5. Learning & Skills Service Profile
(2026/27)

Director:	Pauline Turner
Assistant Director / Head of Service	Mary Meredith
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Linda Tock
Version control:	2
Date Updated:	21 November 2025

Purpose of Plan

This Business Plan provides an overview of the service, and sets out its key priorities, high level objectives, key deliverables, and key performance measures. It will be supported by individual team plans which contain more detail about how teams work towards meeting priorities and measuring success.

The priorities and actions set out in the Business Plan focus only on key areas of development, improvement, and transformation, and does not cover all detailed aspects of service delivery. The identified priorities will link directly into the Council's contribution towards the Community Plan and achievement of productivity and savings targets.

Progress against the service plan will be reviewed on a regular basis within directorate teams, by the Corporate Strategy Team, and in consultation with Cabinet Portfolio Holders.

Table of Contents

Purpose of Plan 1
1. Service Overview 3
Service Description 3
Strategic Direction / Future Plans 4
Overall Service Priorities 5
2. Service Resources and Assets 6
Staffing and Financial Resources (including grants) 6

1. Service Overview

Service Description

Services within Learning and Skills are arranged across seven main areas and work closely with partners, including the Learning Partnership, multi-academy trusts and the Integrated Care Board to narrow the disadvantage gap and make a real difference to children and young people, improving their life chances through access to high quality childcare, education and services that support them to aspire, attain and make good progress.

Early years functions ensure sufficiency of early year places for children and providing information, advice and guidance to parents around childcare, whilst also supporting educational achievement at the earliest stage so that they are better able to achieve their full potential as adults.

High educational standards are championed by schools services who act and advocate on behalf of children and families, providing political accountability for the best possible education on behalf of local communities, providing a Standing Advisory Council for religious education and appointing local authority governors to maintained schools, including providing training. Provision of school lunches is ensured for those children who are eligible for free school meals. Additionally, an active Schools Forum and the Scheme for Financing Schools are duties overseen by these services.

The Virtual School coordinates and promotes high-quality education for children looked after to support them to achieve the best possible educational outcomes.

The Music Service is responsible for delivering the national plan for music education in the city and leads the regional music hub for which the Humber region's local authorities join together to provide high-quality music education for all children and young people.

Employability, skills and participation activities include promoting the effective participation in education, training employment of 16- and 17-year-olds, as well as monitoring those who are not actively participating in education, training or employment.

SEND services, including IPASS and education psychology, promote the best educational opportunities for vulnerable children and those with medical needs and SEND, intervening on their behalf where necessary, providing access to education and administering formal processes for children with SEND. The teams monitor the administration of statutory tests and assessments, providing an additional moderation function. For all children aged above compulsory school age but under 19 years, or those aged 19 to 25 with a maintained Education, Health and Care Plan, sufficient suitable education and training provision is secured and adequate support provided to enable them to participate in education or training.

Access and inclusion services make provision for those children excluded from school, record and monitor those children who are electively home educated, those receiving reduced provision and make arrangements to identify children who are missing education. These provisions include convening appeals panels, and record and monitor in accordance with national guidance. The services additionally provide assistive transport, coordinate

admissions processes for the city and arrange suitable education for those pupils who, because of illness, would not otherwise receive a suitable education. Where any child is identified as not receiving a suitable education, including due to non-attendance, services will support the procedures necessary to issue a School Attendance Order.

Strategic Direction / Future Plans

The Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme presents a welcome opportunity, with partners, to improve the delivery of SEND services whilst also acknowledging the challenges being experienced more broadly. By optimising the use of finances, the highest impact changes will be sought to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. Wider SEND challenges include increasing demand on services due to rising volumes of children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and the consequential impact of insufficient special school places across the city.

Sufficiency challenges exist across the city and affect many of learning and skill's services. Being able to meet the increasing demand for places in childcare settings, mainstream schools, special schools, alternative provision is increasingly challenging and can mean that for some children there are added transport challenges as a result of being required to travel across the city to attend educational provision. Such transport challenges, including those for SEND pupils place additional demand on home to school transport services and additional pressure on an already stretched budget. Increasingly the service is looking at new and innovative approaches and solutions to existing transport difficulties.

