

CABINET MEETING – 15 APRIL 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

EDUCATION AND SKILLS STRATEGY – GET READY ...

Author(s):

Executive Director of People Services

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to present the Sunderland Education and Skills Strategy and seek Cabinet's approval.

Description of Decision:

- a) Agree the Education and Skills Strategy for publication.
- b) To delegate to the Executive Director People Services, the authority to make non-substantive changes to the document prior to publication and, with the Education Leadership Board members, to agree how it is presented and launched.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

A new strategy will provide:

- A clear direction and identify a small number of significant initiatives.
- Ambitious goals and commitments which will improve performance.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

An alternative option would be to not have a strategy in place. The consequence of this would be that the city would not benefit from the clear direction that a strategy will bring and not achieve the collective commitments developed between partners that will lead to improved performance.

Impacts analysed:

Equality Yes Privacy N/A Sustainability N/A Crime and Disorder N/A

Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution? Yes

Is it included in the 28 Notice of Decisions? Yes

Scrutiny Committee

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PEOPLE SERVICES**EDUCATION AND SKILLS STRATEGY – GET READY ...****1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Sunderland Education & Skills Strategy – ‘Get Ready...’ and seek Cabinet’s approval.

2. DESCRIPTION OF DECISION (RECOMMENDATIONS)

- a) To agree the Education and Skills Strategy for publication.
b) To delegate to the Executive Director, People Directorate, the authority to make non-substantive changes to the document prior to publication and, with the Education Leadership Board members, to agree how it is presented and launched.

3. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Why produce an Education and Skills strategy?

- 3.1.1 Young people currently in education are the city’s employees of the future but as the economy develops, individuals will need to acquire both new skills and approaches not just to the world-of-work, but everyday life, with a more flexible attitude and understanding of employer needs. Self-management of increasingly complex lives and careers will become more commonplace for many individuals.
- 3.1.2 Foundation education is no longer sufficient for life. Many individuals will have to re-train at each displacement, whether that be in work or life, but what foundation education can provide is the ability to learn quickly in depth and to adapt.
- 3.1.3 The Education Leadership Board is aware that there is already a lot of good practice in Sunderland, but the strategy includes an important set of ambitious commitments that can only be met if there is a strong sense of engagement, ownership and collaboration.
- 3.1.4 A fresh strategy will provide:
- A clear direction, with commitments and responsibilities that identify a small number of significant initiatives and define the areas where we need to work together more effectively
 - Ambitious goals and commitments which will improve performance

- 3.1.5 For that reason the Board is particularly keen to understand what organisations are already doing, or planning to do, that contributes to any or all of the commitments in the strategy. In addition, through the consultation process, the Board is challenging every organisation and partnership to identify further actions that can be taken over the next 3-5 years that will make an even bigger impact.
- 3.2 Who will benefit?
 - 3.2.1 The City and its residents, the region – every individual, all educational institutions, all businesses and all the people that work in them – should all benefit.
 - 3.2.2 The new strategy will also support and attract investment and external resources to develop Sunderland's education and skills capability. By not having this strategy in place, opportunities for attracting such funding could adversely be impacted upon, or even lost to the City.
 - 3.2.3 The strategy provides an opportunity to bring together major education and skills stakeholders in the city to act in a collaborative and dynamic way to maximize the effectiveness of the assets we already have and those we wish to attract and develop.
- 3.3 Who has produced this strategy?
 - 3.3.1 The Sunderland Education Leadership Board involving a variety of key stakeholders with a clear role to play in improving education and skills in Sunderland. The board, in addition to the City Council, includes representatives from Gentoo, Leibherr, Esh UK, Sunderland University and College, nursery, primary and secondary schools and local providers, and is chaired by John Mowbray. It has led the development of the Education and Skills Strategy for the City and provides a shared goal and a framework for key organisations and individuals to help shape the future education and skills landscape for the City.
- 3.4 Policy Context
 - 3.4.1 This strategy offers a particularly good fit with national, regional and local policies.
 - 3.4.2 For many years education and skills have been the focus of much government activity. Successive governments have wrestled with the issues of UK educational performance and the need to develop an education system that anticipates the future requirements of the economy as well as responding to the needs and aspirations of individuals.

