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Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities
Date	11 January 2022
Present	Councillor Smalley (Executive Member)

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In view of the changing circumstances around the Covid-19 pandemic, this meeting was held remotely. Any relevant decisions recorded in these minutes will be formally approved by the Chief Operating Officer, using his emergency delegated powers.

#### **5. Declarations of Interest**

The Executive Member was 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 interests that he might have in respect of the business on the agenda. None were declare.

#### **6. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the Decision Session held on 7 September 2021 be approved and be signed by the Executive Member as a correct record at a later date.

#### **7. Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Cllr Kilbane spoke on agenda item 4, York Learning and North Yorkshire Adult Learning and Skills Engagement Strategy 2021-2025. He welcomed the opportunity to have input into the draft strategy and he highlighted his experiences within this area, noting what a life-changing experience good adult education can be and that it was also crucial in terms of the jobs market, particularly as we transition towards a low carbon economy. He raised concerns regarding resourcing and hoped adequate funding would be available to support the projects and he also

hoped deep meaningful engagement with residents, businesses and education providers would take place throughout the city.

It was also reported that the Executive Member had received a written representation from Cllr Webb regarding agenda item 4. He had raised concerns with paragraph 5 of the report, particularly regarding the potential loss of control of Adult Learning to a potential Mayor who may not be close enough to York to understand the particular issues faced by Adult Learners, as well as the particular needs of the York job market. He understood that there was a need to focus on skills that would improve a person's opportunity for employment but he hoped that this wouldn't be at the expense of supporting a person's health and wellbeing and he suggested that this point could be clarified in the draft report at Annex 1 of the report.

#### **8. York Learning and North Yorkshire Adult Learning and Skills Engagement Strategy 2021-2025**

The Executive Member considered a report that proposed a consultation on a draft York Learning and North Yorkshire Adult Learning and Skills Engagement Strategy for the years 2021 to 2025.

The Shared Head of Adult Learning and Skills (York and North Yorkshire), the Assistant Director of Communities and Culture and the Head of Service Adult Education were in attendance to provide an update and answer any questions raised.

Officers informed the Executive Member that the aim of the strategy was to set a clear direction for adult learning and skills engagement across both York and North Yorkshire and to also offer the opportunity for individuals to contribute to that. It was noted that it was a draft consultation at this stage and that the draft strategy set an engagement vision with the largest and broadest members of the community.

Officers addressed the research commissioned by York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (YNYLEP), as highlighted within paragraph 5 of the report, and they noted that provision had been delivered to meet a whole range of individual needs but that the majority of people who were currently engaging in learning across York and North Yorkshire were doing so because they were already looking in that direction. Reflecting on the concerns raised, officers agreed it

was essential to set a clear strategy for adult learning based upon a number of key principals.

The Executive Member was also informed that York Learning was funded by the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and that they provided a clear remit to target English, maths, digital skills and family learning. Other areas also supported included health and social care, child care and business and management skills and the new strategy would also ensure people could gain the relevant skills to engage with learning providers that supported green skills training.

The Executive Member shared Cllr Webb's viewpoint regarding devolution and he expected residents of York to receive the best possible deal out of their adult education service when devolution discussions restarted. Officers also confirmed that the strategy within the agenda pack was the summary document and that the full consultation document provided a greater level of detail and set an effective landscape to protect the importance of community learning, which not only built people in skills but built and supported their health and wellbeing.

In answer to questions raised regarding the consultation process and engaging with the wider population, officers confirmed that:

- The full document would be published for residents, stakeholders and partners to read and comment on.
- York Learning would work collaboratively with all stakeholders and partners.
- Wider consultation would take place in January and February 2022 with an implementation plan to be in place by March 2022.
- A wide range of marketing and communication strategies would be used, including developing effective partnerships to reach communities of interest and underrepresented groups.
- York Learning would take part in any nationwide campaigns that encouraged people back to learning.

The Executive Member thanked officers for their report and for delivering an extensive offer to learners and for their continued work during the pandemic.

Resolved: That the Chief Operating Officer be recommended to approve further public consultation to be undertaken, to include further education (FE) colleges, York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership Skills Board, North Yorkshire and York Community Learning Partnership, and other education, voluntary sector and business partners.

Reason: To advance partnership working between the two adult learning services and local stakeholders to stimulate engagement with adults to support the aspirations of local, regional and national skills strategies.

Cllr Smalley, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 11.00 am and finished at 11.27 am].