



Draft Report of the Education & Skills Policy Development and Delivery Committee

Cabinet - 14 December 2017

City Deal Skills

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Purpose: | To provide feedback on progress to date in developing policy on education and skills to meet the challenges of the City Deal |
| Policy Framework: | Education & Skills corporate priority; City Deal |
| Consultation: | Access to Services, Finance, Legal. |
| Recommendation(s): | <p>It is recommended that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Cabinet consider the feedback provided to date in developing policy on education and skills to meet the challenges of the City Deal and consider and endorse the conclusions identified in this report.2) The Leader, Cabinet Member, Chief Executive and senior officers raise the matters highlighted in this report in the relevant partnership arrangements that are in place and seek to introduce the governance arrangements outlined in this report when these are agreed as a way forward for the City Deal. |
| Report Author: | Chris Sivers |
| Finance Officer: | Sarah Willis |
| Legal Officer: | Stephanie Williams |
| Access to Services Officer: | Catherine Window |

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Education & Skills Policy Development and Delivery Committee (PDDC) has been meeting regularly since July 2017. It has cross-party membership and is a forum for Council Members and officers to work together to form policy.
- 1.2 This PDDC determined that its work programme would focus on the implications and opportunities represented by the City Deal and the implications for Swansea. Members have particularly been concerned about issues of pace and scale, as well as ensuring that disadvantaged people are able to benefit from the jobs and growth that the initiative represents.
- 1.3 The Committee has had presentations and discussions about the City Deal itself, overview of the local authority role, regional bodies' roles, curriculum changes, Learning City initiatives and also the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership (RLSP).
- 1.4 Future work programme items include: Pioneer Schools update, views of children and young people on STEM subjects and teacher training implications.
- 1.5 The purpose of this paper is to outline expectations from Swansea of what an optimal delivery vehicle would be for ensuring we have arrangements in place to meet the skills needs to effectively deliver the City Deal, and to ensure that local people are given every opportunity to be a part of those changes.

2. Opportunity

- 2.1 From the discussions amongst Committee members awareness has been raised, as well as questions about how to best manage the future arrangements for the City Deal.
- 2.2 We believe that the optimal delivery model would have the following functions:
 - Undertake needs analysis on a regular basis, working with the business communities involved in future growth
 - Balance the needs analysis for the City Deal alongside existing analysis of needs for skills more widely
 - Undertake predictive modelling for future education and skills needs across the curriculum
 - Liaise with regional education provision to ensure aspirations for quality education delivery and any curriculum changes are managed effectively in a collaborative manner
 - Manage relationships and funding contracts with Welsh Government effectively

- Identify, develop and apply for additional funding to address skills needs
 - Coordinate actions at a local level to raise aspirations for skills needed in the businesses of the future (e.g. especially STEM subjects) to parents, schools and children
 - Ensuring liaison and coordination with local arrangements through Wellbeing Assessments, Wellbeing Plans and other local partnerships
 - Oversee the effective alignment of school curriculum options and skills needs, ensuring pathways to employment are outlined for every age group
 - Ensure there are options for individuals to upskill and take their learning and qualifications to the next level, at all ages
 - Oversee the alignment of new apprenticeships to future skills needs
 - Identify options and liaise with providers to further enhance teaching and learning capability in education settings at all levels
 - Commission providers to deliver responses to meet needs
 - Create and ensure alignment with City of Learning initiatives
 - Monitor performance of progress to meeting needs, and to ensure effective outcomes for learners, identifying areas for improvement
 - Involve children and young people in the development of new initiatives and ensuring they are able to exercise their right to have a say in decisions that affect them.
- 2.3 The key points here are about effective overall pathways starting in early years' provision, and the wider needs analysis. The current remit of the RLSP is very narrow – based around skills delivery for 16-19 year olds, and with the scale and pace of change needed to deliver City Deal, a wider focus will be required.
- 2.4 If the above are agreed as the functions that need to be carried out, then the form can follow. It is suggested that given the need for both an overarching strategy and coordination function between businesses and learning providers as well as a detailed operational function to commission responses and monitor their outcomes, two types of body may be appropriate – a strategic coordination group and a commissioning group.
- 2.5 Given that the overriding concern is ensuring effective educational pathways from the start of children's education, and that the concerns outlined here relate to whole populations, the lead organisations with responsibility for overseeing outcomes for populations are local authorities and with the high profile nature of these sets of initiatives, a democratic mandate and Council Member involvement is highly appropriate.
- 2.6 Whilst it is recognised that there is limited involvement by senior Council officers in the RLSP (one for the six authority areas), we believe this inadequately reflects the need to ensure whole Council approach to

supporting and changing the skills base to meet the challenges of the City Deal. Greater representation of all four Councils will be essential, and given the governance role of Cabinet Members, it is appropriate that they take on a similar role with the RLSP, democratising the work of this partnership in a very visible fashion.

