

**Children, Culture and Communities Scrutiny Committee**      2 July 2024

Report of the Director of Housing and Communities

## **York Learning Strategic Plan Progress 2023/24**

### **Summary**

1. This report presents the end of academic year performance report and data for York Learning for 2023/24.
2. This report forms part of the service's governance reporting arrangements, which are crucially important for the service in demonstrating to Ofsted that it has secure and robust governance arrangements in place.
3. The detailed report at Annex A presents York Learning's progress towards its strategic aims for the academic year 2023/24 which offered clear areas for development to meet the Accountability Agreement agreed at the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing & Adult Social Care in May 2023 available here:  
<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s168782/Annex%201%20Accountability%20Statement%20York%20final%20v1.pdf>
4. The Accountability Agreement is based on the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) which has been developed by the Chamber of Commerce (as our designated Employer Representative Body). (See [Local skills improvement plans - statutory guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100000/local_skills_improvement_plans_-_statutory_guidance.pdf))

### **Background**

5. York Learning is a council service, which delivers a range of adult learning programmes to support people into employment, to improve their skills and to support their personal development. The service is funded almost exclusively from external contract funding and fee income. The service has reported income for the academic year 2023/24 of £4.4m. This report provides the performance against the strategic aims for this academic year.

## **Consultation**

6. This report is based on the LSIP accountability agreement 2023/24 on how to improve and support skills development in the city.

## **Options**

7. This report is for discussion and comment only.

## **Analysis**

8. The report shows that we have been actively working towards the various targets within the strategic plan and have made good progress in nearly all actions set out.
9. Transferable skills delivery has continued to be developed and integrated throughout the offer. Learners are showing a greater understanding of what skills they have and are gaining whilst in learning. The courses have aimed to develop transferable skills such as communication, problem-solving, project management, and digital literacy. We believe we have made significant inroads into this area with learners holding conversations on their transferable skills at observation sessions and within feedback.
10. A well-designed curriculum plan should directly link the courses and skills being taught to match potential employment opportunities, for learners, as part of their progression when they finish. Each core course in the curriculum should align with competencies and knowledge required for relevant career pathways particularly those identified in the LSIP. By mapping curriculum offerings to employability skills, jobs and industries, we can ensure programmes effectively prepare students for the workforce. Ultimately, putting employment links into the very foundation of the curriculum amplifies the career relevance and value proposition of the educational experience.

11. Our evolving economy and job market makes it vitally important for adult education curriculums to anticipate and adapt to emerging skill demands. One area requiring heightened focus is the development of "green skills" that will enable workers to excel in sustainable and environmentally conscious roles across a variety of industries. The council's adult education programs are promoting the sustainability and environmental choices throughout the offer. This could encompass topics such as renewable energy technology, eco-friendly practices, sustainable travel, sustainability in the arts and fashion industries. Supporting the council in promoting sustainable living will also support the region's broader sustainability goals and economic resilience in the face of climate change challenges.
12. The development of bite size learning provision will support individuals to engage in learning at a pace that can suit them. Whilst these individual units will not 'qualify' someone to a particular skill set it will help them equip themselves with the skills they need for work at a time and pace that will suit them.
13. Evolving developments in partnership working has created new skills courses in Cyber Security, Data Analysis, and CAD Design. New developments to create new courses in 2024/25 have also taken place with an emerging offer in Stem for Family Learning; Introduction to Project Management and also an Introduction to Engineering.
14. Access to LSIF funding has enabled us to purchase new equipment relating to: Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR/AR)headsets, Owls Audio Visual technology; drones and Heath Care teaching tools. We have achieved all targets set by the LSIF in how we have implemented the project, shared access to the resources including involving other partners in their use, and are already developing curriculum plans to introduce them to the following:-
  - 16-18 study programme to support mindfulness
  - Maths – numbers development
  - Health and Social Care employers to use with staff
  - NHS – mindfulness and health and social care training.

## **Challenges**

15. Recruitment of tutors continue to be challenging but so far we have continued to successfully recruit in the key areas of English, maths and Digital.

16. Recruiting learners from target areas will require additional recruitment to outreach than we currently have.
17. Venues – to ensure access to the offer is city wide a central location is required in addition to West Offices which is only suitable for desk based learning. Access to an area to develop skills around heat pumps; construction and other hands-on trades would enable wider access. This has been put forward as part of a pipeline proposal for the Combined Authority Mayor to consider.

## **Council Plan**

18. Affordability – York Learning’s offer enhances affordability by providing opportunities for individuals to improve their skills and employability, leading to better employment prospects. All courses related to essential skills are free (to those eligible) and prices where charged are affordable with various support available to reduce or remove fees to those most in need.
19. Equalities and Human Rights - Our offer is fully accessible to a diverse population, including marginalised and disadvantaged groups thus fostering social inclusion. Whilst we try to ensure the offer has courses in the areas most in need, we also work with many community organisations to create courses that will support their clients who have specific learning needs.
20. Climate and Environment - We contribute to sustainability goals by raising awareness and encouraging eco-friendly behaviours and broadening the green skills offer will need to be considered going forward
21. Health – We have a full array of offers that regularly receives feedback from learners that ‘learning with us and engaging in the variety of courses we offer has helped their mental wellbeing and physical health’. Our courses promote health literacy, wellbeing and preventative care thereby empowering individuals to make informed health choices and improve their overall quality of life. Many learners will comment that whilst they may not have started their course to give themselves ‘headspace’ for example, the outcome usually is that;- space to think, time to reflect, time for them, increased confidence, reduced isolation. Attending classes for some is enabling them to live and participate in life.

## Implications

22. This paper is for discussion on our progress only.
- **Financial:** There are no financial implications.
  - **Human Resources (HR):** There are no HR implications.
  - **Equalities:** This is covered in the Council Plan section.
  - **Legal:** There are no legal implications.
  - **Crime and Disorder:** There are no crime and disorder implications.
  - **Information Technology (IT):** There are no IT implications.
  - **Property:** There are no property implications.
  - **Other: N/A**

## Risk Management

23. There are no known risks.

## Recommendations

24. Members are asked to consider our progress through 23/24 academic year to discuss, query and comment.

Reason: To help monitor the service and provide sound governance arrangement for York Learning Services.

## Contact Details

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**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

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Director of Housing and Communities

**Report  
Approved**



**Date** 20 June 2024

**Specialist Implications Officer(s):** N/A

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

**All**

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

**Background Papers:**

- [Local skills improvement plans - statutory guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- 10 Year York Skills Plan (<https://www.york.gov.uk/YorkSkillsPlan>).
- York's Economic Strategy 2022-2032  
<https://www.york.gov.uk/performance-policies/york-economic-strategy>
- York and North Yorkshire - Local Skills Improvement Plan 2023  
[https://www.wnychamber.co.uk/app/uploads/2023/08/LSIP\\_York\\_and\\_North\\_Yorkshire\\_2023.pdf](https://www.wnychamber.co.uk/app/uploads/2023/08/LSIP_York_and_North_Yorkshire_2023.pdf)

**Annexes**

Annex A - York Learning Strategic Plan 23-24