

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Cabinet**

**11 November 2014**

---

**Subject: Wiltshire Education, Employment & Skills Strategy 2014 - 2020**

**Cabinet Members: Cllr Fleur de Rhé-Philippe - Economic  
Development, Skills and Strategic Transport**

**Cllr Laura Mayes, Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

**Key Decision: No**

---

#### **Executive Summary**

This report is intended to update Cabinet on the development and implementation planning of a new integrated Education, Employment & Skills Strategy for Wiltshire which has been developed on a multi-agency, cross-Council and inclusive partnership basis led by the Wiltshire Education, Employment & Skills Board. Through this update we wish to raise the profile of this new Strategy and to gain endorsement from Cabinet. Please see **Appendix 1** of this report for the Executive Summary version of the Strategy.

The Education, Employment & Skills Strategy for Wiltshire produced by Wiltshire Council on behalf of the Wiltshire Education, Employment & Skills Board will enable us to take a holistic and prioritised approach towards the aim of integration of the Education, Employment & Skills agenda in Wiltshire. This new strategy identifies a shared vision, strategic objectives and priority actions to help Wiltshire Council and its partners on the Board to create an environment that will:

- Support schools, the Further Education (FE) sector, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and training providers to increase participation in education, training and employment.
- Support the development of a skilled and competitive workforce that meets the needs of employers both now and in the future.
- Drive business development and economic growth.
- Co-ordinate collaborative partnership working to achieve common goals.
- Provide synergy between emerging education and skills policies translating into practice.
- Support fulfilment of a number of statutory duties in respect of this agenda area.

The Strategy will guide how key partners work together to respond to Wiltshire's economic growth priorities whilst developing an inclusive economy. Implementation of this strategy will put employers at the heart of the employment and skills/education system in Wiltshire to drive growth in the Wiltshire economy and provide a structured and co-ordinated approach to sustained engagement in education, training or work,

across all age and client groups.

## **Proposals**

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Note the progress made towards integration of the Education, Employment and Skills agenda to date and the strategic direction in place and proposed activity to further this.
- (ii) Consider the Action Plans contained within the Full Version of the Strategy which outline the important role for Wiltshire Council in this agenda and directly influence the work programme for relevant services of Wiltshire Council and a number of strategic partners. Please refer to the Apprenticeship Growth Plan and the Increasing Participation & Employment Plan laid out as Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 of the Full Version of the Strategy document (Appendix 2 starts at page 53 and Appendix 3 starts at page 58). Please see **Appendix 2** of this report for the Full Strategy document.
- (iii) Endorse and champion the Strategy as key to improving the Education, Employment and Skills base in Wiltshire, to ensure a focus on Education, Employment & Skills priorities across all our work.
- (iv) Recommend that this Strategy is taken to the Public Service Board for consideration/endorsement.

## **Reason for Proposals**

Wiltshire needs to position itself so it can respond to the education, employment and skills challenges it is facing and the fact that there has never been a busier time in relation to key policy developments impacting on this agenda area. The Strategy provides the clear strategic direction necessary to support shared ownership of this agenda and to build on existing strengths, maximise opportunities, affect change and improvement.

**Dr Carlton Brand, Corporate Director**  
**Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director**

## Wiltshire Council

### Cabinet

11 November 2014

---

**Subject:** Wiltshire Education, Employment & Skills Strategy 2014 - 2020

**Cabinet Members:** Cllr Fleur de Rhé-Philippe - Economic  
Development, Skills and Strategic Transport

Cllr Laura Mayes – Children’s Services

**Key Decision:** No

---

### Purpose of Report

1. To update Cabinet on the development and implementation planning of a new integrated Education, Employment & Skills Strategy for Wiltshire which has been developed on a multi-agency, cross-Council and inclusive partnership basis led by the Wiltshire Education, Employment & Skills Board. Through this update we wish to raise the profile of this new Strategy and to gain endorsement from Cabinet.
2. An Executive Summary version of the Strategy is available as **Appendix 1** of this report. The Full Version of the Strategy, including information on the process for developing the strategy, the policy context, how it will be implemented and how success/impact will be measured, is available as **Appendix 2** of this report. The Full Version also includes the following:
  - SWOT Analysis
  - Apprenticeship Growth Plan
  - Increasing Participation & Employment Plan
  - Performance Dashboard
  - Equality Impact Assessment
  - Education, Employment & Skills Board Terms of Reference

### Relevance to the Council’s Business Plan

3. The Strategy has been developed within the context of the current national, Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) and local policy context. In doing so it takes account of key policy announcements and developments in the field of Education, Employment & Skills. The Council’s Business Plan 2013-1017 has featured strongly in the development of the Strategy as has the SWLEP’s Strategic Economic Plan, Growth Deal and European Structural Investment Fund submissions.
4. Specifically, the Strategy supports all three priorities within the Council’s Business Plan:
  - Protect those who are most vulnerable
  - Boost the local economy

- Bring communities together to enable and support them to do more for themselves

## **Background**

5. In July 2013 an options paper prepared jointly by Children's Services and Economic Development & Planning was taken to both the 13-19 Strategic Board and the Employment & Skills Board. With a view to enable full integration of the Education, Employment & Skills agenda building on the collaborative achievements over the previous three years between the two services, both Boards opted to align the 13-19 Strategic Board and its sub groups with the Employment and Skills Board, expanding to become the Education, Employment and Skills Board with a direct relationship with the Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in recognition of the policy change around the LEP and function of the LEP being key in driving change in the Education and Skills agenda linking with early national changes.
6. The new Wiltshire Education, Employment and Skills Board met for the first time in January 2014 following the merger of the 13-19 Strategic Board and the Employment and Skills Board with a new sub-group structure established to cover the full breadth of the agenda. The changes to the strategic partnership landscape for Education, Employment & Skills, and in particular, the move to full integration, has created a more coherent understanding of the Education, Employment & Skills agenda and in doing so provides greater opportunities for collaboration across the full LEP geography.
7. In February 2014 the Education, Employment & Skills Board convened a Strategy, Policy & Data Group charged with responsibility for developing an Education, Employment & Skills Strategy for Wiltshire. The Group drew its membership from lead officers in the relevant services of Wiltshire Council including Economic Development & Planning, Operational and Non-operation Children's Services, Public Health (including Corporate Research), Adult Social Care, Adult & Community Learning, Organisational Development & Learning and representatives from partner agencies and organisations including Wiltshire College, the Community Learning Trust, the Skills Funding Agency, Department for Work and Pensions, Wiltshire Business Support Service, Federation of Small Businesses, local secondary schools, Voluntary and Community Sector organisations, and the GWP Training Provider network.

## **Main Considerations for the Council**

### Purpose of the Strategy

8. The Education, Employment & Skills Strategy for Wiltshire produced by Wiltshire Council on behalf of the Wiltshire Education, Employment & Skills Board will enable a holistic and prioritised approach towards integration of the Education, Employment & Skills agenda in Wiltshire. This new strategy identifies a shared vision, strategic objectives and priority actions to help Wiltshire Council and its partners on the Board to create an environment that will:
  - Support schools, the Further Education (FE) sector, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and training providers to increase participation in education, training and employment.

- Support the development of a skilled and competitive workforce that meets the needs of employers both now and in the future.
  - Drive business development and economic growth.
  - Co-ordinate collaborative partnership working to achieve common goals.
  - Provide synergy between emerging education and skills policies translating into practice.
  - Support fulfilment of a number of statutory duties in respect of this agenda area.
9. The Strategy will guide how key partners work together to respond to Wiltshire's economic growth priorities whilst developing an inclusive economy. Implementation of this strategy will put employers at the heart of the employment and skills/education system in Wiltshire to drive growth in the Wiltshire economy and provide a structured and co-ordinated approach to sustained engagement in education, training or work across all age and client groups. The Strategy identifies five Strategic Objectives each with their own set of priorities and high level actions:
1. Encourage appropriate aspiration, increase employability and attainment within the current and future workforce so individuals can achieve their potential and meet current and emerging skills needs.
  2. Reduce barriers to engagement/ participation and increase social mobility.
  3. Reduce the incidence of repeat NEET/Workless episodes and prevent sustained disengagement.
  4. Support employers to develop their workforce to sustain and grow their business.
  5. Foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship within the future workforce.

