



SCRUTINY BOARD (CITY AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS)

Meeting to be held in Civic Hall, Leeds, LS1 1UR on
Thursday, 23rd April, 2009 at 11.30 am

(A pre-meeting will take place for ALL Members of the Board at 11.15 a.m.)

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

B Atha - Kirkstall;
S Bentley (Chair) - Weetwood;
C Campbell - Otley and Yeadon;
G Driver - Middleton Park;
J Dunn - Ardsley and Robin Hood;
C Fox - Adel and Wharfedale;
R Harington - Gipton and Harehills;
V Kendall - Roundhay;
J Lewis - Kippax and Methley;
T Murray - Garforth and Swillington;
R Pryke - Burmantofts and Richmond Hill;
A Shelbrooke - Harewood;

A G E N D A

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
1			<p>APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS</p> <p>To consider any appeals in accordance with Procedure Rule 25* of the Access to Information Procedure Rules (in the event of an Appeal the press and public will be excluded).</p> <p>(* In accordance with Procedure Rule 25, notice of an appeal must be received in writing by the Chief Democratic Services Officer at least 24 hours before the meeting).</p>	
2			<p>EXEMPT INFORMATION - POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <p>1 To highlight reports or appendices which officers have identified as containing exempt information, and where officers consider that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons outlined in the report.</p> <p>2 To consider whether or not to accept the officers recommendation in respect of the above information.</p> <p>3 If so, to formally pass the following resolution:-</p> <p>RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following parts of the agenda designated as containing exempt information on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information, as follows:-</p>	

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
3			<p>LATE ITEMS</p> <p>To identify items which have been admitted to the agenda by the Chair for consideration.</p> <p>(The special circumstances shall be specified in the minutes.)</p>	
4			<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>To declare any personal / prejudicial interests for the purpose of Section 81 (3) of the Local Government Act 2000 and paragraphs 8 to 12 of the Members Code of Conduct.</p>	
5			<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>To receive any apologies for absence.</p>	
6			<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</p> <p>To receive and approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 March 2009</p>	1 - 6
7			<p>SKILLS INQUIRY</p> <p>To receive and consider the attached report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development.</p>	7 - 28
8			<p>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Tuesday, 12 May 2009 at 10.00 a.m. (Pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.30 a.m.)</p>	

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Agenda Item 6

SCRUTINY BOARD (CITY AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS)

THURSDAY, 26TH MARCH, 2009

PRESENT: Councillor S Bentley in the Chair

Councillors B Atha, C Campbell, G Driver,
J Dunn, C Fox, R Harington, V Kendall,
J Lewis, R Pryke and A Shelbrooke

64 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2009, be confirmed as a correct record.

65 Session 5 - Skills Inquiry

The report of the Resources Manager, Regeneration Service referred to the Board's Inquiry into Skills and outlined how partners are working together to tackle worklessness and improve Level 1 skills and under in Leeds and how they are commissioning and co-ordinating provision.

This report had been produced following concerns at the Board's last meeting as to what support was being given to those young people who have few or no qualifications. Members wanted to know how they could access further training and what support was available through our partner organisations.

The Chair welcomed the following to the meeting:

- Diana Towler – Job Centre Plus
- Cath O'Grady – Learning Partnerships
- Ruth Davany – Archway
- Julie Staton – Resources Manager, Environment & Neighbourhoods
- Val Snowden – Head of Jobs & Skills, Environment & Neighbourhoods

Diana Towler gave a presentation on "Worklessness – Making a Difference"
The presentation focussed on the following areas:

- Welfare Reform
 - Reference was made to the Houghton Review of Worklessness which looked at the role of local authorities.
 - How to increase employment to 80% - the employment rate in Leeds was currently 73%
 - Changes to the benefits system
- Key Changes
 - Flexible New Deal programme
 - Work for benefit proposals

- Changes to benefits for lone parents and families with young children to encourage a return to work.
- Local Employment Partnerships – Agreement between Job Centre Plus and employers to move more disadvantaged people back into work.
- Reducing Child Poverty by reducing worklessness.
- The Story so Far:
 - Area Worklessness Groups – linked to Area Management wedges
 - Mapping employability and skills with activity of providers and partners – helping to co-ordinate activity, align funds and prevent duplication.
 - Worklessness Pilots in Gipton, Halton Moor and Osmondthorpe and New Wortley.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following issues were discussed:

- Pathways for individuals to return to work – these could involve various partners to assist with debt advice, childcare, basic skills and many other issues. There was a need to simplify the process as far as possible.
- Issues for people on disability benefits.
- Effects on those who were in receipt of tax credits.

