

LEP - Lancashire Skills Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 23rd July, 2015 at 8.00am at Scholars - University of Central Lancashire, Fylde Road, Preston PR1 2HE

Present:

Amanda Melton (Chair)

Andrew Atherton
Steve Gray
Paul Holme

Lynne Livesey
Joanne Pickering

Observer

Cat Settle, Skills Funding Agency Partnership Manager.

In Attendance

Andy Walker, Head of Business Growth, Lancashire County Council.

Mike Neville, Company Services Team, Lancashire County Council.

Dave Brennan, Interim Skills Hub Director.

Ian Ruff, Consultant to the Skills Board.

James Farr – new economy

Tim Allen – ekosgen

Graham Thom – SQW

Rebecca Pates – SQW

Simon Pringle – SQW

1. Welcome and Apologies.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Those present introduced themselves and apologies for absence were received from Bev Robinson and Graham Howarth.

2. Declarations of Interests.

There were no declarations of interest in relation to matters appearing on the agenda.

3. Sector Skills Action Plan - Health and Social Care.

Mr Farr gave a presentation on the findings of the review of health and social care in Lancashire which recommended the prioritisation of the care sector for ESF investment in the future in order to begin to rebalance the divergence in resources available to the sector compared with those available to health employers via HEE.

The presentation also highlighted various recommendations under the four priorities set out in the Sector Skills Action Plan for Health and Social Care, including the following:

Priority 1 - Strengthen Employer Leadership in Skills.

- Create a Health and Social Care Employer Skills Group (ESG) which would take forward key actions and provide a forum for health and care service innovators to interact with skills providers.
- Develop a Lancashire policy for implementation of the Care Certificate, to be signed by all LCA and LWDP members, along with training providers and colleges.

Priority 2 – LEP to work with the ESG in order to bridge existing state skills investment to better address employer needs

- Undertake a detailed analysis of EFA, SFA and non-HEE higher education spend to understand the existing delivery, performance and curriculum offer.
- Agree a set of skills funding priorities for health and social care in Lancashire for each of the key skills funding streams.

Priority 3 - Widen Access to Careers in Health and Social Care.

- Strengthen alternative career paths that enable vocational learners to progress on a par with those taking the traditional academic route via A levels and medical school.
- Develop the business case for a National College for Health and Social Care in Lancashire to address new roles and skills required as a result of the transformation agenda.

Priority 4 - A Strong, Competitive Skills Provider base.

Establish a health and care skills provider network in Lancashire to enable providers to input into the work of the ESG in relation to knowledge, experience and resources.

In considering the report the Committee noted that many employees in the social care sector were low paid and providers were not in a position to take on Apprentices though it was recognised that implementation of the Care Certificate

would present an opportunity to address the situation. It was also suggested that innovation, implementation and patterns of delivery needed to be taken into consideration when measuring performance.

The Chair thanked Mr Farr for this presentation.

Resolved: That all the recommendations set out in the Sector Skills Action Plan for Health and Social Care are noted and discussed at the Away Day on the 28th July 2015 with a view to informing the development of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategy.

4. Sector Skills Action Plan - Visitor Economy.

Mr Allen gave a presentation on the findings of the review of visitor economy in Lancashire, informed the meeting that the Sector Skills Action Plan included a total of 18 recommendations and highlighted the following items under specific headings.

1. Preparing the future workforce.

- Explore options for a best-in-class 'Hotel School' as a joint venture between skills providers and employers to develop people's skills/experience across an array of occupations and disciplines.
- Recommend and actively promote the Hospitality Guild's interactive career map (which captures the huge variety of opportunities within hospitality and tourism, explains job roles, qualification requirements and career paths) to schools, other skills providers and careers guidance professionals across the LEP area.
- Actively promote Traineeships to employers in the visitor economy as a way of helping to address the shortage of suitable candidates for apprenticeships.
- Explore options for compressing the delivery schedule for the Study Programme to be better aligned with employers' recruitment needs, i.e. starting after the end of the peak season and finishing before the onset of the peak season the following year.

2. Developing the existing workforce.

- Design and implement a project to support visitor economy employers (and especially SMEs) to improve their awareness and use of online

sales, marketing and social media.

- Work with key stakeholders in other sectors affected by a lack of public transport as a barrier to work, explore options for introducing a cross-sector initiative, based on the *Wheels 2 Work* model, to help people access employment opportunities that involve unconventional working hours and/or are in areas not well served by public transport.

3. Learning from good practice and deepening knowledge

- Work with employers and skills providers to determine the appetite for, and feasibility of, replicating the Blackpool Tourism Academy model in other parts of the LEP area with concentrations of visitor economy employers, e.g. Lancaster and the Ribble Valley.
- Discuss the Action Plan with the British Hospitality Association, the Tourism Society and other relevant trade bodies, networks and forums to explore opportunities for economies of scale and mobilising resources around shared objectives.

