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Harnessing the talents of young people: Hull Youth Enterprise Partnership

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Introduction

Fostering an entrepreneurial spirit amongst young people has long been considered a 'good thing'; however the current economic climate makes it now more important than ever.

The emergency Budget of June 2010 announced a clear and hard-hitting message: to tackle the deficit, public expenditure will be £83 billion a year lower by 2014-15. The forecasted cuts will have a huge impact on local economies, especially in those areas that are highly reliant on public sector jobs and investment. Hull is one such vulnerable area. A recent report by the Work Foundation suggests that Hull, along with towns such as Grimsby and Barnsley, will be bypassed by the economic recovery. As the report notes: *"These cities lack representation in growth sectors, their populations tend to have low skill levels and they tend to be reliant on the public sector as an employer of last resort."* With a lack of interest from private sector investors and the scaling back of the public sector, it will be increasingly important for places like Hull to look for alternative approaches to stimulating employment opportunities. This will include building on community's assets, such as the skills, knowledge and creativity of local people themselves to improve economic prosperity.

This Local Work demonstrates how this approach is already being implemented in Hull via the work of the Hull Youth Enterprise Partnership (HYEP). HYEP was set up to contribute to Hull's target of creating 1,200 new businesses over the 15 years to 2016, and to encourage young people to become more enterprising. HYEP has pursued a range of activities with primary and secondary pupils in Hull as well as apprentices and college students, and develops and promotes services such as grant finance, new business space and one-stop shop advice centres to encourage young entrepreneurs. This Local Work begins by outlining the challenge that HYEP hopes to address before moving on to consider the Partnership's approach and some of its successes.

The issue

The 2001 Census highlighted that only 0.78% of Hull's population aged 16 – 24 considered themselves self-employed, compared to the regional average of 1.07% and the England and Wales average of 1.31%. In Rotherham, a 'comparator city' within the region, 1.21% aged 16 – 24 considered themselves self-employed. For Hull, the position is accentuated due to the city's relatively young population in comparison with the national average and with other cities: 34.4% of the population was under 24 in 2001, compared with 31.0% in Rotherham, 31.7% in Yorkshire and The Humber, and 31.1% in England. It is hoped that the next census will demonstrate that Hull will have been one of the fastest growing cities in terms of self-employed young people over the previous ten years.

What we do

Hull Youth Enterprise Partnership (HYEP) supports and encourages young people in Hull aged 6-25 to become more enterprising by enabling them to develop enterprising ideas and skills. The aim is contribute to Hull's target of creating 1,200 new businesses over the next 15 years (set in 2001). This ambition was reaffirmed in July 2010 when Dermot Finch, Chief Executive of the Centre Cities, said that Hull's businesses must create nearly 20,000 jobs to bring Hull up to the average employment rate which would boost this target.

HYEP is an informal network of 63 organisations including public sector agencies, community groups, and private sector companies, entrepreneurs and umbrella bodies. Partners were proactively brought together by Hull City Council to address the issue of youth enterprise in the city, in recognition of the fact that little was being done to "grow" and support young entrepreneurs, and that existing activities took place in isolation from each other. It was set up in 2003.

The partnership plays an important role within ONE HULL, the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), contributing to its mission to secure a positive and sustainable future for Hull and its young people. One of the young entrepreneurs supported by the Partnership is a member of the wider LSP partnership. It has lobbied central government on enabling under 18's to be directors in companies and for them to be able to open business bank accounts following consultation with young entrepreneurs in the city.

Secretariat services for HYEP are provided by Hull City Council, whose Youth Enterprise Strategy Manager is closely associated with the strategy and activities of the Partnership and who provides strong leadership. The Manager has played an active role in the development of Hull's economic and enterprise plans in the past including the Local Area Agreement (LAA), in particular to the 'Earning' and 'Learning' strands. The objectives and activities of the Partnership contribute directly to strategic priorities in the city related to enterprise and economic development as well as to those for children and young people. It does this by supporting and empowering young people from primary school age to their mid-20s to develop enterprising ideas and eventually put those ideas into practice.