Cath O’Grady informed the Board of the New Opportunities Experience for Lone Parents. This outlined the pathway following referral from various sources through support from case workers and partner organisations leading to development of skills and ultimately employment and continued post employment support. An information sheet was circulated to all Members of the Board on this matter.

Ruth Davany informed the Board of the work of Archway. This focussed on the following areas:

- Leeds Youth Employment Network
- Employment support and benefits for 19-25 year olds.
- Support for those not in education, employment or training.
- How to encourage those with a lack of interest and low confidence.
- Links with Park Lane College and enabling key skills qualifications.

The Board’s attention was also brought to the following issues:

- The role of the Leeds Strategic Outcome Worklessness Group. This had helped people reach work in their own localities.
- The impact of the Houghton Review and the positive impact on the local authority co-ordinating role.
- How to get those without Level 1 skills trained and skilled for life – this was considered to be one of the most challenging issues.
- The LSC Capital Building Programme – it was reported that the new Leeds City College proposals remained a priority.

Further issues discussed in response to Members questions and comments, included the following:

- Learning Partnerships and Archway were commissioned by the Council and received funding from Yorkshire Forward and European Social Funds.
- Concern that the curriculum for the Leeds City College was still unclear and for those who did not have Level 1 skills – it was reported that the curriculum reform programme looked at foundation training and developing clear pathways through the training ladder. Issues surrounding the development of curriculums involved various partners.
- Employment rate figures related to those of a working age, normally between 18 and 65, who were in employment.
- Performance Indicators in relation to reducing those on benefits. These were monitored by the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP)

The Chair thanked those present for their attendance.

RESOLVED – That the report and the information presented be noted as part of the Board's Skills Inquiry.

66 Marketing Leeds Grant Agreement 2009/10

The report of the Chief Executive updated the Board on the proposed Marketing Leeds Grant Agreement for 2009/10 and the associated draft Business Plan and Activity and Events Summary.

The Chair welcomed the following to the meeting:

- Jean Dent – Director, City Development
- James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement)
- Deborah Green, Chief Operating officer, Marketing Leeds

Members were informed of the decision to 'call-in' the Marketing Leeds Grant Agreement in September 2008. This call-in decision was subsequently considered by the Scrutiny Board (Central and Corporate Functions) who released the officer delegated decision to enter in to a Grant Agreement with Marketing Leeds for 2008/09. However, Scrutiny Board (Central and Corporate Functions) recommended that Scrutiny Board (City and Regional Partnerships) consider the agreement in detail before offices entered in to a further Grant Agreement with Marketing Leeds for 2009/10.

It was noted that the proposed business plan for 2009/12 was dependent upon funding from other parties as well as the Council. It was reported that the total budget for Marketing Leeds for the next year was approximately £1.5 million. This included a £400k grant from Leeds City Council. Yorkshire

Forward has now committed £2.4m of funding for the next three years subject to completion of the Grant Agreement.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following issues were discussed:

- Outcomes as detailed in the report – Members attention was brought to key performance indicators and it was explained how these would be used to measure outcomes.
- Possible areas of overlapping/duplication of work with other bodies – it was reported that Marketing Leeds worked closely with Town Centre Management and other partners to avoid duplication. Areas of expertise had been identified for the relevant organisations to cover.
- Difficulty with measuring economic activity – perception studies were used and comparisons made with other cities.
- Aspirations for Leeds to be recognised as a city of European status.
- Leeds had been ranked as best value for money for locating businesses.
- Leeds needed specialist destination marketing to meet aspirations.
- Marketing Leeds did not undertake roles already carried out within Leeds City Council, but complemented services and provided a more specialist service.
- Members' attention was brought to the Activity and Events Summary in the report for 2009/2010 which identified the partners involved and the aims and activities over the next year. Particular reference was made to a recent visit to Milan for the Festival of Commerce and Culture of the fact that 165 delegates from Leeds attended.
- Promotion of Sport and Culture in Leeds and the benefits that sporting and cultural events can bring to the city.
- It was felt that Marketing Leeds as a separate organisation from the Council was better positioned to attract funding particularly from the business sector.
- Reporting procedures for Marketing Leeds – it was reported that in addition to regular reports and financial statements that an Annual Report was to be submitted to the Executive Board. This report would be available to all Members of the Council.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

67 Sustainable Communities Act

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development provided information on the Sustainable Communities Act and its implications for Leeds.

The report focussed on the following areas:

- Proposals to promote sustainability
- Preparing and considering proposals

- Submitting and judging proposals
- Local Sending Report

It was noted that the Secretary of State had invited local authorities to submit proposals under the Sustainable Communities Act and the deadline for any proposals was 31 July 2009.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That any comments from Members be submitted to the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development.

