

## Future Talent Plan Update

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Report of: The Director of City Development

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure, Investment & Inclusive Growth)

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

### Brief summary

The Future Talent Plan was launched in September 2022 with a vision *‘for a globally competitive city where we work together to enable the right opportunities for people and businesses to thrive in a rapidly changing labour market and ensure that nobody is left behind’*. The Plan sets out our collective ambition to improve talent and skills in Leeds and seeks to bring together businesses, education and skills providers and key stakeholders to deliver these ambitions.

Significant progress has been made in delivering against our Future Talent Plan actions over the past 12 months. This includes specific skills and careers events, focusing on some of the emerging sector areas; new and innovative skills programmes; partnerships with our key sectors to improve our offer to young people; and investment in new employment support programmes to support those furthest away from the labour market into a positive outcome.

This report sets out an overview of progress made over the last 12 months and highlights examples of actions we are taking forward next year. The report will be supported at the Board meeting by a presentation with detailed examples and case studies.

The Future Talent Plan has also informed the new Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy which will go to Executive Board in September 2023. The updated strategy re-affirms our commitment to inclusive growth and will continue to focus on tackling inequality, ensuring we have the right infrastructure to enable our ambition, tackling the climate emergency, supporting all sections of our society into better jobs, raising skill levels and improving the health of the poorest the fastest while helping people to live healthy and active lives.

## Recommendations

- a) Members are asked to note progress made in delivering our collective ambitions set out in the Future Talent Plan and agree any appropriate Scrutiny Board actions that may arise from this report.

### What is this report about?

- 1 The Future Talent Plan was launched in September 2022, following extensive research and a consultation exercise that crowd sourced ideas from employers, education and skills providers and citizens across Leeds. This result is the Future Talent Plan that has been co-created by the city.
- 2 The Future Talent plan is enabling us to respond to challenges that people and businesses are facing. For example, Covid-19 accelerated underlying trends in the economy and labour market, including the adoption of digital technology and need for digital skills, leaving people without digital skills at a disadvantage locked out of the labour market. The Future Talent consultation highlighted the importance of Digital Skills, AI and Data with increasing digitization across all sectors and we are responding.
- 3 Following the launch in September 2022 the Future Talent Plan set two main frameworks which would enable Leeds to be *“A globally competitive city where we work together to enable the right opportunities for people and businesses to thrive in a rapidly changing labour market and ensure that nobody is left behind”*.
  - **Supporting our people and businesses to thrive:**
    - We will prioritise investment in the skills of people in the city who need our support the most, helping them to get work or start a business in emerging and vital areas of the economy;
    - We will encourage people who have been economically inactive back into the workplace;
    - We will enable people in work to learn new skills, progress throughout their career, and be able to change jobs;
    - We will raise the bar on inclusive recruitment, better jobs, and healthy workplaces;
    - We will use and strengthen our assets to maximise employment and skills opportunities, harnessing our collective power to enable people and businesses to thrive.
  - **Aligning our city’s education and training infrastructure**
    - We will develop clear talent pipelines through promoting progression pathways and working together better as a city;
    - We will support good quality careers education so that young people are informed, inspired and qualified to access jobs in the city;
    - We will show young people that they can make a career here in Leeds and demonstrate the rich and diverse opportunities that the city has to offer.
- 4 This report reviews the actions which have taken place in the 12 months since inception. The Future Talent plan aims to help the city respond to a rapidly changing labour market. It particularly addresses the impact of Covid-19 across the economy, and how this has been intertwined with the challenges caused by the UK’s exit from the EU and other global and national challenges. The plan also addresses the employment and skills demands from the transition to Net Zero, as well as new responsibilities and policies arising from West Yorkshire Devolution and a changing national skills and training policy landscape.

## What impact will this proposal have?

- 5 We have delivered a significant programme of actions and events across the city that have had a positive impact. Twelve organisational pledges have been made and published on the Future Talent plan website. These pledges are from partners in the city who have committed actions to help achieve our collective ambitions, enabling people and businesses to thrive over the next 3-5 years.

## How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 6 The Future Talent Plan is part of a suite of work that was undertaken to inform the refresh of the council's Inclusive Growth Strategy, which is resetting our vision for growth up until 2030 to ensure that our economy works for everybody in a time of change and uncertainty.
- 7 The work supports the council's ambition for a healthy and caring city for everyone by 2030, through promoting better employment opportunities and more secure work for people. It also aligns with the Climate Emergency agenda through promoting 'green' skills and jobs to enable the transition to a green economy.

