

LEP - Lancashire Skills and Employment Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 21st November, 2018 at 8.00 am at the Committee Room 'B' (The Diamond Jubilee Room) - County Hall, Preston

Present

Joanne Pickering

Gareth Lindsay

Lynne Livesey

Observer

Chris Hebblethwaite, District External Relationship Manager, Department for Work and Pensions

Dean Langton, Chief Executive, Pendle Borough Council

Ruth England, Head teacher, Shuttleworth College

Andrew Dewhurst, Director, Affilius Group

Councillor Mark Townsend, Leader of Burnley Council

In Attendance

Sara Gaskell, Strategic Partnership Manager (Adults), Lancashire Skills Hub

Tracy Heyes, Strategic Partnerships Manager (Employers), Lancashire Skills Hub

Ryan Hyde, Business Support Officer, Lancashire County Council

Mike Neville, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Lancashire County Council

Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, Skill Hub Director, Lancashire County Council

Janet Jackson, Strategic Partnership Manager (Young People), Lancashire Skills Hub

Martin Hill, City Deal Skills and Employment Coordinator, Lancashire County Council

Kerry Harrison, Digital Skills Coordinator, Lancashire County Council

Paul Faulkner, Local Democracy Reporter, Lancashire Post

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair, Joanne Pickering, welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies for absence were noted from Amanda Melton, Bev Robinson, Mark Allanson and Lindsay Campbell.

It was noted that Paul Holme had now resigned from the Committee. The Committee noted their thanks to Paul for his service to the Committee and wished him well for the future.

2. Declaration of Interests

Gareth Lindsay declared an interest in item 12 – European Social Funds (ESF) – Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Opt-In Projects – Performance Report as his organisation, North Lancs Training Group, was involved in the delivery consortium for this project.

It was agreed that Gareth could remain and take part in any voting, if required.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2018 were approved as an accurate record and duly signed by the Chair.

4. Matters Arising

The Committee were informed that, following the meeting held on 10 October 2018, the Education and Skills Funding Agency requested that the resolution of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board at item 9 – European Social Funds (ESF) – Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Opt-In be amended in order to clarify that, by signing off the plans, the Committee was approving the release of the funds for the plans from the ESFA to providers.

Following consideration of this request, the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board agreed that the resolution of the Committee for this item be amended to read as follows.

The chair referenced a request from the Growth Deal Management Board, building on the note at the last committee regarding the request for Growth Deal funds for the proposed merger of Accrington and Rossendale College with Nelson and Colne College, asking for the committee to confirm that the request be viewed as a strategic priority. It was agreed that the funding request was a strategic priority, in that the funds would leverage significant investment from Government and secure the future viability and sustainability of the campus in Accrington.

Resolved: That the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board:

- (i) Confirmed that satisfactory progress had been made against the Capacity Building/Engagement Activity Plans.
- (ii) Approved the changes to the Capacity Building/Engagement Activity Plans, subject to maintaining the original amount of allocated funding to Mental Health and Complex Barriers Specialist Awareness to enable release of the funds to the providers.
- (iii) Noted the allocations for the 2019-21 programme and extensions to the current projects.

- (iv) Agreed that the funding request for the proposed merger of Accrington and Rossendale College with Nelson and Colne College was a strategic priority.

5. Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub Update

Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, Director of the Lancashire Skills and Employment hub, presented a report which provided the Committee with an update from the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub.

It was noted that 914 searches had been undertaken on the Escalate system, which enables effective referrals to the range of European Social Fund projects, and that data regarding needs and interests was being collected which would help to shape future provision. Thanks was given to Sara Gaskell for the facilitation of the Adult Skills Forum and the development of the tool.

In line with the development of the Skills Advisory Panels, an additional recommendation was presented to the Committee to put forward a formal request to the Education Skills Funding Agency to have an observer on the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board.

It was suggested that the Committee should work in partnership with Lancashire Leaders in order to review the provision of apprenticeships in greater detail and establish examples of good practice in relation to use of the Apprenticeship Levy. The establishment of a task and finish group on the subject of apprenticeships to report to the next meeting of the Committee was subsequently proposed.

Resolved: That the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board:

- (i) Noted the update.
- (ii) Agreed to put forward a formal request to the Education Skills Funding Agency to have an observer on the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board.
- (iii) Agreed to establish a task and finish group on the subject of apprenticeships (consisting of Gareth Lindsay, employer ambassadors and local authority leaders) to report to the meeting of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board on 3 April 2019.

6. City Deal Skills and Employment Report

Martin Hill, City Deal Skills and Employment Coordinator, presented a report providing an overview of the information submitted by the City Deal Skills and Employment Steering Group to the City Deal Executive.

It was emphasised that the performance is mainly in line with the targets for each of the key performance indicators. It was noted that, while there was a decline in apprenticeship starts nationally and in Lancashire due to the Apprenticeship

reforms, there had been an increase in the number of apprenticeship starts generally, and a significant increase in the number of construction apprenticeships in the City Deal area.

The increase in number of claimants was accredited to changes in the classification of unemployment (Job Seekers Allowance to Universal Credit).

It was noted that social value was being integrated into the Growth Deal and City Deal programme including the Supplementary Planning Document for housing sites. It was suggested that good practice in this area could be rolled out to other districts of Lancashire.

Resolved: That the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board noted the contents of the report.

8. Careers Information Advice and Guidance for Adults

It was agreed that Item 8 would be considered before Item 7.