Although it covers the whole of the city council area, the Partnership has largely concentrated on the most deprived parts of the city where the needs for such services are greatest. HYEP has taken the coherent, strategic approach of considering its activities in terms of the ONE HULL Community Strategy's longer term aspirations for jobs and financial success, in particular to:

- ***'improve the quality of Hull's business sector'*** by contributing towards the marketing of Hull as a location for business, investment and skilled young people and raising awareness

amongst young people of the opportunities offered within the city by the private sector;

- **'allow Hull's businesses to be more competitive'** by encouraging young people to invest in the city's key growth sectors, including port and logistics, food and drink, health and social care, retail, renewables, construction, creative and digital industries;
- **'create a culture that encourages people to start their own businesses'** by developing and promoting targeted services and one-stop shops providing advice to young entrepreneurs, improving access to workspace for start-ups by young people under 25 years old, and providing programmes from primary school age onwards to develop entrepreneurial skills.

Project examples

In November 2009 the Partnership launched the first strategy of its kind in the country, *'The Strategy for Hull's Enterprising Young People'*; a prospectus to invest 2009-2014. This links European, national and regional strategies and policies with the needs and opportunities available to young people in Hull. Under the umbrella of the HYEP, partners have carried out a wide variety of activities across the city, often stimulated into action by young entrepreneurs who advise the HYEP. Examples include:

- Arranging conferences during **Global Entrepreneurship Week** for the past six years each with over 200 attendees from primary, secondary schools and training organisations and local colleges. In addition, events have been hosted to promote the city's enterprising young people in **Humber Business Week** and the **Yorkshire International Business Convention**.



Ruth Badger at Global Entrepreneurship Week

- Establishing and running a **Youth Enterprise Bank** which provides grant funding to 13-19 year olds with an enterprising idea, either as a business or as a community project. Since it was established in 2003, the Youth Enterprise Bank has awarded £142,000 to 127 young entrepreneurs, 12 social enterprise projects and 9 young enterprise projects in schools in the city. 85% of the businesses are still trading. The Youth Enterprise Bank is now taking part in the School Gates Project which gives grants to young parents with an enterprising idea. The bank receives its support from members of the city's business community, young entrepreneurs and donations from partners. One of the young people it has supported is, for example, donating profits from the sale of his books relating to his entrepreneurial experience.
- Promoting companies established under the **Young Enterprise Company Programme** to partner organisations to use their services whilst they are still at school as well as helping them to become businesses afterwards. Since 2004 five 'real' businesses have been established by young people through this approach, two of whom are Make Your Mark Ambassadors.
- Sponsoring a **Fair Trade Fortnight** by supporting young people selling fair trade products in schools, and advising on setting up a Fair Trade café – as part of the Wilberforce 2007 Celebrations.

- The campaign of the Hull Youth Enterprise Partnership through Hull's youth enterprise development company, **Force-7**, to promote enterprise skills to young people was short-listed twice for prestigious PR awards sponsored by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations in the UK, doing extraordinarily well to even compete with some of the best PR and marketing organisations in the UK.
- The city has established **KC Enterprises**, delivered by Hull City football club and Hull FC rugby league club, that show the sports clubs as a business and enables the participants to gain a recognised enterprise qualification. We feel this project, because of the links with the two different sports, shows Hull's innovation in adapting and creating its own enterprise education and skills programmes building on the Premier League Enterprise academy programme.
- In partnership with Rotherham, Hull has **pioneered an education programme** which is transforming the aspirations of young people in the City. By embedding enterprise skills into the curriculum, pupils, teachers and business professionals have come together to form ground-breaking partnerships. Hull has developed the Big 13 enterprise skills. Children as young as four have been introduced to the concepts behind running a business. The first primary school, in one of the most deprived areas of the city, has achieved the prestigious Excellence in Enterprise Education Award and Hull's future economy is set to thrive.
- Established a Facebook site to launch competitions including a logo competition with over 100 entries from across the world. The winners of this competition came from Yorkshire and Skopje in Macedonia. Each winner has been awarded **£400 to invest in an enterprising idea** funded by the Youth Enterprise Bank. Local young entrepreneurs are also promoted on street banners, as part of the city's campaign of supporting its enterprising young people as role models within the community.
- The city has launched a new programme whereby schools, colleges and training centres can book young entrepreneurs to talk to young people about developing their enterprise skills. The young entrepreneurs are funded to attend and this is seen as a recession-proofing scheme to support some of our young entrepreneurs who receive £1,000 for their business. Also, following on from two pilots and consultation with young people about what skills they gather from enterprise education, a programme called the **Badgers' Sett Enterprise Challenge** has been established with former BBC Apprentice star Ruth Badger. Young people aged under 19 with an enterprising idea, a new business idea or a co-operative/community enterprise project can compete to gain financial investment. All winners have opportunity to access business advice to further develop their idea from Yorkshire's Women's Enterprise Champion. In addition all entrants have the opportunity to access business advice from a number of Hull's young entrepreneurs.



