Scrutiny Conclusions Note – West Yorkshire Skills System

1. **SUMMARY: Global economic trends (e.g. AI, energy prices) and national policy are beyond the direct control of Combined Authorities. However, greater devolved control of skills powers and funding could enable regional and local partners to better align skills provision with local employment, productivity and growth needs.**

2. There appears to be limited evidence of significant progress in addressing the long-standing skills and productivity challenges facing both the nation and the region.

3. Many of these challenges are intensified by national policy decisions, international economic conditions, and gaps in data collection and performance measurement.

4. Key challenges include engaging certain groups (e.g. over-50s, young NEETs, ethnic minorities, graduates, ESOL) and matching local skills provision to labour market demand.

5. The skills system is fragmented across national, regional and local levels, as well as across public and private sectors, institutions, industries, geographies and labour market needs.

6. No single body has sufficient control across the skills system to set priorities, direct resources, coordinate activity, plan for future needs and ensure accountability for outcomes.

7. The degree of control directly affects the ability to plan strategically, secure buy-in and coordinate activity across the system. *E.g. delivering Electric Vehicle ambitions requires alignment between policy objectives, industry demand and education provision.*

8. Devolution intends to bring more of the skills system under regional and local control – in partnership with key stakeholders – and provide mayors more ‘levers to pull’.

9. However, devolution also presents risks if responsibilities to convene and enable system-wide change are not matched by sufficient powers, funding and accountability mechanisms.

10. Devolution also brings risks in deliverability and accountability if ‘convener’ and ‘system enabler’ responsibilities are given without enough funding and power to follow up.

11. There’s further debate to be had on which skills priorities we should focus on, how existing and future powers should be used, and the balance between ambition and deliverability.

12. Investment and programmes are in place, but awareness of them appears limited, as is clarity on how specific interventions address identified problems ("problem > solution > outcome").

13. Some ambitions and interventions appear to be progressing without a clearly defined delivery plan or robust framework for measuring success.

OUTCOMES

14. **Include an item at 23 October 2026 meeting on the implications of *Rewiring the State* and devolution, with some focus on opportunities and risks for the skills system.**

15. **Use the 23 October 2026 meeting focusing on quarterly budget, KPI and outcome reports to scrutinise skills programme delivery and outcomes.**

16. **Review case studies to demonstrate and better understand the "solution > action > outcome" pathway of current and planned skills interventions.**