Lancashire Skills and Employment Board

Private and Confidential: No

Wednesday 27th January 2016

Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework
(Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer)

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Executive Summary

The final draft of our Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework was endorsed by the LEP Board on Tuesday 6th October for consultation. The framework sets out the skills and employment strategic priorities for Lancashire.

Following consultation between September and November, the framework has been amended and reformatted in accordance with feedback.

The final version of the framework is provided for comment and approval.

Recommendation

The Lancashire Skills and Employment Board is asked to:

1. Comment on the revised framework, and;

2. Approve the final document (subject to comments from the meeting being incorporated).

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1 Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework

1.1 The final draft of our Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework was endorsed by the LEP Board on Tuesday 6th October for consultation. The framework sets out the skills and employment strategic priorities for Lancashire, and was developed using the Lancashire skills and employment evidence base, the six sector skills studies, and the City Deal skills and employment study.

2   Consultation

2.1   The consultation took place between September and November, and involved two workshops targeting a) employers and b) partners and providers ('The Lancashire Skills Conversation'), meetings with Council Chief Executives, discussion with the Lancashire Youth Council and presentations and discussions at a variety of network meetings. Comments were also submitted via the LEP website.

2.2   Feedback has been collated and analysed and the framework amended accordingly. The feedback sessions at the end of the two workshops have been summarised and are provided in Appendix A. Reassuringly, similar themes were prioritised and similar comments were received from the employer workshop as the provider and partner workshop.

3   Revisions

3.1   The final version of the framework is provided in Appendix B. Minor amendments have been made to page 12. Amendments have been made mainly to the framework section starting on page 13.

3.2   The overarching summary has been much simplified, in accordance with a request from employers to provide a one-page simple summary. The pages detailing the actions have also been tweaked and reformatted, and the 'mechanisms' column populated.

3.2   One objective and action were removed in totality as there was no reference to either throughout the consultation (when consultees were asked to say what was important in the framework). These were: 'To reduce current skills shortages (teachers, tutors and lecturers) by increasing engagement with employers in co-delivery and sharing staff across providers' (objective) and 'Work with Sector Skills Development Partnerships (SSDPs) to develop models for increasing co-delivery by employers, industry assessors and the sharing of staff' (action).

3.3   One additional objective was added to the 'Inclusive Workforce' theme: Raise digital skills to improve social mobility and engagement with public services, and to increase employability, in response to feedback from consultees and the workshops.

3.4   In accordance with feedback (and previous discussion at the committee) an outcomes sections has also been added at the back articulating baselines and targets.

4.   Recommendation

4.1   Committee members are asked to comment on the revised framework and, in particular, the outcomes section.

4.2   Committee members are asked to approve the final document, subject to comments from the meeting being incorporated.

Appendix A: Summaries of feedback from the Workshops

Headlines from the Employer Lancashire Skills and Employment Conversation

Key themes:

1. Lancashire as an attractive place to live and work

Marketing Lancashire to attract professionally qualified people to relocate to Lancashire, and to retain graduates from the Universities and Colleges (or attracting people back when they are 25+!).

Creating an identity, including leaders / business figureheads.

Engaging undergraduates and graduate placements / interns with businesses to create routes in Lancashire to encourage retention.

2. Increasing engagement with Apprenticeships

Stimulating demand from employers. Use of clustering to make numbers viable for SMEs who wish to engage; hub and spoke approaches in which larger businesses employ more apprentices which can then engage with SMEs; enabling employers to support apprentices e.g. mentoring and to provide on-the-job training / assessment role.

Development of progression routes for apprentices / broadening levels.

Increasing understanding of apprenticeships – employers, learners and parents.

3. Raising the profile of work / jobs with young people (strongest theme by far!)

Engaging with young people (as early as possible – primary / early secondary) to promote the world of work and to inspire young people to think about jobs / careers.

Need to enable more businesses to engage with schools to give young people insights into different sectors and industries in Lancashire. Very difficult for teachers to play this role when they have limited insight into industry (generally).

Females into engineering – need to do more to encourage diversity.

How do we engage schools? Motivations / league tables.

4. Engagement of employers.

How do we engage more employers with our shared objectives? Engage the 'unengaged'? Same old faces at the event?

