed training. ▪ 50 businesses have been involved in HEI-lead consultancy projects which focussed on a specific element of their business. ▪ A further 60 business have attended taster sessions. ▪ The total figure (396) also includes business which may have been referred on to other types of provision not included in the project (e.g. postgraduate programme, construction qualifications).
250 individuals	<p>Over 400 individuals have accessed careers support through one to one sessions, careers coaching and specific workshops. Careers workshops have been 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 has included workshops focussed on the specific areas of the creative industries; IT, project management and sports coaching.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A total of 271 personal planning interviews have taken



	<p>place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 114 careers workshop places were attended. ▪ A further 145 individuals affected by the recession have benefitted from specific training. ▪ Over 250 of the individuals supported are recent graduates; 145 other individuals facing unemployment have been supported. In addition 15 final year undergraduates were able to access the subject specific workshops within the areas of creative industries and IT.
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- 1.1. The approximate split of York and North Yorkshire businesses to the rest of Yorkshire and Humber is as follows:
 York & North Yorks 53% (of this York is 29%)
 West Yorks 24%
 Other Y&H 23%

When the size of York in comparison to the business base in West Yorkshire is taken into account the percentage take up from York companies is good, especially since this the project had not been done before and it was working from a very low baseline.

- 1.2. The programme was delivered through the Higher York partnership. Delivery partners were York St John University, The University of York, York College and Craven College. The Higher York team and delivery partners worked very closely with other agencies to both maximise the benefit for businesses and individuals and avoid duplication in the services. A plan for referrals was developed alongside the original bid and structures were put in place to ensure that enquiries were dealt with efficiently and effectively. A client relationship system was created and utilised by partners. This was especially useful for cross-referrals between partners (for both businesses and individuals).
- 1.3. The individual offer included an initial personal planning interview (diagnostic) which was intended to identify any further skills which the individual might benefit from. The Careers Services from the two universities involved conducted the interviews and The University of York ran careers workshops. Other training offered through the project was available to individuals with a maximum amount of £500 funding per individual being used to support this. For individuals, the key referral agencies were Job Centre Plus (JCP), Future Prospects and Next Step. In addition to the careers service offer, a further 145 individuals affected by the recession have benefitted from specific training. Those eligible for training include underemployed graduates in the area, older graduates recently made redundant and those at risk of redundancy. The project has also supported a range of individuals (graduates and non-graduates) interested in starting their own business. Original discussions included graduate internship activity however



wider regional discussion highlighted that this element would be better delivered by other stakeholders and following close consultation with HEFCE, it was agreed to focus upon signposting such graduate opportunities within the general offer. Match funding through the regional development agency, Yorkshire Forward was made available to support this activity.

- 1.4. For businesses, the key referrals agency was Business Link Yorkshire. Enquiries were dealt with by the partners identified above and the central Higher York team who would make recommendations about the support an individual or business might access. The business diagnostic service offer highlighted training and other business needs and made recommendations for the organisation involved. A total of 64 businesses took advantage of the business diagnostic service. This figure is lower than anticipated as the project was able to build on the Business Link facility much more than planned and provide training options which were identified through the Business Link diagnostic service. Some business leaders and employees preferred to access the training and support directly and were made aware of this through marketing activity using existing local business networks such as York Professionals and the Federation for Small Businesses. Cross-referral within the partnership was also a key success factor and allowed businesses access to a wider range of support.
- 1.5. Evaluation of the programme has highlighted a number of points:
 - 1.5.1. One to one focus on businesses does seem to result in greater take up of training rather than 'blanket marketing' activity. The key account management approach through York Enterprise should support this finding. Interagency and inter-organisational working were crucial to make best use of resource and ensure cross-referral
 - 1.5.2. Businesses were happy to pay something towards training and one-to-one business consultancy. Follow on business was achieved on a full-cost basis with some companies.
 - 1.5.3. In a number of cases business requirements for skills and knowledge transfer have 'merged' and been more effectively delivered through consultancy type activity rather than scheduled training sessions with other businesses.
 - 1.5.4. Non-accredited short courses have proved popular.
 - 1.5.5. IT, sales, marketing, customer service, financial planning, aspects of management and leadership have emerged as the most popular training areas.
- 1.6. In terms of customer satisfaction aligned to working with businesses it is suggested that the following measures could be used in the future:



- 1.6.1. The number of businesses engaged in some form of training or consultancy.
- 1.6.2. The number of employees engaged in some form of training or consultancy.
- 1.6.3. The number of referrals from other agencies or organisations in the city or region.
- 1.6.4. The number of businesses taking up further opportunities following the initial activity.
- 1.6.5. Higher York partners will now focus on clarifying the employer offer in the short to medium term taking into account the changed funding landscape, the skills needs demanded locally and the emerging economic vision, enterprise strategy and updated Adult Learning and Skills Strategy.
- 1.7. The development of case studies relating to the higher level skills offer to the private, public and third sector organisations in York. A target of 10 case studies was agreed. Some further case studies have been collected taking the total beyond the target of 10.
- 1.8. Support achievement of the LAA Level 4 target: 37% in 2010. The latest figures show that the LAA level 4 target has been exceeded and is now at 40.9%. The Higher York partners continue to provide level 4 opportunities through their core and project funding. The new national fees policy for Higher Education will potentially provide some challenges for the sector and may have a negative impact on how many people decide to access HE in the future, particularly those from poorer backgrounds. The Higher York education institutions are currently developing their response to national policy including how they deliver widening participation and raising aspiration activity. A meeting has been set up to get feedback and discuss changes to the sector strategically with both York and North Yorkshire Local Authorities and representatives of the head teacher community. John Thompson is the City of York Council representative at this meeting.
- 1.9. Maintaining good relationship with intermediary agencies and bodies in relation to development, profiling and delivery of higher level skills e.g. Learning City York, Business Link, Yorkshire Forward, Job Centre Plus, Next Step providers. Links to agencies continue to progress well. There continue to be referrals for training via Business Link and useful feedback provided by Business Link on the overall service provided by Higher York. The 'commercialisation' projects with Science City York continue to advance with several scoping meetings been held already and Higher York involvement in recruiting a Knowledge Transfer Officer at SCY to take forward the projects.



- 1.10. Contribution to building interface with local communities through:
higher level skills support; information, advice and guidance ; positive profiling of the contribution of students to local communities.
- 1.10.1. Higher level skills support has been provided through the HEFCE/Yorkshire forward funded programme for individuals as outlined above. Higher York has started the process of reviewing its employer engagement strategy to reflect lessons learnt so far and changing government policy.
- 1.10.2. Training for IAG practitioners continues to be provided through Higher York to the local guidance community along with drop-in sessions and workshops working closely with Future Prospects. Over 100 individuals have accessed training. Higher York has developed information sheets for guidance works, teachers, potential students and their families. These have been distributed to libraries, schools, colleges and other appropriate outlets and are also available free via www.studyork.com. This website provides information for a local, national and international audience about studying in Higher Education along with the opportunities in York itself.
- 1.11. The Higher York team manages the Higher York Student Forum which brings together students from each of the Higher York education institutions. The students work on projects which relate to students across York not just one institution. The students are drawn from different backgrounds i.e. mature, international, local etc. Currently the Forum has almost completed working on a project to develop and collect examples of positive student engagement in the City. They have also been working with Student Unions to develop a leaflet aimed at students moving into rented accommodation in the private sector to raise awareness amongst students about being a 'good neighbour' and how to engage positively with their local community. The students have worked closely with City of York Council's Corporate Communication team.
- 1.12. There is also an initiative involving Student Unions working with PR leads in the HE institutions and the Council to develop some briefing information about the positive contribution of students in the local community.
- 1.13. Higher York coordinated some research about the economic and employment gains produced by having two universities in the city. This study took into account money spent in the economy including services and goods purchased by the two institutions (including the Science Park) and the positive effect on the overall labour market. One of the conclusions from the survey was that the employment



gains from the two universities equates to 10% of jobs in the city. A copy of the report has been shared with the Council.

