

Report of the Director of City Development

Report to Executive Board

Date: 21 March 2018

Subject: Adoption of the Leeds Talent and Skills Plan

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. This report presents the final draft of the Leeds Talent and Skills Plan and recommends its adoption. The report also updates the Executive Board on the consultation processes undertaken, as presented to the Board in November 2017, which have informed the final draft. The Plan is included at Appendix I supported by a high-level impact framework at Appendix II.
2. Respondents to the consultation gave a strong welcome to the Plan's overall ambition and the Council's appetite to facilitate a conversation about the city's skills and talent needs. There was a recognition that the issue of skills and talent is fundamental to the city's continued economic success, and to ensuring this success is distributed in a more inclusive way. This is a welcome reflection of the way in which the inclusive growth agenda, led by the Council, has positively influenced city partners.
3. Respondents also recognised that achieving the Plan's ambitions would be done through a collective and collaborative effort, and signalled their commitment to working with the Council to achieve this.
4. The recommendations in this report support the Council's Best City vision and ambition, 'Leeds...A Strong Economy and Compassionate City', and specific Best Council Plan (2018/19-2020/21) outcomes to 'do well at all levels of learning and have skills for life' and 'earn enough to support themselves and their families' and the Best Council Priorities of Inclusive Growth, Child-Friendly City, and Culture.

5. The recommendations also support and are closely aligned to the draft Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy, particularly the emerging priorities of the IGS relating to 'people' and 'productivity', and the Leeds Health and Well-being Strategy, particularly the priorities relating to a more representative workforce through improved health and work.

Recommendations

6. Executive Board is asked to:
 - a) Approve the adoption of the Leeds Talent and Skills Plan
 - b) Approve the proposed outcome framework to monitor impact and support the ongoing review of the Plan
 - c) Note that the Chief Officer Employment and Skills is the officer responsible for the implementation of this decision.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report presents the final draft of the Leeds Talent and Skills Plan and recommends its adoption. The report also updates the Executive Board on the consultation processes undertaken, as presented to the Board in November 2017, which have informed the final draft. The Plan is included at Appendix I supported by a high-level impact framework at Appendix II.

2. Background information

- 2.1 The Leeds Talent and Skills Plan, covering the period 2018-2023, sits alongside the draft Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy, and reflects the critical importance of skills to economic growth. It provides a framework for improving the supply of skills that our residents need to play a full and more productive part in the labour market (whether through direct employment or self-employment), and that our businesses need to thrive, helping to create a more inclusive economy in a compassionate city. It sets out a series of actions for growth in the form of six city challenges, as well as putting forward interventions in support of specific sectors.
- 2.2 In November 2017 Executive Board approved the publication of a consultation draft of the Talent and Skills Plan. The draft of the Plan was developed through informal discussions with a wide range of stakeholders including the business community (and business representative organisations such as the Leeds Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses), education and skills providers including the universities and the further education colleges, and third sector partners.
- 2.3 Executive Board approved a consultation period from 21st September until November 2nd 2017.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 The draft Talent and Skills Plan was developed through informal discussion with stakeholders, as well as through a process of research and analysis of economic and employment data. The informal discussions were intended to ensure, as far as practicable, that the Plan was reflective of the skills issues in the city, to the needs of employers, and the potential for skills providers to deliver provision in response.
- 3.2 While the approved period for consultation was from 21st September to 2nd November 2017, a flexible approach has been taken to receiving comments. In essence, all responses to the consultation draft have been accepted and considered up to and including 31st January 2018.

3.3 Consultees - partners and representative bodies

- 3.3.1 Following e-mail distribution to stakeholders representations/comments on the draft Plan were received from:
 - Leeds Chamber of Commerce (in addition to receiving a presentation on the Plan to the Chamber Leadership Group);
 - Federation of Small Businesses;
 - Leeds Digital Board;

- University of Leeds, Leeds Arts University, Leeds Trinity University, Leeds Beckett University (through a round-table discussion chaired by the Executive Member for Employment, Skills and Opportunity);
- The Leeds Principals Group (including Leeds City College and Leeds College of Building);
- Game Republic (representative body for games developers operating across Yorkshire and the Humber);
- Leeds Inclusive Growth Built Environment Forum (supported by CHY).

