

How this Strategy was Developed

This strategy has been co-produced with partners and stakeholders from across the system following a phased methodology that has gathered information from a wide and diverse range of people, organisations, and groups, as well as a variety of data sources, case studies, and best practice examples. This approach provided key stakeholders, including educators, employers, parents, carers, children and young people, to inform, shape and influence the strategy throughout its development. This has enabled us to provide a holistic assessment of the changes needed to develop an Education and Skills system that delivers better outcomes for all learners in Doncaster.

Independent Strategic Review & Phased Consultation

The strategy began its development in Spring 2019 with a commissioned independent strategic review, conducted by an experienced former Director for Childrens Services. This review brought an external, objective perspective formed through interviews with many internal and external colleagues, partners and members of the community. The review was structured around three key questions:

- *What would a successful learning and skills system look like in 2030?*
- *Where are we now in terms of strengths and areas for development?*
- *Are we pursuing the right goals and working in the right way?*

The outcomes of this review formed the basis of a *Framework for Consultation*, which set out the strengths and challenges faced within the current system, and included a series of recommendations for developing a successful future system. This Framework was shared via an online survey and group forums to allow key stakeholders to further consider whether these aims were right, and whether any key opportunities or challenges had been missed. The feedback and analysis from this second phase of consultation was used to develop a *Strategic Statement of Intent*, which comprised the key elements of this final strategy: a vision for – and key characteristics of – a future system, six priority areas for action, and 18 aims.

The third and final phase of consultation culminated in two large interactive stakeholder workshops with representatives from across the system gathered to review the Statement of Intent prior to the final strategy development. These workshops were extremely positive and constructive. In addition to sharpening our insight into what our collective areas of focus should be over the short and long-term, they served to improve partnership working as they acted as a useful vehicle for sharing and learning about each other's challenges, objectives and cultures (across and within organisations, agencies and services). *Working Better Together* is a key priority of this strategy, and we will be proactive in ensuring the subsequent plans for delivery further draws on the skills, knowledge, and expertise of partners and other stakeholders and continues to empower a sense of shared responsibility.

'Doncaster Talks'

A further strategic priority is embed equity and inclusivity across the system – and this too has been exemplified by our approach to develop this strategy; ensuring that all residents have had the opportunity to shape our priorities over the next ten years through the Doncaster Talks programme. This borough-wide engagement campaign ran in tandem with the education and skills consultation and simply asked the people of Doncaster what mattered to them now and in the future. This dialogue centred around three open questions:

- *What's good about where you live?*
- *What would you like to see improve?*
- *What should Doncaster focus on for the future?*

We received a total 3,610 responses from people of all ages, ethnicities, and background, within each of our localities. One of the recurring themes was the need for high-quality education provision, and continued opportunities for lifelong learning. These responses have been used to shape the priorities as presented in this strategy.

Performance Review

These wide-ranging and in-depth consultations provided rich insights. They told us what mattered to educators, employers, parents, communities, and perhaps most importantly, learners, in terms of shaping a future system that delivers better outcomes for all residents. However, it was important to contextualise these findings, and to understand the barriers that would need to be overcome in order to meet these demands. We therefore undertook a comprehensive performance review, considering a range of indicators that highlighted areas of achievement and progress, as well areas for improvement.

Learning from Elsewhere

Further sources of information have been drawn from a desk-based review of the regional and national policy context, as well as an assessment of national and international best practice. This latter exercise has included working with a senior advisor from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to develop an innovative model for transforming the learning environment.