

## Future Talent Plan Update

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> September 2022

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

- In March 2022, Executive Board [approved](#) the Future Talent Plan and delivery approach.
- The Future Talent Plan has been developed as a set of web pages as part of the new Inclusive Growth Leeds Website. It was launched on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and can be found at [www.futuretalentleeds.com](http://www.futuretalentleeds.com). It can be accessed directly or through the front page of the Inclusive Growth Leeds Site ([www.inclusivegrowthleeds.com](http://www.inclusivegrowthleeds.com)).
- The vision we set out is ‘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 Future Talent Plan sets out ambitions to improve talent and skills in Leeds and seeks to bring together businesses, education and skills providers and organisations to deliver these ambitions.
- The plan has been developed as a result of regular consultation with a cross-sectoral steering group, as well as a public consultation in Autumn/Winter 2021. This involved the hosting of two online conversations and the attendance at and facilitation of a number of meetings and events. Now that the plan has launched, the steering group is being re-configured as a delivery group to meet on a bi-annual basis to review the city’s progress in achieving the ambitions.
- Significant progress in delivering the Future Talent Plan has already been achieved. This includes the Leeds Digital Careers Festival which has taken place this month to attract a diverse range of people to digital opportunities in Leeds, as well as a Creative Skills Festival planned in November to showcase the creative and cultural offer in the city and beyond. This report sets out an overview of this progress and highlights examples of actions we are taking forward.

### Recommendations

- a) Members are asked to note the launch of the Future Talent Plan and ongoing and upcoming activity and agree any appropriate Scrutiny Board actions that may arise from this report.

### What is this report about?

- 1 The Future Talent Plan is our new Skills and Talent plan. Our previous plan had not been refreshed since 2017. Our 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.
- 2 Although the number of UK job vacancies has decreased in June to August 2022 from the previous quarter, there were still 1,266,000 vacancies in that period. Since a peak of 11,300 online job postings in West Yorkshire in mid-March (4-week average), postings have been lower. Leeds, the largest source of vacancies, remains well below levels seen earlier in 2022. However, figures remain high in historic terms, with 10,700 online postings recorded for West Yorkshire in the week ending 6<sup>th</sup> August 2022. This implies that companies are not able to fill the available roles with talent, signalling that interventions supporting people to reskill and upskill are needed.
- 3 There has been a decrease in the employment rate and increasing levels of economic inactivity in May to July 2022 compared to the previous quarter, with the economic inactivity rate increasing by 0.4 percentage points to 21.7%. The rise in economic inactivity has largely been driven by numbers of students and people who are long-term sick. The Institute for Employment Studies has commented that the number of people out of work due to long-term ill health is now rising faster than at any point in at least three decades. These figures suggest that action is required to help and support people who are out of work.
- 4 This tightening of the labour market has not led to an increase in wages, with national and regional figures pointing to pay having fallen over the year once adjusted for inflation. Additionally, the Institute for Employment Studies has suggested that the reducing number of vacancies could be potential early signs that labour demand is starting to weaken in the private sector with the combined effects of rising interest rates and higher inflation impacting businesses. We will work with our business support colleagues to monitor this situation to understand how this is impacting in Leeds. Public sector vacancies continue to rise, likely due to difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff. The current economic landscape is volatile and challenging, and the Future Talent Plan has been created to co-ordinate a collective response and strengthen the assets available in the city to maximise employment and skills opportunities.
- 5 The Future Talent Plan has been developed as a website in order to create a virtual 'space' to facilitate the coming together of businesses, education and skills providers and organisations around a set of ambitions to improve talent and skills in Leeds. It encourages organisations to pledge actions to deliver these ambitions, with a 'Make a Pledge' form included on the website. These actions along with council actions are published on the site, with the website providing the means for showcasing activity across the city as well as enhancing our presence amongst partners. The website also enables officers to update information quickly so we can respond to volatility in the labour market. The Future Talent site sits as part of the wider Inclusive Growth Leeds website that has recently been developed, thus allowing people to understand the link across to Inclusive Growth.

### **What impact will this proposal have?**

- 6 By maintaining a strong focus on delivery, through encouraging and publicising city actions, the Future Talent Plan seeks to inspire and co-ordinate talent and skills activity in Leeds over the next 3-5 years.

