

## **LEP - Lancashire Skills and Employment Advisory Panel**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 3rd April, 2019 at 8.00 am at the Committee Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston**

### **Present**

Amanda Melton

Mark Allanson  
Lindsay Campbell  
Neil Conlon  
Andrew Dewhurst  
Dean Langton

Gareth Lindsay  
Lynne Livesey  
Joanne Pickering  
Dr Lis Smith  
Councillor Mark Townsend

### **Observers**

Chris Hebblethwaite  
Stephen Jones

Katherine O'Connor

### **In Attendance**

#### **Government Advisers**

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

Stephen Jones – Head of FE Territorial Team (Lancashire, Knowsley and St Helens) ESFA.

Katherine O'Connor – Senior Policy Manager – Lancashire/Local Business Support, BEIS

#### **In Attendance**

Richard Kenny, Interim Director of Growth, Planning and Environment, Lancashire County Council.

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

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

Kerry Harrison, Digital Skills Coordinator, Lancashire County Council

Lisa Moizer, Coordinator, Lancashire Skills Hub, Lancashire County Council

Mike Neville, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Lancashire County Council

Paul Faulkner, Local Democracy Reporter, Lancashire Post

## 1. **Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. As there were some new members of the Panel the Chair asked all those present to introduce themselves.

Apologies were received from Bev Robinson and Ruth England.

The Chair informed the Board that she would take Item 9 as the next item of business in order that Mr Kenny, the Interim Director of Growth, Planning and Environment could present his update and then leave the meeting due to another commitment.

## 9. **Update on the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership review**

Mr Kenny, the Interim Director of Growth, Planning and Environment from the County Council updated the Panel on the current position regarding the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership transition process and also with regard to recent discussions at the Lancashire Leaders.

Members of the Panel discussed the good relationship which existed between the Partnership and Lancashire Leaders and noted that the Government focus on Combined Authorities had waned over recent years with greater emphasis being placed on devolution and working collaboratively. It was also recognised that there was a key role for the Panel in assisting the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership and Lancashire Leaders with the formulation of a compelling vision of public/private sector working to deliver improved opportunities within skills and employment in Lancashire to be made to the Government in the future as part of the development of the Local Industrial Strategy.

It was noted that the development of a Local Industrial Strategy would be the subject of an informal session after the Panel.

The Chair thanked Mr Kenny for his update. He then left the meeting.

**Resolved:** That the Panel work with the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership and Lancashire Leaders to develop a compelling vision of public/private sector partnership working to deliver improved opportunities within skills and employment in Lancashire for submission to the Government in the future as part of the development of the Local Industrial Strategy.

## 2. **Declaration of Interests**

The Chair, Gareth Lindsay, Lynne Livesey and Dr Lis Smith all declared an interest in relation to item 5 on the agenda as the organisations they represented were involved in the delivery consortiums for the European Social Fund activity referred to in the report. As the report was an update on activity for noting it was not considered necessary for any of the Board members to leave the meeting during consideration of the report.

### **3. Minutes of the last meeting.**

It was noted that following the last meeting the Education Skills Funding Agency had nominated Stephen Jones, the Head of the FE Territorial Team (Lancashire, Knowsley and St Helens) to attend the Panel.

Dr Lawty-Jones confirmed that all actions set out in the Minutes had been completed.

**Resolved:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2018 are confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

### **4. Skills and Employment Advisory Panel**

It was reported that at the meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019 the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board had approved that the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board be renamed as the Lancashire Skills and Employment Advisory Panel with a revised Terms of Reference as set out at Appendix 'A' to the report.

In-line with the new Terms of Reference and Government guidance, it was recommended that a representative of the Voluntary and Community Sector be appointed to the Panel and a proposed recruitment and selection process was presented together with suggested wording for advertising the vacancy.

#### **Resolved:**

1. That the decision of the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019 to re-name the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board as the Lancashire Skills and Employment Advisory Panel, with the revised Terms of Reference as set out at Appendix 'A' to the report presented, is noted.
2. That the proposed recruitment and selection process and wording for an advert regarding the vacancy on the Panel for a representative from the Voluntary and Community sector, as set out in the report presented, is approved.
3. That Mr A Dewhurst be appointed to the Interview Panel (alongside the Chair and Dr Lawty-Jones) as part of the recruitment process referred to at 2 above and that the appointment of a representative from the Voluntary and Community sector be recommended to the LEP Board for approval in due course.

### **5. Lancashire Skills Hub Update**

D Lawty-Jones presented a report which gave the Panel an overview of activity by the Skills Hub since the last formal meeting in November 2018.

She reported that the Lancashire Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hub Annual Conference would be held on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019 at Park Hall, Charnock Richard with Sir John Holman (creator of the Gatsby Benchmarks) as key note speaker. It was noted that the focus during the academic year had been to support schools to achieve an average of 4 benchmarks though a number of schools/colleges in Lancashire had made greater progress, with some likely to have achieved all 8 this academic year, which would be celebrated at the Conference.

With regard to the European Structural Investment Funds it was reported that the Education Skills Funding Agency opt-in procurement process had been completed and contracts issued to four providers, two of which were new providers. It was reported that there were some changes to Strategic Partnership Manager roles and the Chair suggested that members of the Panel would benefit from having an updated organisation chart for the Skills Hub.

