



## **LEP – Sub Committee**

### **LEP - Lancashire Skills and Employment Board**

**Private and Confidential: NO**

Wednesday, 30 November 2016

### **Digital Advantage - Progress Report**

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#### **Executive Summary**

The committee requested a paper on the Digital Advantage project at the last meeting.

In a response to the key skills and employment issues which came out of the Creative and Digital sector report, The White Room have been contracted to deliver a pilot project. The project, named Digital Advantage, aims to strengthen the digital skills pipeline and increase the number of young people progressing into digital apprenticeships in Lancashire businesses.

The pilot began in Summer 2016 and has signed up approximately 90 young people in nine schools and colleges and has begun delivering in four schools and colleges.

#### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the committee note this report.

## **1 Background**

1.1. The research undertaken in 2015 to determine the skills and employment issues of the Creative and Digital sector informed the Lancashire Skills and Employment Framework along with the other priority sector studies. The summary of the key recommendations for the Digital sector in the sector skills study and the framework are:

- Strengthen the Digital skills pipeline.
- Inspire young people in schools and post-16 learning through engagement with business and the 'world of work'.



- Promote the industry to young people, in terms of breadth, career/progression pathways, to break myths and to promote opportunities in Lancashire.
- Enhance employability and enterprising skills, attitudes and behaviours throughout the education journey, including digital skills.
- Ensure that our post-16 learning infrastructure is fit-for-purpose (e.g. use of digital technology), and aligned to our economic priorities and labour market demands.
- Improve work readiness, softer skills and enterprising skills.
- Increase digital apprenticeships in priority sectors and developing standards which reflect the needs of the industry.

1.2. A pilot project was tendered in spring 2016 aimed at engaging young people in the digital sector and developing industry-relevant skills. The White Room were successful with their Digital Advantage programme and were awarded £30,000 to deliver a pilot in academic year 2016/2017 (championed by Creative Lancashire and funded by the BIS allocation to the Growth Hub). The White Room are digital skills specialists who had already successfully piloted a first year of Digital Advantage in 2014/2015 in Manchester.

## **2. Project overview from The White Room**

- 2.1. Digital Advantage is Lancashire's Digital Finishing School, a ground breaking initiative for young people which brings together a range of industry experts with schools, sixth forms and colleges to deliver digital industry skills and experience into the classroom. The project aims to deliver 16 hours of free inspiring teaching and learning into the classroom supported by online learning and inspirational careers advice.
- 2.2. Central to the project will be a competition to develop the best digital product or service and win a cash and crowdsourced start-up prize. They will provide the digital skills and training needed to make this happen and to help equip students for an apprenticeship in the creative and digital sector.
- 2.3. Digital Advantage provides real insight, advice and guidance to an incredible industry that is being transformed by digital technology. It will open up over 100 apprenticeship opportunities and provide the skills and knowledge needed to get into the industry on the ground floor and to carve out an exciting and rewarding career in the fastest growing sector in the UK.
- 2.4. Digital Advantage seeks to transform the lives and careers of all those who participate in it and to give the whole region a real Digital Advantage. Careers in the creative and digital sector are open to students from all disciplines and therefore so is the Digital Advantage programme.
- 2.5. Education institutions will receive a package of support to help them prepare students for study and work in the creative and digital industries. Parents will



also get access to online information advice and guidance about careers in digital, the fastest growing industry in the UK

### 3. Progress to date

- 3.1. Digital Advantage began to promote the pilot to schools and colleges over the summer 2016 and began delivery in the first institution in October 2016.
- 3.2. Close links have been forged with Digital Lancashire, a CIC who are working with the Skills Hub to support Lancashire's digital businesses and set up the Digital Skills Partnership alongside local hubs. This gives Digital Advantage a direct link and relationship with Lancashire's digital businesses.
- 3.3. A steering group chaired by Lisa Moizer brings together Digital Advantage and Digital Lancashire regularly to ensure the projects support each other and are successful.

Description	Output target	Progress to date
Number of schools/colleges engaged with the pilot (delivering the programme)	10	9 confirmed, 1 outstanding – see further detail in table below
Number of starts on programme	100-120	Approximately 90
Number of young people who complete the programme	80-100	
Number of young people progress into a digital apprenticeship	40-50	
Number of young people progress into a digital job or further study in a digital subject	40-60	
Number of young people who receive CEIAG	100-120	
Number of teachers or parents who receive CEIAG	20 Teachers 200 Parents	



<b>Institution</b>	<b>RAG Rating</b>	<b>Summary</b>
1. Blackburn College	Green	Delivery has started
2. Blackpool 6th Form College	Green	Delivery start date set for January
3. Burnley College	Green	Delivery start date set for January
4. Central Lancaster High	Red	No planned start date yet (contingency plan in place should the school drop out)
5. Haslingden High	Green	Delivery has started
6. Lancaster & Morecambe College	Green	Delivery start date set for January
7. Nelson and Colne College	Green	Delivery has started
8. Runshaw College	Green	Delivery start date set for December
9. Wellfield High, Leyland	Green	Delivery has started
10. West Lancs College	Green	Delivery start date set for December

#### **4. Recommendations**

4.1 The committee is asked to note this report.