

Committee/Board Name and Date of Meeting:
Education Skills and Employability Board

Meeting Date:
26 October 2022

Report Title
SYMCA Skills Strategy Update

Is the paper exempt from the press and public?	No
Reason why exempt:	Not applicable
Purpose of this report:	Policy Decision
Is this a Key Decision?	No
Has it been included on the Forward Plan?	Not a Key Decision

Director Approving Submission of the Report:
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Executive Summary

In January 2022 the board commissioned development of a strategy for Education, Skills and Employability in South Yorkshire. The Board also acknowledged i that development of the strategy must take account of developments in the wider education, skills and employability landscape that impact on delivery or that create new opportunities for residents and employers across South Yorkshire e.g. the Local Skills Improvement Plan being led by the Chambers of Commerce. This paper seeks to update the Board on the development of the strategy.

What does this mean for businesses, people and places in South Yorkshire?

The Skills and Employability Strategy will seek to better prepare residents for work in general terms and for employment in areas that are priority for growth in South Yorkshire with the aim of supporting people to progress in their careers towards better paid employment but also to

progress into work that is good for inclusion, wellbeing and communities, including work that supports environmental improvement.

Recommendations

Board members are invited to:

- Note the progress of the development of the strategy in this paper and the fit with developments in the wider education and skills landscape

Consideration by any other Board, Committee, Assurance or Advisory Panel

None.

1. Background

1.1

SYMCA know from extensive evidence and research that South Yorkshire is in a low skills equilibrium, typified by low skills, low pay, low aspiration and a low productivity labour market. Markers for formal educational attainment are lower across South Yorkshire compared to the national average at almost all levels. Performance gaps by socio-economic status take root in the earliest years of children's lives and fail to narrow in the years that follow. However, it is worth noting that these challenges are not unique to South Yorkshire.

1.2

Investment in a system that meets South Yorkshire's future needs will require bold and innovative leadership if it is to improve outcomes and achieve a stronger, greener and fairer future.

The strategy also will need to address these challenges set out in the Strategic Economic Plan, in terms of both skills supply and demand:

- Raising attainment and progression in South Yorkshire to levels at least comparable with the rest of England
- Raising qualification levels in the workforce linked to more highly skilled jobs
- Addressing health inequalities that affect productivity
- Better use of apprenticeships to drive up the attainment of technical skills in the workforce, addressing high levels of economic inactivity, especially among young adults
- Driving a more inclusive workforce
- Ensure the system is better aligned to match skills supply with skills demand

1.3

Employer demand for skills does not work effectively as a driver for increased skills levels across South Yorkshire. With the aim to address this, the emerging Local Skills Improvement Plan and Strategic Development Fund will form a part of facing this issue; highlighting some of the present and future employer skills needs in the region.

2. Skills strategy development

2.1 In 2021 board members commissioned the development of a strategy for education, skills and employability and subsequently at the January 2022 meeting of the Board, recommendations for key themes for the strategy were accepted. These included:

- Targeting School Readiness so that young children start school with the skills experiences and behaviours they need for success;
- Providing educational enrichment to raise young people's aspiration and achievement
- Growing apprenticeships across South Yorkshire through a leadership role
- Helping adults improve their basic English, maths and digital skills.

Other priorities agreed in addition included:

- Improving responsiveness to employer skills demands building on the Skills Accelerator Trailblazer findings;
- Adult skills activity funded through the Adult Education Budget;
- Development of a clear skills offer focused on our Net Zero ambitions
- Strengthen our Community Learning offer to residents
- Developing a package of support for young people not in education, employment, or training.

Following a procurement exercise, KADA consultants were appointed to assist in the writing and facilitating the development of the strategy.

2.2 The development of the strategy is split into 2 parts. The first aspect currently underway is a series of engagement sessions with different stakeholders. KADA have just completed 7 Stakeholder workshops, which follow the journey through an individual's educational and work career based on the key themes. These engagement sessions are identifying key priorities and gaps for the skills strategy to address.

In addition, to broaden the engagement but also so that the work does not only have the lens of business on it and is more people focused; work around participatory democracy will be included including direction from the Mayoral manifesto and engagement more widely with students, learners and job seekers. This additional engagement will take place in various forms such as 1-1's, small focus groups and using existing meetings or fora.

2.3 It is expected that part 1 will conclude by the end of November 2022, following this, the process will involve drawing together the overall narrative alongside a set of measures of success to form a draft implementation plan, this needs to be set against any proposed resource costs and timeline for delivery in 2023.

2.4 The second part of the work is to develop each individual strand proposed and to start to unpick the detail of what can be done, who should be involved and how it can be delivered. Further work will be done to develop the framework rationale against which the proposed areas fit and to refine any potential costed options in each area, to be presented to the Board

3. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal

3.1 Option 1

This paper seeks acknowledgement on the progress of the Skills Strategy

3.4 Option 1 Risks and Mitigations:

Strategy proposals are out of scope of influence. The strategy must have a clear focus with challenging but achievable goals. Once further work has been done, we will test this again with the Board.

3.5 Option 2

N/A

3.8 Option 2 Risks and Mitigations:

N/A

3.13 Recommended Option

Option 1

4. Consultation on Proposal:

4.1 None.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 SYMCA Executive will continue development of the strategy. It is anticipated that a more developed proposal following part 1 of the process, will be available by end of 2022. It is expected that part 2 will conclude early 2023.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice

6.1 Funding is in place for the development of the Strategy from internal budgets. There is no additional ask at this stage though additional detail on recommendations and the costs behind these will be worked on further. This will follow the normal governance and approvals processes.

7. Legal Implications and Advice

7.1 SYMCA has adult education, skills and training functions. The development of a strategy will complement those functions. Many of the MCA's functions are exercised concurrently with the Constituent Councils. In developing the strategy any expenditure will comply with the Contract Procedure Rules. The decision to adopt the final strategy will be a Key Decision.

8. Human Resources Implications and Advice

8.1 None at this stage

9. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice

- 9.1 An equality Impact assessment has already been undertaken and presented to Members at the time of considering the Strategy.
As part of developing any strategy the MCA will need to have due regard to the need to :-
- I. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - II. Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

10. Climate Change Implications and Advice

- 10.1 None at this stage. To be revisited when proposals are developed

11. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice

- 11.1 None at this stage

12. Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice

- 12.1 Outcomes of the strategy and agreed interventions will inform the development the Business and Skills Marketing and communications Strategy. Central to this remains exposure of issue and solution promotional marketing of interventions and gaining new market communication ground.

List of Appendices Included

None.

Background Papers

None.