3.3.2 In addition, given the importance of aligning the Plan with existing and planned activity at the city region level, comments were sought and received from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and the Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership, as well as Employment and Skills Officers across the Leeds City Region.

3.4 Communities

3.4.1 Executive Board endorsed from the outset that the Plan is primarily a stakeholder facing document, as set out in Section 2. However as a key element in the Council's approach to inclusive growth it is critical that communities are given the opportunity to shape and inform our ambitions, as they will be the ultimate beneficiaries.

3.4.2 An entirely new document based on the Plan was developed for a community audience, and has been shared through various social media channels, as well as being printed and made available in the Council's Community Hubs. The intention is that this document will continue to inform dialogue around talent and skills for Community Committees and Priority Neighbourhoods.

3.4.3 Members have had the opportunity to feedback community perspectives through a variety of fora, including Community Committees and the three locality focused Employment, Skills and Welfare Boards, as well as on an individual basis.

3.5 Scrutiny Board Inclusive Growth, Culture and Sport

3.5.1 The draft Plan was presented at Scrutiny Board Inclusive Growth, Culture and Sport in December 2017. Members welcomed the plan, and in a broad ranging discussion which reflected on the work of the Employment and Skills service in engaging with over 4,500 young people in 2017/18 to promote apprenticeships, and the continued success of the Leeds Apprenticeship Recruitment Fair, identified the issue of Information, Advice and Guidance for young people, set out under Call 1: putting children at the heart of the talent and skills plan as being of particular interest.

3.5.2 Further scrutiny on this specific matter has been undertaken and will inform the development of a Young Person's IAG Charter which will be considered by Executive Board in April. This development, in response to the Plan's first call to action around children at the heart of the Plan, demonstrates how the Plan is already stimulating tangible actions and results.

3.5.3 Additional opportunities for elected member briefings and discussion of the plan content were created through a Member Development session, a presentation to the More Jobs, Better Jobs Member Steering Group and the meeting of the Community Committee Champions for Employment, Skills and Welfare.

3.6 Other parties

3.6.1 The revised draft has also been informed and improved by comments from the Council's Policy Network, and the Health Partnerships and Financial Inclusion teams.

3.7 Summary of the responses

- 3.7.1 Respondents gave a strong welcome to the Plan's overall ambition and the Council's appetite to facilitate a conversation about the city's skills and talent needs. There was a recognition that the issue of skills and talent is fundamental to the city's continued economic success, and to ensuring this success is distributed in a more inclusive way. This is a welcome reflection of the way in which the inclusive growth agenda, led by the Council, has positively influenced city partners.
- 3.7.2 The strong alignment between the Plan and the wider skills and talent issues that face the Leeds City Region was also welcomed by stakeholders. This not only reflects the importance of Leeds to the wider economy, but also the strong collaborative relationships between local authorities, and between the Council and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, to understand those challenges and drive change.
- 3.7.3 There was also positive feedback on the three principles that underpin the Plan.
- 3.7.4 The Plan sets out a number of significant issues which need to be addressed to achieve the city's ambition to address skills gaps and shortages and enable our residents to achieve their full economic potential. These issues are framed as our city challenges to action, as achieving them will only happen through all stakeholders working together. Additionally, some of them can only be achieved through the support of Government in progressing the devolution of powers, freedoms and flexibilities. In some cases this will require a collective voice greater than just Leeds, working through partners such as the Northern Powerhouse or the Core Cities.
- 3.7.5 The first three calls were reflective of the same 'big ideas' set out in the draft Inclusive Growth Strategy and broadly continue to be so. Reassuringly, feedback on the calls identified, and a shared commitment to their delivery, was overall very positive.

