

**Decision Session – Executive Member for
Culture, Leisure and Communities**

11 January 2022

Report of the Director of Customer and Communities

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

Summary

1. This report proposes a consultation on a draft York Learning and North Yorkshire Adult Learning and Skills Engagement Strategy for the years 2021 to 2025.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member is asked to:
 - comment on the draft strategy and, subject to any proposed amendments,
 - approve further public consultation being undertaken to include FE colleges, YNYLEP 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.

Background

3. September 2021 saw the appointment of a new Shared Head of Adult Learning and Skills with a brief to determine a clear strategic vision for the adult learning provision provided by City of York Council and North Yorkshire County Council. This strategy and direction is required to support adults to access the training and support that can be provided by engagement in education.
4. Aligning both services across a common strategy is important to support the wider economic needs and skills strategies of the York and North Yorkshire sub-region, as well as to ensure a strong lobbying position for the services once the adult education budget is

devolved under a combined mayoral authority, which is expected to happen in 2024/2025.

5. Research commissioned by York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (YNYLEP), as part of the work to develop their skills strategy, paints a picture of the local adult education landscape that suggests a current disconnect between the education offer for adults and local skills need. It cites limited innovation in community learning, a decreased focus on family learning and learning to support deprived communities, and a lack of support for capacity building in the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). With regard to adult learning and digital skills it suggests that, whilst provision seeks to meet the demands of the community, it fails to engage individuals in the breadth of learning experiences necessary to meet the aims of the skills strategy. The reports stress the disconnect between the majority of adults and the skills sector, with the largest proportions of training being in English and Maths or delivered to those already in work, largely in the Health and Social Care sectors.

The Proposed Strategy

6. Reflecting these concerns as well as the important and combined drivers of ESFA funding, the 'Skills for Jobs' Whitepaper and City of York's own ten-year skills strategy, it is essential to set a clear strategy for adult learning between now and 2025 based upon a number of key principles:
 - Adult education must support the development of the local economies,
 - Adult education must feel accessible to the community to be able to deliver on its aims,
 - Adult education curriculum must meet the needs of published skills strategies,
 - All adult education provision must provide a basis for progression in skills, confidence and wellbeing,
 - Adult education programmes must have clear intent, effective implementation to meet this intent leading to demonstrable impact.
7. The draft strategy is attached at Annex 1.

Consultation

8. In addition to discussions already held with key partners and with the council's Skills Teams, initial engagement on the draft strategy has also received positive encouragement from the North Yorkshire FE principals group, the chair of the YNYLEP Skills board and the York and North Yorkshire NEET forum. Should the draft strategy be approved further wider consultation will take place in January and February 2022 with an implementation plan to be in place by March 2022.

Options

9. The principal options open to the Executive Member are:
Option 1: Recommend the draft strategy for further internal and external consultation.
Option 2: Suggest amendments to the draft strategy ahead of consultation.

Analysis

10. Option 1 will reinforce existing joint working and develop key strategic partnership opportunities taking into consideration the contributions of consultees. Option 2 provides an opportunity to make amendments to the text in Option 1.

Council Plan

11. The strategy outlines a key ambition to bring the skills needs of the economy closer to adults in the city and surrounding regions, enabling more adults to move into well paid jobs within the local economy supporting a key ambition of the council plan.
12. In addition, learning, and in particular learning in groups, has been shown to have a positive impact on mental wellbeing. Whilst many of our community learning courses have a direct impact upon physical wellbeing. This strategy aims to protect this vital use of adult education funding supporting the council outcome of good health and wellbeing for residents.
13. Wider partnership working and more effective use of community learning funding will also support council priority outcomes in:
 - Getting a better start for children and young people through effective family learning in English and Maths and Wider family learning supporting a range of themes including transition,

- Safe Communities and Culture for all through effective partnership working within the authority and with key community and voluntary organisation to use education funding to empower individuals and groups to make a difference for themselves.

Implications

14. **Financial** – York Learning is a largely self-financed service reliant upon external grant, contract and other earned income.
15. There are no additional Equalities, Human Resources, Legal, Information Technology, Property, Crime and Disorder or Other implications arising from the report.

Risk Management

16. In compliance with the Council’s risk management strategy the main risks that have been identified associated with the proposals contained in this report are those which could lead to the inability to meet business objectives and to deliver services, leading to damage to the Council’s reputation and failure to meet stakeholders’ expectations. The level of risk is assessed as “Low”. This is acceptable but means that regular monitoring is required of the operation of the new arrangements.

Contact Details

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| | Report Approved | ✓ | Date | 13.12.21. |
| Specialist Implications Officers: | | | | |
| Wards Affected: All | | | | |
| For further information please contact the author of the report | | | | |

Annex 1: The draft Summary York Learning and North Yorkshire Adult Learning and Skills Engagement Strategy 2021-2025

Abbreviations:

AEB – Adult Education Budget

ESFA – Education and Skills Funding Agency

EHCP - Education and Health Care Plan

FE – Further Education

IAG – Information, Advice and Guidance

NEET – Not in Employment, Education or Training

RARPA - Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement

VCS – Voluntary and Community Sector

YNYLEP – York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership