

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 10 June 2019

**Report Title**

Rotherham Employment and Skills Strategy

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

**Report Author(s)**

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**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

The report provides detail of the Rotherham Employment and Skills Strategy and seeks Cabinet endorsement of its adoption by the Council.

The Strategy is a Rotherham Together Partnership (RTP) document which links to the existing Rotherham Economic Growth Plan, to provide a framework for delivery of employment and skills activity over the next 5 years. This is essential to provide a suitably enterprising and skilled local workforce to drive forward the sustainable long-term growth of the Rotherham economy and allow it to compete in an increasingly global economy.

**Recommendations**

1. That the Rotherham Employment & Skills Strategy be endorsed.
2. That it be noted that responsibility for delivering and monitoring of the Strategy sits with the Business Growth Board of the Rotherham Together Partnership (RTP).
3. That it be noted that the Strategy will be monitored on a six-monthly basis, with the results reported through the Business Growth Board of RTP.

### **List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 The draft Rotherham Employment and Skills Plan

Appendix 2 Findings from the research work carried out by Sheffield Hallam University (SHU)

Appendix 3 Initial Equality Screening Template

### **Background Papers**

None

### **Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

Improving Places Select Commission – 20 December 2018

### **Council Approval Required**

No

### **Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Rotherham Employment and Skills Strategy**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Rotherham Economic Growth Plan was approved in 2015, containing two “employability and skills” themes
  - Skills for employment and progression
  - Inclusion, well-being and employment
- 1.2 Acknowledgement of the increasing importance of skills in attracting investment and growing indigenous businesses, as well as ensuring local residents can access employment opportunities, resulted in agreement by The Rotherham Together Partnership that Rotherham required a specific Employment and Skills Strategy.
- 1.3 Responsibility for the production of the Strategy sits with Rotherham Investment and Development Office (RIDO), within the Council, supported by the Employability and Skills sub-group of the Business Growth Board.
- 1.4 The Employment and Skills Strategy builds on the existing Rotherham Economic Growth Plan (2015-25) and also seeks to link to and complement the Sheffield City Region’s Strategic Economic Plan and its thematic priority on Skills, Employment and Education.

### **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 The Strategy is a Rotherham Together Partnership (RTP) document, with monitoring of its implementation being the responsibility of the Employability and Skills sub-group of the Business Growth Board.
- 2.2 The aim of the Strategy is to extend prosperity to all by:
  - Actively and productively working with the Sheffield City Region to secure investment and resources to implement our strategic skills and employment outcomes
  - Supporting and promoting the importance of investing in the existing and future workforce
  - Building strong alliances between business, schools, educational institutions and training providers
  - Aligning partners’ combined resources to address the strategic outcomes set out in the Strategy
  - Addressing inequality in the economy and within communities
- 2.3 To ensure the strategy could be delivered and endorsed by all relevant stakeholders consultation was carried out with local businesses, providers and support organisations, by Sheffield Hallam University (SHU), to identify the main issues facing Rotherham with regard to employability and skills. The full findings are attached to the report at Appendix 2, but headline findings include:
  - Skills shortages and recruitment difficulties for certain sectors

- Employers unwilling to accommodate employees with multiple needs
- Most job information is now via the internet and across a wide range of sources, which some people find difficult to access
- Returners to job markets have outdated skills (esp. IT) and lack confidence
- Assistance for job seekers has reduced considerably
- Welfare reform is excluding some people – “survival rather than job hunting”
- The need for more employer involvement in developing the Rotherham skills and employment offer
- In work poverty

2.4 The Strategy includes a “delivery plan” setting out the actions needed to deliver against the aims set out in para 2.2, with each action having an outcome and timescale, which will be monitored. These actions will require further development once the Plan has been approved with the Employment & Skills Sub-group leading on this work.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

3.1 Produce and implement a Rotherham Employment & Skills Strategy - to deliver a fit for purpose strategy developed and endorsed by all the relevant stakeholders. It will meet the needs of both businesses and residents to ensure they can access sustainable jobs with the prospect of career progression. The Strategy will also ensure that Rotherham’s employment and skills activities dovetail with those of the wider City Region.