#### Process for the development of the Strategy

10. This Strategy is owned by the Wiltshire Education, Employment & Skills Board, a private sector led partnership that aims to put employers at the heart of the employment and skills/education system in Wiltshire to drive growth in the Wiltshire economy. As such, this is a partnership Strategy produced by Wiltshire Council on behalf of the Education, Employment & Skills Board. The methodology for the production of the Strategy comprised:
- A desk based review of the policy context;
  - An analysis of data on Wiltshire in the context of Education, Employment and Skills;
  - Interactive workshop sessions with partners and stakeholders to identify and agree the Strategic Objectives, Priorities and High Level Actions;
  - A wider consultation exercise including the general public ran from 26 August to 10 October to gain further input and feedback on the draft Strategy;
  - Ahead of being considered by Cabinet on 11 November, an information briefing was provided to Children's Select Committee on 14 October with an invitation to the 16-19 Task Group to input to the continued development of the Apprenticeship Growth Plan and Increasing Participation & Employment Plan. Evidence was provided to the 16-19 Task Group's meeting on 16 October. Please see **Appendix 3** of this

report for comments provided on the 16-19 Task Group's draft report to help inform Cabinet's response.

11. Together, through a series of workshops with members of the Strategy, Policy & Data Group and the established subgroups to the Board (Learning and Working in Wiltshire Group and Apprenticeship Growth Group), existing strategies that interface with this agenda were reviewed alongside relevant data sets, establishing a single robust evidence base from which the Board could identify the Strategic Objectives and Priorities for investment/intervention. Further to this, the Board has been supported to develop its system for measuring the future success/impact of the Strategy. A public consultation period ran from 26 August to 10 October to seek wider input and feedback on the draft Strategy prior to it being finalised. Consultation responses and discussion points raised by the 16-19 Task Group were carefully considered and a series of changes/inclusions were recommended to the Education, Employment & Skills Board at its 21 October meeting. The Board agreed to these recommendations being incorporated in the Final Strategy which is now with Cabinet for consideration/endorsement. Prior to publication there is an opportunity to take on board any further recommendations that may arise from Cabinet's consideration of the Strategy and the recommendations made in the 16-19 Task Group's Report.

#### Benefits of the Strategy

12. Benefits of having a single integrated Education, Employment & Skills Strategy include:
  - Clarification of key issues and identification of objectives.
  - Identification and understanding of partner responsibilities.
  - Supporting a range of statutory duties in this agenda area to be fulfilled.
  - Co-ordination of resources and effort.
  - Creation of the environment for employers to influence and inform the skills agenda and education and training provision.
  - Development of a co-ordinated offer for employers and individuals that is appropriate and accessible.
  - Shared/joint influencing of external/national policy and resources.

Furthermore, this new Strategy provides a timely refresh and integration of the Wiltshire Work and Skills Plan (2010), the Raising the Participation Age Strategy (2012) and the NEET Reduction Action Plan (2012).

#### Implementing our Strategy and measuring success

13. Two of the five subgroups belonging to the Education, Employment and Skills Board will be taking forward implementation and delivery of the Action Plans which support the Strategic Objectives. The Apprenticeship Growth Group will be taking forward implementation and delivery of the Apprenticeship Growth Plan. This group aims to provide a co-ordinated, partnership approach to increasing the number of Apprenticeships in Wiltshire and maximising their uptake. The Learning and Working in Wiltshire Group will be taking forward implementation and delivery of the Increasing Participation and Employment Plan. This group aims to develop an inclusive economy that will provide equality of economic opportunity for all in Wiltshire. Membership of both of these groups is drawn from a wide and representative stakeholder base. In the short term these groups will

be developing the finer detail of both the Apprenticeship Growth Plan and Increasing Participation & Employment Plan including any baseline and target measures as appropriate.

14. The system for measuring success will be based on the following three components:
- (i) Monitoring – We will use monitoring to review any action due for the previous quarter, identify any issues/ challenges, understand the implications for the next quarter and use this information to plan for the next quarter.
  - (ii) Performance measurement – We will adopt a ‘Balanced Scorecard’ approach, developing a system that complements our strategic direction. This will be based on measuring the extent to which we achieve our strategic objectives. To support this, a performance dashboard has been developed which has identified a suite of performance indicators, including a ‘top twenty’ KPI list which will be used as a monitoring and performance tool. Our performance will be benchmarked.
  - (iii) Evaluation – We will adopt a systematic approach to evaluation for individual projects, programmes and key interventions.