When considering the report the Committee recognised that seasonality was a major influence in many areas of the visitor economy and whilst there was no issue regarding supply for the workforce there were concerns in relation to the retention of employees within the sector. It was suggested that the seasonal nature of work in the sector could be a benefit as it provided an opportunity to attract young people into the sector to gain work experience.

The Chair thanked Mr Allen for this presentation.

Resolved: That the recommendations set out in the Sector Skills Action Plan for the Visitor Economy are noted and discussed further at the Away Day on the 28th July 2015 with a view to informing the development of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategy.

5. Sector Skills Action Plan - Energy and Environmental Technologies.

Mr Thom and Ms Pates gave a presentation on the findings of the review of the Energy and Environmental Technologies (EET) sector in Lancashire which highlighted the following recommended actions.

Meeting the demand for skills.

Action 1 - Increase provision of short courses to address skills shortages in specific technical skills and encourage take up.

- Short retaining courses which focus on specific technical skills which allow people with broad based engineering skills/experience to transfer across the EET and or become specialised in a technical area with skill shortages.
- Short courses on softer skills such as project management and commercialisation.
- Provision of taster courses on a very short term basis at no/low cost to encourage interest in specified areas.
- Promotion of Post Graduate Certification courses to fill industry identified gaps.

Action 2 Apprenticeships – greater promotion and take up.

- Greater promotion of the benefits of apprenticeships to young people in schools.
- Encouraging large firms to work with their supply chains to expand the total number of apprentices recruited.
- Encouraging larger employers to consider using higher level Apprenticeship models (including Degree Apprenticeships) to complement planned graduate recruitment.
- Promoting to employers the flexibility built in to Apprenticeships and the development of Trailblazer Apprenticeship frameworks.

Sector attraction.

Action 3 - Improving awareness and attractiveness of the EET sector as a career choice, including for women.

- Produce EET promotional materials on career opportunities in the sector and disseminate amongst schools, FE Colleges and universities.
- FE/HE, employers and the LEP to participate and support school GCSE/A Level/Careers option days.
- HE/FE providers to work with employers and schools to promote National Women in Engineering Day in 2016 to raise awareness of the opportunities for women in the sector.

Action 4 – Developing and promoting a coherent message about Lancashire as a place to work in the EET sector.

- Develop a strong marketing message regarding the current strength and potential growth of the EET sector in Lancashire and run a local/regional marketing campaign with particular focus on mobile workers and experienced returners.

Sector intelligence.

Action 5 – Energy and Environmental Technologies Sector Skills Development Group

Use the existing Development Group to gather intelligence on employer needs, provide a co-ordinated response to skills gaps/changing needs, work with the LEP to engage with and influence national activities and lead cross LEP working on key issues/sub sectors.

The Supply System.

Action 6 - Introduce mechanisms to increase the number of FE staff teaching EET related subjects in Lancashire.

- Create a pan Lancashire pool of EET employers who are willing to release staff to engage in the delivery of EET lectures/modules/courses.
- Establish and deliver a marketing campaign to people who will soon be retiring from EET firms in Lancashire to engage in the delivery of the above lectures/modules/courses.
- Create commercial courses (linked to Action 1 above) that are delivered by employers as contractors and where prices can be set accordingly.

Action 7 - Adjust FE and HE provision to better meet employers' needs.

- Increase the student experience with industry via projects and placements to help encourage more graduates to go and work there on completion of their courses and give graduates work experience/business skills.
- Adjust course curricula to better meet the needs of industry requirements.

In considering the report the Committee noted that retention of workers was an issue for the sector as many graduates left the County for jobs elsewhere that were perceived as being more attractive. It was also suggested that reference should be made in the report to the opportunities presented by data science and the proposed National Energy College.

The low level of girls who took science as a subject at school or pursued a career in Science/Energy was also discussed and it was suggested that more needed to be done to encourage girls to take the subject and for women to pursue careers in the sector.

The Chair thanked Mr Thom and Ms Pates for the presentation.

Resolved: That the recommendations set out in the Sector Skills Action Plan for the Energy and Environmental Technologies Sector be noted and discussed in detail at the Away Day on the 28th July 2015 with a view to informing the development of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategy.

6. Sector Skills Action Plan - Financial and Professional Services.

Mr Pringle gave a presentation on the findings of the review of the Financial and Professional Services Sector in Lancashire and informed the meeting that it was anticipated the sector would lose its most experienced workers over the next 10 years and be further impacted by cost pressures, new business models, merger/acquisitions and employability issues.