68 Work Programme

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development provided Members with a copy of the Board's current work programme. Also appended to the report was a copy of the Forward Plan of Key decisions along with the minutes of the Executive Board meetings held on 13 February and 4 March 2009.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

69 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 23 April 2009 at 11.30 a.m.

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Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Scrutiny Board (City and Regional Partnerships)

Date: 23rd April 2009

Subject: Skills Inquiry

Electoral Wards Affected: All

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the Scrutiny Board's Inquiry into Skills Members indicated that they wished to discuss a number of issues with the Leader of the Council, Councillor Andrew Carter.
- 1.2 Unfortunately the Leader of Council was unable to attend the Scrutiny Board meeting on the 26th March 2009 or the one scheduled for the 30th April 2009 due to prior engagements.
- 1.3 The Board meeting was therefore rescheduled to today in order that the Leader of Council could attend today's final session of this inquiry.

2.0 Background Papers

- 2.1 The following papers are attached as appendices to this report in order to provide some background information:
 - Appendix 1 Skills Inquiry Terms of Reference
 - Appendix 2 Extract of the Board's minutes of the 26th February and report of the Assistant Chief Officer (Planning, Policy and Improvement) / Director City Development
 - Appendix 3 Extract of the Board's minutes of the 26th March 2009 and report of the Resources Manager, Regeneration Service

3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1 The Board is requested to seek information and ask questions of the Leader of the Council in order to assist Members prepare its final report and recommendations following completion of its inquiry into skills.

Background Papers

None used

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Scrutiny Board (City & Regional Partnerships)

Inquiry into Skills

Terms of Reference

1.0 Introduction

1.1 On 3rd July the City & Regional Partnerships Scrutiny Board agreed to carry out an inquiry into skills.

1.2 In particular, it was decided to investigate the following three individual areas:

(a) Leeds Strategic Plan incorporating the Leeds Local Area Agreement

The background, activity and contribution of all interested parties towards achieving the relevant improvement priorities and targets contained within the LSP and any future plans in this regard. Two improvement priorities in the Leeds Strategic Plan particularly address the issue of improving skill levels to level 2 or higher, with reference to workforce development.

(b) Leeds City Region Multi Area Agreement (MAA),

The MAA for the Leeds city region has been developed to help close the gap in higher level skills, and reduce transport congestion across the city region, as identified within the City Region Development Programme (CRDP). The MAA was signed off in July by the eleven City Region Local Authority Leaders and government.

(c) The future of Further Education (FE) in Leeds

The Learning and Skills Council has consulted on the merger of Park Lane, Thomas Danby and Leeds College of technology to form a new Leeds College. The three colleges have agreed to the merger proposal, and it is expected there will be substantial investment in the FE estate.

2.0 Scope of the inquiry

2.1 The purpose of the Inquiry is to make an assessment of, and, where appropriate make recommendations on, the following areas of interest:

(a) Leeds Strategic Plan incorporating the Leeds Local Area Agreement

The activity and contribution of all interested parties towards achieving the relevant improvement priorities and targets contained within the LSP and any future plans in this regard.

(b) The Leeds City Region MAA

The focus of the MAA skills proposals, which is on higher level skills (NVQ levels 3 / 4 +) in priority business sectors.

(c) The future of FE in Leeds.

To ascertain the extent that the merger will bring about improved learning outcomes for employers, individuals and communities.

3.0 Comments of the relevant Director and Executive Board Member

3.1 The Directors of City Development and Environment & Neighbourhoods, and the relevant Executive Board Members have been requested to comment on these terms of reference.

4.0 Timetable for the Inquiry

4.1 The inquiry will take place over 6 sessions with a view to issuing a final report in April 2009.

5.0 Submission of evidence

5.1 The following formal evidence gathering sessions have been scheduled:

5.2 Session 1 – 23rd October 2008

Introduction to the LAA, MAA and FE

To consider the background and relationships of the LAA, MAA and FE in contributing towards meeting the target indicators with our partners as set out in the Council's Strategic Plan 2008/2011. It will also cover the scope and the rationale behind the targets which have been set.

5.3 Session 2 – 20th November 2008

The Leeds City Region MAA

The purpose of this part of the session is to consider the current proposed arrangements for the MAA in Leeds. In particular the Board will consider:

- The rationale for the MAA (evidence base).
- The proposed outcomes of the MAA, and impact on Leeds businesses and residents.

The future of FE in Leeds

This part of the session is to consider the proposed merger of 3 FE colleges in the city and the likely impact on employers, individuals and communities and to seek input from LSC, college principals and Leeds Skills Board on the plans for:

- the new college,
- its governance, and
- ability to respond to skills needs.

5.4 **Session 3 – 15th January 2009**

The Leeds City Region MAA

The purpose of this part of Session 3 is to consider any information requested from the previous session and examine any possible future developments to the MAA, eg City Region approaches to tackling worklessness.