3.2 Do nothing - support for both residents and business in regard to employment and skills will remain fragmented, with the Rotherham offer for investors failing to be as strong as it potentially could be and local people being disadvantaged in the jobs market.

### **4. Consultation on proposal**

4.1 The Strategy has been produced by RiDO, in conjunction with colleagues in CYPS and the Employment & Skills sub-group of the Rotherham Business Growth Board. The draft Strategy was an agenda item at both the Business Growth Board and the RTP Board, with the Board approving the draft Plan on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2019, with a further two week consultation period allowed for comments.

4.2 SHU were retained to discuss the main issues that Rotherham, its businesses and residents face regarding skills and employability with stakeholders.

4.3 The Improving Places Select Commission considered the Strategy on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2018. It was supportive of the Strategy and its aims.

## **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 Implementation of the Strategy will start immediately once endorsement is obtained. Monitoring will be carried out every 6 months, with a review after two years. Responsibility for the monitoring will sit with RiDO, reporting to the Employment and Skills sub-group of the RTP.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

- 6.1 The Council's contribution to the successful delivery of the Rotherham Employment and Skills Strategy is dependent on the availability of external funding alongside existing provision supported by RiDO's Enterprise Co-ordinator and the Senior Employment Initiatives Officer. The latest Employment and Skills Fund (ESF) funding call for the period 2020-2023 has funding of £15.7m available for the wider Sheffield City Region.
- 6.2 The Council has already submitted an ESF funding bid for the "Business & Education" project. This funding will cover a period of 2.5 years and will fund the cost of the Skills and Employability officer plus the costs for a website, promotional video, an annual programme of events and other administrative costs. The bid requests £214k for the Council, direct from the ESF call and offers £177k match funding from RiDO, this being the cost of two direct posts. These posts are provided from within existing RiDO budgets.
- 6.3 A decision on this funding bid is expected shortly.
- 6.4 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the content of this report.

## **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

- 7.1 No legal implications arising from the content of this report.

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 There are no direct HR implications arising from this report.
- 8.2 However, as the Council recruits a large proportion of its workforce from within the local labour market; improvements in skills for employment and progression will contribute to maintaining/improving the external talent pipeline, which in turn will assist the Council with future workforce and resourcing demands.

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 9.1 The Employment and Skills Plan identifies a range of key priorities and actions which, if prioritised in terms of funding and delivery, will improve the range and breadth of learning opportunities and support available for vulnerable young people and adults to move into learning and employment.

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

- 10.1 An Initial Equality Screening Template is attached as Appendix 3.

## 11. Implications for Partners

11.1 This is an RTP Strategy approved by the Board on the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2019 after widespread consultation. The RTP will be fully involved in monitoring of delivery through the Business Growth Board and its Employment and Skills sub-group.

## 12. Risks and Mitigation

12.1 That there is insufficient funding to allow full delivery on the Plan.

12.2 **Mitigation:** There is funding available for Employment and Skills from the Sheffield City Region and Central Government. Officers will ensure that all efforts are made to secure these funds for Rotherham. An ESF bid has already been submitted for the “Business Education Alliance” project, in partnership with other areas within the City Region, where an approval decision is expected soon.

12.3 That Rotherham is in a very competitive market for attracting and securing inward investment.

12.4 **Mitigation** – Rotherham having a pool of skilled and enterprising workers will be a major benefit when promoting the borough as an investment location.

## 13. Accountable Officer(s)

Simeon Leach, Economic Strategy & Partnerships Manager, x23828

Approvals obtained on behalf of:-

|  | <b>Named Officer</b> | <b>Date</b> |
|--|----------------------|-------------|
| Chief Executive  | Sharon Kemp          | 24/05/19    |
| Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services<br>(S.151 Officer) | Judith Badger        | 22/05/19    |
| Head of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)                          | Bal Nahal            | 20/05/19    |
| Assistant Director of Human Resources (if appropriate)               | John Crutchley       | 14/02/19    |
| Head of Procurement (if appropriate)                                 | Karen Middlebrook    | 30/04/19    |

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