
Decision Session - Executive Leader

7th September 2010

Report of the Director of City Strategy

Future Prospects – Annual Report and Draft Business Plan

Summary

1. To advise the Executive Leader of the outcome of the work of Future Prospects for last year and update on the preparation of a new Business Plan to take forward this service.

Background

2. Future Prospects (FP) is the client focused information advice and guidance (IAG) and skills development offer in York since 1992. It is the only agency in York to provide an all age IAG service, and the only organisation in the UK to have received two Excellence Awards through the matrix quality standard for IAG. Since 1992, Future Prospects has provided a range of services and opportunities from both its city centre premises, and through outreach (in partnership with many statutory and voluntary organisations) in local communities identified as in most need of their support. As a provider of choice for York, Future Prospects has an excellent reputation with both those using the service, and the wide range of referral professionals and organisations who see FP playing a key role in supporting both individuals and businesses in meeting the challenge of social and economic inclusion.
3. As a holistic service its aim to address the practical barriers to getting a job. Services such as financial healthchecks, various skills assessments, IT qualifications, employability skills, workplace resilience training, access to resources, and up to date labour market information help customers navigate through their individual journey. By offering the service under one roof, it is able to help people return to work more quickly, with qualified and expert Advisers who can support people with challenging and complex needs. Other agency services are also incorporated under the Future Prospects umbrella in order to maximise the impact for customers: these include a counselling service, skills for life and ESOL assessments, and can provide accredited bitesize qualifications.
4. The Annual Report outlining the work of Future Prospects for the last year is attached. Key headline outcomes for the past year are:
 - 308 individuals gained paid employment - £523k benefits savings

- 99 disabled people got jobs- £870k benefits savings
 - 54 young people got jobs- £182.5 k benefits savings
 - 5484 went into training and learning- 40% into accredited training at level 1 and 2
 - In depth advice to 8136 individuals
 - 1033 drop in advice sessions and 83 tasters across 13 venues across the community.
 - 2384 attended employability skills workshops
 - 68,523 visitors to the Future Prospects website
 - Top 4 referral sources- friend/colleague, website, jobcentreplus, and health professionals
 - 99% customer satisfaction rate
 - 176 individuals gained an entry level or level 1 qualification through the on site Open College Network provision.
 - 90% of clients choose face to face access as their preferred way of using the service
5. The Annual Report also highlights the return on investment in this service in order to deliver value for money in support of the commitment to economic inclusion. Future Prospects work with 70% of the unemployed people in York on Job Seekers Allowance and 29% of those on Employment and Support Allowance/Incapacity Benefit. In terms of impact on the local economy, in the last year Future Prospects achieved:
- £2.78 million of additional revenue into York through jobs gained (based on minimum wage and average of 30 hours a week employment)
 - £57k of extra income flowing into the Westfield and Clifton area through benefits uptake
 - £90k of extra income from benefits maximisation through city based service
 - £1.57 million in annual benefits savings through moving people off benefits and into paid work

One particular project with a contract value of £25k, saw a return on investment value of £176k benefits savings, £260k in wages- a net difference of £85k flowing into the economy.

6. Future Prospects was created as a public sector partnership, initially hosted by York College. Staff transferred to the City of York Council in 2003 and more recently in March 2010 the partnership arrangements with York College were ended so that now the service is managed through the economic development service of the City Strategy Directorate. A new business plan is being prepared to guide the ongoing work of Future Prospects in a time of considerable change in the provision of information, advice and guidance services. An initial draft is attached for information.

Consultation

7. At present, only internal officer consultation has taken place regarding the annual report and draft business plan for Future Prospects.

Options

8. The options for the Executive Leader to consider are to agree to the annual report or not to do so. With regard to the draft business plan, this is provided for information at present and so comments are invited. Further consideration of the service will be made through ongoing service and budget reviews.

Corporate Priorities

9. Future Prospects is an important means for delivering the strategic objectives set out in both the Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Plan with respect to economic inclusion.

Implications

10. This report has the following implications:
 - **Financial:** The Council's current commitment to Future Prospects is approximately £165k towards an organisation with a turnover of approximately £800k. The changing relationship with York College and programmes to support economic inclusion have had a significant impact on Future Prospects. A significant deficit resulted in 2009/10 which has been covered by reserves. This has led to a major recovery plan for the organisation being implemented. There remains uncertainty over funding programmes. The level of support from the Council toward Future Prospects in 2011/12 onwards will need to be considered as part of the review of all services with the Directorate and the budget setting process.
 - **Human Resources (HR):** A restructure of staffing is underway following the Council's agreed HR policies and procedures.
 - **Equalities:** The Annual Report highlights the commitment to address economic inclusion.
 - **Legal:** Historically, through its partnership arrangements Future Prospects has had no clear legal constitutional status. Effectively, since the ending of the management arrangements with York College it is now part of the Council's economic development service.
 - **Crime and Disorder:** There are no Crime and Disorder implications for the Council.
 - **Information Technology (IT):** There are no IT implications for the Council.
 - **Property:** The Council has taken the lease of the premises at 24 Swinegate occupied by Future Prospects. A number of short term break clauses have been negotiated so that this can be kept under close review given the uncertainties of funding.
 - **Other:** Nil

Risk Management

11. Previous Internal Audit reports have highlighted the risk through the uncertain legal status attached to Future Prospects. This is addressed above. Additional significant risks relate to the uncertainties of funding to support the current levels of turnover. These are being kept under close review, and will be considered further through the Council's budget setting process.

Recommendation

12. It is recommended that:
 - i. the Executive Leader approves the Annual report for Future Prospects.
 - ii. the Executive Leader notes and provides comments on the draft Business Plan for Future Prospects so that these can be taken into consideration.

Reason: To support the economic objectives set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Strategy.

Contact Details

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Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Bill Woolley
Director of City Strategy and Deputy Chief
Executive

Report Approved



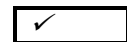
Date 23 August 2010

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Finance – Patrick Looker
HR – Sue Foley

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report.

Background Papers: None

Annexes:

Annex 1 – Future Prospects Annual Report

Annex 2 – Future Prospects Draft Business Plan