The future of FE in Leeds

The purpose of this part of the session is to consider any information requested from the previous session and further matters relating to the merger of the 3 colleges and its impact in Leeds.

5.5 **Session 4 - 26th February 2009**

Leeds Strategic Plan incorporating the Leeds Local Area Agreement

The purpose of this session is to look at how are partners who have signed up to the LAA are delivering on the targets that have been set and to hear about the changes they are making in order that they can meet those targets. It will also explore individuals who are post school who have no qualifications/ no level 1 and the extent to which services are effective.

5.6 **Session 5 - 26th March 2009**

Leeds Strategic Plan incorporating the Leeds Local Area Agreement

The purpose of this session is to continue hearing evidence from the parties signed up to the relevant improvement priorities and targets in the LSP and any information requested from the previous session.

5.7 **Session 6 – 30th April 2009**

Final Report and Recommendations

The purpose of this Session is to consider the Board's draft inquiry report and recommendations.

6.0 Witnesses

6.1 The following witnesses have been identified as possible contributors to the Inquiry:

- Director of City Development
- Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods
- Relevant officers from the City Development and Environment and Neighbourhoods Departments
- Head of Regional Policy
- Key partners such as: Bradford Council (MAA skills lead), WY Universities, Learning and Skills Council, and Yorkshire Forward (Regional Development Agency), FE Principals, Shadow Board of the proposed new college, Leeds Skills Board.

7.0 Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.1 Following the completion of the scrutiny inquiry and the publication of the final inquiry report and recommendations, the implementation of the agreed recommendations will be monitored.
- 7.2 The final inquiry report will include information on the detailed arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the Board's recommendations.

8.0 Measures of success

- 8.1 It is important to consider how the Board will deem whether its inquiry has been successful in making a difference to local people. Some measures of success may be obvious at the initial stages of an inquiry and can be included in these terms of reference. Other measures of success may become apparent as the inquiry progresses and discussions take place.
- 8.2 The Board will look to publish practical recommendations.

EXTRACT FROM SCRUTINY BOARD (CITY AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS) THURSDAY, 26TH FEBRUARY, 2009

60 Session 4 - Inquiry Into Skills

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development, the Assistant Chief Officer (Planning, Policy and Improvement) and Director of City Development submitted reports regarding the Board's Inquiry into Skills. The reports focussed on the following areas:

- a) Local Area Agreement
- b) Skills Targets in the Leeds Strategic Plan

The Chair welcomed the following to the meeting:

- Dylan Griffiths – Project Manager (Policy), Policy, Planning and Improvement
- Paul Stephens – Chief Economic Services Officer, City Development
- Teresa Brookes - Skills Development Manager, Environment & Neighbourhoods
- Mandy Crawford-Lee – Learning & Skills Council

In response to Members comments and questions, the following issues were discussed:

- The funding of 16-19 Further Education was to be transferred from the Learning and Skills Council to local authorities ring-fenced education budgets.
- Government policy on skills which is very much based on employer needs and is demand led.
- Government initiatives that focussed on employees:
 - Train to Gain
 - Apprenticeships
 - Skills Pledge
- Concern was raised regarding the meeting of targets that were set before the recent economic downturn. It was reported that the view of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) was to maintain current targets and aspirations and that employers and providers should also retain the same focus.
- Effects of the economic downturn on the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). The Council was due to be visited by CAA Assessors and it was felt that if it could be proved that everything had been done within reason and that aspirational targets had been set, that there would be no detrimental effect on the CAA results.
- How to multi-skill the workforce in preparation for changes in employment opportunities?

- How to address the training needs of the workless?, particularly those who have been in long term unemployment. This would involve working at a local level and would include various services and organisations including the local authority. There was a need to promote awareness of training that was available to hard to reach groups
- There was a focus on school leavers obtaining at least level 2 qualifications and there had been a recent increase in these figures. There was also an emphasis on getting employees qualified to level 2 and 3.
- Work would be undertaken with the new college in order that the curriculum matches as far as possible the demands of employers and provides the necessary skilled workforce in the city region now and in the future
- Responding to the economic downturn – Yorkshire Forward had taken a lead on this at a regional level and it involved working with all key partners including the Learning and Skills Council and Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber. There was a recognition that there needed to be a better use of resources available for training.
- How to achieve Level 2 and 3 targets within the Local Area Agreement – there was responsibility not just on employers and providers, but on individuals undertaking training?
- How to encourage employers to identify and be aware of their skill needs and the training opportunities that are available especially to small and medium sized businesses?
- It was reported that Leeds City Council is undertaking its own skills census of qualifications within it's workforce which could be made available to the Board.
- Members were asked to participate in a small working group to meet with igen Leeds Careers Advisors.
- The Leeds Skills Board, Chaired by Councillor Andrew Carter and concerns that he had not been available to attend today's meeting

RESOLVED –

(1) That the reports be noted.