Dr Lawty-Jones also informed the Panel that as a £16m underspend had been identified in the Growth Deal programme and the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board had agreed a process for reallocating the funding which was focused on existing projects and projects submitted for the Growth Deal 3 submission that had not been allocated funding due to the level of Government funds awarded at that time. It was noted that providers of a number of potential pipeline skills capital projects had been contacted and given the opportunity to submit a project template for consideration against other projects that were submitted under Growth Deal 3.

**Resolved:**

1. That the update on activity by the Skills Hub since the last meeting in November 2018 is noted.
2. That all members of the Panel be provided with an updated organisation chart for the Skills Hub.
3. That the Panel be kept informed of developments regarding any potential pipeline skills capital projects which may be brought forward for consideration in relation to the £16m underspend identified in the Growth Deal programme.

**6. Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership - Progress Report**

Kerry Harrison, Digital Skills Coordinator, presented a report which gave the Panel an overview of the development of the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership over the last 12 months.

It was reported that a Steering Group for the Partnership had been established, together with Networking Groups on the Future Workforce, Skilled Productive Workforce and Inclusive Workforce. All Network Groups were working well and involved links with employers and Lancashire Adult Learning. It was suggested that the low level of broadband coverage in some parts of the County hindered the work of Lancashire Adult Learning and the County Council was seeking to allocate additional ERDF funding to further expand coverage.

Lancashire had also secured £274,000 of Digital Skills Innovation Funding that would be used to implement Digital Skills projects to support the unemployed into digital roles and support self-employed females and females in the workplace to develop their digital skills.

It was also noted that the DCMS had commissioned work on the development of an evaluation framework for national/local Digital Skills Partnerships which would help better organise activity and provide a strategic overview. The Panel noted that the commissioning of Digital skills research would also help prioritise actions and measure outputs against KPIs.

**Resolved:**

1. That the update on the development of the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership over the last 12 months, as set out in the report, is noted.
2. That the initial findings of the Digital skills research are presented to the next meeting of the Panel on the 12th June 2019.

**7. Tech Talent Charter**

Kerry Harrison, Digital Skills Coordinator, informed the Panel that the Tech Talent Charter was one of a number of measures supported by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport that was aimed at addressing the gender diversity gap.

In considering the report the Panel acknowledged the need to encourage more women into digital, discussed the potential negative connotations of positive discrimination and recognised the fact that diversity related to more than just gender. It was agreed that the proposed Tech Talent Charter was a positive step forward in addressing gender diversity in the Tech Sector which would hopefully be expanded to include other minorities in the future.

**Resolved:** That the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board be recommended to sign the Tech Talent Charter, to show the commitment of both the Partnership and Lancashire's Digital Skills Partnership to increasing diversity in the Tech Sector workforce and to encourage engagement of local businesses.

**8. Apprenticeship Action Group**

Lisa Moizer, Coordinator from the Lancashire Skills Hub presented a report on

the work of the Apprenticeship Action Group which had worked with Lancashire Leaders to review the reduction in Apprenticeship starts in Lancashire, the impact of the reforms and identify best practice with regard to use of the Apprenticeship Levy. It was noted that the Lancashire Leaders would also be consulted on the report and asked for feedback.

When considering the proposed Action Plan set out at Appendix 'B' to the report the Panel noted that there was an identified Lead who would be responsible for taking individual recommendations forward. It was suggested that at this stage the Plan was predominantly public sector focussed and there was a need to engage more with employers in the future. It was also proposed that a separate column be added to the Action Plan so that updates on progress against each recommendation could be included in the future.

Use of the Apprenticeship Levy was discussed and it was suggested that Lancashire should adopt a similar approach to a scheme in Manchester where major Levy payers meet to discuss how best to use funds, such as transfers from the NHS to local charities.

With regard to the reduction in Apprenticeship starts it was recognised that Officers now had access to more detailed information than before and it was suggested that a number of metrics be agreed which could be tracked to assess the effectiveness of the plan.

**Resolved:**

1. That the work of the Apprenticeship Action Group in developing the Action Plan set out at Appendix 'B' to the report presented is noted.
2. That the comments of the Panel as set out above are taken into account when finalising the Action Plan before it is presented to the next meeting for approval.
3. That the final draft of the Apprenticeship Action Plan be presented to the next meeting, taking into account the feedback from the Panel and the Lancashire Leaders, and that the Plan include a set of metrics for tracking purposes

**10. Reporting to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership**

**Resolved:**

1. That the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board be recommended to sign the Tech Talent Charter, to show the commitment of both the LEP and Lancashire's Digital Skills Partnership to increasing diversity in the Tech Sector workforce and to encourage engagement of local businesses.

2. That the following items be included in the feedback report to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board.
  - a) The proposed recruitment and selection process and wording for an advert regarding the vacancy on the Panel for a representative from the Voluntary and Community sector, the appointment of Mr A Dewhurst to the Interview Panel and that a recommended appointment will be reported to the LEP Board for approval in due course.
  - b) An overview of the development of the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership over the last 12 months.
  - c) The outcome of the Apprenticeship Action Group and evolving Action Plan.

## 11. Any Other Business

No items of business were raised under this heading.

## 12. Date of Next Meeting

The Chair reported that the next scheduled meeting of the Panel would be held at 8.00am on the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and suggested that consideration be given to an alternative venue so that members of the Panel could visit different establishments across Lancashire.

**Resolved:** That the Skills Hub Director identify an alternative venue for the meeting to be held at 8.00am on the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and inform members of the Panel in due course.