Dave Garbera Hull's Young Entrepreneur of the Year 2010

- With Hull Youth Council and Force-7 considerable efforts are made to involve young people in shaping, developing and delivering new programmes and activities including websites of the Partnership. Force-7 is a youth enterprise development and communication specialist that manages events and supplies youth-oriented products and services for other events. All its directors are under 25. An example of its involvement with HYEP was in establishing a working group of their staff, representatives of HYEP and members of the business community to consult on what Hull should do during Global Entrepreneurship Week 2010, working up the full schedule of events. It is also helping us with young entrepreneurs to identify what managed workspace facilities are required in the city to support young people.

The impact

The Hull Youth Enterprise Partnership has achieved a high profile locally with enthusiastic champions. These include local councillors, local businesses with national reputations keen to adopt, and improve on, activities they had heard were successful elsewhere and the Partnership's Patron, local MP for Kingston-upon-Hull and Hessle, Alan Johnson, the former Home Secretary. This section considers just some of the ways in which HYEP has had a positive impact in the locality.

Developing young people's skills

Individuals who have been involved in activities developed by HYEP have reported a fundamental change in their own, and others', attitudes and ways of working. For example, secondary school pupils of all levels of ability have acquired much improved communication and teamwork skills following participation in Youth Enterprise activities arranged by the Partnership. Stephen Logan Aim Higher co-ordinator at Malet Lambert School commented: *"You wouldn't believe the way those students have moved on in a year. They are streets ahead of those who didn't participate in terms of communication skills and confidence"*.

He went on to add that the interest from his colleagues in the staffroom means that he is now optimistic that the approach, *"has momentum, and will become institutional"* and that it will contribute to improving levels of attainment. Moreover, comments from young people who have participated in activities funded by HYEP illustrate a variety of impacts on their self-awareness, ambition, knowledge and know-how. Such comments include:

"Luck doesn't make you successful, you do!"

"To go forward in life you need to be determined and set goals"

"It has showed me the importance of team work"

"To get where you want to be, you have to take charge and go for it and not be afraid"

Fostering cross-sector relationships

Maureen Foers OBE, Yorkshire's Women's Enterprise Champion and one of the business people associated with the Partnership, commented that it is a useful forum for those involved in public sector work, social enterprises and businesses, *"to learn from each other"*, adding that it had allowed the private sector *"to become involved in public sector funding streams"*. As an employer, they commented that it is *"quite noticeable"* which young people have participated in the Partnership's activities, as they, *"learn more and faster"* and have a more enterprising approach, much valued by prospective employers.

Encouraging entrepreneurship early

At primary school level it is still early days for Partnership activities, working in partnership with Rotherham and the Young People's Enterprise Forum through the Hull Ready programme. Councillors report parents' satisfaction that projects funded by the Partnership have given their children experience of different activities, such as making a mock-up issue of the local paper,

learning about global trade or planning an eco-town, and especially in encouraging the children to aspire to different ways of earning a living from their own, as well as managing loans from local businesses. Staff are reported to be optimistic that through demonstrating the relevance, for example, of maths, good English and geography, children will appreciate the value of learning and results will improve, as well as learning the big 13 Enterprise Skills. Success is recognised by the fact that five schools in the city have now achieved the Warwick Award for Excellence in Enterprise Education which is a national standard.