(2) That Councillors Bentley, Driver and Pryke form a working group to meet igen Leeds Careers Advisers on 11 March 2009 and others as appropriate.

(3) That the Leader of the Council be invited to attend the next session of this inquiry on the 26th March or subsequent Scrutiny Board meeting on the 30th April 2009.



Report of the Assistant Chief Officer (Planning, Policy and Improvement) / Director City Development

Date: 26 February 2009

Subject: Skills Targets in the Leeds Strategic Plan

Electoral Wards Affected:
ALL

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

On 3rd July 2008 the City and Regional Partnerships Scrutiny Board agreed to carry out an inquiry into skills in Leeds with particular reference to:

- Skills targets in the Leeds Strategic Plan (incorporating the Leeds Local Area Agreement (LAA))
- Skills targets in the Leeds city Region Multi Area agreement (MAA)
- The future of Further Education in Leeds.

This report provides information on progress by partners to deliver targets in the LAA.

Additionally, the Board has requested information on actions to support people who have left school without any qualifications and this report details work taking place in Leeds to address this.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 This report provides information on the skills targets in the Leeds Strategic Plan 2008 to 2011 and what the Learning and Skills Council, the lead partner and other partners are doing to achieve these targets. Additionally, the scrutiny board has requested information on what is being done to help those in the working age population who have no qualifications.

2.0 Background

Skills Targets in the Leeds Strategic Plan (Local Area Agreement)

- 2.1. The Leeds Strategic Plan 2008 to 2011 recognises the importance of a highly skilled workforce and the provision of infrastructure, institutions and culture to support lifelong learning for the city's future. The strategic outcome adopted under the learning theme is to have 'An enhanced workforce that will meet future challenges through fulfilling individual and economic potential and investing in learning facilities'.
- 2.2. This outcome is based on sound evidence. Research has found that: 'employers in Leeds are more likely to report skills gaps in their workforce, indicating that the current workforce needs to improve certain skills to work effectively' and 'the instances of skills shortage vacancies are also higher in Leeds than elsewhere in the [West Yorkshire] sub region'.
- 2.3. It also found that employers in Leeds are relatively good at providing training and should be supported to continue doing so.
- 2.4. The priorities and targets in the Leeds Strategic plan support this outcome. Two indicators have been selected to measure progress against the improvement priority to 'enhance the skill levels of the workforce to fulfil individual and economic potential'. These are the proportion of the working aged population qualified to at least Level 2 (equivalent to five good GCSE passes) or higher and the proportion of the working age population qualified to at least Level 3 (equivalent to two 'A' levels) or higher. Both of these indicators are drawn from the National Indicator Set and have been agreed with the Government as part of the negotiations for the Leeds Strategic Plan 2008 to 2011. The Leeds Strategic plan priorities and targets complement the Multi Area Agreement which focuses on the reported gaps in higher level skills with an initial focus on financial and business services.
- 2.5. Several partners have signed up to support the delivery of these targets. The Learning and Skills Council has agreed to be the lead partner for these targets and is responsible for co-ordinating activity to help deliver the targets and collating performance management information. The significant contribution of employers in the city is demonstrated by Leeds Chamber of Commerce and Industry signing up to contribute to the delivery of this target. The other partners who have agreed to help contribute to the delivery of these targets in addition to Leeds City Council are Jobcentre Plus, Education Leeds, Leeds Colleges and the voluntary, community and faith bodies who will coordinate their contribution through Leeds Voice. Scrutiny board has heard evidence on the activities of further education colleges in Leeds at previous meetings. Voluntary groups have in many cases been commissioned through programmes like Access to Employment to deliver training, particularly to people without qualifications and are furthest away from employment. This is discussed below in this report. The Leeds Initiative Skills and Economy partnership oversees skills and training activity from a partnership perspective for the city.
- 2.6. The targets set for Leeds are ambitious and represent an acceleration on past performance. For Level 2 skills the target is to achieve an increase of nine percentage points by 2010/11 and for Level 3 skills 6 percentage points by 2010/11. New national programmes including the Skills Pledge and Train to Gain will increase the numbers achieving basic skills and help Leeds achieve the targets it has agreed with Government.

- 2.7. Train to Gain is a national scheme which delivers tailored support to businesses of all services and in all sectors to improve the skills of their employees. The Skills Pledge is a voluntary commitment by an employer to provide training for its employees.
- 2.8. The focus in the Leeds Strategic Plan on enhancing skill levels as a prime lever to drive economic growth and promote wider and fairer access to economic opportunities follows the analysis presented in the Leitch Review of Skills published in 2006. This report recommended that the UK commit itself to become a world leader in skills by 2020 by focusing on employer needs for economically valuable skills and re-orienting the activities of the Learning and Skills Council and further education colleges to help deliver this.

