

Committee: Education Board – for Information	Dated: 21/06/2023
Subject: Skills: Trends and Next Practice Conference – Evaluation Summary report	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly? Contribute to a flourishing society. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People are safe and feel safe. 2. People enjoy good health and wellbeing. 3. People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential. 4. Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need. 	1, 2, 3 and 4
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of funding?	N/A
Has this funding source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Deborah Bell, Strategic Director for Skills, and Education	For Information
Report author: Barbara Hamilton, Head of Adult Skills Education and Apprenticeship, Department of Community and Children’s Services	For Information

Summary

The Skills: Trends and Next Practice conference provided significant implications for UK businesses, educators, and policy-makers.

The conference speakers looked at global trends in education and skills provision, with a particular view to education and skills provisions and employment options.

The event took place in the Livery Hall on 18 May 2023. A series of presentations, discussions, and case studies focused on key questions about the future of education and skills. The event will be followed up with the research and discussion findings used to create solutions for making systemic change at local, national, and international level.

The long-awaited *Skills Trends Review* was launched at the conference. This report strongly emphasised the need for adult education and skills to urgently adapt and respond to changes in the workforce, in demand for skills, and to new innovative ways of delivering education and training.

The event focused on three overarching trends – each with important implications for the delivery of education and skills:

1. Changes to workforce and learner demographics
2. Changes to the learning ecosystem and learning methods
3. Changes to the skills required for employment.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

1. Background

1.1 The Skills: Trends and Next Practice review was launched at the skills conference. The report reiterated the main findings: the need for the education and skills sector to respond to changes in the demand for new, flexible, and innovative skills. For example, there is an increase in the ability to learn from anywhere, using online platforms and appropriate software. The important question is whether this represents a genuine response to training needs.

1.2 In most high-income economies, the combination of the ageing population and the rise of automation and digitalisation means that workers may need to retrain and reskill multiple times in their lifetime. Rising levels of self-employment combined with increasing interest from young people in pursuing entrepreneurial careers require new approaches to skills delivery.

1.3 These changes are already affecting traditional education and skills delivery and will have profound implications for equity and access to training. The difficulty will be to match supply with the demand for skills and economic growth. The traditional educational and skills sector is slow in keeping 'on track' with the rapid pace of change.

1.4 There is an overwhelming consensus that what is needed is an education and skills sector that can work with a wide range of partners, experts and specialists, and quickly respond to immediate and future skills and education needs.

2. Current Position

2.1 The Skills: Trends and Next Practice event mainly focused on three overarching trends, each with important implications for the delivery of education and skills:

1. Changes to workforce and learner demographics
2. Changes to the learning ecosystem and learning methods.
3. Changes to the skills required for employment.

These trend themes were supported by two sets of table discussions.

2.2 Discussion topics included: lifelong learning and the impact on the need to work longer; and skills in the context of increasing rates of self-employment.

2.3 A second set of group discussions focused on the rise of automation, digitalisation, and remote working, and the impact on skills. The growing demand for fusion and green skills was seen as essential to understanding potential future employment opportunities.

2.4 The overall aims of the event were to:

- convene a gathering of national and international businesses, education sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and innovators who work in the skills development spaces
- empower attendees to co-create and build new impactful knowledge and influential relationships
- develop practical ways to improve links and connections between enterprise and education
- enable the development of fusion skills to be a catalyst for creating impact on improved diversity, access, and social mobility.

2.5 Attendees at the event were all experts in their own professional and or research fields:

- Invited guests from European and UK cities that are transforming the future by proactively combining education, enterprise, and skills.
- Cross-sector businesses that are leading the future in terms of skills development.
- Individuals and organisations that are developing new tools for measuring and reporting skills and qualities for the future.
- The higher, vocational, and private education sectors that are proactively and open-mindedly researching, evidencing, and theorising about the future.
- Skills services, apprentices and young people who are redefining, re-evaluating, and challenging current training provision.

2.6 It is evident that business and organisational demands are quickly changing. What was learnt in schools as little as five years ago, may not prepare new employees with sufficient skills for their current work–life situation.

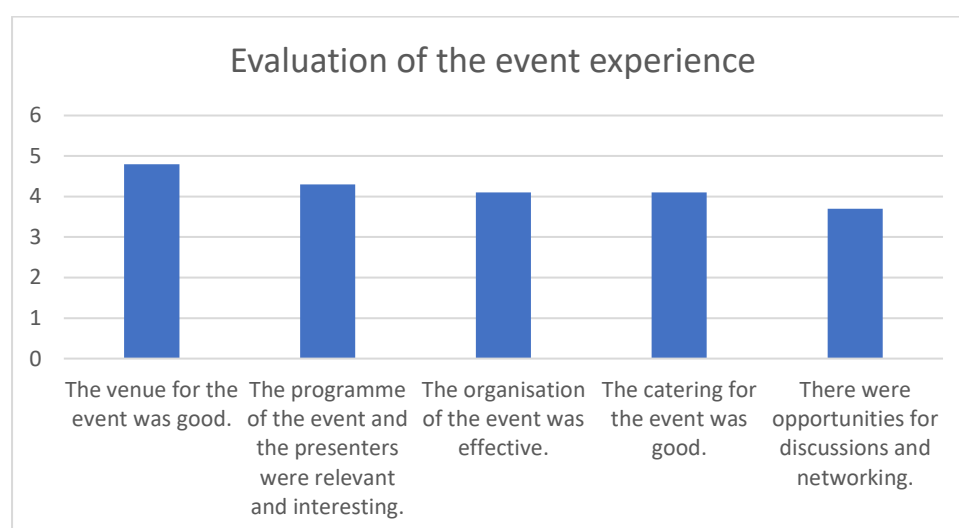
2.7 It is the adult education and skills sector that must adapt and respond to the many changes in the workforce, to demand for new skills, and to find innovative ways to deliver education and skills training. A face-to-face two-hour ‘talk and chalk’ session is no longer the best and only way to deliver education and skills.

