



## Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Limited

**Private and Confidential: NO**

**Date:** Tuesday, 8 December 2020

### **Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework 2021 Refresh** (Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer)

**Report Author:** Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, Director of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub, [Michele.lawty-jones@lancashirelep.co.uk](mailto:Michele.lawty-jones@lancashirelep.co.uk)

#### **Executive Summary**

The first iteration of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework was published in February 2016. The Skills and Employment Advisory Panel and the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub have undertaken a refresh of the framework for 2021, including consultation with partners, as detailed in Section 2. Minor amendments have been made in line with the feedback from the consultation, and the board is asked to approve the final version of the framework for publication in January 2021.

#### **Recommendation**

The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board are asked to approve the final version of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework 2021, for publication in January.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 The first version of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework was published in February 2016 and covered a 5 year period. The Skills and Employment Advisory Panel and the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub have undertaken a refresh of the framework, recognising that the framework was coming to the end of its time period and also that the framework was no longer current due to the progress made since publication.
- 1.2 It was agreed that the framework in this instance should be refreshed for a one year period only, taking into account the unique environment resulting from COVID-19, the development of allied strategies and groups (the LEP's Strategic Economic Framework, Sector Groups and the Greater Lancashire Plan), and the requirements of DfE for a Local Skills Report in March 2021, to meet national guidance. It is anticipated that future versions of the framework will cover a time period of several years.



1.3 A draft of the framework was presented to the September Skills and Employment Advisory Panel meeting and approved for consultation.

## **2. Consultation**

2.1 Consultation has been undertaken via a number of virtual meetings and events. This included:

- Consultation session with LEP directors on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October
- Discussions with 14 of the 15 Local Authority Chief Executives and Directors
- Two consultation events with employers, providers and stakeholders (run via Zoom) which attracted a total of 41 attendees

2.2 There was general agreement with the themes and priorities identified within the framework, and it was agreed that it was appropriate to refresh the framework for a one year period taking into account the current environment.

2.3 It was suggested a number of times that the impact of COVID-19 is no longer short-term, but medium to longer term and that the framework should be refreshed in a year's time when the implications are more fully understood. Concerns were raised about the adverse impact on the more disadvantaged communities and the compounding effect on the 'levelling up' agenda, and the potential for the gap to widen.

2.4 Across the group sessions, attendees were asked to rate priorities within the different themes, and the results were as follows:

### **Future Workforce:**

1. Breadth and quality of careers provision
2. Supporting young people and NEET
3. Accelerating the development of virtual encounters with employers and FE/HE
4. Technical education routes

### **Inclusive workforce:**

1. Improving employability of unemployed & inactive
2. Moving people into jobs in areas of demand
3. Digital inclusion

### **Skills and Productive Workforce:**

1. Reskilling/upskilling the current workforce
2. Digital skills
3. Inclusivity and diversity of the Lancashire digital sector

2.5 Some gaps were highlighted in the framework, such as improving career provision relating to self-employment and these have now been made more explicit within the framework.



- 2.6 It was recognised that the framework also had a role in supporting the work of the Sector Groups, and that as intelligence was gleaned from the expert employer panels, the partners involved in delivery would need to respond appropriately. Particular reference was made to building a green workforce, in-line with the drive towards clean energy and net zero carbon targets.
- 2.7 It was also suggested that a section could be added around asks to government, aligning with the restart of the work on the Lancashire Industrial Strategy (LIS), now addressed. There was a call to use the framework to lobby in relation to skilling up the people of the North, alongside the capital investment in infrastructure, to drive economic stability and a return to growth and increased productivity.
- 2.8 The framework was distinguished for being ambitious with a significant number of activities spread across partners. However, it was further noted that the activity builds on the foundations built over the past four years, since the publication of the first framework. The list under 2.4 will help to drive priorities within the Skills and Employment Hub and conversations with partners.
- 2.9 The final version of the framework is provided in the attached Appendices, with the summary of the Labour Market Intelligence. The framework will be professionally designed prior to publication, in a style similar to that of the Technical Education Vision.
- 3. Conclusion**
- 3.1 In line with the feedback received through the consultation, a number of minor amendments have been made to the draft framework. The Skills and Employment Advisory Panel recommend to the LEP Board, to approve the final version for publication in January 2021 for a 12 month period.

### List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A