3.0. Main Issues

Progress in Leeds

- 3.1 Skill levels in the working age population are measured through the Annual Population Survey. This asks a sample of the population to provide details on their skill levels. The latest figures from the 2007 survey records a fall in the reported level of Level 2 and 3 skills in Leeds. For Level 2 skills the percentage reporting they have these skills has fallen from 70.9 per cent in 2006 to 69.0 percent in 2007 and for Level 3 skills the reduction is from 50.9 per cent in 2006 to 49.5 per cent in 2007. Although this suggests that skill levels have fallen in Leeds from 2006 to 2007 this could be due to sampling error and cannot be taken to mean that skill levels are certainly worsening among the working age population in Leeds. More up to date figures are not yet available.
- 3.2 The economic downturn may be expected to reduce the number of highly qualified people employed in Leeds, and employers may be expected to reduce investment in skills training in a downturn. This will have to be carefully monitored and action taken by the Learning and Skills Council, Skills Board, Leeds City Council and others.
- 3.3 Although the Learning and Skills Council is the lead partner for the delivery of the skills targets in the Local Area Agreement it is not the principal provider for the delivery of Level 2 and Level 3 skills in Leeds. It is a significant funder of further education provision in Leeds and delivers the Train to Gain brokering service in Leeds. It is also responsible for encouraging employers in the city to sign up to the Skills Pledge.

Apprenticeships

- 3.4 2635 Leeds residents started on an apprenticeship in 2007/8. Of these 1734 were at Level 2 and 901 at Level 3. Around half of those starting apprenticeships are under 19 but will be in the working age population when they complete their apprenticeships. In January 2009 the Government announced 35,000 additional apprenticeships nationally for 2009/10. It is not yet known what impact this will have in Leeds.

Train to Gain

- 3.5 LSC figures show that the number of Leeds residents enrolling on Train to Gain courses have increased by 178% between 2006/7 and 2007/8 for level 3 skills courses and 134% for level 2 skills courses. 4651 Leeds residents started a Full Level 2 programme through Train to Gain in 2007/8. 275 residents started a Full Level 3 programme through Train to Gain in 2007/8. Figures for 2008/9 are not yet available. In January 2009 the Government announced it will extend Train to Gain to agency workers. The impact of this in Leeds is not yet known.

Skills Pledge

- 3.6 As of November 2008, 97 businesses in Leeds have signed the Skills Pledge and the Learning and Skills Council is working to encourage other businesses to sign up. Leeds City Council signed the Skills Pledge in November 2008 and is developing its own approach to Train to Gain funded learning opportunities and corporate apprenticeships

- 3.7 The Leeds Skills Board, led by the Chamber of Commerce, which is composed mainly of local employers with Yorkshire Forward and Learning and Skills Council also as members, is working to raise demand for skills through supporting the Skills Pledge, Train to Gain, promote new vocational Diploma courses and support the increased take up of apprenticeships among local employers.