3. Policy event experience and evaluation summary

3.1 The evaluation summary of the Skills: Trends and Next Practice event supports the view that the work carried out in small groups was beneficial and worthwhile. Working with and meeting new people, all with a common purpose, was inspiring and worked well. Participants were able to talk, listen, co-create, solve problems, and influence each other.

3.2 Out of a possible score of 5, the overall average for the experience of the policy event was 4.2. As can be seen in the graph below, the venue, and the quality of the programme and speakers received high ratings.

3.3 The least highly rated area was the opportunity for networking and conversations. However, the qualitative comments indicated that people just wanted the event to be extended and have more chances to network, including for people to be able to move more between the tables.

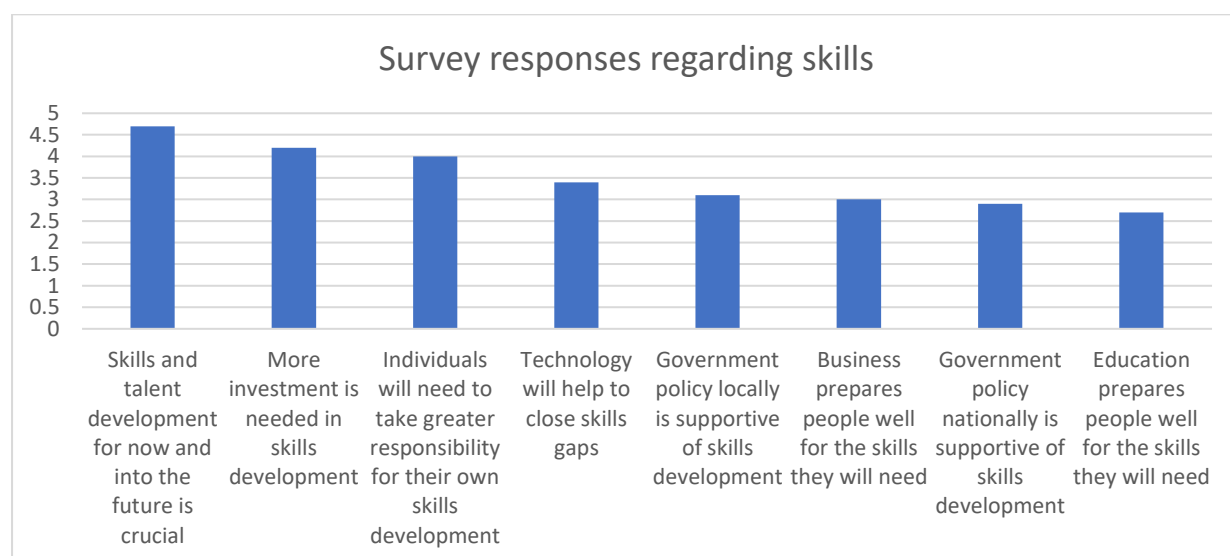


3.4 The participants strongly identified needs related to skills development. The post-event survey, (rating areas out of 5, with 5 being 'strong agreement' to 1 being 'no agreement') showed that skills are an issue. 'Skills and talent development for now and into the future is crucial' received the highest rating, with an average of 4.7 out of 5.

3.5 The second-highest rated area was the need for more investment in skills development – rated, on average, as 4.2. Conversely, the lowest ranking area was the way education prepares people for skills, with a score of only 2.7 out of 5. Business (enterprise) only scored fractionally better than education at preparing people with the skills they need (3.0).

3.6 Also ranked lowly in terms of effectiveness was national policy around skills (2.9). Local government policy around skills was rated slightly higher at 3.1. The data also strongly suggests that individuals will need to take greater responsibility for their own skills development.

3.7 This finding has implications for the whole sector and for policy in terms of the way skills provision is organised. The survey results also suggest that technology will do little to reduce the needs for skills, with an average score for this being a slightly positive 3.4. See the following survey results:



4. Corporate & Strategic Implications

4.1 Strategic implications – The report findings and outcomes from the event will fully support the delivery of the corporate plan.

4.2 Financial implications – None

4.3 Resource implications – None

4.4. Legal implications – None

4.5 Risk implications – None

4.6 Equalities implications – The outcome of the report fully complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010. The proposals in the report findings will not have any negative impact on people protected by existing equality legislation – age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

4.7 Climate implications – None

4.8 Security implications – None

5. Conclusion

5.1 Experience shows that workers will need to retrain several times in their lifetime. The *Skills Trends Review* report launched at the Skills: Trends and Next Practice conference put forward the view that increased levels of self-employment, combined with young people pursuing an interest in entrepreneurial careers, will require a more innovative approach to skills delivery.

5.2 The real concern is that employers, especially the small and medium sized businesses, may choose not to provide training to employees as more people are attracted to a more non-linear career path.

5.3 Traditional education patterns are already disrupted. This may have a negative impact on equity of access to training, for matching the supply and demand for skills, and long-term economic growth. The real task is to ensure that the availability of education and skills is 'future-proofed'.

5.4 The global skills gap, driven by population-level trends and changes in technology, means that 87% of businesses state that they are experiencing skills gaps now or expect to. Other research shows a 'skills mismatch' between employer demands and the skills of employees. The aim is to ensure that education and skills provision is 'future-proofed'.

5.5 The report highlighted examples of interesting and innovative practices that are responding to these trends. The three overarching trends identified have implications for how the Government will need to respond and adapt their education and skills delivery.

5.6 The event and its many supporting discussion groups reached consensus that education and skills training play an important role in creating a more equal society.

6. Appendices

- None

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