

**To the Chair and Members of the  
REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

**UPDATE ON WORK & SKILLS PARTNERSHIP**

<b>Relevant Cabinet Member(s)</b>	<b>Wards Affected</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>
Peter Davies (Mayor of Doncaster) - Development Portfolio Holder	All	N/A

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. Following on from the Panel's review into Apprenticeships completed last year, Members were keen to receive an annual update on the work of the Private Sector-led Work & Skills Board in attempting to improve the Skills our residents have in order to support economic growth across the Borough. This report provides a full assessment of our present position, work completed by the Board in recent months and an outline of what is planned in the remainder of 2012/13.

**EXEMPT REPORT**

2. N/A

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

3. It is recommended that the Members of the Regeneration & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Panel:
  - a) Note the contents of this report;
  - b) Consider the effectiveness of what is proposed to improve Skill levels across the Borough; and
  - c) Question the presenters of the report at the meeting itself.

**BACKGROUND**

4. In order to ensure the Borough's economic growth, we need to both:
  - Understand **what skills our businesses need to grow** and to **match this demand**; and
  - Ensure that the Borough's **Young people** leave statutory education **equipped with the basic skills and knowledge** (Maths, English and Employability skills) to enable a positive transition into work and prevent them becoming not in employment, education or training (NEET).

Skilled, well-trained staff are more efficient, motivated and productive, leading to more competitive businesses. Conversely, those areas with the highest percentage of people with no/low skills are most vulnerable to either economic downturn or recession.

In the context of increasing unemployment in the Borough, including 15% of our 18-24 year olds being out of work, the need for us to meet this skills challenge is critical. Within this, there is also a need to raise aspirations and engagement of young people and their families and to offer real alternatives to a meaningful career away from higher education routes and for them to contribute to wider society.

### **Skills: The current position**

5. According to the latest Labour Market statistics published by the Office for National Statistics, the skills of our people still lag behind those in other areas. Members should note that:
  - Only 1 in 5 of Doncaster's residents have a qualification at Level 4 or above – this is significantly below both the national average and the regional average;
  - The percentage of people with qualifications at Levels 2 or 3 and above has increased however, with the gap to the regional and national average narrowing as a result. Nearly 43% of our residents have a Level 3 qualification or above (up from 41% in 2010), whilst 64% of residents have a Level 2 qualification or above (up from 61% in 2010);
  - Fewer people now have 'no qualifications', although at 15.2% there remains a significant gap to the regional and national average.

Improving skills, linked to the demands of our businesses, is therefore of critical importance to the wider economy:

- Those areas with the highest percentage of the population with low educational outcomes and skills are most vulnerable to recession/downturn;
- Lagging areas (like Doncaster) need to focus on getting the basics right (Maths, English, basic employability skills) so individuals can achieve a positive transition post statutory education, change careers, be more resilient in time of economic downturn and business can be confident that employees have the necessary skills;
- It is likely that more jobs in the future will require higher skills (Level 3) and there will be fewer jobs at Level 2 and below – so getting the right education and skills platform is crucial in making a positive transition to post statutory education and employment.

### **The role of the Work & Skills Board**

6. The creation of a Private Sector-led Work & Skills Partnership, set up in March 2012, was in direct response to this challenge. Chaired by Nigel Brewster (Managing Director, Brewster McBride and Skills chair for the Sheffield City Region Local Enterprise Partnership), it has representation from a range of local businesses, Doncaster College, Doncaster Chamber of Commerce, Job Centre Plus, Primary School & Secondary School Headteachers and the Council to deliver the skills in the borough that our businesses need to grow **and** ensure our residents get in work and stay in work.

The Board's aims are clear:

- Doncaster taking **control of its own destiny** making **the most of current national opportunities/funding**;
- Taking action now to respond to **large increases in youth unemployment**;
- **Co-ordinated action, improved leadership and accountability** through this partnership;
- Delivery of a single set of actions with the Borough's **resources aligned** behind them to get the messages to business/individuals;
- Ensuring **some simple key messages are communicated**;
- Work with the education and training sector (primary, secondary, special and Pupil referral units) **to ensure young people leave school equipped with the skills employers desire** (Maths, English and basic employability skills); and
- Be open to **positive challenge, and scrutiny** from business, public and private sector partners.