2.7 Current RLSP arrangements are on the basis of the six local authorities in South West Wales: Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion and Powys. However, the Joint Committee that has been established to oversee the development of the City Deal is on the basis of the four local authorities that are signatories to that: Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire. Ceredigion and Powys have a separate regeneration partnership arrangement via the different governance arrangements for these two regeneration partnerships, it will be important to ensure that the boundaries for skills partnerships are coterminous. Recently it has been agreed that the RLSP will have separation in its working arrangements to ensure coherence with the two different regeneration partnerships.

2.8 Therefore, there could be two bodies to oversee this work – a commissioning group reporting to a strategic skills board that reports to the City Deal Joint Committee. They could be based on a footprint of the four authority signatures to the City Deal and could have Terms of Reference that include the following.

2.9 **Strategic Board**

- Ensures democratic oversight and accountability
- Is held accountable by the Joint Committee for ensuring delivery of education and skills to meet the needs of the City Deal arrangements
- Holds commissioners accountable for delivery of these arrangements
- Involves businesses, learning providers and elected Members in developing the strategy for education pathways and directing commissioners about appropriate responses
- Includes key policy makers from Welsh Government in this field
- Ensures learning at all ages is considered as part of the processes, including learning for higher level skills
- Provides effective oversight for use of the apprenticeship levy funds
- Ensures effective voice of children is considered as part of decision making, and in keeping the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Is accountable through local authority scrutiny arrangements
- Has the authority to direct learning organisations, schools and local authorities to carry out the functions necessary to deliver the aspirations.

2.10 **Commissioning Group**

- Delivers according to an established commissioning cycle, commissioning for outcomes
- Ensures effective involvement of providers in a Forum but not on the commissioning group, to maintain transparency in decision making

- Ensures children and young people are able to exercise their right to be heard in decision making as part of the commissioning cycle
- Considers innovative routes to investment, including social investment as well as grant funding and sponsorship
- Ensures value for money in commissioning arrangements
- Delivers needs analysis and predictive modelling for future skills needs, on a short, medium and long term basis
- Identifies appropriate opportunities to build capacity of learning providers across the age ranges
- Ensures effective liaison with regional educational improvement initiatives
- Coordinates with local groups awareness raising on City Deal and skills initiatives, particularly promoting options to underrepresented groups.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 The Regional Learning & Skills Partnership has been providing a role coordinating post-compulsory and tertiary education for many years and covers the six local authority areas, as well as involving businesses and learning providers. There is little involvement of education professionals, with a single representative from one authority representing all the schools in the six authority areas. This will be inadequate to undertake the role outlined above. The focus has been as a delivery body on behalf of Welsh Government, and has insufficient accountability locally, seeming distant to local arrangements. In some cases, local learning partnerships have been put in place to address this gap. There is no wider strategic function, for example, in promoting to children and young people and there is little or no involvement of children and young people in their work.
- 3.2 The RLSP has good business representation and many businesses are involved either on the Board itself or in the industry cluster groups and this can be built on to ensure that the growth industries contained in the City Deal are well represented. The Partnership has also undertaken to raise awareness amongst primary and secondary schools and headteachers alongside Swansea staff.
- 3.3 The RSLP also shows good data capacity and capability, which can also be built upon as well as the established mechanisms for developing skills needs assessments.
- 3.4 The precise methodology by which the Strategic Board and Commissioning Group will undertake the needs assessment is to be determined in future. However, it is expected that they will engage with members of the business community, including those involved in growth areas such as the digital sector and use their skills and knowledge through consultation, secondment, etc. This would support identification of needs and capacity building among providers.

3.5 Therefore, the current arrangements provide capacity and capability to build upon, but will need to be reformed to meet future needs.

4. Equality and Engagement Implications

4.1 None arising from this report. If Cabinet choose to progress with the model outlined, then the Council's EIA process will be applied. We hope that the enhanced involvement and engagement of children and young people will have a positive impact on decision-making and supports this Council's commitment to Children's Rights.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 None arising from this report. However, if Cabinet choose to progress with a different model for the RLSP arrangements, there could be resource implications at that point. Due to the challenging financial outlook, it must be assumed that any additional costs incurred as a result of these proposals will be met through existing resources, or through the introduction of additional savings proposals.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 None arising from this report. However, if a different governance set up is agreed going forward, legal advice should be sought at this stage as to the detail of how this will operate.

Background Papers: None

Appendices: None