

## **LEP - Lancashire Skills and Employment Advisory Panel**

### **Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 9th September 2020 at 8.00am virtually via Zoom**

#### **Present**

Amanda Melton

Mark Allanson	Bev Robinson
Neil Conlon	Dr Lis Smith
Andrew Dewhurst	Liz Tapner
Lynne Livesey	

#### **Observers**

Stephen Jones, Head of FE Territorial Team, ESFA  
Heather Murray, Senior Partnership Manager Lancashire, DWP  
Jane Robinson, DWP

#### **In Attendance**

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

#### **1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Councillor Briggs, Edwina Grant, Dean Langton, Lindsay Campbell, Ruth England, Gareth Lindsay, Paul Evans and Carla Passarello.

#### **2. Declaration of Interests**

None

#### **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 03 June 2020**

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 03 June 2020 are confirmed as an accurate record.

#### **4. Matters Arising**

None

#### **5. Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub update**

Michele Lawty-Jones, Skills Hub Director, presented the report (circulated) giving an update on the activities of the Skills Hub since the last meeting. She particularly highlighted the following:

- 3.2 DWP had undertaken the due diligence checks and gateway assessments of projects submitted under the £1.4m 2.2 call 'Enabling SMEs to engaging in Technical Education' which closed in January and the £10m 2.1 call 'Skills for Sustainable Employment' which closed in March. Two projects were submitted against the former, and 5 against the latter. It was understood that all projects submitted against the calls had passed the gateway assessment and were deemed eligible, but are now awaiting assignment of an appraiser by DWP. Timescales for appraisal are currently unclear due to the volume of projects across the country in the appraisal pipeline.
- 3.4 The Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) has issued contract extensions to the European Social Fund (ESF) opt-in projects, extending projects until the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. This will enable the extension and growth of 3 projects:
  - 'Moving On' which provides support to young people who at risk of or NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) with view to engaging them in learning and/or work;
  - 'Skills Support for the Unemployed' which supports unemployed and inactive adults into work through skills and employability interventions
  - 'Skills Support for the Workforce' which aims to upskill employed people (including furloughed workers) in-line with business needs and provide redundancy support to businesses and individuals.
- 6.4 A call from government for bids for Institutes of Technology (IoT) is expected early in the autumn, focusing on delivery of Higher Technical qualifications at levels 4 and 5 in key STEM subject areas Local partners had already agreed that Blackpool & the Fylde College should be the lead organisation for a Lancashire bid, working with FE and HE partners, following a session led by the LEP Chair prior to lockdown. In preparation for the bidding round, the Skills and Employment Hub, along with Blackpool & the Fylde College, hosted a Visioning Session with FE and HE partners, to identify the priorities for a Lancashire IoT. A further session with all partners in early September will continue to progress developments, including the specific sectors for focus and identifying which provision can be built upon and what will need to be newly developed across partner organisations.
- 8 the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership had been shortlisted for the Digital Skills and Inclusion initiative of the Year award, the results of which would be announced in October.

- 8.3 Fast Track in Lancashire – a further £1.5m to the partnership to increase the activity and number of projects. This was an opportunity to influence future policy around a national skills fund.

It was noted that it was important to continue to put out communications to ensure partners could engage and to make people in Lancashire aware of what was on offer.

**Resolved:** that the Skills and Employment Advisory Panel note the update

## 6. Careers Hub Expansion

The Panel received a presentation from Mark Bowman, CEO – Inspira, and Kay Vaughan – Careers Hub Lead, on the expansion of the Careers Hub. The presentation outlined the journey so far, current progress against the average benchmarks, support available during Covid-19 restrictions and plans for the next term.

In answer to questions, it was noted that the Careers Hub was interlinking with Careers Leaders, and was working to develop a community of practice for Special Schools across Lancashire. The latter will involve working with DWP to engage Disability Confident employers in activities with SEND young people. It was asked that connections be made in regard to the development of Youth Hubs with DWP.

Mark and Kay were congratulated on their work so far.

**Resolved:** that Kay Vaughan engage with DWP regarding the development of Youth Hubs

## 7. Impact of Covid-19 - Latest Insights

The Panel received a presentation from Joe Mount, Skills & Economic Intelligence Officer, and Lisa Moizer, Skills Hub Coordinator, highlighting the latest insights on the impact of Covid-19, and specifically updating on furlough rates and claimant counts by district, age, gender and sector, a comparison of the north west to the UK as a whole and the take up of the Self Employed Income Support Scheme.

Michele Lawty-Jones updated on local responses, including the Skills Swap, Skills for Work, Redundancy Task Force, Post-16 Officers Group, Digital Skills and Devices, Digital Careers Journey and online stakeholder engagement.

It was noted that a social marketing intern had been appointed to help develop the use of social media platforms to market the support available.

The 'Lancashire Keep Learning' social media campaign, aimed at providing 16-24 year olds with information and encouragement to remain in or return to education,

had appointed an agency with experience in reaching this age group to develop creatives for Snapchat, TikTok and Instagram. £15,000 had been allocated to the campaign, though it was intended to request partners to contribute to allow expansion.

Heather Murray, DWP, updated the panel on some of the government-led initiatives, including sector based work academies and a fund for increasing private sector capacity for job finding support and the green grant scheme. She requested that information on the Kickstart scheme was included on the website to help promote it to employers.

**Resolved:** that the Skills and Employment Advisory Panel note the update, and a further update be brought to the next meeting

## **8. Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework 2021**

Michele Lawty-Jones updated the panel on the refresh of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework. It had been agreed at the July committee meeting that the framework should be refreshed for a one year period, taking into account the unique environment resulting from COVID-19, the development of the LEP's Strategic Economic Framework and the Greater Lancashire Plan, and the requirements of Department for Education for a Local Skills Report. The panel were directed to the draft framework at Appendix A.

The panel discussed the draft and agreed that the light touch consultation was the appropriate approach. It was also suggested that it should be made clear that this was only an interim paper while the other strategies were being developed, as the landscape was continually changing. It was acknowledged that although there was pressure in the short term to respond to the current situation, it was important to continue to consider the medium to long term plan.

**Resolved:** that the Skills and Employment Panel approved the draft framework for consultation and agreed to the light touch consultation

## **9. Reporting to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership**

**Resolved:** that the activities and feedback from the panel be fed into the LEP Board

## **10. Any Other Business**

Andrew Dewhurst announced his intention to resign from the panel, following his appointment to an additional role at Nelson and Colne College as Chief Information Officer which created a conflict of interest. Andrew was thanked for his work on the panel.

A recruitment process for vacant private sector posts would commence shortly.

It was also noted that the Vice-Chair position on the panel was still vacant.

**Resolved:** that

- i. the panel record their thanks to Andrew, and note the recruitment process
- ii. any member interested in taking the vacant Vice-Chair role should speak to Amanda or Michele this week

#### **11. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled for 8.00am on 11 November 2020.  
Arrangements to be confirmed nearer the time.