### Work undertaken so far

7. Partnership efforts so far have focused on laying the foundations for effectively improving skills and job prospects for the future.
  - Work is nearly complete on establishing the level and quality of Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) given to Children & Young People and Adults across the Borough. Good quality careers advice, linked to the needs and wants of our existing businesses, is absolutely crucial in allowing people to make informed decisions about what qualifications they want to undertake. This work will inform the procurement of a 'portal' for pupils, teachers, people looking for apprenticeships or employment opportunities to access in the future to guide their future intentions (see Paragraph 8, Moving Forward);
  - A comprehensive 'Labour Market Information' survey is underway with 1,000 local businesses to effectively establish the state of our local economy and to establish what support businesses need in order to grow. Questions relate to:
    - Changes to the workforce over the past 12 months to gain an idea of business demand;
    - The skills of the current workforce; and
    - Future plans for recruitment.The results will be made available in October and will guide the development of the 'portal' highlighted above, any changes to 'Business Support' offered by Partner organisations that are required and to identify whether any training provision by our providers is either missing or lacking the quality required by our businesses.
  - Work continues with the Prime Contractors of both the Government's Work Programme and the Youth Contract to ensure that people can access the opportunities on offer and that any duplication between what's delivered by different partner organisations is minimised.

- A vast amount of negotiation has taken place in conjunction with Sheffield City Region Partners with the Government to sign the 'City Deal' – a deal struck to allow the region greater control over skills, infrastructure and transport budgets to deliver growth. This deal was signed last month and includes an entire section on Skills-related activity to be delivered between 2013 and 2016, including in Doncaster; further detail is given in the next paragraph.
- Doncaster's Association of Training Managers (DATM) has now been reconstituted and will play a key role moving forward in ensuring training provision offered across the Borough matches what employers require in terms of current and future skills.
- The Council has begun to work on a number of programmes to better connect local people to local jobs, including changes to the Council's Sites & Allocations Policies (currently out to consultation with the wider public) and our setting-up and management of contracts delivered on behalf of the Council – particularly in relation to Construction and service contracts.
- Finally, a large amount of discussion with Private Sector firms has taken place to promote local job opportunities, including the creation of graduate/apprenticeship programmes and to support future major programmes such as the Inland Port; further detail will be provided at the meeting.

### **Moving forward**

8. Building on this momentum is critical in the remainder of 2012/13. The Partnership's focus will be on the following programmes that should reduce unemployment & the number of NEETs across the Borough:
  - Working up the delivery elements of the 'City Deal' is critical – this includes creating 4,000 new Apprentices between 2013 and 2016 across the City Region, including 850 in Doncaster;
  - Delivery of a product that brings up-to-date Careers Information, Advice & Guidance in one place to pupils, teachers, job seekers and businesses alike;
  - Continuing close work with the Prime Contractors of major Government-backed programmes such as the Work Programme to ensure our local people can take advantage of the opportunities on offer from local employers;
  - Complete the delivery of our Local Market Information survey and ensure that the Borough's training provision, the careers guidance offered to Children & Young People & Adults and the business support offered to new & existing businesses is matched against the results found; and
  - The Council will continue to develop and deliver programmes to better connect local people to local jobs, with a particular focus on Procurement.

### **IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY PRIORITIES**

9. Improving the Skills of our People relates to the following two key priorities for the Council:

<b>Priority Theme</b>	<b>Mayor's Priorities</b>	<b>Implications of this Initiative</b>
1. Creating a strong, connected and inclusive economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drive forward the Doncaster economy</li> <li>• Get the balance of public and private transport right</li> <li>• Promote Doncaster as a tourist destination</li> <li>• Regenerate Doncaster's town centres</li> </ul>	Skilled, well-trained staff are more efficient, motivated and productive, leading to more competitive businesses.
4. Protecting and improving all our children's lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to improve education and skills</li> <li>• Build on a strengthening Children's Service</li> </ul>	Improving Children's skills across the Borough is a vital part of improving their life chances.

## **RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

10. As the UK Commission for Employment & Skills has reported, people with low skills and no qualifications are at a significant disadvantage in the labour market. Competition for jobs means that this group is often at a disadvantage even when seeking employment in routine, low paid and often insecure jobs. This can lead to an above average risk of unemployment or even economic inactivity.

In addition, a no or low skilled labour market is a direct impediment to business and economic growth within the Borough. Improving the skills of our residents should significantly reduce this risk.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

11. None directly related to this report.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

12. There are no specific financial implications directly related to this report. Any specific implications arising as a result of the proposals outlined in this update will be the subject of future reports.

## **CONSULTATION**

13. Consultation has taken place with all members of the Work & Skills Board in the completion of this report. These include members of staff from the following organisations:

Private Sector employers (including McDonalds, HSR Law, Rejus and others)  
Doncaster Chamber of Commerce  
Doncaster College  
Job Centre Plus  
Sheffield City Region Local Enterprise Partnership  
Staff from across the Regeneration & Environment and Children & Young People Directorates

14. This report has significant implications in terms of the following:

Procurement		Crime & Disorder	
Human Resources		Human Rights & Equalities	
Buildings, Land and Occupiers		Environment & Sustainability	
ICT		Capital Programme	

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

A plan for Doncaster - Doncaster's Borough Strategy (2010-2015);

An Economic Strategy for the Borough (2010-2015);

Children & Young People's Plan (2011-2016);

Doncaster's Labour Market Profile (August 2012), available via [www.nomisweb.com](http://www.nomisweb.com)

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