

**ADULT LEARNING AND SKILLS STRATEGY FRAMEWORK**

*To:* **Cabinet**

*Date:* **22<sup>nd</sup> May 2012**

*From:* **Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment**

*Electoral division(s):* **All**

*Forward Plan ref:* **N/a** *Key decision:* **No**

*Purpose:* **To outline and seek approval for the draft Adult Learning and Skills Strategy Framework for consultation.**

*Recommendation:* **To approve the draft Adult Learning and Skills Strategy Framework and its four priorities for consultation.**

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Improving skill levels is a vital part of maintaining and developing the competitive position of Cambridgeshire in the global economy. The County's performance in improving skills to meet the needs of business improved before the recession and this has demonstrated an ability which we can build on. Given the current economic climate, this is now more important than ever.
- 1.2 Despite this success and although the percentage of the working population with various qualification levels has increased, this needs to be accelerated. An important part of achieving this and driving up skills in Cambridgeshire is to have a clear strategy.

## **2. MAIN ISSUES**

- 2.1 To address these issues, a draft Adult Learning and Skills Strategy Framework has been developed as a contextual document that details the County Council's priorities for skills development. This has been developed by a group of officers from across the Council representing all the Directorates that work with the skills agenda.
- 2.2 The Executive Summary of the strategy is attached as Appendix 1. This contains four key priorities and a series of actions that will be needed to achieve these. Some of these actions are made operational in three other strategies: the Apprenticeship Strategy, the Child Poverty Strategy and the proposals for raising the participation age in schools. There is also an important link to the Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP's) work on skills.
- 2.3 The four key priorities outlined in the Strategy are:

Priority 1: Improve individual aspirations and skills across Cambridgeshire so our young people and adults can succeed in the labour market.

Priority 2: To make sure future employees know what employers are looking for.

Priority 3: To improve the responsiveness of providers to labour market needs so that provision and learners' skills acquisition are well aligned, particularly for our vulnerable groups.

Priority 4: To support and enable partners, businesses and employers to improve skills across Cambridgeshire.
- 2.4 It is planned that the Executive Summary and priorities from the draft Framework be subject to consultation with key stakeholders before being completed. Subject to the decision of Cabinet, this will be concluded as soon as possible and then be revised and the full strategy will be brought back to Cabinet for final approval.

### **3. ALIGNMENT WITH PRIORITIES AND WAYS OF WORKING**

3.1 By acting as a strategic lead and promoting the Adult Learning and Skills Strategy Framework, the County Council will be improving opportunities for young people and adults to progress into employment. The development of the skills of the young people and adults in Cambridgeshire will benefit individuals, businesses and the local economy and support the investment in growth.

#### **3.2 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

3.2.1 The development of higher skill levels across the County is vital to improve the ability for people to get jobs and therefore for the economic health of the County and country.

#### **3.3 Helping people live healthy and independent lives**

3.3.1 Reducing the educational and skill disparities will increase people's ability to get jobs and in turn to live more independent and healthy lives.

#### **3.4 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people**

3.4.1 The strategy will promote skills development for those who need it most thus protecting the most vulnerable members of our society.

#### **3.5 Ways of working**

3.5.1 Maximising our economic potential also means investing in our future workforce. This starts with further improving our educational outcomes, and ensuring more young people take part in post-16 education and training. We will also invest in improving adult skills that meet employers' needs.

### **4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

#### **4.1 Resource and Performance Implications**

4.1.1 There are no significant implications for any of the prompt questions within this category.

#### **4.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications**

4.2.1 None.

#### **4.3 Equality and Diversity Implications**

4.3.1 None.

#### **4.4 Engagement and Consultation**

4.4.1 The proposed strategy has been shared extensively with a variety of multi-agency networks including the voluntary sector, Community Learning Partnerships, provider networks and the Local Economic Partnership Skills

Strategy sub-group. It has also been shared across the County Council by the cross-Directorate Adult Learning and Skills Strategy Group.

## **5. RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the draft Adult Learning and Skills Strategy Framework and its four priorities for consultation.

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
None	.