## Leeds City Council delivery

- 8 The Leeds Apprenticeship Recruitment Fair returned to the First Direct Arena in February 2023 to mark the start of National Apprenticeship week. This was the 11th Apprenticeship Fair organised by the Employment & Skills service and saw a record number of visitors: 12,084 free tickets were booked ahead of the event, with just over 8,000 visitors (66%) attending on the day. 106 organisations booked stands to exhibit from a wide range of sectors, including agriculture, health and care services, creative and design, digital and financial and professional services. 92% of exhibitors rated the event as excellent or good. 387 visitors completed an evaluation survey and 77% of visitors rated LARF23 as either excellent or good overall, with 78% stating they were either more likely to start an apprenticeship or more interested in an apprenticeship because of attending LARF23.
- 9 In June 2023, the service delivered the second SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Next Choices event at Leeds First Direct Arena. This was a city-wide event aimed at supporting young people who have special educational needs and disabilities. 67 organisations exhibited, providing information about jobs, apprenticeships, training and skills opportunities including FE courses, volunteering, leisure activities, finances and benefits. Around 2,200 visitors attended, which was a 20% increase on visitor numbers from last year's event.
- 10 Leeds Creative Skills Festival (LCSF), a weeklong festival of activities took place in November 2022 with a Creative Skills Showcase event held at the Leeds First Direct Arena. The event, sponsored by Channel 4, 4Skills and Leeds City College, aimed to inspire young people to consider a career in creative skills and provided a platform for industry experts to deliver presentations and take part in topical panel discussions. A total of 63 employers, training providers and cultural partners exhibited at the event and 2,200 people attended. LCSF will be taking place again in November 2023.

## Support to young people

- 11 The Employment and Skills service provides information, advice and guidance to secondary schools, FE and sixth form colleges to support their careers programme. This includes an online careers guidance platform (Start in Leeds), apprenticeship information sessions, regular careers network meetings, employment and education brokerage activities as well as monthly newsletters and careers resources.
- 12 During the 2022/23 academic year the service engaged with over 80% of schools and colleges, delivered 78 apprenticeship information sessions to 5,660 students, delivered 4 careers events with a total of 285 exhibitors, 4,390 visitors and facilitated 24 employment brokerage support activities involving 3,500 students.
- 13 Support was available on the Start in Leeds website to coincide with A level and GCSE results days in order to provide support to young people who did not get the grades they needed to move onto their chosen destination or who have not secured a place for September 2024. "Next Steps" includes support from the Employment Hub, the Pathways team as well as information from providers and apprenticeship opportunities. A postcard promoting Next Steps was sent out to all year 11s as well as the NEET cohort along with a social media campaign.

## Support for employers

- 14 Dedicated sector leads are now in place to support priority sectors including Digital and Tech, Finance and Professional services, green skills/sustainability and Health and Social Care. Actions over the last 12 months include:

### The Digital and Tech sector

- The first Leeds Digital Careers Festival (LDCF) event was held in September 2022 - a festival and careers event aimed at those new to the digital sector, The festival culminated in a recruitment event at Leeds first direct arena. 50 digital organisations exhibited, with around 1,800 visitors in attendance. The festival will take place again this September, with over 50 exhibitors expected over 2000 visitor bookings already. The event has 3 pillars of 'inform, include, inspire' to help focus activities and ensure the aims of the event are achieved.
- As part of the focus on digital skills and supporting the tech sector, work is ongoing to support digital employers to be able to access a wider and more diverse talent pool for future roles. In collaboration with partners across the city, several small-scale events have taken place with a view to engage future talent groups who do not currently work in a digital or tech role. These events include:
- Inspiring Future Talent In Digital Event which took place in September 2022, This brought together careers leads and IT teachers from further education providers and digital employers. The aim of the event was to help inspire a diverse range of future talent into digital technology careers by connecting employers and educators. 31 people attended the event which included panel discussions, a workshop and speaker sessions.
- Tech careers workshop session held at Merrion House, Leeds in March 2023 for 16 of our Leeds employment hub customers. The session provided a brief overview of tech careers with an opportunity for attendees to gain one to one feedback on their CV.

