



LEP – Sub Committee

LEP - Lancashire Skills and Employment Board

Private and Confidential: NO

Date: Wednesday, 6 June 2018

Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership

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Executive Summary

Lancashire was the first area in the country to launch a Local Digital Skills Partnership, in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) at the Digital Skills Summit held on the 18 April 2018. Following the launch of the partnership the focus has been on establishing the partnership structures, continued working with DCMS and taking a coordinated approach to working with support opportunities relating to digital skills. In addition a business case has been put forward to DCMS for funding for one year for a Digital Skills Coordinator role.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Lancashire Skills and Employment Committee:

- 1) Note the progress made to date
- 2) Give delegated authority to the Chair to review the offer from DCMS, should the business case be approved, and make a recommendation to the LEP Board regarding DCMS funding.

Background and Advice

1. Background

Following the April meeting of the committee, at which it was reported that Lancashire would be the first LEP to launch a Local Digital Skills Partnership (LDSP) in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), considerable progress has been made both in terms of launching the partnership, working with DCMS and progressing support opportunities to enhance the digital skills offer in Lancashire.



2. Launch of the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership

- 2.1 The Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership (Lancashire DSP) was launched at the Lancashire Digital Skills Summit, held at EKM's offices, on Wednesday 18th April 2018.
- 2.2 The summit was opened by Mike Blackburn, LEP Director and the keynote speeches were given by Phil Smith, Chairman of Innovate UK & The Tech Partnership and co-chair of the National Digital Skills Partnership and Richard Keely, Head of the Google Digital Garage UK.
- 2.3 The summit, in addition to launching the Lancashire DSP, comprised 3 panel discussions focused on the Skills and Employment Strategic Framework themes of Future Workforce, Inclusive Workforce and Skilled and Productive Workforce. The panels showcased local digital skills initiatives from across Lancashire, but also included reference to new activities and offers from corporate partners to support discussion about the future development of the Lancashire DSP. As such, the panels comprised of representatives from local partners currently delivering activities in Lancashire, corporates delivering digital skills initiatives including Lloyds and TSB, and representatives from organisations delivering digital initiatives nationally and internationally, for example, Freeformers.
- 2.4 The summit was attended by 97 people from 64 organisations including national and local businesses, local and national partners and many of our local digital skills projects. DCMS were extremely pleased with the event and the first launch of a LDSP.
- 2.5 Feedback from delegates was incredibly positive. There was excitement about what had been achieved to-date by working in partnership, and the potential of what can be accomplished together going forward. Delegates also said how important it is to maintain the enthusiasm and momentum that had been built. An issue raised several times throughout the day was that Lancashire doesn't showcase enough what it does and that improving communication of this agenda and achievements both within the County and nationally is something we have to work on. The press release, which received a significant amount of coverage, can be viewed here: <https://www.lancshireskillshub.co.uk/news/uks-first-digital-skills-partnership-launched-lancashire/>
- 2.6 It is now essential that we develop practise locally, growing and sustaining projects that have an impact, as well as bringing on board corporate support and national policies in a coherent and collaborative way so that we are consistently adding value to the local picture and continuously learning.
- 2.7 Google, TSB, Lloyds and Freeformers have all agreed to give more support to digital skills training in Lancashire through the partnership. Google has committed to work with local partners to train 1,000 people/businesses through its Google Digital Garage programme.



3. Next Steps

Following the summit focus has been on the following actions:

3.1 Establishing the Lancashire DSP Structures

Terms of Reference and a proposed structure are being drafted for the Lancashire DSP with the proposal for a LSDP Steering Group comprising representatives from the Skills Hub, Lancashire County Council, Digital Lancashire and DCMS and in addition 3 networking groups focused on the 3 themes of Future Workforce, Inclusive Workforce and Skilled and Productive Workforce.

3.2 Working with DCMS

We will continue to work closely with DCMS to support the development of their 'playbook' (best practice guide for establishing Local Digital Skills Partnerships) and to ensure that we take a coordinated approach to the take up of corporate support opportunities and Government initiatives to test new models and ideas, and proactively share our experiences with areas who wish to set up their own local DSPs across the Country. The Director of the Skills Hub presented at the May LEP network Skills Lead meeting on progress Lancashire has made regarding the Lancashire DSP.

DCMS have a limited amount of funds allocated to support the development of Digital Skills Partnerships in a small number of LEP areas. A business case and proposed job description for the role of Digital Skills Coordinator for one year have been submitted to DCMS. It is anticipated that a decision will be received regarding the funding of this role by the end of May. The committee are requested to give delegated authority to the Chair to review the offer from DCMS, should the business case be approved, and to make a recommendation to the LEP Board regarding the funding offer, as this will be required before the next committee meeting.

3.3 Corporate Support Opportunities

Discussions have commenced with a number of the initiatives introduced at the Digital Skills Summit with the aim of ensuring a coordinated approach to the development of these support opportunities and alignment and joint working with existing projects and partners.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee note the progress made to date and give delegated authority to the Chair to review the offer from DCMS, should the business case be approved, and make a recommendation to the LEP Board regarding the funding offer.



List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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N/A

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A