Education and Skills Strategy:
A partnership framework for Staffordshire

Education and Skills Strategic Group

Summary of Meeting

20 June 2019
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| **1/Welcome**  
Councillor Philip White, Chair of the Strategic Group (and Cabinet Member for Employability and Skills) | PHILIP to consider membership |
| 1. Philip White welcomed representatives from across the education and skills sector. | |
| 2. He discussed the **breadth of the membership** (slide 3) and members introduced themselves. Philip agreed to consider extending membership to businesses. | |
| 3. He discussed the importance of **local democracy** and how, as cabinet member with responsibility for education and skills, he had spent his time looking and listening and shared his thoughts on:  
- many good existing structures but they are fragmented vertically  
- variations in outcomes  
- protecting our most vulnerable  
- low unemployment in the county but low skilled  
- future economy – automation  
- upskilling in work | |
| 4. He shared his **ambitions for Staffordshire** to be the best place for children to grow up where everyone has the opportunity to prosper, be healthy and happy. | |
| 5. That **education and skills is a key priority**: before, during and after school-life. | |
| 6. He referenced the changing landscape (eg, currently 55%, and rising, of 400 Staffordshire schools are now academies) and **changing roles**, where local authorities are evolving from main education provider to become:  
- Champion - for children,  
- Commissioner -  
- Convenor - of partnerships | |
| 7. He noted Staffordshire’s performance ranked amongst 152 local authorities (slide 4) and that rankings cannot show the **wealth of excellent existing practice**, which we need to capture and share. | |
| 8. He said that **we are a leadership group** with an agreed **strategic partnership framework**, come together to provide strategic leadership for education and skills in Staffordshire to:  
- shape our future **DIRECTION**  
- have a clear view of our **IDENTITY** as a place  
- drive **ASPIRATION** – clearest feedback from recent consultation  
- with a **SHARED** vision, principles and aspirations (slides 6 and 7) | ALL MEMBERS |
9. We need a **whole system approach** because if we aren’t working together, with the same principles, we cannot effect system-wide change for all 900,000 people in Staffordshire.

10. He finished by saying he would like the meetings to have one or two key speakers, from different organisations, to stimulate discussion.

### 2/Future economy – Local Industrial Strategy

**Anthony Baines, County Commissioner for Learning and Skills**

11. Tony discussed some of the successes in the Staffordshire economy:
   - fewer people with no qualifications
   - 30,000 new jobs created
   - particularly in engineering and manufacturing
   - 3,500 new businesses
   - rapid acceleration in the growth of skills over last 4 years
   - rising wages; higher disposable income

12. However, there is a **national decline in productivity** and many jobs (e.g., in retail and logistics) are being replaced by automation.

13. Tony referenced the government’s [UK Industrial Strategy](#) to boost productivity, create good jobs and increase earning power and the four **Grand Challenges** it sets out:
   - artificial intelligence and data
   - ageing society
   - clean growth
   - future of mobility (transport)

14. As part of the Industrial Strategy, the Learning Enterprise Partnership (LEP) will be required to agree a [Local Industrial Strategy covering Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent](#) that builds on local strengths.

15. Tony shared research that would affect Staffordshire’s workforce (of 470,000 adults):
   - 93% of current jobs have a digital element
   - 14% of current jobs are ripe for automation
   - A further 32% of jobs will be affected by technological change

16. Members were engaged with Tony and it was recognised the need for greater, system-wide understanding of the future of work and careers.

### 3/Aspirations

**Kerry Dove, Strategic Insight Manager**

17. Philip introduced Kerry and stated that raising aspirations across education and skills was vital.
18. Kerry explained that during the consultation on the Education and Skills Strategy, partners had repeated the importance of aspiration; and in a recent county council survey of children and young people:

- 32% felt that there were local opportunities to support their aspirations
- 63% look to their parents/carers for careers advice

19. Kerry outlined the county council’s new “Raising Aspiration” programme, of research and highlighted two elements:

a) Raising Aspiration: best practice/lessons learned

Kerry asked members and peers to discuss or send any examples of good practice on raising aspiration (call 01785 276518 or email kerry.dove@staffordshire.gov.uk).

b) Raising Aspiration: educational attainment in Staffordshire

Kerry, with Jim Pugh, discussed a qualitative research project with Staffordshire University, to work with staff and parents in four schools to help understand the fall in attainment between Key Stages 2 and 4. Starting with two primary-aged schools and their linked secondary-aged schools, the research could be extended to more schools.

c) (The other areas include a deeper analysis of national and local data and research to understand what other local authorities are doing successfully.)

20. Kerry and Jim answered a number of questions and Kerry was asked to consider including a middle and high school in the school research.

4/Our priorities

21. Members reflected on the earlier discussions and, on tables, identified what they considered were the priorities for the Education and Skills Strategy.

22. There was a broad agreement on the key priorities, which were summarised by Philip:

a) Inclusion – including all learners, vulnerable groups
b) Aspiration – including IAG for all ages, careers education, role of parents/family
c) Outcomes – educational and wider health, social, civic, etc
d) Curriculum offer – eg, consistency between all phases, input from employers and sector leaders
e) Best practice – eg, sharing successes, what can be done for “free”
f) Emotional wellbeing – including personal resilience
g) Capacity – eg, recruitment and retention, strong governance, lobbying of government

ALL MEMBERS to share examples of good practice with Kerry

KERRY to consider

ALL MEMBERS to advise Andrew of any views on the key priorities
5/Next Steps

23. Philip thanked everyone for their positive contributions and agreed to work with officers to produce key draft documents for the next meeting in October:
   - work programme
   - communications plan

24. The terms of reference include two meetings per year, but members agreed to hold an additional meeting in autumn.

25. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 2 October from 2.00 to 4.00 pm in Stafford, with informal networking and tea and coffee from 1.30 pm.

| OFFICERS  | to produce draft documents |
| ALL MEMBERS | to add to diaries |