

LEP - Lancashire Skills Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 10th September, 2015 at 8.30 am at the Bispham Campus - Blackpool and The Fylde College, Ashfield Road, Bispham, Blackpool, FY2 0HB.

Present:

Amanda Melton (Chair)

Steve Gray
Paul Holme
Lynne Livesey

Joanne Pickering
Bev Robinson

Observers

Cat Settle, Head of Apprenticeships and Local Growth, Liverpool, Cumbria and Lancashire.

Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, Lancashire Skills Hub Director.

In Attendance

Alison Moore, Programme Manager, Programme Office, Lancashire County Council

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

Lisa Moizer, Coordinator, Lancashire Skills Hub

Mike Neville, Company Services Team, Lancashire County Council.

John Lonsdale, UCLAN

1. Welcome and Apologies.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Graham Howarth.

2. Declarations of Interests.

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

3. Presentation - Lancashire Higher Education Institutions

John Lonsdale, Director of Innovation and Enterprise at UCLan gave a presentation on how Lancashire Higher Education Institutions could contribute to the skills agenda in relation to the following.

- Professional Qualifications
- Higher apprenticeships
- Employability Skills

- EU (ESIF) programmes
- CPD (Continuous Professional Development)
- Coordination role for the County
- Retaining skills in the region.

In considering the presentation the Committee discussed the need to retain graduates and noted that whilst the proportion of graduates from the County who went on to secure employment was high many often did not remain within Lancashire. The perceived gap between the number of graduates and available jobs was also discussed and it was suggested that further work needed to be done to clarify the severity/extent of the gap in order to be able to address it. The importance of Information Advice and Guidance in ensuring that people were well informed about potential areas of study, especially in relation to subjects which would then address identified skills gaps in the market was also discussed.

Joanne Pickering asked Mr Lonsdale to provide her with details of a contact person at each of the HEIs which she could share with employers in her role as Deputy Chair of the Lancashire HR Employers Network. She also offered to circulate details of the new UCLan Engineering Innovation Centre for SME development via the network.

The Chair thanked Mr Lonsdale on behalf of the Board for his presentation

Resolved:

1. That the information set out in the presentation on how Higher Education Institutions in Lancashire could contribute to the skills agenda is noted and taken into account in future discussions.
2. That a copy of the presentation is shared with the members of the Skills Board for information and future reference.
3. That Mr Lonsdale provide a named contact for each of the HEIs that businesses can use as an entry point to engage with each University for circulation to members of the Skills Board and for use at business networks.

4. Minutes of the last meeting.

Joanne Pickering asked whether any additional information in relation to the presentation on the Visitor Economy had been circulated following the last meeting and Andy Walker undertook to check and share any information with the members of the Committee.

It was noted that an overview on the emerging skills/partnership framework was to be presented to the Lancashire ESIF Partnership on the 11th September 2015. Paul Holme, Joanne Pickering and Sam Mercer from the SFA were nominated to serve on the Sub Group which would support the Partnership to prioritise and take forward a pipeline of projects.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 23rd July 2014 is confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

5. Growth Deal Skills Capital

Michele Lawty Jones reported that following the last meeting the timescales for the launch and completion of the Growth Deal Skills Capital Round 2 had been revised and agreed with the Skills Funding Agency.

Details of the revised timescale were discussed and it was noted that the changes would enable some successful projects to commence in April 2016, to meet the need to allocate and spend funding by the end of the 2016/17 financial year in line with the Growth Deal programme agreed with Government. EOIs would initially be reviewed by the Lancashire Skills Hub and LEP staff (with advice from the SFA) in order to agree a shortlist of projects which would advance to full business case. The recommended shortlist would then be presented to the Committee for consideration with recommendations being made to the Lancashire LEP Board for final approval.

It was noted that in order to enable both the SFA to provide feedback and the Committee to consider the EOI recommendations before they are submitted to the LEP Board for approval it would be necessary to change the date of the meeting in December.

Resolved:

1. That the revised timetable for the Growth Deal Skills Capital Round 2, as set out in the report presented, is approved.
2. That the meeting scheduled for the 3rd December 2015 is cancelled and rearranged for 8.00am on the 10th December 2015 in Room A05 at County Hall, Preston.

6. Lancashire Skills and Employment Framework

Michele Lawty-Jones presented an updated version of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Framework which had been amended in response to feedback from the Lancashire Skills Board Away Day in August and the completion of the studies and further analysis of the findings and recommendations.

In considering the Framework members of the Committee agreed that it should be a flexible, living document which would be updated in the light of experience. It was noted that Sector Skills Development Partnerships would be established to oversee the implementation of sector specific action plans and it was suggested that care needed to be taken to ensure that a wide range of stakeholders across Lancashire were involved in the process, including employers, schools, Universities and UTCs.

It was suggested that once the Framework was finalised it should be subject to review on a quarterly basis in order to ensure it remained relevant.

Resolved: That the Lancashire Skills and Employment Framework, as set out in the report presented, is approved for consultation with local authority Chief Executives and key stakeholders, including providers and employers.

7. Apprenticeships Levy Consultation

The Committee considered a report regarding the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills consultation on the implementation of an Apprenticeship Levy for large employers which was intended to address the structural decline of employer investment in skills in a sustainable way.

Concern was expressed regarding the lack of clarity around what constituted a 'large employer' and the potential impact which different interpretations could have. It was reported that the intention was for members of the Committee to submit views on the proposal outside of the meeting to enable the Skills Hub to formulate a collective response which would be forwarded to BIS before the end of the consultation on the 2nd October 2015.

Resolved:

1. That the Lancashire Skills Board submit a collective response to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills consultation on the implementation of an Apprenticeship Levy for large employers.
2. That the Skills Hub collate information gleaned from the higher level skills study and the steering group (plus any other relevant issues raised in the sector studies) into the consultation questionnaire.
3. That Members of the Lancashire Skills Board submit any comments to the Skills Hub (Lisa.moizer@lancashire.gov.uk) by Wednesday 23rd September 2015.
4. That the Skills Hub circulate a draft consultation response to all members of the Skills Board by Monday 28th September 2015 for comment with members providing feedback by close of play on Wednesday 30th September 2015.
5. That the Skills Hub submit the agreed collective response on behalf of the Lancashire Skills Board by the 2nd October 2015 deadline.

8. Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012

Michele Lawty-Jones presented a report in response to a request by the Growth Deal Management Board for suggestions as to how best to identify/capture social impacts and ensure that they are taken into account in future decision making in

accordance with the requirements of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012.

The Committee noted that initially it would be necessary to agree a Lancashire based definition of social value in order that priority areas/benefits could be identified and integrated into procurement processes. It was reported that a number of examples of good practice across the country had already been identified and would be taken into consideration when developing an approach for Lancashire.

It was reported that at the meeting on the 8th September 2015 the Growth Deal Management Board had considered a report on the matter and had agreed:

- That further research be undertaken into approaches in other sub-regions and also good practice.
- That further discussion is undertaken with relevant teams in Lancashire County Council, including the Programme Office, in order to understand the current position.
- That a report be taken to the Lancashire Skills Board raising awareness of the Social Value Act and suggesting that the Board take the strategic lead in articulating the potential outcomes and benefits, aligning outcomes with the evolving Lancashire Skills and Employment Framework.
- That a further report be brought to the next Growth Deal Management Board on the 21st October to provide an up-date on progress.

In considering the report the Committee agreed that the Skills Board should take the strategic lead in developing a Lancashire based response to social value through the Skills Hub. Offers of assistance were made by Joanne Pickering in relation to legal colleagues who had undertaken work around social value and from Lynne Livesey who suggested that a project team from UCLan could be established to support the Skills Hub.