7 A series of actions are ongoing and planned, including:

#### Partner action examples

- Leeds City College are a key partner in the city and have pledged to continue their strategic alignment with the Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy and Future Talent Plan. They will continue to work closely with employers and wider partners to help address future skills needs, adapting their curriculum to the labour market needs and making a wide range of courses available and accessible to students, including their new T Levels courses, an alternative to A Levels which are focused on developing the practical skills employers look for, as well as apprenticeships and higher technical qualifications. The College is also a key partner in the P-TECH programme which offers students the opportunity to develop skills and competencies for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) careers, and work closely with the council to ensure that those that face the most barriers and are hardest to reach get the support and opportunities they need to thrive.
- Leeds Trinity University as a career-led Higher Education provider that embeds industry placements and projects for all students at every level is an important partner in this work. They have committed to a number of actions, including providing space for local employers to recruit and engage with students, as well as showcasing the university's talent in order to make it straightforward for organisations to access the talent and work proactively to support the skills agenda in Leeds.
- The Connecting Communities to Health and Care Careers partnership has worked to scale up and embed learning from the Lincoln Green employment pilot, working with communities across the city. An example of this work: Between February to July 2022 there was a focus on the Killingbeck and Seacroft and Burmantofts and Richmond Hill wards to improve access to long term career opportunities, work experience, volunteering, education and training in the sector. Numerous local engagement events took place during this period from the mobile bus, direct marketing and awareness raising through local third sector organisations and events. To date 63 people have been offered employment and 47 have completed qualifications.
- The Healthier Working Futures project that was funded through the UK Community Renewal Fund with the Leeds Health and Care Academy as the lead partner. It focused on unemployed or economically inactive young adults (aged 16-25) to raise awareness of the health and care pathway through engagement programmes and taster days delivered by third sector organisations. This was a 6-month project that concluded at the end of June 2022 the project has engaged 917 young people, of which 35 completed education and training, 120 were supported with job hunting, and 10 were supported into employment.
- The council has received funding from the Health Foundation to build connections between the Inclusive Anchors Network and communities in the city facing greatest health inequality, through economic means including skills development and creating new pathways to employment. This project offers an opportunity to build upon learning from the health and care sector and apply it to a broader range of places and Anchor organisations.
- Ahead Partnership have signed up to the Future Talent Plan and have pledged to continue working with and connecting private and public sector partners to support young people to achieve their aspirations, strengthen the talent pipeline whilst improving diversity, inclusion and social mobility, and help businesses design and deliver programmes to tackle skills deficits. The Partnership have also highlighted their employer-led Growing Talent Morley programme to address skills gaps in the town, as well as their Growing Talent Digital Leeds

annual programme of activities to drive the engagement of young people in digital careers. The programme is targeted towards schools with the highest populations of students eligible for free school meals and all of the schools in the city who have more than a 50% BAME population. In 2021/22, the programme supported 12,011 young people, with 3,811 young people taking part in live events. 72% of young people said they were interested in a career in digital or tech after taking part.

- The West Yorkshire Green Jobs Taskforce is undertaking a range of actions to co-ordinate and progress the Taskforce's work, including creating 1,000 well-paid, skilled jobs for young people, focusing on equality and sustainability, and ensuring that skills in green areas are clearly defined and targeted.
- Women Friendly Leeds have highlighted their employability campaign which centres around a Women Friendly Recruiter's Checklist for employers. This is in response to women feeling concerned about employability regarding the pandemic and the future. The campaign will support hiring practices which are more women friendly. Once an employer makes a pledge to be a Women Friendly Recruiter, they will receive a checklist, logos and other resources. The checklist includes points such as flexible working practices and positively recognising gaps in career histories and non-work experiences.

#### Leeds City Council action examples

- In June 2022, Leeds City Council put on a brand new SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Next Choices event at Leeds First Direct Arena. This was the first time a city-wide event aimed at supporting young people who have special educational needs and disabilities has taken place. Over 60 organisations exhibited, providing information about jobs, apprenticeships, training and skills opportunities including FE courses, volunteering, leisure activities, finances and benefits. Around 1,800 visitors attended.
- 12<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> September 2022 – Leeds' first Digital Careers Festival has featured a festival and recruitment event aimed at those new to the digital sector who are looking for employment and training opportunities in the city. A week-long community and school roadshow of activities to inspire careers in digital has happened in locations across the city to engage harder to reach community groups and those under-represented in the tech and digital sector. The community workshops were led by employers and training providers within the sector and provided advice, information and support. The school roadshow involved digital businesses in the city and included talks to secondary schools, sixth form and Further Education colleges. The festival culminated in a recruitment event at Leeds First Direct Arena. 50 digital organisations were exhibiting, and 14 of these were also involved in the festival activities for school and community engagement over the week. Exhibitors were from multiple sub-sectors of digital including fintech, gaming and healthcare tech. 1,350 visitors booked to attend the event.
- The Council has partnered with Workfinder as part of the Festival, a platform which matches employers with young people looking for work experience using AI to ensure that employers receive applications from the right people. For three months, the council will have use of the platform and incentivise digital employers to offer work placements to local young people.
- As part of the focus on digital, work is ongoing to map future skills needs and priority areas, the provider landscape and emerging trends in this important area of the economy. This is being completed by a specially appointed Digital Skills Lead officer and is due for completion in Autumn 2022.

