

LEP - Lancashire Skills and Employment Advisory Panel

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 3rd June 2020 at 8.00am virtually via Zoom

Present

Amanda Melton

Mark Allanson	Dean Langton
Lindsay Campbell	Gareth Lindsay
Neil Conlon	Lynne Livesey
Andrew Dewhurst	Bev Robinson
Ruth England	Dr Lis Smith

Observers

Paul Evans, Assistant Director, Cities and Local Growth Unit, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Stephen Jones, Head of FE Territorial Team, ESFA
Heather Murray, Senior Partnership Manager Lancashire, DWP
Carla Passarello, District External Relationship Manager, DWP

In Attendance

Kerry Harrison, Digital Skills Coordinator, Lancashire County Council
Sarah Kemp, Chief Executive Officer, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership
Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, Director, Lancashire Skills Hub
Joseph Mount, Skills and Economic Intelligence Officer, Lancashire County Council
Lisa Moizer, Coordinator, Lancashire Skills Hub
Holly Tween, Democratic Services Officer, Lancashire County Council

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introductions were made by all in attendance.

Apologies were received from Katherine O'Connor.

2. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2020

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2020 are confirmed as an accurate record.

4. Introduction to LEP CEO Sarah Kemp

The Chair particularly welcomed Sarah Kemp, CEO of the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership.

5. Impact of Covid-19 on Skills and Employment in Lancashire

Michele Lawty-Jones, Director of the Lancashire Skills Hub, outlined the report (circulated) on the impact of Covid-19 on skills and employment in Lancashire, and the risks and priorities that are emerging.

Committee members shared some of their observations. Some key points were:

- There was concern about the lack of visibility about the future
- Supply chain was an issue, as many business customers were not trading
- There was concern that at the end of furlough many people would be unemployed, and some may not have transferable skills that will enable them to move to another sector
- There was a reluctance for businesses to take on new apprentices or staff
- Current business bankruptcies, and the threat of more, will greatly impact cash flow.

Sarah Kemp reported that the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) had started development of the delivery plan for the strategic framework.

The LEP had established sector groups across key industry sectors for Lancashire.

The impact of the current situation was sector-specific, and was being considered in phases – stabilisation of the business, recovery and return to growth.

The sector groups were aiming to get to a granular level of detail for each of the phases to identify what interventions and level of intervention are needed and what the top priorities were for each sector. The main concerns emerging were preserving cash in the business and bringing staff back to work.

Members were invited to comment on the priorities identified in the report:

- It was suggested that the impact on aerospace could be referenced, due to its significance in Lancashire
- Putting a timeline to the actions would be helpful
- Communication of Lancashire's priorities was important
- The committee's role as a facilitator and enabler should be highlighted

- There may be an opportunity to build a wider development / prompts towards innovation and skills to support the growth of new industries given there may be opportunities to develop manufacturing base through a range of new SMEs
- There may be a loss of key skills for businesses if they lose employees due to a loss of working capital

It was noted that there was a window of opportunity to boost the skills and health and wellbeing of individuals currently furloughed to support business recovery or support development of employees' employability if they were made redundant. The team were working to bring together the different resources emerging targeted at furloughed workers – such as the DfE Skills Toolkit, local provision, Skills Support for the Workforce – and were working with partners to bring them onto one webpage which could be promoted to businesses and individuals to engage furloughed workers.

It was commented that some furloughed workers were not picking up on support offers or vacancies, and that marketing around the offers available in terms of support for businesses and supporting the health and wellbeing of employees should be balanced with marketing employability skills for individuals.

Resolved: that the Director of the Skills Hub would incorporate the comments from the meeting into the developing paper and that the paper would be shared with the LEP Board

6. Lancashire Digital Skills Landscape Research – Next Steps

Kerry Harrison, Digital Skills Coordinator, presented the report (circulated) and gave a short presentation on the key headlines from Lancashire's digital sector research.

Members were thanked for returning their recommendation rankings and were invited to comment on the collated list as presented. Following this discussion, the committee agreed to consider the collated priority list in light of the discussion. The rankings of the priorities and discussion would be fed into the Digital Skills Partnership Steering Group to enable the development of a digital skills action plan.

It was noted that colleagues at the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership had been named in this year's national Digital Leaders 100 and have made the top 10 in the 'Digital Skills or Inclusion Initiative' award category.

Resolved: that the Skills and Employment Advisory Panel

- i) Asked for the collated ranking to be circulated by email
- ii) Congratulate the Digital Skills Partnership on their shortlisting in the national Digital Leaders 100

7. Skills and Employment Advisory Panel

Michele Lawty-Jones introduced the report (circulated) giving the background and progress against the government's requirement for local Skills Advisory Panels and the extension of grants into 2020/21.

Resolved: that the Skills and Employment Advisory Panel noted the planned use of the SAP grant in 2020/21 and would recommend to the LEP Board that the LEP accept the £75,000 grant being offered by the Department for Education

8. Reporting to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership

Resolved: the following items would be reported to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board:

- A paper outlining the Careers Hub expansion would go to LEP Board in June
- A report asking the LEP Board for approval to accept the SAP grant would go to the June meeting
- The headlines from the Digital Skills Research would be shared at the September LEP Board meeting

9. Any Other Business

It was noted that there was a vacancy for a vice Chair. Any member who was interested was requested to contact the Chair, or Michele.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next formal meeting is scheduled for 09 September 2020, at 8.00am. Venue/virtual details to be confirmed.

The next informal meeting is scheduled for 8.00am on 08 July 2020. Venue/virtual details to be confirmed.

11. Exclusion of the Press and Public

At this point the Lancashire Skills and Employment Advisory Panel approved that the meeting move into Part II, Private and Confidential, to consider the remaining agenda items as they contained information defined as confidential or exempt in accordance with the relevant paragraph of Part I to schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as set out in each report or presentation. It was considered that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

12. Expansion of the Lancashire Careers Hub

Michele Lawty-Jones presented a private and confidential report (circulated) highlighting that funding had been allocated by Department for Education (DfE) to the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) to enable the continuation and expansion of the existing Lancashire Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hub. An options paper, supported by the LEP Chair and Interim Chief Executive had been submitted to the CEC. The preferred option is to roll out the Careers Hub from Blackpool, Burnley and Pendle to the whole of Lancashire.

Resolved: that the Skills and Employment Advisory Panel note the options submitted to the CEC, and the request to roll out the Careers Hub across the whole of the Lancashire area