With regard to the findings of the review Mr Pringle highlighted the following cross cutting themes and 10 recommended actions as set out below to develop and promote a more vibrant, dynamic and competitive FPS sector across Lancashire.

- Lancashire is business friendly.
- Inspiring and preparing the future workforce to engage with FPS career opportunities.
- Better sense of 'who we are' as a sector.
- Better coordinated skills and demand.
- Tackling gender imbalance and under representation of hard to reach groups.

Demand.

1. Targeted campaign to raise awareness of importance of early succession planning in SMEs/family owned firms.
2. County wide portal to coordinate increased use of company projects/placements for students to enhance employability etc.

Supply.

3. Better FPS facing careers advice and guidance across all schools.
4. Greater specialisation across FE/HE/ITP/private provision.
5. Support shift to online learning – more delivery/content made available via web.
6. Enabled access in to the HE base.

Attraction.

7. Develop and promote coherent message about Lancashire's FPS offer.
8. Programme to increase part time working and volunteering for Lancashire's school age students – enhancing employability/work readiness.
9. Encourage Lancashire students to exploit existing opportunities eg Shell Step.

Intelligence.

10. Lancashire FPS skills observatory.

When considering the report the Committee recognised that FPS was a diverse sector and Lancashire needed to develop an attractive offer which would both

encourage young people to enter the local workforce but also attract older people working elsewhere within the sector back into the County. In addition it was suggested that consideration be given to any specific codes in the Standard Industrial Classification where Lancashire was able to provide an exceptional offer that would compete with that which was available in surrounding areas.

The Chair thanked Mr Pringle for his presentation.

Resolved: That the recommendations set out in the Sector Skills Action Plan for the Financial and Professional Services Sector be noted and discussed at the Away Day on the 28th July, 2015, with a view to informing the development of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategy.

7. Minutes of the last meeting.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 11th June 2015 are confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

8. Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

9. Skills Capital Application Process 2016-17 Projects.

Andy Walker presented drafts of the Expression of Interest Form and Guidance Note that were being developed for use in relation to applications for skills capital projects for delivery in 2016/17. In response to a query Mr Walker confirmed that it would be possible for applications received during Round 1 which had not subsequently been successful to be resubmitted in relation to Round 2.

Resolved: That the draft Expression of Interest Form and Guidance Note being developed for use in relation to applications for skills capital projects for delivery in 2016/17 are noted.

10. ESIF Pipeline Project Exercise.

Andy Walker reported that the 2014-20 ESIF Programme was reaching a stage where projects would begin to move forward through the application/appraisal process and so there was a need to ensure there was a robust and well planned pipeline of projects which were strategically aligned with local priorities, built on other investment and could delivered the required European outputs for Lancashire.

It was reported that a pipeline exercise and ESIF event in June had attracted over 100 expressions of interest from local organisations/stakeholders. The Committee

considered details of those EOI's which related to Skills and Employability work together with proposals how the Skills Board might approach supporting the Lancashire ESIF Partnership in prioritising and driving forward this body of work.

Resolved: That a Sub Group comprising 4 members be established to:

- a) Re-open the EOI process briefly to ensure that all skills partners have an opportunity to submit projects.
- b) Work with the LEP's Business Support Programme Board to assess and progress Business, SME and Enterprise and Sector Focused Projects.
- c) Consider facility based projects in a process which is aligned with Skills Capital Decisions.
- d) Look to encourage a single bid combining the best aspects of the Graduate Retention Programmes.
- e) Consider how best Client, Location and Community Grant based projects can be taken forward

11. Membership

Professor Atherton informed the meeting that it was his intention to resign from the Committee at the end of the year.

Andy Walker reported that there were two existing vacancies on the Committee and consideration would be given to identifying potential new members for all three vacancies in due course.

Resolved: That the Committee be kept informed regarding future appointments.

12. Away Day 28th July 2015 - content and arrangements.

The Committee discussed the proposed programme for the Away Day which was scheduled for the 28th July 2015 at the Woodlands Conference Centre, Chorley.

Resolved: That, having considered the proposed programme for the Away Day on the 28th July 2015 the Committee agreed:

- 1. That the Sector Skills Action Plan on Financial and Professional Services would not be presented at the Away Day as it had been discussed earlier in the meeting.
- 2. That any presentation in relation to the City Deal Skills Plan should highlight the top five priority issues for Lancashire.
- 3. That further consideration be given to the role of the Skills Hub in the future.

13. Any Other Business.

No items of business were raised under this heading.

14. Date of next meeting.

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting would be held at 8.30am on the 10th September 2015 at Blackpool and the Fylde College, Ashfield Road, Bispham.