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**Cabinet**

**6 May 2014**

Report from the Economic & City Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## **Construction Skills Scrutiny Review – Cover Report**

### **Summary**

1. This report presents the final report of the Construction Skills Scrutiny Review – see Appendix 1, and asks Cabinet to approve the review recommendations.

### **Background**

2. At a meeting of the Economic and City Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee (ECDOSC) held in July 2013 the Committee considered a briefing paper on a proposed scrutiny review of construction skills in York. The briefing paper forecast a recovery in the construction industry with increased demand for people with construction skills. The Committee agreed that this review should proceed and set up a Task Group to carry out the review on their behalf.
3. The Task Group met in August and September 2013 to consider a draft remit and as a result the following aim and objectives were agreed:

### **Aim**

To investigate ways of increasing the supply of local people with building and construction skills.

### **Objectives**

- i. Identify what skills gaps and shortages there are in York and will be in the future, against planned development in the city over the next 5 years and beyond

- ii. Examine the opportunities for local people, including NEETs, 16-24 year olds and those looking to retrain, to enter the construction industry to enable the industry to take advantage of new and emerging projects
- iii. Identify what strategy and funding is in place by building companies and training organisations to develop a suitably qualified workforce to meet projected demands including retention and recruitment strategies, and identify best practice.

## **Consultation**

- 4. As part of the review the Task Group met with apprentices at York College and attended meetings of the Property Forum of York's Chamber of Commerce and YorCity Construction Steering Group, which provided the opportunity to talk with representatives of construction firms, training providers, training agencies and the Armed Forces. Further details of the consultation that took place are contained within Appendix 1 to this report.

## **Conclusions**

- 5. York is going through a significant period of change with plans for up to 22,000 homes over the next 15 years with the creation of 1,000 jobs per year and a sustainable skilled workforce.
- 6. From the evidence collected by the Task Group all indications point to a boom in the construction industry in York and a way to narrow the gap in the skilled workforce was needed to best take advantage of any upturn in construction.
- 7. York has the protocols in place through YorCity Construction's Skills Model to secure locally targeted recruitment and training opportunities on larger sites and this model is being rolled out to smaller developments.
- 8. Employers acknowledged there was a major skills gap in York and they were struggling to recruit skilled staff. Many were committed to taking on apprentices but this training took two or three years and apprentices are not able to satisfy the immediate requirements.
- 9. The construction industry needs to be better promoted in schools as a worthwhile career with a wide variety of jobs available from tradespeople to professional, technical and commercial and sales positions.

10. That more needs to be done to attract women into the construction industry, not just in an office environment but at all levels.

## **Review Recommendations**

11. As a result of the evidence gathered the Task Group made the following recommendations which were endorsed by the Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee at a meeting on 25 March 2014.
  - i. That the Council support the Delivery and Innovation Fund bid submitted by the Education and Skills team to promote in schools within the next academic year and beyond the varied career opportunities in the construction industry and in particular the career opportunities in the construction industry for women.
  - ii. That CYC support the YorCity Construction network to:
    - a) agree a realistic target for growth in the number of construction industry apprentices within the city and in the number of businesses in the construction industry taking on apprentices.
    - b) work with the Planning and Regeneration team to establish a framework at commercial pre-planning inquiry stage whereby firms in the construction industry are made aware of the support available from YorCity Construction.
    - c) work with the Planning and Regeneration team to develop a framework so that once a commercial planning application has been approved the Education and Skills Team can broker relationships between the developer and local training providers to ensure that potential apprenticeship opportunities are levered and in order to upskill the local workforce;
    - d) continue to work with training providers to make the skills offer more accessible for existing staff working in the industry, regardless of age, and others looking to retrain.
  - iii. Learning City York Partnership Manager provides ECDOSC with six monthly progress reports from YorCity That the Construction Steering Group.

## **Options**

12. Having considered the scrutiny final report attached, the Cabinet may choose:
  - (i) To approve the recommendations
  - (ii) Not to approve some or all of the recommendations listed above.

## **Council Plan**

13. The work on this review and its arising recommendations supports the 'create jobs and grow the economy' priority within the Council Plan 2011-15.

## **Implications**

14. The implications associated with the recommendations arising from the review are listed within the final report at Paragraphs 78 to 81 – see Appendix 1.

## **Risk Management**

15. There are no specific risks arising from the recommendations in the final report (Appendix 1). However, there is potentially a risk that the gaps which the Task Group has identified during its review may continue to present a growing problem for the skills of young people and the construction industry in particular, if Cabinet decides not to recommend any further work with the YorCity Construction network.

## **Recommendations**

16. The Economic & City Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends Cabinet:
  - (i) Notes the content of the final report at Appendix 1
  - (ii) Approves the recommendations as shown in Paragraph 11 of this cover report.

Reason: To conclude the Scrutiny Review in line with CYC Scrutiny procedures and protocols.

## Contact Details

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Report  
Approved

Date 8 April 2014

Wards Affected:

All

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

## Appendix

**Appendix 1 – Final Report**

## Annexes

**Annex A – Review aims, objectives and timetable**

**Annex B – Training provision and funding landscape**