

Education Skills and Employability Board

Monday, 06 February 2023

Skills Strategy

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

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Executive Summary

In January 2022 the Education, Skills and Employability Board commissioned the development of a strategy for Education, Skills and Employability in South Yorkshire. The Board also acknowledged 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, in particular, 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?

South Yorkshire lags behind the national averages across all levels of formal education, which impairs attainment and progression. The workforce in the region is typified by a lower qualification profile which matches the available jobs. The Skills and Employability Strategy will provide a long-term vision supported by our key partners that supports our shared ambitions for economic growth, inclusion and net zero in line with employment opportunities.

Recommendations

Members are invited to:

- Note the progress of the development of the strategy in this paper

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

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

19 January 2023

1. Background

1.1 The Education, Skills and Employment Board commissioned the development of a South Yorkshire strategy for education, skills and employability based on the following themes:

- 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
- Strengthening our Community Learning offer to residents
- Developing a package of support for young people not in education, employment, or training.

1.2 We have to address the long-term systemic skills problems that hold South Yorkshire residents back from fulfilling their potential. That means a change in our approach to a longer term approach working in close partnership with our local authorities, colleges, training providers and other partners.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Skills strategy development

KADA consultants were appointed to assist in the development, drafting and facilitation of the development of the strategy. A series of planned workshops targeting different aspects of the skills landscape in South Yorkshire have been undertaken with different stakeholders. These sessions have been themed around the journey through education, training and work to support in identifying key priorities and themes for the skills strategy. In addition, work around participatory democracy has been included to broaden the engagement.

Direction from the Mayoral manifesto, Local Skills Improvement Plan, the Regional Skills Advisory Board and Local Authority strategies along with direct engagement with students, learners and job seekers has helped to develop a broad range of perspectives to inform the development. This additional engagement, also

supported by KADA, has been taking place in various forms such as 1-1's, small focus groups and using existing meetings or fora.

Early headlines that highlight some of the key issues from the sessions include:

- **An inclusive system in which no one is left out.**
- **Flexible outcome and destination focused funding** which supports inclusive economic growth.
- **Strong authentic South Yorkshire identity** with a clear understanding of our offer.
- A system **responsive** to employers and learners and with the **capacity and capability to deliver**.
- **Clarity, collaboration, coordination, and a shared consensus at its core.**
- **Data led, driven locally by partners, and community based.**
- Co-designed and standardised **social value** protocols, which harnesses planning, procurement, and investment levers.
- **Delivered locally in and with communities** with strategic alignment to strategies and levers.
- **Clear and simple pathways** for all levels which showcases progression opportunities.
- Encourages and **supports workforce development.**
- **All age CEaIG delivered by professionals.**
- **Adaptable** provision which can **offer blended options**
- **Multi-year funding** which can meaningfully respond to local priorities.

The intent of the Skills Strategy is to focus on producing a clear shared vision and set of priorities that drive action alongside an outcome framework and implementation plan.

2.2

Timescale

The consultation phase concluded at the end of December 2022, although some further activity is still scheduled. The focus is now on developing the overall narrative alongside a set of measures of success to form a draft implementation plan and outcome framework. The emerging updated Local Skills Improvement Plan will form an integral component part of the strategy; highlighting some of the present and future employer skills needs in the region. The timing of the final report will be dependant of the progress of the LSIP and integration of the research and recommendations. The LSIP timelines are for a draft report to be published by the end of March 2023 and final version of the final version by the end of May 2023.

Members are asked to note the progress of the development of the Skills Strategy

3. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

3.1

SYMCA Executive will continue development of the strategy.

4. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice

- 4.1 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

5. Legal Implications and Advice

- 5.1 SYMCA has devolved 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 Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules. The decision to adopt the final strategy will be a Key Decision.

6. Human Resources Implications and Advice

- 6.1 None at this stage.

7. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice

- 7.1 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.

8. Climate Change Implications and Advice

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

9. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice

- 9.1 None at this stage.

10. Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice

- 10.1 It is proposed that a full marketing and communications plan be developed by the Marketing and Communications Officer on receipt of the first draft of the strategy. Commencement of all marketing and communications activity to be aligned with expected delivery of final plan.

List of Appendices Included:

None.