



Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 4th February 2021

To the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Education and Skills 2030 Strategy

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Cllr Nuala Fennelly – Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, and Schools	All	Yes
Cllr Bill Mordue – Portfolio Holder for Business, Skills, and Economic Development		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. In December 2015, Team Doncaster invited a team of independent national experts to assess what steps were needed to improve Doncaster's education and skills system in terms of equipping residents and businesses for changing times, from childhood and through adulthood. Following the publication of the Commission's report – One Doncaster – in October 2016, Team Doncaster has transformed its approach to the delivery of learning provision. The strategic partnership adopted and took forward the thirty recommendations, which included a number of notable achievements and transformational projects. When the Independent Commission returned in October 2018, they confirmed that Doncaster had entered into a 'virtuous circle' of improvement and noted both the pace of progress and the ambition that the Local Authority had shown in improving outcomes for all learners in the locality.
2. Significant progress has since been made since 2016, however some challenges remain and a number of new issues and opportunities have emerged (social, economic, technological, and political) – requiring increased focus and energy to address.
3. This is why we are taking a long-term view for Education and Skills, through this co-produced and co-owned ten-year plan for learning in Doncaster. We know that we need to deliver a system fit for the future, that benefits everyone, and we believe that we can achieve this through working collaboratively to go beyond simply 'catching up with the national average' – and to forge our own path as a leading location for innovative learning.

4. This report therefore presents the draft new all-age, long-term strategy for Education and Skills for approval at Cabinet on 9 February 2021. Once approved, a public facing, fully designed summary version of the document will be developed and launched in Spring 2021.

EXEMPT REPORT

5. This report is not an exempt item.

RECOMMENDATIONS

6. That Overview & Scrutiny Committee:
 - Support the draft Education and Skills Strategy 2030, which is being considered by Cabinet on 9th February 2021.
 - Provide feedback and recommendations on any changes to the content, launch or implementation of the strategy.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

7. The Education and Skills 2030 strategy will develop the life-long learning offer within the borough, enabling people, places and businesses to participate in a growing and inclusive economy.
8. Educational outcomes have a profound influence on people's ability to live a fulfilling life and engage in quality employment. Enabling all residents have access to quality education and training everyone is therefore one of the most effective ways to improve wellbeing, by boosting self-confidence and self-esteem, building a sense of purpose, and providing opportunities to connect with others.
9. Adopting a new Education and Skills Strategy at this point will enable the Council and its partners to refocus resources and efforts. Notably, in terms of enabling residents to retrain and reskill at any age and stage of life, supporting people to access the jobs of the future, fulfil their aspirations, and to develop the 'soft' skills needed to live well.

BACKGROUND

10. Subsequent to the convening of the Independent Commission for Education and Skills and the publication of the One Doncaster Report (2016), Team Doncaster has transformed its approach to the delivery of learning provision, adopting all thirty recommendations, and undertaking key transformational projects such as developing the borough as a University City. When the Independent Commission returned in October 2018, they confirmed that Doncaster had entered into a 'virtuous circle' of improvement and noted both the pace of progress and the ambition that the Local Authority had shown in improving outcomes for all learners.
11. A combination of national and local policy imperatives led to a reconfiguration of Team Doncaster's governance of learning and opportunities. Notably, Doncaster was designated as one of the country's Opportunity Areas and allocated £6m (plus £2.75m in Essential Life Skills funding) to transform outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. In addition, Doncaster has undertaken an ambitious inclusion programme, which resulted in Doncaster opening the first Big Picture Learning UK school (February 2019). The Children and Young People's Plan has also been instrumental in raising standards in schools and supporting learners through a partnership-led whole-family approach. The commitment to transform education and skills has received strong praise from the Independent Commission.