3.8 Proposed amendments in response to feedback

Challenge 1: Putting children at the heart of the Talent and Skills Plan

- 3.8.1 All respondents recognised this as a priority. In response to the emerging Children and Young People's Plan 'triple A' obsession around progress on attainment for children from deprived backgrounds, the plan now makes a more explicit recognition of the importance the Council attaches to this issue.
- 3.8.2 As noted at 3.5.1, a commitment has been made to bring forward a Young Person's IAG Charter to reflect the need for young people to recognise and pursue their entitlement to appropriate Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance. This has been reflected in the plan.

Challenge 2: Employers and people at the centre of the education and skills system

- 3.8.3 Feedback from partners and others has resulted in a refinement to this call, with the issue of supporting the current workforce to upskill and be resilient to economic change moved to Call Three. This recognises that these issues are key to improving productivity.
- 3.8.4 The fundamental principle of a skills system that is more reflective of the needs of residents and our local economy, and the value of co-design and feedback to achieve this, remains entirely valid.

Challenge 3: Better jobs – tackling low pay and boosting productivity

- 3.8.5 As noted above, elements of Call 2 relating to productivity through upskilling have been incorporated into this call. The potential value of an increased focus on adult learner loans as a valuable opportunity for individuals to fund skills training has been reflected.

Challenge4: Increasing labour market activity and productivity through a more representative workforce

- 3.8.6 No changes have been made.

Challenge 5: Attracting and retaining talent in the city and widening participation in education and training

- 3.8.7 Feedback from the business community suggested that an important part of the offer we can make to graduates and professionals is the quality and mix of our housing, particularly affordable housing, in appropriate locations, with a mix of appropriate tenures. This has been incorporated into the call, noting that the city can point to a strong commitment to this ambition, as well as tangible action in the shape of housing development programmes.

Challenge 6: Improving connections between employment opportunities and residents

- 3.8.8 No changes have been made.

Sector interventions

- 3.8.9 The second part of the plan focused on potential interventions relating to specific sectors within the economy. These were not interventions that the Council is proposing to deliver, or fund, but which have been developed through consultation with industry and which should help education and skills providers better understand the city's needs, and bring forward solutions in response. Broadly, both employers and providers understood the rationale for this approach and recognised the part they need to play in effecting change.
- 3.8.10 Respondents were generally supportive of the proposed interventions and sought to understand how they could play a role in their delivery. There was a recognition that there needed to be an ongoing commitment by all partners to review the changing needs of the city, and the interventions, and challenge whether they continued to be valid and meeting the city's needs.
- 3.8.11 Although not related to a specific intervention, a greater emphasis on creativity and culture has been incorporated into the plan, reflecting two important themes raised in feedback. First, the creative and cultural sector is a vibrant, diverse, and important part of the city's economy and social fabric. It creates employment opportunities for many residents, some through self-employment / freelance careers, or through working for employers. It particularly contributes to our thriving start-up and micro-enterprise story. On these points it therefore merited greater emphasis. Second, employers and education providers both emphasised the importance of creative skills – such as problem solving and communication – within the economy and their applicability to many different sectors. These points have been reflected in the plan.