- Leeds Unleashed took place on 5th May 2023 at xDesign in Leeds, 4 Leeds tech employers delivered a one-day event which promoted tech careers to students, along with workshops, interactive demonstration sessions and panel speakers to find out more about tech roles, apprenticeship and skills needed in the sector. 210 young people from years 10 and 11 attended.
- In partnership with tech Bootcamp provider, Northcoders and local tech firm, Infinity Works, part of Accenture, a series of events have taken place under the umbrella title of Leeds Tech Careers Launchpad, with a building theme of providing tech and digital careers related information and advice to candidates wanting to know more about a career in digital. So far 2 out of the 4 planned events have taken place, with 33 attendees to date. Attendees have been a diverse mix of people, including students, career changers, refugees, and people not currently in the labour market.
- Working with Bruntwood SciTech a student insight, tech careers day was held in May with tech employers and training providers talking about their career and training in digital and promoting future career opportunities in the city. 27 students and education career advisors attended. Educate the Educators, tech careers event took place at Bruntwood Scitech, Leeds in July. This event focused on informing educators about the range of tech and digital career routes, employer skills needs and employment opportunities for their students, to help inform the future talent through their career's advisors.
- The council co-sponsored Ahead Partnership's GirlTech23 programme in March. This event brought 135 female students aged 12 –14 from Leeds schools to hear about digital skills and careers with the aim of building confidence in young women to pursue a career in digital. The Employment & Skills team were represented at the event, discussing digital apprenticeship options as part of the market stall and workshop sessions.
- Working with education partner, Hundo, a mini virtual careers event was launched in May to help local students explore local digital employers. The virtual careers expo will be re-launched in September 2023 and will give young people further access to employer skills and careers information, showcasing some of the emerging and vital areas of the local economy and help them navigate career options. Eight T-level students from Leeds City College are also gaining hands on work experience by helping develop the platform, gaining valuable employment skills and helping to develop a virtual careers expo which will appeal to their peers.

Planned activities include:

- To continue a series of careers information events to engage with a range of adults and students across Leeds to inform and inspire more people to upskill in digital and consider sustainable career opportunities in the growing Leeds tech sector.
- A student insight day is planned for October to welcome new students to the city and help them understand future tech career opportunities available to them once they graduate.
- The continuation of a careers event which will focus on digital and tech career opportunities as part of our emerging and vital areas of the local economy and future skills needs.
- Working with WYCA skills Bootcamp funding to deliver digital skills training in line with local employer needs. The Bootcamps will be delivered within a 16-week

period to an equivalent of a level 3 qualification, with expected job opportunities on completion.

- Developing partnerships with networks across the city such as Black Young Professionals, WILD Digital and Get Away Girls, with an aim to support key demographics with digital skills and careers information.

### **The Financial and Professional services sector**

- A mapping exercise of training provision has been undertaken around the skills offer for the financial and professional services sector. Engagement with employers in the industry is ongoing to understand future skills needs.
- Financial Services Time Machine the launch of the 2023 report took place on 24th May 2023 at Leeds City College. Students were involved in a StartUp Sherpas work experience squad to develop ideas to support the finance sector, The launch showcased the students top 10 ideas and how the project has impacted student's views on the green economy, and their own future career pathways. Around 100 students from year 10 to 12 engaged.

### **Employer engagement to support the transition to net zero**

- Commissioned The Future of the Green Economy in Leeds programme providing young people with work experience following a pathway to entrepreneurship, resulting in a dataset of 2000 ideas to be open sourced providing a city green print to showcase the work.
- The service is working with LCC's Climate Energy and Green Spaces teams, to look at how we can support contractors delivering on green projects and their supply chains. Examples of this would include work with Believ (EV charging infrastructure) to deliver on their social value aspirations and SSE who are developing a new energy centre in Leeds to develop a pipeline of employees.
- A pilot recycling hub project. Delivered in partnership with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), with support from EY Partnership, New Futures Network and Council contractors Leeds City Council (Climate, Energy and Green Spaces and E&S) have developed and delivered the pilot, focused on HMP Wealstun. The pilot programme provided the opportunity for prisoners to dismantle disused heating equipment supplied by the council into component parts for recycling. The pilot is being modelled to support a future contract to start Autumn 2023 between the Council and HMP Wealstun with a view to increasing reinvestment in employment, training and post release activities.
- Yorkshire Sustainability Week. The events were designed to strengthen, inspire and expand our sustainable business community across the region. The first sustainability event in Yorkshire, took place on 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> July hosted by Secret Event Service, supported by E&S and Economic Development with LCC as headline sponsor. The conference was held at Cloth Hall Court Leeds. Two conferences were held as part of the week, day 1 Living Sustainably and Day 2 Future Cities. The week reached an audience of over 500,000+ in the pre-event marketing campaign, brought together 1200 people in person in 20 events across 15 locations across Yorkshire, and brought over 600 people together in our first ever 2-day conference.
- The inclusive growth website hosts information for Leeds residents and businesses for the Employment & Skills support services available to them. From May to Aug 2023, the Leeds Apprenticeship hub information page received 4,928

views. The Employment & Skills page received 3,902 views and the Leeds Employment Hub received 3,285 views.