12. Despite these achievements, outcomes must continue to improve at pace – to make sure, not just that we close the gap between ourselves and the national average, but also so that we close the gap between disadvantaged learners and their peers. Not enough of our young people leave school with the required grades in English and Maths at GCSE, too many of our residents many residents have no formal qualifications to their name, and too few of our residents manage to access highly skilled, highly paid employment.
13. The wider world of learning and work is also changing, and the education and skills system in Doncaster must adapt to reflect these changes. Employment and society in the 21st Century increasingly requires a solid foundation in traditional core academic skills and knowledge, as well as technical skills and essential life skills. Our younger generations are facing longer working careers which may require them to re-skill a number of times. How we deliver learning and how we skill our residents needs to adapt and respond to these changes – ensuring that learning is cross-disciplinary, personalised, and focussed on transferable and human skills to ensure future resilience.
14. In addition to this, the Covid-19 pandemic has created the largest disruption of education systems in history. The impact on employment could also hardly be starker – particularly for our young, minority, and disadvantaged residents – with a jobs recovery not expected until after 2021. On the other hand, the pandemic has acted as a catalyst for innovation. New, innovative approaches to education and training have emerged, with provision for distance and digital learning progressing rapidly. As a society, we have also been reminded of the essential role of educators and educational settings play within the community. At this point in time, there is therefore a pressing need to address the widening levels of disparity and develop resilience for future challenges through capitalising on these innovations and opportunities – championing lifelong learning as a crucial way to raise levels of wellbeing across the borough.
15. This is why we are taking a long-term view for Education and Skills, through this co-produced and co-owned ten-year plan for learning in Doncaster. We know that we need to deliver a system fit for the future, that benefits everyone, and we believe that we can achieve this through working collaboratively to leverage our community assets and raise both expectations and aspirations within the place. This is a key strategic moment for Doncaster to go beyond simply ‘catching up with the national average’ – and to forge its own path as a leading location for innovative learning.
16. Strategy development to date has followed the following process:
 - An independent review (including consultation) and development of a Framework for Education and Skills by an Independent Advisor for Education and Skills.
 - A second phase of consultation, focusing on the Framework, and development of a Strategic Statement of Intent.
 - Further public consultation through the Doncaster Talks process.
 - Two special workshops to review the Statement of Intent (the priorities and aims) prior to the final strategy development.
 - Consultation on the draft strategy itself.
 - Working with a senior advisor from the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development to shape the strategy around international best-practice.
 - As well as desk-top research, gap analysis, etc.

17. Our 10-year **Vision** is:

Equitable and inclusive lifelong learning that empowers people to fulfil their aspirations and thrive in life and work.

18. The **Priorities** are four life-stage priorities (1-4), and one cross-cutting all-age

Priority 1: Best Start

Priority 2: Accelerating Achievement

Priority 3: A New Model of Post-16 Education

Priority 4: New Skills and Pathways to Fulfilling Life and Work

Priority 5: Equitable and Inclusive Lifelong Learning

19. The 15 Aims (which fall under the Priorities) are:

Aim 1: Improve Readiness to Learn & Build Strong Foundations in Learning

Aim 2: Support Effective Learning through High Quality Early Years Settings and Multi-Agency Working

Aim 3: Promote Family & Community Learning to Support Families & Strengthen Parental Engagement

Aim 4: Establish a Broad Curriculum & Approaches to Teaching & Learning that Develop the Whole Person

Aim 5: Raise Levels of Achievement & Ensure Pupils Reach their Full Potential at Key Stages 2 to 4

Aim 6: Nurture an Outstanding Educational Workforce

Aim 7: Ensure the Education & Skills System is Responsive to the Needs of the Local & National Economy

Aim 8: Develop a Coordinated Post-16 Education Offer that Gives Learners the Skills they need to Prosper

Aim 9: Transform Doncaster into a University City that Provides Advanced Learning through Centres of Excellence

Aim 10: Establish Learning Partnerships with Local & Regional Industries that Provide Quality, Sustainable Employment

Aim 11: Ensure all Residents have Opportunity to Access & Thrive in Fulfilling

Careers Aim 12: Remove Barriers to Employment & Develop, Retain, & Attract Talent

Aim 13: Champion and Empower Disadvantaged Learners to Enable Social

Mobility Aim 14: Improve Outcomes for Minority & Vulnerable Learners

Aim 15: Equitable Lifelong Learning for Every Community

20. At the end of each priority section of the strategy, a number of key areas for action and key measures for success have been listed in boxes to provide a SMART connection on how we can achieve the aims and make systemic changes in 'delivery phase' of this strategy. This also includes a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which will be used to check progress and drive performance improvement over the next 10 years. Stretched performance targets will be set as part of the delivery phase to ensure we achieve transitional change that moves Doncaster above the national average for many key educational and economic outcomes, rather than constantly chasing incremental improvement.