- Leeds City Council has an ambition for Leeds to be recognised as a national, and international, exemplar in the provision of creative and cultural opportunities for children and young people between the ages 0-25yrs.
  - The Leeds Creative Skills Festival (LCSF) will be the first event of its kind in Leeds which highlights the exciting and diverse range of opportunities available within the sector. The Festival will take place 14 – 18 November 2022 with a Creative Skills Showcase event held at the Leeds First Direct Arena on Thursday 17 November.
  - This event will showcase the offer and aims to inspire young people to consider a career in Leeds and beyond and will:
    - focus on careers and opportunities in the sector, pathways, skills etc.
    - deliver sector-led educational resources to support good quality careers education,
    - explore the opportunity for work experience placements and site visits.
    - offer support for employers in the sector such as help with recruiting apprenticeships and access to funding and training.
  - The festival will be a precursor to activities planned for the Leeds 2023 Year of Culture and beyond including Bradford City of Culture 2025.
  - The LCSF will contribute to the Inclusive Growth Strategy and The Future Talent Plan and will encourage Leeds residents to take up opportunities in the creative and cultural sector.
  - A Green Skills Lead officer has also been appointed to look at the local skills needed to transition to Net Zero and will undertake a green economy skills mapping exercise similar to the work being undertaken around digital.
  - Following the success of this year's Apprenticeship Recruitment Fair which sold 6,000 free tickets, in addition to the new SEND event to support young people with special educational needs and disabilities at Leeds First Direct Arena, both events are scheduled to return in Spring 2023.
  - 100% Digital Leeds is undertaking a range of actions that will ensure greater digital inclusion and therefore increase digital skills. This includes building a digital inclusion ecosystem across Leeds, increasing the capacity of organisations to deliver digital inclusion, and implementing interventions in response to community need.
  - The Future Talent Plan vision seeks to 'ensure that nobody is left behind' and this project has aimed to maintain a focus on those who need our support the most, encouraging future skills provision to support those living in disadvantaged areas and in our priority neighbourhoods. The plan sets out our ambition to prioritise investment in the skills of people in the city who need our support the most. The work of our Employment and Skills Service with the city's priority neighbourhoods remains core to the delivery of the Future Talent Plan. It involves individual approaches in each area, working together with neighbourhood actors and partners to identify community assets that can be built upon, and supporting people with opportunities that are relevant to them.
- 8 More actions will be added to the website by both partners and the council on an ongoing basis.
- 9 Our approach to Future Talent Leeds including the website is a practical example of the Team Leeds approach. It brings a range of stakeholders closer together to each play their part in

achieving our ambitions and enables them to learn about each other and the actions they are taking. This is also reflected in the programme of Future Talent events which are convening relationships between education and training providers and businesses.

- 10 In the Executive Board [as](#) of March 2022, positive impacts of the Future Talent Plan were set out. This includes providing clarity and creating confidence against a backdrop of change and uncertainty in the labour market and encouraging future skills provision that supports and empowers those living in our disadvantaged areas and priority neighbourhoods.
- 11 The plan's diversity and inclusion impacts were also noted. It proposed that actions relating to the Future Talent Plan would tackle inequality through focusing on those who are economically inactive, those who have stopped working, those furthest away from the labour market, and those in low-paid and insecure work. The Future Talent Plan also recognises diversity and inclusion across all of its ambitions, for instance through encouraging and supporting employers to develop inclusive recruitment practices. A diverse range of people inputted into the development of the plan through the public consultation, including people from all over the city, of different age groups, people with a disability or long-term health condition and multiple ethnic groups.

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

Health and Wellbeing       Inclusive Growth       Zero Carbon

- 12 The Future Talent Plan is part of a suite of work being undertaken that informs 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.
- 13 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.

### What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?       Yes       No

- 14 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.
- 15 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.

16 A public consultation also took place in the Autumn of 2021, with two online ‘conversations’ facilitated by a partner 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.

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

17 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. 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?**

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

19 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?**

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

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

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

21 Not applicable

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

22 A steering group focused on delivery will also be set up to meet on a 6-monthly basis to monitor the city’s overall progress in achieving the high-level Future Talent Plan ambitions, with representation from key stakeholders including members of the original steering group and Inclusive Growth Ambassadors, 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 will take place in January 2023. We will also draw on the cross-sectoral experience and expertise of our Leeds Inclusive Growth Delivery Partnership to engage with businesses and organisations about the plan.

23 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.

24 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. In August 2022, the service reported that it had supported 1,274 people into work since April 2022.

25 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 update will be monitored.

26 The Inclusive Growth website will soon feature content about the Leeds Inclusive Anchors Network including the Anchors Progression Framework which will enable anchor institutions to self-assess how they are contributing to their locality, particularly around employment. In the future, the Private Sector Progression Framework which is currently in development will also be published on the website, and the Future Talent site will direct organisations to both frameworks as a mechanism to measure success.

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

27 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**

- None

### **Background papers**

- None