3.9 Implementation and impact

- 3.9.1 The Leeds Talent and Skills Plan aims to effect change through convening and stimulating activity, with limited direct delivery falling to the Council. While a number of interventions are proposed, in some cases continuing existing activity, not all of these will have a direct operational impact. Because of this, the Plan does not include detailed outputs from delivery.
- 3.9.2 However, it is important to demonstrate how the plan will have an impact on the city and in particular on communities, should the ambitions of the plan be achieved.
- 3.9.3 Drawing on a range of existing indicators including those featured in the Best Council Plan, particularly relating to the outcomes 'to do well at all levels of learning and have skills for life' and 'earn enough to support themselves and their families' and priorities including Inclusive Growth and Child-Friendly City, specifically 'helping ready students for the world of work' and 'supporting businesses', and those featured in the More Jobs, Better Jobs Breakthrough Project, a suite of impact indicators has been drawn up for the Board to consider. This is at Appendix II.
- 3.9.4 Subject to approval by Executive Board, these will then be monitored by the Employment and Skills service and reviewed by the Sustainable Economy and Culture Partnership Board.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 A substantial programme of consultation and engagement has been undertaken since the publication of the draft Plan in November 2017. Details have been included in the main issues section of this report.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 The Council aims to improve the lives of all its citizens and foster good relations between different groups in the community. The Plan encourages inclusive employment and skills growth, aiming to ensure that the benefits of a prosperous economy are open to all Leeds citizens, and builds on the way in which equality and diversity underpin our inclusive growth agenda.
- 4.2.2 A number of proposals set out within the Plan directly address challenges faced by groups with equality and diversity protected characteristics in accessing and sustaining employment and skills opportunities in the city, demonstrating the Council's commitment to truly inclusive growth for all residents of our communities.
- 4.2.3 By addressing barriers to employment and productivity, we anticipate that challenges around cohesion and integration, which are often fostered by inequalities relating to employment and opportunity in general, will be mitigated.
- 4.2.4 An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration screening has been undertaken to ensure that the ambitions of the Plan are reflective of the Council's equality and diversity principles. As the Plan does not involve specific policy changes there are no further and specific screening requirements.

4.3 Council policies and best council plan

- 4.3.1 The recommendations in this report support the Council's Best City vision and ambition, 'Leeds...A Strong Economy and Compassionate City', and specific Best Council Plan (2018/19-2020/21) Outcomes 'to do well at all levels of learning and have skills for life' and 'earn enough to support themselves and their families' and the Best Council Priorities of Inclusive Growth, Child-Friendly City, and Culture.
- 4.3.2 The recommendations also support and are closely aligned to the draft Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy, particularly the emerging priorities of the IGS relating to 'people' and 'productivity', and the Leeds Health and Well-being Strategy, particularly the priorities relating to a more representative workforce through improved health and work.
- 4.3.3 A number of Best Council Plan indicators are reflected in the impact framework of the Talent and Skills Plan.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 The recommendations set out in this report do not have any financial implication for the Council in terms of implementation. In the medium to long term, it is reasonable to expect that progressing specific actions in the Plan will contribute to the general economic improvement of individuals, households, families, and communities, especially in our most disadvantaged areas of the city, thus reducing the demands on the Council (and other partners) in addressing the costs of these issues.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

- 4.5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report. This decision is subject to call-in.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 There are no operational risks falling directly to the Council as a result of the decisions set out in this report.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 This report summarises the consultation process undertaken on the draft Leeds Talent and Skills Plan, as presented to the Board in November 2017, along with the revised Plan reflecting the issues raised, supported by a high level impact framework.
- 5.2 Respondents to the consultation gave a strong welcome to the Plan's overall ambition and the Council's appetite to facilitate a conversation about the city's skills and talent needs. There was a recognition that the issue of skills and talent is fundamental to the city's continued economic success, and to ensuring this success is distributed in a more inclusive way. This is a welcome reflection of the way in which the inclusive growth agenda, led by the Council, has positively influenced city partners.

5.3 Respondents also recognised that achieving the Plan's ambitions would be done through a collective and collaborative effort, and signalled their commitment to working with us to do so.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Executive Board is recommended to:

- a) Approve the adoption of the Leeds Talent and Skills Plan
- b) Approve the proposed outcome framework to monitor impact and support the ongoing review of the Plan
- c) Note that the Chief Officer Employment and Skills is the officer responsible for the implementation of this decision.

7. Background documents¹

7.1 There are no background documents.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.