Planned activities include:

- Work with education partners in the city to develop skills provision in the city e.g. Skills Bootcamps Heat Pumps.
- In partnership with Leeds College of Building, E&S is driving forward a construction retrofit forum to bring together key stakeholders to include FE, HE and other skills providers, businesses and social landlords.
- Developing opportunities to support LCC supply chain through key Council Green contracts to maximise, support and promote social value opportunities for Leeds residents.
- Developing E&S carbon literacy (CL) champions or facilitators within the E&S service to embed carbon literacy into current provision and curriculum and enable the extension of the Council's Adult Learning offer to include CL learning for Leeds residents.
- Developing Leeds Adult Learning programmes in partnership with Council services to promote first step engagement.
- Developing the integration of skills to support the journey to Net Zero within E&S employability programmes.
- Partner collaboration developed with the WYCA, Leeds Beckett University, Knowledge Exchange and LCC E&S to support Leeds SMEs through a series of business sustainability events – How to Build a Greener Future.
- Innovate UK Bid collaboration with 4 Housing Associations and the Construction sector to support the development of an employability programme to support Housing Association tenants develop construction and retrofitting skills.

### **The Health and Care sector**

- A collaborative partnership with the Health & Care sector involving the following Leeds Anchors, Leeds City Council, Leeds Teaching Hospital NHS Trust, Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust, Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Leeds Beckett University and Leeds City College. The partnership aims to narrow inequalities with adapted recruitment practices targeted towards residents within the Priority Wards providing support to meet individual needs. The focus is a person-centred approach to open up career opportunities within the sector removing barriers and requiring no qualifications or experience with interview guarantee pathways.
- The current pathways are: Step into Care, NHS Clinical Roles, Childrens Residential Practitioners, Care Navigators / Receptionist at GP Practices, Admin roles and Maths, English and ESOL to ensure people have the required level and Employment and Skills Advisors for 1 to 1 support. Since the pilot in February 2022 to August 2023, 517 people, of whom, 286 (55%) from a priority ward have attended an information session, 207 people have gained employment and 136 continue to be supported within a pathway.

### **Inclusive recruitment**

15 On Employability Day 30 June 2023 Employment and Skills invited organisations to get involved in this year's Employability Day, which helps to raise awareness about how they support people

into sustainable work. Workplace Leeds delivered a session to help employers understand inclusive recruitment tools, accessing an untapped talent pool and employer and candidate support available through their services.

- 16 Supported Internships – Leeds City Council has been working closely with the National Development Team for Inclusion to increase the number of Supported Internships across the city. Supported Internships are work based study programmes for young people with Educational Health Care Plans. Interns (Aged 16-24) spends 3 days per week with an employer and 2 days within a college setting with the ultimate aim of the young person moving into sustained employment. Supported Internships are one of the most effective ways for young people with EHCP's to move into paid work. Awareness raising sessions have been delivered with the aim of increasing the number of employers offering placements to contribute to an inclusive workforce. A city wide SEND Employment Forum will be launched in October 2023 with the aim of improving paid employment opportunities for young people with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 17 The Council have re-partnered with Superpower (formally Workfinder), a platform which matches employers with people looking for employment opportunities using AI to ensure that employers receive applications from the right people. A 6-month project is underway to engage local talent to access and sign up to the Superpower platform to search for relevant employment positions.
- 18 Innovation skills workshop talent & skills. The event in July 2023 was city wide and brought together organisations developing entrepreneurial and innovation skills and talent in the city. The event has built awareness of Leeds innovation partnerships, showcased the activities happening in the city and collaboration.
- 19 Lifelong learning. Adult learning and skills providers in the city will deliver skills taster sessions with the aim of inspiring more adults to re-skill and up-skill to help with future career prospects. A 'have a go fortnight' of skills taster sessions, focused on the priority sectors, is planned to take place in November and will be delivered at venues across the city.

