

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee 19 December 2013

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Education Trust

Recommendation

1. That the Select Committee consider and comment on the remit and progress in the establishment and development of the Education Trust and its key activities to date.

Report of Cabinet Member for Learning & Skills

Summary

What is the Select Committee being asked to do and why?

2. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to members on the development of the Education Trust. The Committee is asked to consider the progress the Education Trust has made and comment on its future development and direction.

Report

Background

3. The Education Trust operates as the strategic arm for the learning and skills agenda for the Local Economic Partnership (LEP) and is also accountable to the Staffordshire Strategic Partnership. The Trust was established to ensure that Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire has a partnership in place which brings together all organisations that have an interest in education, training, skills and jobs.
4. The purpose of the Trust is to raise achievement, employability and aspirations amongst young people and adults in the area such that Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire gets ahead and stays ahead when it comes to education, training skills and jobs. The Terms of Reference of the Trust are contained within Appendix 1.

Development of the Trust

5. The Trust has a Board of Members from a range of representative and stakeholder bodies within the learning and skills sector at a senior level which is covered in Appendix 2. The six key aims of the trust are to:
 - a. To provide a strong **strategic influence and leadership** within the region on education, training and employability by acting as a forum for organisations, including public sector bodies, private sector businesses and third sector organisations, schools, colleges and other education and training providers.
 - b. To promote activities that seek to **raise the achievement of pupils and students** in education and training within the region.
 - c. To promote activities that seek to **raise educational and training aspirations** amongst young people, their families and advisors.
 - d. To **work through local delivery bodies** and support individual or groups of schools, colleges and other providers to raise student achievement and attainment
 - e. To provide a **network of contact** for communications and mutual support between business, public sector, third sector and educational organisations
 - f. To seek to **influence policy makers at national level** of the needs and potential of education and training within the region **to leverage resource** to the delivery agents to support the achievement of its key purpose
6. The Board is supported by an Executive Group that provides secretariat support and have recently appointed an Interim Chief Operating to strengthen the Executive Support function of the Trust and to accelerate its development and the implementation of the action plan. The post is based in Staffordshire as our stakeholder contributions along with the provision of secretariat support and also works from Stoke-on-Trent one day a week. We envisage that other Trust partners will contribute to the funding of the post in the future and as the Trust evolves and develops.

Education Trust Plan

7. The Trust established three task and finish groups led by members of the Board and the former LEP Enterprise & Skills Group as detailed in Appendix 3. The purpose of the Task Groups were to oversee the development of the Trust Plan as detailed in Appendix 4 to support the achievement of the following three priorities:
 - a. **Improving links between business and education and training providers.**
 - b. **Matching skills supply and demand.**
 - c. **Communication and networking with wider stakeholders.**
8. Some of the key activities and development that are taking place to meet these priorities are set-out below:

a. Improving links between business and education and training providers

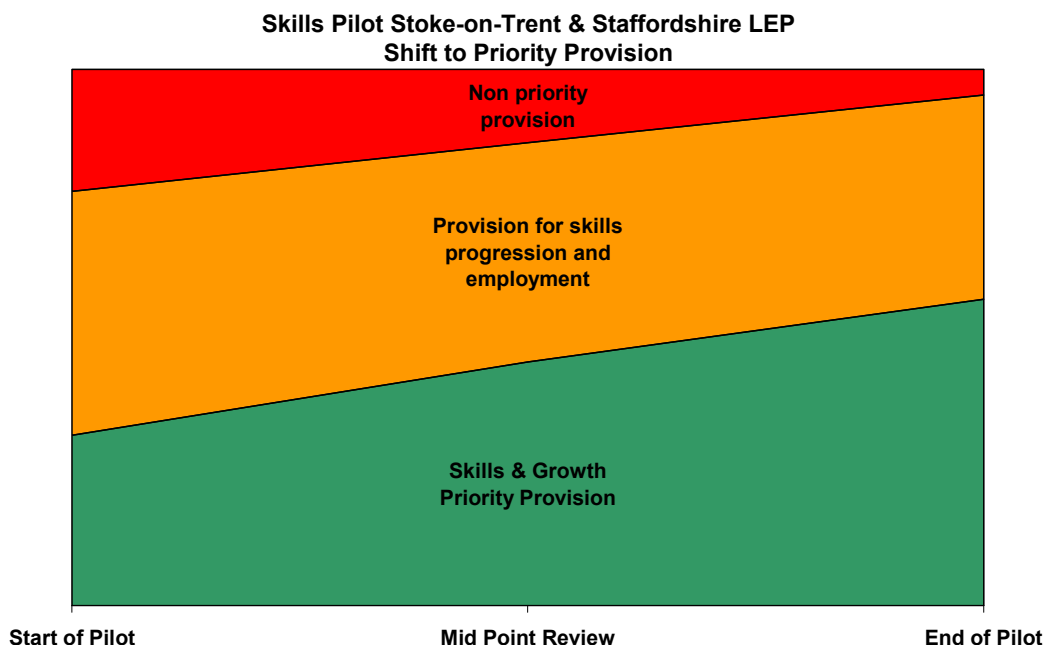
9. Careers Guidance and work exposure is critical in helping young people decide their future options and ensure they have the opportunity to achieve their potential and raise their aspirations whilst understanding the opportunities in the local economy. Appendix 5 illustrates the key components of the offer locally and we will be working to understand the offer provider through schools and colleges to complete the picture.
10. The Trust is also working in partnership schools and colleges to promote the world of work through the skills show and has secured £63,000 ESF funding to deliver 3 high profile skills and careers events across Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent. The local events will mirror the national Skills Show that took place at the NEC in November 2013 and will enable schools in the area to experience the skills competitions and specialist careers advice first hand.
11. The aim of the local programme is to deliver 3 skills events in Stoke-on-Trent, Burton-upon-Trent and Cannock targeting over 3000 young people 14-19 and 19-25 with learner difficulties and disabilities and young people not in education employment and training. The skills events will be complimented by a range of short 30 minute local skills activities targeting over 600 young people, to be delivered in colleges, schools and employer premises. Both activities feature in a broader strategy led by the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Education Trust to promote skills and to raise aspirations of young people.
12. The skills events will focus on the key sectors for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire and will feature employers and apprentices sharing their experiences in their respective sectors, "Have a Go" activities, competitions and the provision of information advice and guidance from the National Careers Service. The events will promote vocational learning pathways, Apprenticeships, FE and HE, careers in sectors key to the area and ESF.
13. The events will engage directly with secondary and special schools across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire and transport will be provided to and from the events.

