

Introduction

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I think it's just worth thinking about Yorkshire's universities and who we are, and reminding everybody in the room the power of these institutions and their impact. The University of Leeds, Leeds Met - no particular order this series of institutions - Leeds Trinity and All Saints, York, York St John, Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam, Hull, Bradford, Huddersfield, Leeds College of Music, The Open University, and our two associate members, the Northern School of Contemporary Dance and the University of Lincoln at its Hull campus. I've done that rather deliberately because through the rest of the speech I'm going to mention one or two institutions and I wanted to make sure that I've mentioned every single one at some point in the speech so nobody could feel that they'd been left out. But I think the point of just going through that list is that these are institutions that have a really significant impact on Yorkshire, on education in Yorkshire obviously, but much more importantly on the region itself and on the regional economy.

Now recently Yorkshire Universities have commissioned a report on its economic impact, on the economic impact of those higher education institutions, and I thought I would litter this talk with a few facts because they're really quite remarkable. This is data from 2004/5, and in that year the direct spend from Yorkshire's universities in Yorkshire was £1.43 billion. If you take the usual economic multiplier, that has us heading towards an impact of nearly 3 billion, or, to put it in context, about 3.2% of the region's annual GDP. That's on a par with other important sectors, like food and drink, hotels and catering, banking and insurance, so really quite a significant player in the regional economy. That translates into a lot of jobs, estimating the impact of the higher education institutions somewhere in the region of 37,000 jobs in Yorkshire are either a direct or indirect consequence of the higher education institutions in this region. That's about 1.7% of the total jobs in the region, and to put it in context it's more than are employed in the chemical industry, more than are employed in electrical and optical equipment, transport, textiles, and the clothing sectors. So really again on that evidence a major player.

If you look at research and development, I think it's fairly clear that one of the weaknesses in Yorkshire's economy is that there's not enough investment in R&D

by the major companies in the region, but the universities contribute significantly to that. We have activity contract income with industry in the order of £61 million in that particular year that I identified. We also have a big impact on the number of students that stay in Yorkshire and the Humber, something like 73% who originally lived in Yorkshire will stay in Yorkshire after their higher education. And from those that come in from outside the region the figure obviously drops, it's somewhere in the order of 40% with their first degree, but it rises up into the 60s, again if you look at individuals that take postgraduate taught or postgraduate research degrees in our institutions.

Now those are the sort of broad economic facts. There are lots of examples of specific impact and I just want to run through one or two. If you look at enterprise and the economy, one example would be the four CETLs that run in Yorkshire that are related to enterprise. For example, there is the Institute of Enterprise at Leeds Met University CETL, Enhancing, Embedding and Integrating Employability at Sheffield Hallam University, Collaborating for Creativity at York St John University, and the White Rose CETL Enterprise which involves obviously the Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York.

Whilst I'm on the White Rose - I promise not to spend too much time on it - those three universities all feature in the top one hundred universities in the world. I think I'm right in saying that we're probably the only region, perhaps with the exception of London, where you could say that, where three universities exist within one region that are in that top one hundred, and that's a remarkable fact and a very important fact I think for Yorkshire's future.

There are lots of other examples of impacts in other fields. If I go over to think about health and wellbeing - and apologies for doing that, it's my natural background coming out - York St John University is involved in running York Hospitals NHS Trust Cardiac Rehab Service, Hull York Medical School is involved in a pilot project with colleges and schools in North Lincolnshire to develop students' interest in science; the University of Hull's Postgraduate Medical Institute and the Local Acute Trust together host two oncology health centres with drop-in services for patients; Leeds College of Music has a music making course for adult and community learning students with mental health issues, and so on. There are examples of the Yorkshire Universities impacting in other fields, I won't go through them all: society and community, culture and sport, and of course in skills.

Now that gives you an idea of where we were in 2004/5, and obviously much of this conference is more about where we're going and the future impact that we would like to have. We of course want to do better, we want to excel, and we want to be a major force, interacting with government agencies - we're going to hear from Felicity shortly - interacting with the Regional Development Agency, and interacting with industry and other sectors, voluntary services etc, community engagement in our region.

To that end this conference of course is part and parcel of that, but over recent years we have been working on a fairly major partnership and a concordat, if you like, with the Regional Development Agency at Yorkshire Forward - I also have the privilege of sitting on that board. And the four areas that we've agreed to work cohesively together and first of all, very importantly I think, in the creation of knowledge itself, and particularly as that relates to world-class excellence and to innovation. Of course there will be work on skills and creating high quality people, high level skills for Yorkshire's economy. We'll be working with Yorkshire Forward on business support, and again particularly in that region, innovation and the ideas that come out of our universities turning into new businesses will be a significant focus of that. And of course many people in the room will know that the most international organisations in the region are Yorkshire's universities, and I think we can help Yorkshire Forward a lot in terms of its internationalisation and its quest for inward investment back into Yorkshire.

There's a lot of ongoing work, a lot of flesh is being put on the bare bones of that strategy that I've just outlined. An example is some current work looking at scientific excellence in the region, and I think it's fairly clear that there will be a piece of evolving work on carbon sequestration, carbon management, and the whole sustainability agenda, which I think all of the higher education institutions in Yorkshire will be able to play to. There's further stuff coming down the pipe: advance manufacturing and biomolecular structures particularly as they relate to new drug development.

Now I thought I would be right up to date and I'll give you a quote which I read in the Guardian yesterday. I've doctored it a bit, as I'll explain shortly. But David Eastwood, Chief Executive of the Funding Council, was speaking at the conference of the Northern Universities in recent days and this is a direct quotation from David: *"Regional Development Agencies have understood this ... (he's talking really about the relationship between the economy, universities and Regional Development Agencies) ... have understood this with myriad partnerships with*

us, HEFCE, and universities." What he says about Yorkshire is the longstanding and much valued collaborations in Yorkshire have invested, Yorkshire agencies have invested in universities precisely because of their power, because of the power of their economic interfaces, and the quality of their relationships with employers, that's the way we're being seen externally and that's an excellent start. I do have to confess that there was also a little bit about the University of Manchester in that quote, it seems to have dropped out of my quotation, strange how that happens intermittently.

So I think that's quite a good note to finish on, the external view of Yorkshire's universities and their impact. We have put together a conference, which you'll know the strands, we've got strands about employability, regeneration and innovation, improving learner progression, knowledge transfer and supporting business, and the cultural role of higher education institutions, so a very broad range of subjects to be covered. We have got excellent keynote speakers, Felicity Everiss, who I'm going to introduce shortly, Steve Smith this afternoon, Tom Riordan from Yorkshire Forward tomorrow morning. And we don't have the Minister because she has to answer questions in the House but we will have a representative from the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills, we hope for the last keynote later tomorrow afternoon. We've also got some fantastic panellists, panel presentations, and some interesting topics to discuss over the course of the conference. I think we're in for an excellent two days and I sincerely hope that you enjoy the conference. Thank you for your attention.

[Applause]

So I should now introduce Felicity Everiss, who I think probably needs relatively little introduction. It was quite interesting, you think you know somebody until you read their CV, and Felicity is obviously a career civil servant who's worked in various government departments in London before coming up here in '99 as Regional Director of the Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber. I've had the pleasure of working with Felicity on and off on various topics and see her at the Yorkshire Forward Board and I know we're in for an interesting forty-five minutes or so. Felicity.