Resolved:

1. That the Lancashire Skills Board take the strategic lead in articulating the potential outcomes and benefits of social value and align outcomes with the evolving Lancashire Skills and Employment Framework
2. That the Skills Hub work with relevant teams at the County Council, including the Programme Office, in order to better understand the current position.
3. That the Skills Hub explore the offers of assistance from UCLan and Forbes Solicitors in connection with research into good practice and approaches in other sub-regions in relation to social value.
4. That the Committee be kept informed of further developments

9. Terms of Reference of the Lancashire Skills Board/Purpose and Objectives of the Lancashire Skills Hub.

Michele Lawty-Jones presented a report that outlined the key objectives and success criteria for the Lancashire Skills Hub which had been developed following discussions at the Lancashire Skills Board Away Day in August 2015. In considering the key objectives the Committee noted that care would need to be taken regarding the Sector Skills Development Partnerships to ensure they did not duplicate existing structures and it was suggested that under the Key Objectives heading the words 'prioritise and direct' be deleted and replaced with 'and prioritise' with regard to the use of relevant mainstream and discretionary funding.

It was also reported that consideration had been given to the relationship between the Committee and Skills Hub, together with comments received regarding the requirement for members of the Committee to be impartial.

As a result it was proposed that both the name and Terms of Reference of the Committee be amended to better reflect its role and purpose in the future. Requests were made at the meeting for the wording of the Terms of Reference to be further amended to refer to 'Blackpool and the Fylde College' and for Joanne Pickering to be shown as 'Director of the HR, Training and Quality at Forbes Solicitors and Chair of the Lancashire HR Employers Network.'

Resolved:

1. That, subject to the amendment of the wording under 'Key Objectives' specified above the purpose, objectives and success criteria (2015/16) for the Lancashire Skills Hub, as set out in the report presented, are approved.
2. That the LEP Board be recommended to approve.
 - a) The change of title of the Lancashire Skills Board to the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board.
 - b) The amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board, as set out in the report presented and including the additional amendments specified above in relation to Blackpool and the Fylde College and Joanne Pickering's job title.

10. Skills Board membership - Verbal report.

The Committee discussed the current 2 vacancies in membership and it was suggested that consideration be given to seeking potential candidates from across a variety of skill sectors, including Creative Digital, Health, Construction, the Visitor Economy and Energy. The Committee recognised that whatever appointments were made in the future care would need to be taken to ensure that the successful candidates would not be likely to become conflicted in relation to

the work of the Committee in order to minimise the possibility of future meetings being inquorate.

It was also proposed that a section be added to the revised Terms of Reference of the Committee emphasising the need for members to regularly attend meetings and that attendance would be monitored and reviewed.

Michele Lawty-Jones reminded the meeting of discussions at the Away Day in August regarding the remit of the Committee and proposed that Tracey Ellmore from the Department for Work and Pensions be approached about attending future meetings as an observer. Andy Walker also reported that following Professor Atherton's announcement that he intended to resign from the Committee at the end of the year discussions were underway to identify a suitable replacement.

In view of discussions earlier in the meeting it was suggested that the duration of next meeting in October be extended to accommodate further discussion around issues such as the Apprenticeship Levy, Trailblazers and Area Review.

Resolved:

1. That further consideration is given to recruiting an additional 2 Committee members from across a variety of skills sectors including Creative Digital, Health, Construction, the Visitor Economy and Energy.
2. That before it is referred to the LEP Board for approval the revised Terms of Reference of the Committee are further amended to include a section emphasising the need for members to regularly attend meetings and that attendance would be monitored/reviewed.
3. That Tracey Ellmore from the Department for Work and Pensions be invited to attend future meetings of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board as an observer.
4. That the meeting scheduled for the 22nd October 2015 be extended to 12 noon to accommodate further discussion around matters such as the Apprenticeship Levy, Trailblazers and the Area Review.

11. Any Other Business.

No items of business were raised under this heading.

12. Date of next meeting.

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting would be held between 8.00am and 12 noon on the 22nd October 2015 in Room A07 at County Hall, Preston.

In accordance with the earlier decision of the Committee the subsequent meeting

will be held at 8.00am on the 10th December 2015 in Room A05 at County Hall,
Preston.