21. The final section of the strategy called 'Working Better Together – Our Approach to System Transformation', outlines three key factors that will allow us to make the

systemic changes and deliver on the priorities and aims:

- Addressing the key messages from consultation with key partners, which clearly signal a collective desire to make changes. This is crucial to maximise ownership, as well as collaboration;
- Adopting a set of shared principles;
- Developing a whole-system approach to transformation through establishing an effective Talent & Innovation Ecosystem.

22. Once the strategy has been approved, actions plans will need to be developed for each of the five priorities, through collaboration from key partner stakeholders involved in improvements and delivering the changes. Learning & Opportunities have also revised their governance structure to include an Education & Skills Board, with five sub-groups under it to ensure the delivery of the priorities is monitored effectively and supported by effective decision-making.

23. There may be financial implications (both revenue and capital) to making the systemic changes and providing more sustainable funding. This will become clearer in the next couple of years, as the priority implementation and investment plans are finalised. Learning & Opportunities will make every effort to prioritise existing resources and redesign any services within the current budget envelope, but this may not be viable given the fundamental changes proposed in the strategy. We will report back on this at the end of the implementation planning phase.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

24.

- Option 1: Continue delivery of existing actions and projects to meet the One Doncaster Report and Revisit recommendations.
- Option 2: Adopt the Education and Skills 2030 Vision, Priorities, Aims and Delivery Principles in order to refocus efforts within a wider view of an all-age strategy over the next ten years (recommended)

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

25. Adoption of the Education and Skills 2030 Strategy and its Vision, Priorities, Aims and Delivery principles is recommended (option 2) as this will ensure that the revised actions and projects reflect the current strategic environment and highlight responses to prominent issues. It builds on the findings and recommendations of an independent strategic review, lengthy multi-phased consultation, international best-practice and academic studies, as well as needs assessments and other strategies undertaken since the publication of the One Doncaster report.

26. It is not recommended that option 1 be taken; continuing with the existing strategy vision, objectives and actions would not meet the current learning needs of Doncaster residents or economy.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

27.

Outcomes	Implications
<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	<p>The Strategy is deliberately broad in scope to ensure a whole-person, whole-life focus. The priorities and aims will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All residents have line of sight to good, fulfilling work as they move through the education system, through a strong careers information, education, advice, and guidance offer. • All that residents have opportunities to retrain, up-skill, and re-skill at any age and stage, in order to access new careers. • Our post-16 education offer is closely connected with the local economy; with skills pathways that are shaped by local employers.
<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	<p>The Strategy recognises the need for a place-based education and skills offer that connects with local culture and heritage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through supporting schools to tie the school curriculum to local culture and heritage and promoting physical activity. • Through engaging residents in learning via local community groups, forums, and projects, including Adult and Family Community Learning. • Through developing a University City joint prospectus that includes centres of excellence for green technology, health and social care, and creative and digital.

<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	<p>The Strategy that will ensure delivery of this vision over the next ten years, and, moreover, extends this to an <i>all-age</i> offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing the best-start in learning through increasing levels of parental engagement, renewing our focus on speech and language acquisition and development, and providing a strong Early Help, Health, and Social Care offer. • Ensuring that every child and young person achieves their full potential at Key Stages 2 to 4, through implementing consistent behavioural approaches, offering an inclusive and well-rounded curriculum that develops essential life skills and supports emotional and physical wellbeing, and recruiting and retaining the best teachers and leaders. • Reforming our Post-16 education and skills system to equip residents with the skills, ambition and attributes needed to thrive in the 21st Century. • Providing opportunities for residents to learn and acquire new skills throughout life, and to access (and progress within) secure, rewarding employment through working closely with industry to develop sectoral career pathways, strengthening our all-age careers, advice, and guidance offer, and improving the availability and accessibility of adult learning. • Addressing educational and skills disparities across our communities, by extending the work of the Social Mobility Opportunity Area, increasing support for vulnerable learners, and utilising our local assets to extend our community learning offer.
<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	<p>The Strategy recognises the need to address the socio-economic and health barriers to learning. It therefore advocates for an education and skills system that is well-connected with health and social care, which promotes positive mental and physical wellbeing, for example through embedding trauma-informed approaches, multi-agency working and access to early help and intervention. It also aims to build community assets and promote connections across the place.</p>

