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| <b>Subject:</b>           | Draft Belfast Employability and Skills Framework                         |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 10 June 2015   |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | John McGrillen, Director of Development                                  |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Lisa Toland, Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development, |

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| <b>Is this report restricted?</b>            | <b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>            | <b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b> | <b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>            |

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| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>   |
| 1.1        | The purpose of this report is to update members on progress on the draft employability and skills framework and to advise on proposed next steps.  |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>   |
| 2.1        | Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Note the update on the employability and skills framework, including the proposed next steps which will be presented to SP&amp;R on 19 June</li><li>- Note and agree the action plans (to be developed) and the proposed monitoring and reporting arrangements through the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.</li></ul> |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Key Issues</b>  |
| 3.1        | Members will be aware that the council has been working with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) to develop a framework for action on employability and skills issues. A draft framework has now been developed and it identifies a number of areas of focus, and suggests a number of headline targets based on skills  |

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|  | <p>attainment and employment rate increases, in order to focus action and measure impact of agreed initiatives.</p> <p><b>3.2</b> The draft framework was presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 22 May 2015. Members asked that the report be deferred for consideration at the 19 June meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. This was principally to allow them to receive more information on requests for match funding for European Social Fund (ESF) which had been included in the same report. This will be presented separately to SP&amp;R Committee.</p> <p><b>3.3</b> The framework suggests that, in order to ensure that all activities are focused on building skills levels and generating greater alignment between skills demand and supply, a series of targets should be established. Suggested targets are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– To increase the employment rate in the city to at least 72% by 2025 (current rate is 67.6%). This will mean moving an estimated 17,500 Belfast residents into work over 10 years – 1,750 per year</li> <li>– To reduce the proportion of the working age population with no qualifications from the 2012 baseline of 23% to between 9% and 12% by 2025. This means reducing the number of people with no formal qualifications by around 22,000</li> <li>– To increase the proportion of the working age population with level two qualifications and above from the 2012 baseline of 64% to between 76% and 79% by 2025. This would mean providing 40,000 additional people with qualifications at level 2 or above</li> <li>– To increase the proportion of the working age population with level 4 qualifications and above from the 2012 baseline of 28% to between 37% and 39% by 2025. This would mean up to 30,000 additional people with level 4 qualifications and above.</li> </ul> <p><b>3.4</b> The next stage in the process is to consider how this framework can be moved towards implementation, in conjunction with a number of key partners. While Belfast City Council has ambitions and a significant political commitment to address this issue, it has very limited resources at this point in time. It is therefore critical that members give careful consideration to how our resources are used most effectively to deliver on the ambitious targets and to encourage partners to commit to collaboration in the long-term. Partners have suggested that they see the council</p> |
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|            | <p>has playing a pivotal role in both the coordination of governance and in the coordination of delivery. To do this will require the commitment of dedicated resources to broker these partnerships and to convene parties around the key challenges.</p> <p><b>3.5</b> As part of the formal process of securing buy-in to the framework and ensuring that it is focused on the relevant priorities to make a difference in this complex environment, it is proposed that a 12 week public consultation exercise is undertaken. In that period, officers will continue to engage with partners in order to maintain some momentum in the process. There are also opportunities to host a number of focused engagement events with a range of partners, such as the Belfast Strategic Partnership to raise awareness of the proposals and to ensure buy-in to the process.</p> <p><b>3.6</b> The draft framework is to be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19 June 2015. Subject to their endorsement and council ratification, the public consultation exercise will commence in July 2015. A report on the outcomes of the consultation exercise and the proposed actions will be presented to the October meeting of the SP&amp;R Committee, and to the City Growth Committee for information.</p> <p><b>3.7</b> Once the broad framework is agreed, it is proposed that the action plans and progress against targets will be reported back through the City Growth and Regeneration Committee and that this Committee will be responsible for endorsing future programmes of work.</p> <p><b>3.8</b> <u>Financial and Resource Implications</u><br/> There are no defined financial allocations within the draft framework – these will be developed as part of the action planning process. Resources will have to be secured from partner agencies, as well as looking at council resources required for the delivery of priority activities.</p> <p><b>3.9</b> <u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u><br/> The framework is to be equality screened.</p> |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>  |
|            | Appendix 1 – Executive Summary: Draft Belfast Employability and Skills Framework  |