Provider sufficiency is an additional challenge across the city, with insufficient post-16 independent providers to meet the demand for those pupils who wish to continue their education. Similarly, there are increasingly fewer early years providers entering the market to provide places where existing gaps are known.

The implementation of the new education management system, Synergy, presents opportunities for better recording and reporting of those learning and skills areas within scope of the system. Once fully embedded, the expectation is that some operational staff time will be freed up for case work whilst also helping to better inform service delivery which will lead to continuous service improvement across all areas, not least SEND.

With the expansion of the early years education entitlement and the 'National Wraparound Initiative' with childcare now available from 8am to– 6pm each weekday during termtime for working parents, it is anticipated that this will support with an increase in economic growth across the city. With more parents able to work, the opportunities that exist across the city with employers are more likely to be taken up. With increased employability, the city may benefit from increased footfall amongst local business and so lead to sustained growth over time.

With the expansion of the remit of the virtual school to include all children with (or have previously had) a social worker and those in kinship care there is an opportunity to transform the lives of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, including those with special educational needs and disabilities and in care. Ensuring that those who have lost the most from the pandemic can recover and flourish, the ambition for a broader virtual school offer will support more children and young people to fulfil their potential.

It has been proven that music plays a key role in brain development, helping to nurture language and motor, emotional and collaboration skills. All children should have these

opportunities and, leading the Music Hub for the Humber Region, with neighbouring local authorities, Hull is perfectly placed to provide as many opportunities as possible to expose children and young people to the power of music, whether that be through learning to play instruments or harnessing the power of their own voices.

Overall Service Priorities

Service Priority	**Strategic Driver (Community Plan Ambition, Government, Organisational, etc)**
Alternative Provision Review and Recommissioning of Providers	Community Plan – reducing barriers and challenges to accessing services, the right health and education facilities to increase accessibility and equity for families, helping all children to reach their potential in the correct accessible environment, helping them to develop confidence and increase self-esteem. Government – regulatory frameworks, policy and legislation. Partnership – working collaboratively to ensure families receive the best possible support and services to enable children to make good progress in their learning and development. Organisational – continuous service improvement to ensure young people are supporting to achieve their potential.
Promoting financial sustainability within the SEND System	Community Plan – reducing barriers and challenges to accessing services, the right health and education facilities to increase accessibility and equity for families, helping all children to reach their potential in the correct accessible environment, helping them to develop confidence and increase self-esteem. Government – regulatory inspectorate frameworks, policy and legislation. Partnership – achieving safeguarding objectives for children and young people with complex needs. Organisational – continuous service improvement to ensure children and families get the right help, at the right time, from the right people.
Implementation of new statutory duties for Early Years.	Community Plan – reducing barriers and challenges to accessing services, the right health and education facilities to increase accessibility and equity for families, helping all children to reach their potential in the correct accessible environment, helping them to develop confidence and increase self-esteem.

	Government – regulatory frameworks, policy and legislation. Partnership – working collaboratively to ensure families receive the best possible support and services to enable children to make good progress in their learning and development. Organisational – continuous service improvement to ensure young people are supported to achieve their potential.
Delivery of SEND improvement Plan	Community Plan – reducing barriers and challenges to accessing services, the right health and education facilities to increase accessibility and equity for families, helping all children to reach their potential in the correct accessible environment, helping them to develop confidence and increase self-esteem. Government – regulatory inspectorate frameworks, policy and legislation. Partnership – achieving safeguarding objectives for children and young people with complex needs. Organisational – continuous service improvement to ensure children and families get the right help, at the right time, from the right people.

2. Service Resources and Assets

Staffing and Financial Resources (including grants)

Budget 2026/27	**£000'**		
Staff Costs	8,809	**Budget Changes**	**£000's**
Other Expenditure	5,024	26/27 Efficiency Savings	
Gross Expenditure	**13,833**		
Fees & Charges	-1,813	25/26 Savings undelivered	
Grant Income	-2,710		
Other Income	-2,161	Removal of Grant Income Budget Line	102
Gross Income	**-6,684**		
		Investments	443
Net Expenditure	**7,149**	Funding of Base Pressures	