<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	<p>The strategic approach outlined – Working Better Together – and the accompanying Delivery Principles strongly reflect the Connected Council vision. Our approach to ‘Working Better Together’ will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure responsibility for delivery of the strategy is shared across the partnership – including the education, employment, and community sectors, thereby embedding a whole-person, whole-life focus. • Improve communication, coordination across the system, as well as to improve governance arrangements. • Strengthen collaboration at a local, regional and national level, embedding best-practice reflecting national policy and regional initiatives, and seeking opportunities to secure sustainable funding.
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RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

28. There is a risk that the strategy, once developed, is not owned and delivered by the Team Doncaster partnership. This will be mitigated by:
- Fully consulting the partnership on the development of the Education and Skills 2030 Action Plans;
 - Making it clear within the Education and Skills Strategy that a substantial part of the Strategic Mission is dependent upon achieving the ambitions already established within Doncaster Growing Together; and
 - Embedding the priorities within the Doncaster Growing Together governance and performance management arrangements.
 - Developing revisable delivery plans, with periodic reporting arrangements.
29. This Strategy has interdependencies with other strategic developments (such as the future Borough Strategy and Culture Strategy, and Sheffield City Region Strategic Economic Plan). To prevent any ‘misalignment’ or contradiction with these strategies, the policy team have worked closely with other colleagues to contribute to and take account of implications to the Education and Skills Strategy.
30. Central government proposals or funding announcements (such as an extension to the Social Mobility Opportunity Area funding) will influence the delivery of the Education and Skills strategy objectives.
31. This strategy has been written with a professional audience in mind. The policy team has been and will continue to liaise with colleagues in Corporate Communications to ensure the strategy is communicated appropriately with the public and younger audiences.
32. As with other activities, progress may be hampered by the Council’s response to continuing lockdown measures due to Covid-19.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: HMP; Date: 16.12.20]

33. A local authority has a number of specific statutory duties in relation to children and young people.
34. Under sections 13-14 education act 1996 the council as an education authority has a duty to promote high standards of education and fair access to education. It also has a general duty to secure sufficient schools in their area, and to consider the need to secure provision for children with special education needs (SEN). s17 of the children act 1989 provides that it shall be the general duty of every local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and so far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs. The authority must also arrange suitable full- time education for the pupils of compulsory school age, to begin no later than the 6th day of the exclusion. The authority must identify those children not receiving education and to investigate the whereabouts of pupils who have poor attendance and are at risk of being deleted from schools' admission register.
35. Members must also be aware of the council's obligations under the public sector equality duty in s149 of the equality act 2010. It requires public authorities when exercising their functions to have due regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between people who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not. The relevant protected characteristics under the equality act are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. This has particular relevance to children and young people who have SEN.
36. The actions set out in the strategy should assist the council in complying with its statutory duties. As the programs of activity to deliver the strategy develops further, specific and detailed legal advice will be required.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: SB, Date: 14/12/20]

37. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report however, the delivery of any outcomes from Strategy Development will need to take place within agreed budgets. Any financial implications relating to specific areas of the strategy will need to be included within further reports and revenue or capital budgets will need to be identified from either resources or additional resources allocated through the budget process.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: SJ, Date: 14/12/20]

38. There are no specific human resources implications contained within the report, although there is a need to ensure that the workforce has the capability and capacity going forward to support the delivery of the outcomes.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: PW; Date: 16.12.20]

39. There are no specific technology implications at this stage. However, any emerging technology requirements to support the delivery of the Education and Skills 2030 Strategy and its associated priorities, aims and key areas for action should be discussed with Digital & ICT and where applicable considered and prioritised by the Technology Governance Board (TGB).