- 3.4.3 Significant changes in national education and skills policy pose new challenges and opportunities for Sunderland's education and economic partners. Local Authorities no longer control, direct or dictate education provision, but they still have a statutory duty to "promote fulfillment of potential". There are an increasing number of new challenges and opportunities as more schools become Academies, together with the introduction of Free Schools, University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The Education and Skills Strategy has been set within the context of the city's economic growth ambitions alongside the aims of existing city-wide strategies and within the wider policy context described below.
- 4.2 The Sunderland Education Leadership Board is determined to promote shared ownership and responsibility for the strategy. Recognising the importance of the involvement of all stakeholders in its development and as a result has held a number of stakeholder strategy development workshops.
- 4.3 The DRAFT Education and Skills Strategy – 'Get Ready...' is attached in Appendix 1 and has been produced by the Sunderland Education Leadership Board with the support of the City Council's policy unit. The strategy is structured along the following themes:

4.3.1 Ready for School

Sunderland will be a place where babies and young children are provided with all the support they need to thrive and where every child reaches school age ready to take full advantage of every learning opportunity – at home, in school, within the community and beyond. It will be a place where children, young people and adults progress seamlessly through the education system.

4.3.2 Ready for Work

Sunderland will be a place where people of all ages can confidently make informed choices, maximise their potential and develop skills on which they can build careers. It will be a place where employers lead the skills agenda, where the local workforce meets current and future employment needs and where economic participation is optimised.

4.3.3 Ready for Life

Sunderland will be a place where children, young people and adults are provided with the opportunities they need to develop all their talents and interests and to acquire the skills, knowledge and qualities that enable them to enjoy fulfilled lives. It will be a place that recognises achievement in all its forms and encourages active engagement in the life of the city.

- 4.4 It then proposes a range of commitments to deliver this strategy. These commitments have been developed to enhance and complement partners existing 'business as usual' activities.

- 4.5 The Education Leadership Board is proposing to launch the strategy at the annual Education Conference at the Stadium of Light on Thursday 2 July 2015.

5. REASONS FOR THE DECISION

- 5.1 A new strategy will provide:

- A clear direction and identify a small number of significant initiatives.
- Ambitious goals and commitments which will improve performance.

6. Alternative Options

An alternative option would be to not have a strategy in place. The consequence of this would be that the city would not benefit from the clear direction that a strategy will bring and not achieve the collective commitments developed between partners that will lead to improved performance.

7. Impact Analysis

Equalities - An Equality Analysis has been undertaken and the strategy has identified significant current and potential benefits from pursuing the Education & Skills Strategy commitments.

8. Other Relevant Considerations / Consultations

8.1 Financial Implications

Within the Sunderland Education and Skills Strategy, there are no direct financial commitments in adopting the strategy. As project ideas for implementation and action develop, requests for financial contributions and/or funding support from the Council may arise and these will be considered on a case by case basis as appropriate.

8.2 Risk Analysis

A number of key risks have been identified and addressed during the strategy development process. A key risk was that for the strategy to be effective it could not be developed in isolation, therefore links with other key city strategies have been identified and integrated as appropriate. This has been supported by a programme of engagement with stakeholders, partners and practitioners to ensure that the strategy content remains valid.

8.3 Policy Implications

Support from the Council's policy unit throughout the development of the Strategy has made ensure strategic fit with the relevant national and local policies.

8.4 Implications for Other Services

The development of the strategy has consulted with other service areas to ensure the policies are not developed in isolation and reflect the activities of other relevant service areas.

8.5 The Public

The Strategy has been developed by the Sunderland Education Leadership Board which consists of a range of both public and private stakeholders and who have engaged and consulted with an extensive range of wider stakeholders.

8.6 Children's Services

The Education Leadership Board has engaged and consulted with an extensive range of stakeholders across Children's Services.

10. List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – DRAFT Education & Skills Strategy – 'Get Ready...'