b. Matching skills supply and demand

14. The Trust has been working to support the City Deal negotiations with Government and our skills 'asks'. A key part of the deal has been how to secure better influence and alignment of skills provision and delivery across the area. To meet this ask in July the Business Secretary Rt Hon Vince Cable announced that Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP will be one of three LEPs nationwide that has been selected to pilot radical new measures to improve skills training and get more people into work. This gives the LEP and the Education Trust greater influence over the Adult Skills Budget which funds colleges and training providers in delivering classroom and workplace based training. The Adult Skills Budget is equivalent to an annual investment of around £39m each year in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.

15. How the Skills Pilot will operate is as follows:

- a. The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Pilot would follow the basic principle of providing weighted priority skills outcomes. The weighting would move provision to priority outcomes on a plan-led basis.
- b. The priorities would be twofold and would either focus on the skills required for growth in priority sectors, or on those areas that support skills progression and employment.
- c. The clawback mechanism would remove up to 5% of funding from providers and colleges that did not make the shift in provision as planned. This funding would be redistributed through negotiation with successful providers or commissioned from other providers.
- d. This model would operate as an incentive to colleges and training providers to respond to LEP priorities over a planned period as only those qualifications matching LEP priorities would be funded.
- e. The diagram below illustrates the expected shift in skills investment over the pilot period, for each provider the picture would look different dependent on how well they are already delivering against LEP priorities.



c. Communication and networking with wider stakeholders

16. The Trust has been developing its communications activity and was recently launched at an event in Stoke on the 12th November to the press and the media. This forms part of a wider communications plan to improve the profile of the Trust with local and national stakeholders that includes production of a charter and promotional features along with a greater presence on the Local Enterprise Partnership Website.

17. In order to engage more schools and employers in practical work with the Trust a series of Touch Point locality projects have been established. The projects will help to determine how schools are preparing young people for the world of work and what the local skills requirements of businesses are in that community. The projects will explore the mindsets, behaviours and expectations of young people and the expectations of employers in an attempt to bridge that gap through changes in local practice.
18. It is envisaged that six to eight schools will be involved in a series of projects in Stoke, Newcastle, Tamworth and Cannock that will take place over the next two years. A key outcome of the projects will be building and facilitating sustainable partnerships between schools and employers in each locality to improve the work readiness and expectations of young people.

Link to Strategic Plan

19. The aims and ambition of the trust support the County Councils Strategic Plan in supporting jobs, skills and prosperity and raising the attainment and achievement of young people and adults through education and training as set out below:
- Outcome 1: Staffordshire's economy prospers and grows, together with jobs, skills, qualifications and aspirations to support it;
 - Outcome 5: Staffordshire's children and young people can get the best start in life and receive good education so that they can make a positive contribution to their communities;
 - Outcome 7: Staffordshire's people and communities can access, enjoy and benefit from a range of learning, recreational and cultural activities.

Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity

20. At the Cabinet Member Accountability Session of 8th November 2012 a commitment was made to update the Committee on the Education Trust.

Community Impact

The Education Trust has the potential, if successful to raise the aspirations and attainment of young people and adults and improve the skills base such that more people can enter into jobs and business prospers. There is a reputational risk if the Education Trust is not successful in gaining stakeholder engagement and support as it will be unable to deliver on its priorities.

Contact Officer

Name and Job Title: Anthony Baines, County Commissioner Skills & Employability
Telephone No.: 01785 895984
Address/e-mail: Anthony.baines@staffordshire.gov.uk

Appendices/Background papers

Appendix 1: Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Education Trust Terms of Reference
Appendix 2: Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Education Trust Structure Diagram
Appendix 3: Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Education Trust Task Groups
Appendix 4 : Education Trust Plan
Appendix 5: Map of the Careers Offer