### **Safeguarding Implications**

15. Supporting children and young people to progress well, achieve educationally and successfully access education, employment or training opportunities is key to keeping them safe from harm. Young people who are not in education, employment or training are more likely to be at risk from harm, including for example Child Sexual Exploitation. The Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, Looked After Children and Care Leavers (single inspection framework) includes a clear focus on education, employment and training. In addition, evidence shows that more vulnerable children and young people including those Looked After, Care Leavers and those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities are more likely to be at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).
16. This Strategy seeks to increase the participation of children and young people in education, employment or training and therefore improve safeguarding through a stronger focus on prevention, early intervention and targeted work to meet the particular needs of vulnerable groups.

### **Public Health Implications**

17. Increasing the participation of young people and adults in education, training or work is likely to result in improved public health outcomes in Wiltshire. Young people and adults who are not in education, employment or training are more likely to have low skills, experience long-term unemployment and financial difficulties as well as suffer from poor health or depression.

### **Environmental and Climate Change Considerations**

18. There are no identified environmental and Climate Change impacts within this report.

## **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

19. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the Council to promote Equality of Opportunity, Good Relations and Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken to support the development of the Strategy (this is contained within the more detailed version of the Strategy document). The Education, Employment and Skills Strategy is fundamentally designed to promote equality of opportunity and to ensure that all groups are able to contribute and benefit from an inclusive economy.
20. None of the protected groups, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, are thought to be at risk of adverse impact as a result of the Strategy. It may be possible that the outcomes of the Strategy will affect sections of the community in different ways by specifically targeting particular groups of individuals to overcome disadvantage and inequality. A significant number of priorities under the strategic objectives will specifically support individuals who are at risk of socio-economic disadvantage and may have multiple protected characteristics. The Equality Impact Assessment document is a working document which will be updated at various stages of the implementation phase of the Strategy. The Impact Assessment which has been signed off for compliance corporately will be published on the Council's website. Outcomes of monitoring will be provided to the Lead Equalities Officer at Wiltshire Council who has been consulted in the completion of this Impact Assessment.

## **Risk Assessment**

21. A comprehensive SWOT Analysis was undertaken to support the identification of priorities. As part of this, risks have been identified in the form of existing weaknesses and potential threats. These have been brought together in a dedicated section of the Strategy that defines the Education, Employment & Skills Challenge in Wiltshire.

### **Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken**

22. By not moving forwards with implementation of the Strategy Wiltshire will be missing out on the obvious benefits a single integrated approach to Education, Employment & Skills affords in terms of partnership working. There is an additional risk of not being able to address the weaknesses and threats identified nor the ability to build on our strengths and maximise opportunities. Ultimately, failure to sufficiently address the challenges identified could result in poor Education, Employment & Skills outcomes which in turn will impact on our ability to meet economic growth priorities.
23. More specifically, it may negatively impact our ability to meet statutory responsibilities to encourage, enable and assist young people to participate in education or training as set out in the Education Act 1996, Education and Skills Act 2008 and Apprenticeships, Skills and Children and Learning Act 2009 and subsequent legislation and statutory guidance. It could also negatively impact our ability to meet Ofsted requirements as set out in the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection; Looked After Children and Care



Leavers (single inspection framework), the review of the effectiveness of education and training provision for 16-19 year olds and the framework for school inspection, including local authority school improvement arrangements.

**Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks**

24. As with any Strategy, there are potential risks around ensuring the adequate funding and resourcing of the strategy to deliver the required outcomes and raising people's expectations about what will be different and the benefits they will see as a result of the Strategy. There will always be the potential risk of external factors beyond our control, policy developments, national/European funding changes that could influence/impact our ability to deliver the Strategy.
25. In considering these risks it is important to note that the Strategy is a partnership Strategy and is not intended to be resourced wholly by Wiltshire Council or any other partner singularly, the Strategy emphasises the importance of aligning the resources of partner organisations to achieving a shared vision, objectives etc. A joined up partnership approach alone will yield significant benefits and efficiencies/avoid duplication, overlap, etc.
26. In terms of specific significant sources of funding that will be used to deliver against some of the priorities/high level actions that sit under each of the objectives we have taken a partnership approach to identifying those priorities and securing the required investment in the following ways:
  - Ensuring alignment with the submission made to the European Structural Investment Fund (the next round of European funding which has the same life span as this strategy 2014-2020 and has both a Skills for Growth and Skills for Inclusion focus).
  - Ensuring alignment with the recently approved City Deal and wider Growth Deal.
  - Ensuring alignment with the Council's Business Plan and alignment with Service Plans of relevant Council services operating in this agenda area.
  - Ensuring alignment with the relevant Strategies and Plans of the Children and Young People's Trust, Health and Wellbeing Board.
  - Ensuring alignment with the Action for Wiltshire Programme for which a new Phase 3 has been agreed and budget committed (this is a Wiltshire Assembly programme led by Wiltshire Council).
27. Additionally, Wiltshire Council and partners have a strong track record of securing external funding and will continue to identify funding streams that could be used to support our Strategy. The Strategy also outlines ongoing programmes of work/projects, for which there is already funding secured.

**Financial Implications**

28. No consultants or other external resource have been engaged in the production of this Strategy and any continued development of the Strategy and Action Plans will be undertaken by staff already employed by Wiltshire Council working closely with partner organisations.

## **Legal Implications**

29. There are no identified legal implications within this update report.

## **Options Considered**

30. A full range of options were discussed throughout the development of the Strategy and associated Action Plans (Apprenticeship Growth Plan and Increasing Participation & Employment Plan). Significant early consultation had been undertaken in developing the document between February and July 2014, including workshops with Board and sub-group members and setting up a dedicated Strategy, Policy and Data Group to develop the Strategy with an extensive, representative membership. A wider public consultation ran from 26 August to 10 October providing the opportunity to gain wider input to the development of the Strategy.

## **Conclusions**

31. Wiltshire needs to position itself so it can respond to the Education, Employment and Skills Challenges it is facing and the fact that there has never been a busier time in relation to key policy developments impacting on this agenda area. We believe our Strategy provides the clear strategic direction necessary to support shared ownership of this agenda and to build on existing strengths, maximise opportunities, affect change and improvement.
32. Cabinet is asked to:
- (i) Note the progress made towards integration of the Education, Employment and Skills agenda to date and the strategic direction in place and proposed activity to further this.
  - (ii) Consider the Action Plans contained within the Full Version of the Strategy which outline the important role for Wiltshire Council in this agenda and directly influence the work programme for relevant services of Wiltshire Council and a number of strategic partners. Please refer to the Apprenticeship Growth Plan and the Increasing Participation & Employment Plan laid out as Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 of the Full Version of the Strategy document (Appendix 2 starts at page 53 and Appendix 3 starts at page 58). Please see **Appendix 2** of this report for the Full Strategy document.
  - (iii) Endorse and champion the Strategy as key to improving the Education, Employment and Skills base in Wiltshire to ensure a focus on Education, Employment & Skills priorities across all our work.
  - (iv) Recommend that this Strategy is taken to the Public Service Board for consideration/endorsement.

**Alistair Cunningham**

**Associate Director Economic Development & Planning**

**Julia Cramp**

**Associate Director Commissioning, Performance & School Effectiveness**

### **Report Authors:**

**Haylea Asadi**, Employment & Skills Manager, Economic Development & Planning

Email: [haylea.asadi@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:haylea.asadi@wiltshire.gov.uk)

CM09589/F

Tel: 01225 718588

**James Fortune**, Lead Commissioner, Children's Services

Email: [james.fortune@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:james.fortune@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Tel: 01225 713341

Date of Report: 30 October 2014

---

## **Background Papers:**

13-19 Strategic Board Options Paper, Tuesday 17 July 2013

## **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 - Executive Summary: Wiltshire Education, Employment & Skills Strategy 2014-2020

Appendix 2 - Full Version: Wiltshire Education, Employment & Skills Strategy 2014-2020

Appendix 3 - 16-19 Task Group's draft report