Improve communication; consider 'skills pledge' type model – benefits of engaging – you will / we will approach; use of case studies.

Encourage employers to undertake longer-term workforce planning.

5. Digital Technology

Cross cutting theme?

Use of digital technology to engage young people (schools, college, university).

Technological changes – maintain skills in a fast-paced environment – applies to businesses across all sectors.

Keeping at the forefront – role of universities and R&D / science etc.

6.   Engagement of the most vulnerable – inclusivity

Ways to target and reach the most vulnerable – working with third sector partners.

Support into employment – ensuring support continues beyond entering employment to encourage sustained employment. Providing training to employers to enable them to support vulnerable people (both NEET and adult unemployed).

7.   Simplify the document / timelines / KPIs

Plea from employers to simplify the document! Take out jargon. Integrate targets and KPIs.

Mentioned but not multiple times:

- Transport links to help people engage with work. Wheels to work programme spoken about favourably.
- New business start-up – simplify landscape to enable individuals to engage easily with support available.

Headlines from the Provider and Partner Lancashire Skills and Employment Conversation

Key themes:

1. Lancashire as an attractive place to live and work

Strong theme in regard to the marketing of Lancashire to attract growth companies to bring high value jobs. A need to grow our own talent and improve graduate retention from our local universities (including attracting people back when they are looking to start a family).

Engaging undergraduates and graduates in placements / interns with businesses to create routes in Lancashire to encourage retention, and also the employability of our students (experience Vs qualifications).

2. Increasing engagement with Apprenticeships

Increase employer engagement particularly SMEs with apprenticeships. Concern that large companies are overly dominant. Opportunity to develop progression from level 2 and 3 apprenticeships to higher level. A feeling that higher level (level 4+) required further employer engagement and more customisation to meet the needs of the employer.

More to be done to support young people and adults to engage with apprenticeships – routes in, and routes out on completion to progress to higher levels.

3. Raising the profile of work / jobs with young people

Increase employer interactions with young people in primary and pre-16 to inspire young people about the career options available in Lancashire. Recognition of the correlation between employer interactions and influence and attainment levels.

'Influence the influencers' – engaging with parents and teachers to influence decision making of young people.

Use the language of young people and social media to engage – involve young people in the development of different approaches, and ensure that approaches recognise diversity e.g. gender, ethnicity and socio-economic background.

School engagement critical.

4. Engagement of employers

Engaging the unengaged. Skills pledge model could be beneficial if a partnership approach is taken – be clear about the benefits and potential return on investment for businesses involved.

Opportunity to enhance the Growth Hub (Boost) to engage employers rather than directly approach, and to work through organisations such as the Chambers, Federation of Small Businesses etc. – 'network of networks' using shared messages to engage employers in skills and employment.

Need to include engagement of social enterprises.

5.   Employability / Placements

Increasing opportunities in Colleges and Universities for students to engage with placements to boost employability. Interaction with businesses critical to enable students to gain experience alongside their qualifications. Application of knowledge is critical.

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships were referenced as a useful mechanism.

Entrepreneurial skills were also cited as important in developing the employability of young people and students.

6.   Curriculum Development

Important to engage employers in curriculum development; ensuring that provision meets the needs of employers and is fit-for-purpose (curriculum needs to be continuously developed to ensure that it does not become out-of-date). Benefits of bespoke provision also discussed.

7.   Leadership and Management

Priority across sectors and businesses. Opportunity for cross-pollination across sectors and businesses. Focus on the leader *and* the senior team.

Combine with strategic workforce planning (ageing workforce – succession planning strategies required).

8.   Engagement of the most vulnerable – inclusivity

Ways to target and reach the most vulnerable. Escalator models to support vulnerable to engage with work. Volunteering an important component in re-engaging people.

Transport – often a barrier to engaging with learning and work – reference to the benefits of the 'Wheels to Work' programme.

9.   Digital Technology

Cross cutting theme? – questioned whether Creative and Digital should be split with a focus on digital inclusivity and technology.

Use of digital technology to engage young people and students.

Technological changes – maintain skills in a fast-paced environment – applies to businesses across all sectors.