Support for citywide and Council Priorities

2. The Council recognises that this project fulfils several of its stated corporate aims including supporting the Learning City and Thriving City themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Higher York team has ensured that the following activities are supporting the wider city strategy:
 - 2.1. Higher York supports the work relating to Leeds City Region and the new Local Enterprise Partnerships for example, the partnership has supported wider messages relating to York and its profile through its own 'lobbying' processes. It maintains good links particularly with the employment and skills strands.
 - 2.2. Higher York partners continued to provide full page within the 'Your City' publication to support the raising of awareness of the City's activities and partnerships. However, this has now ceased due to a change in Council policy. However, Higher York has been coordinating a group of PR representatives from a diverse range of organisations in the city and it is hoped that this forum can support the sharing of knowledge, good practice and overall contribute to profile raising outcomes for the city as a whole.
 - 2.3. Higher York has supported the Council in policy development practices through the policy 'Think Tank' project. An intern has been supporting the partnership to map expertise across the city which may be of use to the Council and looking at different models for the ongoing engagement of the academic community with real and current policy issues and development. Higher York hosted a number of half day workshops of the Council's Policy Network at York St John University, providing speakers from the University of York to support discussions in two workshops. Higher York has also facilitated more positive links with the Joseph Rowntree Trust and Foundation. A free event will be held on 23rd March to showcase expertise in both the Council and academic community in city. It will focus on how these communities can work together, along with the third/voluntary sector, to support public policy development and delivery. The conference takes the theme of 'Safeguarding the Vulnerable'. Kersten England will be providing a keynote address and Nigel Batey will provide a workshop looking at the use of data in supporting work with the vulnerable. It is hoped that a number of staff from the council will also attend as delegates. It is hoped that the event will be an ideal opportunity to profile good practice in the City to a much wider geographical audience.



- 2.4. Higher York continues to input into the Learning City Board, York @ Large, Business Forum and Inclusive York Forum. Higher York sponsored the WOW conference in 2010.
- 2.5. Support of graduate retention in the city (Thriving City) through working with the two universities and Graduates Yorkshire. The Graduate internship programme funded across the region is due to complete in March so the final figures of placements in York will be available after March. Both universities continue to promote work placements and internships with businesses in York and further afield. The latest numbers will be reported in the next report, however, increasing number of local businesses are recognising the value of intern and work placement students for their businesses.
- 2.6. The Construction Skills Academy at Heslington East has been functioning now since March 2011 and Higher York has supported the LDF, Planning and Procurement teams in the Council to look at how to roll this model out to other major building sites. Reference has now been included in the draft LDF. The model is now called 'targeted training and recruitment'. The Heslington East pilot phase has delivered or exceeded the majority of its targets including providing valuable work experience placements for school and college children. Targeted training and recruitment has now been rolled out to the City of York Council West Offices. Both S.Harrison Development Ltd and Miller Construction have been very supportive of the initiative and to date the following has been agreed:
- A supplier event aimed at raising awareness amongst local companies about possible work opportunities during the construction phase with Miller Construction.
 - Agreement reached about how Coyles recruitment agency (managing temporary job opportunities) can worked with Job Centre Plus to raise awareness amongst local people of any temporary jobs which may be available on site.
 - Commitment to support York College of development of the future workforce through activities such as presentations, work placements and site visits.
 - Miller have offered to take on 2 graduate interns and S Harrison would like to host an undergraduate curriculum related work placement.
 - Miller are encouraging their supply chain to be involved in education and training related activities.

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