

Summary Sheet

Council Report

Improving Places Select Commission – 20th December 2018

Title

Rotherham Employment and Skills Plan

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

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Paul Woodcock, Acting Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment

Report Author

Simeon Leach – Economic Policy and Partnerships Manager

Ward(s) Affected

All

Executive Summary

This report sets out the main points of the draft Rotherham Employment and Skills Plan and seeks the Commission's comments on it, to be incorporated into the final draft.

Recommendations

That the Commission feedback their comments on the draft Plan, so these can be considered for inclusion in the final version that is recommended to Cabinet.

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)

Background Papers

The Rotherham Economic Growth Plan

<W:\Economic Development\ECONOMIC GROWTH PLAN final.pdf>

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Final approval sits with Council Cabinet and the Business Growth Board of the Rotherham Together Partnership.

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Title: Rotherham Employment & Skills Plan

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Commission feedback their comments on the draft Plan, so these can be considered for inclusion in the final version that is recommended to Cabinet.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Rotherham Economic Growth Plan was approved in 2015. This contained two “employability and skills” themes
 - Skills for employment and progression
 - Inclusion, well-being and employment
- 2.2 With the increasing importance of skills in attracting investment and growing indigenous businesses, as well as ensuring local residents can access employment opportunities, it was agreed by The Rotherham Together Partnership (RTP) that Rotherham required a separate Employment and Skills Plan.
- 2.3 Responsibility for the production of the plan sits with RiDO, within the Council, supported by the Employability and Skills sub-group of the Business Growth Board.
- 2.4 The Employment and Skills Plan will build on the existing Rotherham Economic Growth Plan (2015-25) and also seek to link to and complement the Sheffield City Region’s Strategic Economic Plan and its Thematic Priority on Skills, Employment and Education.

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 The Plan is a joint Council/RTP document, with monitoring of its implementation the responsibility of the Employability and Skills sub-group of the Business Growth Board.
- 3.2 The Plan has two main objectives
 - A workforce with the skills and experience to support Rotherham’s economic growth and secure investment
 - Supporting people back into sustainable employment

3.3 Consultation was carried out with local businesses, providers and support organisations, by Sheffield Hallam University (SHU), to identify the main issues facing Rotherham in regard to employability and skills. The full findings are attached to the report as Appendix 2, but headline findings include:-

- Skills shortages and recruitment difficulties for certain sectors.
- Employers (un)willing to accommodate employees with multiple needs.
- Most job information 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”.
- Need more employer involvement in developing the Rotherham skills and employment offer.
- In work poverty.

3.4 Improved skill levels can underpin strong and sustainable economic and employment growth, while supporting an increase in the levels and quality of employment for local residents. To achieve this, Rotherham partners will seek to deliver the following priorities:

- Provide the support that Rotherham residents require to access the local job market and to maximise progression within their careers.
- Assist businesses to source the training they require to unlock new jobs, new markets and raise productivity.
- Develop enterprising young people and jobseekers, aware of the career options available to them and the breadth of local employment opportunities, including apprenticeships.
- Use the University Centre Rotherham (UCR) and other local providers to drive an increase in the number of residents with Level 4 and higher qualifications.
- Ensure that (young) people can find a job that meets their aspirations within Rotherham or the wider Sheffield City Region.
- Broker close linkages between Rotherham based enterprises, many of whom are successful and growing, and Rotherham schools and colleges, to provide the workforce of the future – including teacher/industry placements and business involvement in curriculum delivery.

3.5 The Plan includes a “delivery plan” setting out the actions needed to deliver these priorities, with each action having an outcome and timescale, which it will be monitored against.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 4.1 Produce and implement a Rotherham Employment & Skills Plan - 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 Plan will also ensure that Rotherham's employment and skills activities dovetail with those of the wider City Region.
- 4.2 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.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The Plan is to be produced by RiDO, in conjunction with colleagues in CYPS and the Employment & Skills sub-group of the Rotherham Business Growth Board.
- 5.2 An early draft of the Plan has been discussed and endorsed by an SLT/Assistant Director meeting.
- 5.3 SHU were retained to discuss with stakeholders, the main issues that Rotherham, its businesses and residents face regarding skills and employability.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 6.1 The full Plan is scheduled to go to Cabinet for consideration in February 2019.

7. Finance and Procurement Implications

- 7.1 The successful delivery of this Rotherham Employment and Skills Plan is dependent on the availability of external funding. The latest ESF funding call for the period 2020-2023 has funding of £15.7m available for the wider Sheffield City Region. In addition, the Council has submitted an ESF funding bid for the "Business & Education" project, including a Skills and Employability officer post. Confirmation as to whether this funding bid has been approved is expected in January 2019.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 No legal implications arising from the content of this report.

9. Human Resource Implications

9.1 There are no direct HR implications arising from this report.

9.2 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.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 The report and Plan covers the key priority areas for the borough with regard to young people and vulnerable adults.

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 None

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 None

13. Risks and Mitigation

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

13.2 **Mitigation:** There is funding available for Employment and Skills from the SCR 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, with other areas within the City Region.

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

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

14. Accountable Officer(s)

14.1 Simeon Leach, Economy Strategy & Partnerships Manager, x23828

Approvals obtained from:-

Human Resources – John Crutchley

Legal Services – Lesley Doyle

Finance And Customer Services - Jon Baggaley