Sara Gaskell, Strategic Partnership Manager (Adults), Lancashire Skills Hub, and Tracy Heyes, Strategic Partnerships Manager (Employers), Lancashire Skills Hub, presented a report which provided the Committee with an overview of the policy context for careers information advice and guidance for adults, as attached.

The Careers Strategy was highlighted as being a key document, with the aim being for it to support Local Industrial Strategies so that careers advice is well positioned to provide support tailored to the needs of different areas.

The National Careers Service was stated as being the main delivery mechanism. The main target groups included adults aged 18-24 who are not in education, employment, or training, single parents, and adults over 50 who are not in employment.

It was stated that there were 14 projects funded through European Social Funds delivering support, but that the Lancashire Skills Hub were seeking to work with others outside of the European Social Fund in order to coordinate the range of support provided.

It was suggested that a set of metrics of quality assurance be produced. This would be to provide an understanding of what the support is expected to provide, but could also be used as a condition of funding.

Concerns were raised about the potential exclusion of people with limited access to the internet from the support networks provided. However, it was stated that there were projects and plans in place to support these people. Geographical gaps in support were also being identified so that greater support could be provided.

Resolved: That the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board noted the presentation - Careers Information Advice and Guidance for Adults.

7. European Social Funds

Sean McGrath, External Investment/Funding, presented a report providing an overview of Lancashire's ESF programme and the current position regarding allocated and unallocated funds, incorporating the recent uprating of the exchange rate. It was likely that any uncommitted funding would form part of a National Reserve Fund in the future, and so it was important that Lancashire submitted a plan to DWP detailing how the funds would be utilised.

Whether the projects under IP 2.1 could be match funded using the apprenticeship levy was queried. However, there were concerns about the amount of time required in order to determine this.

Resolved: That the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board agreed to recommend to the Lancashire ESIF Committee the proposals detailed in Table 1 for submission to DWP.

9. Technical Education Vision

Janet Jackson, Strategic Partnership Manager (Young People), Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub, presented a report which provided the Committee with an update on the Technical Education Vision.

A key aim of the Vision is to ensure tutors in colleges and providers are closer to industry and can have a better understanding of it so that they can provide technical education which is more tailored to a career in the industry.

It was stated that, following the recent budget announcements by the national Government, employers will pay a rate of 5% of apprenticeship provision costs – down from 10% from April 2019. The aim of this was to enable more small businesses to employ apprentices. It was acknowledged that this might negatively impact apprenticeship starts between the announcement and the end of March 2019.

It was noted that the launch of the Lancashire Technical Education Vision would take place on Friday 30 November 2018. Committee members had received invites and were encouraged to attend if possible.

The Lancashire Technical Education Steering Group will provide updates to the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board through the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub Update report.

Resolved: That the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board noted the update on the Technical Education Vision.

10. LEP Review

At this point, Graham Cowley, Director on the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board, and Kathryn Molloy, Head of Service, LEP Coordination, joined the meeting in order to present item 10 – LEP Review.

It was stated that the Government had undertaken a national review of LEPs, and that the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership was formulating an implementation plan against the recommendations and requirements of the review in accordance with the Government publication – Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnerships.

Board membership was highlighted as being a key aspect of the review, with two thirds of the Board directors required to be from the private sector, and increased diversity of the directors. As the Chair of the Board was also stepping down in December 2018, a selection process for a new chair of the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership was also required.

The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership would need to consider what it delivered directly, commissioned through other parties, and relied on other parties to deliver. However, it was emphasised that it is unlikely the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board would change unless the committee itself would like it to.

It was suggested that this could be discussed further at the informal meeting of the committee on 6 February 2019, and that Graham Cowley would be invited back to this meeting to provide a further update on the LEP Review.

Resolved: That the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board noted the update on the LEP Review.

At this point, Graham Cowley and Kathryn Molloy left the meeting.

11. Exclusion of the Press and Public

At this point the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board approved that the meeting move into Part II, Private and Confidential, to consider the remaining report as it 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 the report. 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.

At this point, Ruth England, Andrew Dewhurst and Paul Faulkner left the meeting.

12. European Social Funds (ESF) - Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Opt-In Projects - Performance Report

The Committee were presented with an overview of performance for each of the Education Skills Funding Agency Opt-In projects against their current ESFA

profiles.

Concerns were raised about the projected underspend for the Moving On (NEET) Project, but it was noted that any unused funding would go back into the LEP allocation.

The volume of actual take up of the skills support for redundancy was highlighted as being significantly lower than the profiled volume. However, this was due to the volume of redundancies in the Lancashire area being significantly lower than projected.

It was noted that geographical gaps for skills support for unemployed were being addressed having brokered partnership working in districts with lower engagement. It was also stated that the project has broken the £3 million mark.

Resolved: That the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board noted the contents of the report.

13. Reporting to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership

The Committee noted that the written resolution – Appointment of 4 New Skills and Employment Board Members - Head Teacher, Digital, Manufacturing and Construction on 15 November 2018 would be reported to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership for formal approval.

The Committee agreed that the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership be made aware of the Technical Education Vision launch on Friday 30 November 2018.

14. Any Other Business

None.

15. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next informal meeting of the Committee was scheduled to be held at 8.00 a.m. on Wednesday 6 February 2019. It was agreed that this would be scheduled to last for the entire morning, and would be at a venue to be confirmed.

The next formal meeting was scheduled to be held in Committee Room 'B' – The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston at 8.00 a.m. on Wednesday April 2019.