Forging international links

HYEP has a commitment to internationalism and are members the European Confederation of Young Entrepreneurs (YES). Recently, through involvement with the BizWorld Foundation which teaches children about business concepts, entrepreneurship and money management in a way that fits the national curriculum, the Partnership is raising awareness of Hull internationally. Strong working relationships are being built with peer organisations in the Netherlands and Gibraltar, with aims to extend across Europe.

Case Study: Bronwyn's story

At just turned 15 years old (HYEP started working with her when she was 14) Bronwyn Wilson can boast she is one of Hull's youngest and most promising entrepreneurs.

Bronwyn, from west Hull, set up her accessories business Crazy Critters last October. She makes hand-sewn ornaments, frames, handbags and more from recycled materials and fabrics which are sold at The Art Box, in Newland Avenue, west Hull.

Bronwyn secured £750 from the John Cracknell Youth Enterprise Bank, which helped her to develop the company further and she hopes to use this money to set up a Crazy Critters website and clarify her position with Trading Standards before producing more professional labelling for her products.

Bronwyn has also been approached by a local Hull company that make soft furnishings to discuss potential collaboration. They have already given her some invaluable business advice about how the industry works and have expressed an interest in selling her Crazy Critters designs once they have been developed further.

At just 15 years old, Bronwyn has demonstrated the skills, commitment and creativity needed to excel in business and is a testament to what can be achieved when we invest in and support our young people through schemes like HYEP.



Bronwyn Wilson and her products

Some success factors

The Hull Youth Enterprise Partnership benefited from the actions of a keen champion and experienced partnership worker in their chair who is Yorkshire's Women's enterprise champion. The Partnership developed in such a way as to bring the 'right' local, regional, national, and more recently international, players on board without raising expectations or disappointing key partners. As far as possible for an association of over 60 members, the Partnership has maintained its strategic integrity without becoming too project-focused. Thus it has been able to avoid many of the pitfalls that can delay, or halt, partnership development.

At the political level, it has been important to demonstrate to elected members what the Partnership does within local schools and communities in order to gain their support. It may sometimes be difficult for busy councillors with other responsibilities to take time off to see projects in action. Similarly, officials from key agencies may find it difficult to find time. However, it is important for the Partnership that its champions and Patron have managed to raise awareness across the board and encourage private sector participation, which helps to ensure a sustainable flow of funding for the Secretariat and partnership coordination activities.

Data and evidence

In the latest financial year, the Partnership has directly contributed to Hull's target of creating 1,200 new businesses by 2016 by enabling 55 businesses to be set up, owned and run by young residents living in the City. Of these, 25 are owned by young people who live in priority target areas (identified in the city's neighbourhood renewal plan) and previously on benefits. It has also created jobs by assisting many more existing enterprises owned by young people to grow and offer employment to other, unemployed, young people.

There is strong anecdotal evidence from key local agencies that the Hull Youth Enterprise Partnership is directly contributing to raising the aspirations of young residents. Well-publicised achievements by participants in activities such as Young Enterprise, Premier League Enterprise Academy, Hull Ready, Global Entrepreneurship and Business Weeks has *"very positively"* helped to create role models in an area where many young people are the second or third generation unemployed.

Conclusion

In the current climate, it is easy to feel despair for the future of our local economies. With the private sector still reeling from the recession and unprecedented cuts to the public sector, places like Hull are going to have a difficult time ahead. However, as this Local Work has demonstrated, investing in and supporting our young people to become entrepreneurs can have real benefits. From the development of individuals' skills, confidence and career prospects, to the wider local economic benefits, including a reduction in the number of people that are not in education, employment and training (NEET) and mitigation against the risk of future worklessness. Hull Youth Enterprise Partnership believes that not every young person will become an entrepreneur, but everyone can be enterprising either in school, in college or in the workplace and the community.

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