Working age population with no qualifications

- 3.8 Around a fifth of the working age population in Leeds do not have a Level 2 or above qualification. As unskilled employment is expected to decline in the future these people will find it increasingly difficult to find work.
- 3.9 Leeds City Council and its partners are working to help those who will be most disadvantaged in the future labour market. Working with Jobcentre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council the Council has commissioned a number of organisations including voluntary organisations like Groundwork and Archway to help people where worklessness is highest in Leeds to improve their skills and get into work through the Access to Employment programme. This is a three year subregional programme, largely funded through Yorkshire Forward. To date over 1,100 people have been helped towards employment of whom 400 have accessed work and 440 have been assisted to improve their skills.
- 3.10 In December 2008 Leeds City Council successfully bid for the Learning and Skills Council / European Structural Fund which co-financed Leeds Skills For Jobs programme. The programme runs from December 2008 to May 2010, with the possibility of a 12month extension to May 2011. The total contract value to May 2010 is £829,000. Through the Skills for Jobs programme Leeds City Council will commission low level skills training activity which enhances existing employability skills activities and is aligned to Learning & Skills Council, Jobcentre Plus and other skills provision in Leeds, such as Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities, wider Skills For Jobs provision, Access To Employment, First Steps, and the New Deal. The target group is low skilled adults aged 19years+ living in disadvantaged communities who are not in employment but who want to work and are either
- new Jobcentre Plus customers ineligible for mainstream provision or
 - not in contact with Jobcentre Plus
- Commissioning will be guided by a District Action Plan and will focus on those most likely to be workless, chiefly BME communities, lone parents, and workless households where children are being raised.
- 3.11 Through the Skills for Jobs (SfJ) programme beneficiaries will be offered a diverse, flexible and responsive menu of activity that can act as stand alone support or as a series of interconnected stepping stones, including:
- An initial short engagement activity, eg. learning activity taster
 - Referral onto IAG provision
 - Ongoing mentoring support
 - Bespoke learning and/or training activity, accredited or non-accredited, linked to an individual's specific needs
 - Skills for Life / Basic Skills qualification, eg. literacy, numeracy, ESOL and ICT at entry Level 1,2 & 3
 - Vocational accredited learning below NVQ1 level or at NVQ1 or equivalent level
 - Support to progress into employment or volunteering
 - Support to progress onto further learning within the SfJ programme or through another provision
- 3.12 As a major employer in the city, employing people at all skill levels the Council can make a significant contribution to addressing the numbers of working age people with no or few skills. The Council recently conducted an employee census to identify training needs including basic skills such as literacy, numeracy, e-skills and English language skills. This will guide the Council's future training and development policies.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 The Leeds Strategic Plan recognizes the importance of a highly skilled and well-qualified workforce to ensure that Leeds is economically competitive and can go up a league and that more people with marketable skills can help to narrow the gap across the city. Ambitious targets on Level 2 and Level 3 skills have been included in the Plan and agreed with government.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 It is recommended that the City and Regional partnerships Scrutiny Board note the contents of this report.

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**EXTRACT SCRUTINY BOARD (CITY AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS)
MINUTES THURSDAY, 26TH MARCH, 2009**

65 Session 5 - Skills Inquiry

The report of the Resources Manager, Regeneration Service referred to the Board's Inquiry into Skills and outlined how partners are working together to tackle worklessness and improve Level 1 skills and under in Leeds and how they are commissioning and co-ordinating provision.

This report had been produced following concerns at the Board's last meeting as to what support was being given to those young people who have few or no qualifications. Members wanted to know how they could access further training and what support was available through our partner organisations.

The Chair welcomed the following to the meeting:

- Diana Towler – Job Centre Plus
- Cath O'Grady – Learning Partnerships
- Ruth Davany – Archway
- Julie Staton – Resources Manager, Environment & Neighbourhoods
- Val Snowden – Head of Jobs & Skills, Environment & Neighbourhoods

Diana Towler gave a presentation on "Worklessness – Making a Difference"
The presentation focussed on the following areas:

- Welfare Reform
- Reference was made to the Houghton Review of Worklessness which looked at the role of local authorities.
- How to increase employment to 80% - the employment rate in Leeds was currently 73%
- Changes to the benefits system
- Key Changes
- Flexible New Deal programme
- Work for benefit proposals
- Changes to benefits for lone parents and families with young children to encourage a return to work.
- Local Employment Partnerships – Agreement between Job Centre Plus and employers to move more disadvantaged people back into work.
- Reducing Child Poverty by reducing worklessness.
- The Story so Far:
- Area Worklessness Groups – linked to Area Management wedges
- Mapping employability and skills with activity of providers and partners – helping to co-ordinate activity, align funds and prevent duplication.

- Worklessness Pilots in Gipton, Halton Moor and Osmondthorpe and New Wortley.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following issues were discussed:

- Pathways for individuals to return to work – these could involve various partners to assist with debt advice, childcare, basic skills and many other issues. There was a need to simplify the process as far as possible.
- Issues for people on disability benefits.
- Effects on those who were in receipt of tax credits.

Cath O’Grady informed the Board of the New Opportunities Experience for Lone Parents. This outlined the pathway following referral from various sources through support from case workers and partner organisations leading to development of skills and ultimately employment and continued post employment support. An information sheet was circulated to all Members of the Board on this matter.

Ruth Davany informed the Board of the work of Archway. This focussed on the following areas:

- Leeds Youth Employment Network
 - Employment support and benefits for 19-25 year olds.
 - Support for those not in education, employment or training.
 - How to encourage those with a lack of interest and low confidence.
 - Links with Park Lane College and enabling key skills qualifications.
- The Board’s attention was also brought to the following issues:
- The role of the Leeds Strategic Outcome Worklessness Group. This had helped people reach work in their own localities.
 - The impact of the Houghton Review and the positive impact on the local authority co-ordinating role.
 - How to get those without Level 1 skills trained and skilled for life – this was considered to be one of the most challenging issues.
 - The LSC Capital Building Programme – it was reported that the new Leeds City College proposals remained a priority.