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: CW; Date 17.12.20]

40. Learning outcomes and health outcomes are intrinsically linked. Promoting the health and wellbeing of pupils and students within schools and colleges has the potential to improve their educational outcomes and their health and wellbeing outcomes (PHE 2014). Emphasis on the role physical and emotional health plays in a person's ability to access education and to achieve their full potential is critical in any strategy aiming to improve access and attainment in education.
41. It is not an expectation that educational settings are solely responsible for improving the health and wellbeing of their community. However, there are steps settings can take to support and promote health and wellbeing, and help to mitigate the effects of the adverse circumstances some of their community will experience. It is encouraging to see the Healthy Learning Healthy Lives (HLHL) programme highlighted as a key area for action. Encouraging education settings to gain HLHL accreditation will ensure our settings in Doncaster take the necessary steps to support and promote the health and wellbeing of the whole school community.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: DA; Date: 16/12/20]

42. Decision makers must consider the Council's duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty at s149 of the Equality Act 2010. The duty requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not share that protected characteristic.
43. The Education and Skills 2030 Strategy will sharpen Team Doncaster's focus on the key actions that will have the biggest impact on learning, continuous development, and access to quality employment. The development of new interventions and improvements to service delivery processes that are made as result of these priorities may require a due regard statement to be completed and reported as and when appropriate. Improved outcomes in all five priority areas will ensure that educational, developmental, and employment outcomes will improve for persons of all backgrounds, regardless of their sexual orientation, marital status, disability, gender, pregnancy, religion or belief. The proposed areas for action will increase and strengthen our local offer and support our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

CONSULTATION

44. Extensive consultation on the development of the Statement of Intent has been undertaken with a range of stakeholders over the last 6 months. This process is further detailed in Appendix 2. Consultation has included an online survey ([available here](#)), as well as targeted stakeholder discussions with the following groups:
 - Adult learners
 - Business Doncaster
 - Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel
 - Doncaster Chamber of Commerce
 - Doncaster Children's Services Trust
 - Doncaster Growing Together Portfolio Group
 - Doncaster Youth Council
 - Doncaster Young Advisors
 - Family Hubs
 - Family Hubs Staff
 - Higher, Further Education and Post-16 Leaders
 - Inclusion and Fairness Forum
 - Key industry sectors

- Learning, Opportunities, Children and Young People Officers
- Parents and carers
- Primary, Secondary, and Special Schools Headteachers; and Chief Executive Officers of Multi-Academy Trusts
- School and Academy Subject leads.
- Independent Education Provider
- Public Health
- Schools Forum
- Sheffield City Region
- Strategy and Performance Unit Officers
- Team Doncaster Strategic Partnership Board
- University City Steering Group
- Voluntary, Community, and Faith Sector Forum

45. Public consultation on the future of Education and Skills has taken the form of the Doncaster Talks process, and we have, and will continue to, ensure that the outcomes from this consultation exercise are fed into the delivery of this strategy. The Team Doncaster summit on the 8th November 2019 included a dedicated session on Education and Skills 2030.

46. Consultation with stakeholder groups, as well as further engagement with members of the public will continue into 2020, and will be used to develop a detailed action plan following publication of the strategy document.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1: Education & Skills 2030 – Draft Strategy

Appendix 2: Education & Skills 2030 – How this Strategy was Developed

Appendix 3: Education & Skills 2030 – Due Regard Statement

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

N/A

REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS

Dani Adams, Policy & Insight
 Manager Policy, Insight, & Change
 01302 736414 Dani.Adams@doncaster.gov.uk

Peter Lowe, Senior Policy & Insight
 Manager Policy, Insight, & Change
 01302 736936 Peter.Lowe@doncaster.gov.uk

Leanne Hornsby
Assistant Director, Education, Skills, Culture, and
Heritage

Riana Nelson
Director of Learning, Opportunities, and Skills (DCS)