### What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?     Yes                       No

- 20 The Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education has been fully engaged with the work set out in this report including through chairing the steering group that was set up to oversee the development of the Future Talent Plan. The Leader of the Council and Deputy Mayor of West Yorkshire who also holds the Skills and Employment Portfolio, and the Chief Executive of the council have also been engaged this work.
- 21 The purpose of the steering group was to ensure key stakeholder representation throughout the project as well as to promote the plan across the members' networks. The group comprised of representatives from education, business, key sectors and WYCA. Members of the group have also been engaged in the website development process.
- 22 A public consultation also took place in the Autumn of 2021, with two online 'conversations' facilitated by a partner organisation, Clever Together enabling the voices of employees,



employers and third-party organisations to feed into the development of the plan. An offline version of the consultation was also distributed across the city's libraries and community hubs. To supplement the consultation, attendance at a range of meetings and events was co-ordinated in addition to the facilitation of two roundtable discussions. We will continue to seek feedback and engagement through the Inclusive Growth Delivery Partnership, Employment and Skills events and conversations with partners.

### **What are the resource implications?**

23 The Future Talent plan does not have direct resource implications but is helping to influence and shape direction of various funding streams including our adult education budget offer, employment support programmes, and other skills-based programmes. The service brings in approximately 80% of its funding from external funding. It also allows the city to better collaborate and plan resources to target limited skills funding to gain the maximum benefit for the people of Leeds, as well as providing a baseline for funding bids and collaborative efforts to drive skills planning.

### **What are the key risks and how are they being managed?**

24 Risk management plans were developed and monitored throughout the course of the project, but no significant risks were identified.

25 A less significant risk identified is regarding the delivery of the Future Talent Plan. A lack of focus on implementation could lead to the plan not being used by partners in the city, with the ability of businesses and other organisations including the council potentially unable to fully commit to the actions in the current economic climate. However, through strong stakeholder engagement, co-production and monitoring this risk has been limited. Furthermore, communications toolkits have been supplied to partners to encourage engagement with the plan and the sharing of it amongst their networks.

### **What are the legal implications?**

26 There are no significant legal issues relating to the recommendations in this report.

## **Options, timescales and measuring success**

### **What other options were considered?**

27 Not applicable for this report.

### **How will success be measured?**

28 A steering group focused on delivery has been set up and will meet on a 6-monthly basis and will monitor the city's overall progress in achieving the high-level Future Talent Plan ambitions. This will involve representation from key stakeholders including members of the original steering group, representatives from the Leeds Inclusive Growth Delivery Partnership as well as managers from the Employment & Skills Service and Economic Policy Team. The group will evaluate progress on the actions as a whole and determine any changed or new priorities. The first meeting took place in January 2023. We will also continue to draw on the cross-sectoral experience and expertise of our Partnerships and networks to engage with businesses and organisations about the plan.

- 29 The Future Talent Plan is adopting an agile approach, where partners are asked to monitor and update the actions they submit, and a continual programme of council activity which responds and adapts to the labour market as well as the success of previous actions is implemented.
- 30 Employment and Skills officers will monitor both the outcomes of employment and skills initiatives resulting from the Future Talent Plan that are delivered by the council and partner organisations. Evaluations are completed for all projects and events undertaken by the Employment and Skills service, measuring impacts such as engagement levels, exhibitor and visitor ratings of events and progression into employment or other development opportunities. Regular performance monitoring is undertaken by the service to evaluate the success of the Service.
- 31 Local labour market data and intelligence will also be collected in collaboration with organisations across the city and region to measure the impact of actions. As part of the Future Talent Plan, we have committed to working with partners across the city to improve our labour market intelligence. To know that the actions have been successfully achieved, outcomes such as higher employment rates, less economic inactivity, increased business start-up activity and more training, apprenticeship and adult learning course uptake will be monitored.
- 32 The Inclusive Growth website will soon feature updated content about the Leeds Inclusive Anchors Network and the successes that they have had in delivering for Leeds. We will also be launching the Leeds Business Anchor Network on 21 September and, a Business Anchor Progression Framework will be published on the Leeds Inclusive Growth website. This will be a tool for businesses to self-assess about how they are working as a business in areas that are important to Leeds, including on employment. The Future Talent site will direct organisations to this framework as a mechanism to enable more businesses to understand where they can contribute to the city and to measure success.

### **What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?**

- 33 The Future Talent Plan has a 3–5-year timeframe and Employment and Skills officers are responsible for its implementation and the upkeep of the website.

### **Appendices**

- N/A

### **Background papers**

- N/A