Further issues discussed in response to Members questions and comments, included the following:

- Learning Partnerships and Archway were commissioned by the Council and received funding from Yorkshire Forward and European Social Funds.
- Concern that the curriculum for the Leeds City College was still unclear and for those who did not have Level 1 skills – it was reported that the curriculum reform programme looked at foundation training and

developing clear pathways through the training ladder. Issues surrounding the development of curriculums involved various partners.

- Employment rate figures related to those of a working age, normally between 18 and 65, who were in employment.
- Performance Indicators in relation to reducing those on benefits. These were monitored by the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP)

The Chair thanked those present for their attendance.

RESOLVED – That the report and the information presented be noted as part of the Board's Skills Inquiry.

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Report of the Resources Manager, Regeneration Service

Date: 26 March 2009

Subject: Activities to assist people into work

Electoral Wards Affected:

ALL

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

On 3rd July 2008 the City and Regional Partnerships Scrutiny Board agreed to carry out an inquiry into skills in Leeds with particular reference to:

- Skills targets in the Leeds Strategic Plan (incorporating the Leeds Local Area Agreement (LAA))
- Skills targets in the Leeds City Region Multi Area agreement (MAA)
- The future of Further Education in Leeds

At its meeting in February, in order to understand the full picture, the Board requested further information on provision available to support those people who have left school with no qualifications or with qualifications at Level 1 only. The report received by the Board at its meeting in February outlined some of the provision delivered through the Access to Employment scheme and planned through the Skills for Jobs programme. This report outlines how partners work together to tackle worklessness in Leeds and to commission and coordinate provision.

1.0. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1. Leeds has a working age population of 499,400 people. This report provides information on what is being done to help those who have no qualifications and are not in work. These people tend to fall into three main claimant groups – those claiming Incapacity Benefit (some 30,020 people in Leeds) and Job Seekers (19,077 people). Lone parents on Income Support account for 9,650 people from the working age population. *(Figs correct as at Aug 08)*

2.0 Background

- 2.1. As part of its Inquiry into Skills, this Scrutiny Board has asked to look at provision available in Leeds to help those with no, or lower level skills, improve their skills and to access work.

3.0. Main Issues

- 3.1. JobCentre Plus has the brief nationally for delivering and commissioning activity to address worklessness and to assist those who are losing their jobs as a result of the recession. Others such as the Learning and Skills Council and Colleges have a remit to increase skill levels.
- 3.2. In order to coordinate a response to worklessness, and to implement a strategic approach to commissioning services, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods has established a Worklessness Strategic Outcomes Group. This provides the opportunity for key stakeholders to work in partnership to make better use of public resources to tackle worklessness in our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The Group is chaired by JobCentre Plus and attended by Yorkshire Forward, the Learning and Skills Council, NHS Leeds, the City Council and a representative from the Voluntary Community and Faith Sector (VCFS).
- 3.3. The Terms of Reference for the Group include:-
- reviewing the evidence base to agree shared priorities and target beneficiaries.
 - assessing existing and planned provision to identify potential duplication and gaps.
 - drawing up an action plan to achieve the improvement priorities and targets in the Leeds Strategic Plan to reduce worklessness with a focus on the most deprived neighbourhoods.
 - to advise on resource allocations and commissioning for the provision of activity to reduce worklessness (jointly agreed specs and commissioning processes that focus on particular client groups and localities / decisions panels).
 - to monitor progress towards achievement of the above targets, impact and effectiveness of interventions.
- 3.4. The work of the Group directs commissioning of additional worklessness activity to focus on those most disadvantaged in the labour market. The Group work together to identify and access funds to support interventions which will assist people to access work. An example of this is the work that is taking place to submit a bid for funding to Yorkshire Forward. This will include work with employers to secure job guarantees and to respond to the recession.
- 3.5. Where funds are available locally the Group commissions activity such as the Access to Employment and Skills for Jobs activity described in a previous report to this Scrutiny Board to assist local people into work. Providers for this activity include the VCFS who have experience of working with, and engaging people, in their communities.
- 3.6. LCC Regeneration Service through Jobs and Skills provides targeted employability and signposting services for workless residents furthest from the labour market. This includes links with area management, recruitment of Community Engagement Officers, work with key stakeholders and with target groups.
- 3.7. The work of the Strategic Outcomes Group is supported by Worklessness Sub Groups which cover the three area management areas. The Sub Groups are managed by Job Centre Plus and bring together a number of stakeholders and providers across sectors. Action plans have

been drawn up for each of the worst performing neighbourhoods to identify provision required locally to achieve the targets outlined in the Leeds Strategic Plan.

4.0. Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that the City and Regional Partnerships Scrutiny Board note the contents of this report and receive presentations from JobCentre Plus, Learning Partnerships, Archway and LCC Jobs and Skills about the work they are delivering in Leeds to assist people with low level, or no skills, to access work.

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