

Lancashire Skills and Employment Board

1 Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework

- 1.1 The final draft of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Framework was endorsed by the LEP Board on Tuesday 6th October 2015 for consultation. The framework, underpinned by a robust evidence base, sets out the skills and employment strategic priorities for Lancashire.
- 1.2 Following consultation with Local Authorities, employers and providers via 'Skills & Employment Conversation' events, the Youth Council, and through attendance at a variety of meetings, feedback has been collated and the framework amended.
- 1.3 The final version of the framework is on the LEP website:
<http://www.lancashirelep.co.uk/lep-priorities/skills-employment/skills-and-employment-strategic-framework-2016-2021.aspx> alongside the evidence base:
<http://www.lancashirelep.co.uk/lep-priorities/skills-employment/evidence-base.aspx> .

2. Growth Deal Skills Capital

- 2.1 A schedule of press releases for the Growth Deal Skills Capital round 1 projects has been developed with SKV, who are employed by the LEP to support communications. A number of press releases have been issued featuring the investments in engineering facilities at Runshaw College, Nelson and Colne College and Training 2000, as well as showcasing the investment in 'Energy HQ' at Blackpool and Fylde College and the investment in the Fleetwood Nautical Campus.
- 2.2 The round 2 procurement exercise has now been completed. Nine projects have been successful and are currently with the Growth Deal programme team and grant funding agreements are in the process of being agreed.
- 2.3 Remaining funding in the Growth Deal Skills Capital pot will be used to support the outcomes of the Area Based Review of Further Education Colleges and Sixth Form Colleges.
- 2.4 A toolkit for incorporating social value into the Growth Deal programme of projects has been developed and is being piloted with a number of Growth Deal projects.

3. Area Based Review (ABR)

- 3.1 The ABRs, driven by Government and the FE Commissioner, will review the College infrastructure across England with view to delivering institutions which are financially viable, sustainable, resilient and efficient with an offer that meets each area's educational and economic needs. This includes focusing on specialisms and ensuring sufficient access to high quality and relevant education and training for all which reflects changes in Government funding priorities and future demand.
- 3.2 Prior to Christmas it was announced by BIS that Lancashire would be split into two areas – Lancashire (Pennine) and Lancashire (Coastal), with the former in Wave 3 (starting Spring 2016) and the latter Wave 4 (Coastal). The announcement was made with no local discussion.
- 3.3 The decision was challenged by the LEP, referencing the fact that the LEP (and allied strategies and plans) is Lancashire wide, and that the evolving Combined

Authority is also Lancashire wide. As a result BIS have agreed to bring the two reviews together under Wave 4 – with 2 sub-reviews but with an overarching Lancashire-wide steering group led locally.

- 3.4 The LEP will be required to produce a visioning document to help guide the outcomes of the review. A working group has been established to prepare for the review. A paper will be provided at the June LEP Board.

4. Apprenticeship Growth Plan

- 4.1 An Apprenticeship Growth Plan is being created with the Skills Funding Agency.
- 4.2 A key element which has been agreed with the SFA is a series of three events in 2016 to support employers impacted by the Apprenticeship Levy. The first event, which was an introduction to the levy and the implications, targeting larger public and private sector employers in Lancashire likely to be affected by the levy, took place on Friday 11th March. The event was attended by over 60 delegates from both private and public sector, and received positive evaluations. The next event will take place in June/July and will focus on strategic workforce planning and the opportunity to engage with higher level and degree apprenticeships.
- 4.3 A Lancashire apprenticeship ambassador network of young apprentices has been launched – the apprentices will visit schools and Colleges to promote the apprenticeship route to young people.
<http://www.lancashirelep.co.uk/news/archive/young-ambassadors-to-promote-apprenticeships-across-lancashire.aspx>

5. Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

- 5.1 The LEP was successful in its bid to the Careers and Enterprise Company for an 'Enterprise Adviser Network'. The pilot project, which launched in January in Blackburn with Darwen and Burnley, aims to stimulate engagement between businesses and industry and schools to inspire young people and provide CEIAG. Essentially the project involves a funded Enterprise Coordinator, working with a network of Enterprise Advisers (strategic business volunteers) working with a network of schools to develop employer engagement strategies and plans. The activity aligns with the Skills and Employment Framework, which identifies CEIAG as a critical priority due to the fragmented and inconsistent offer which currently exists.
- 5.2 The HIVE business network and the Burnley Bondholders are working proactively with us to match local businesses with local schools and Colleges. The businesses in the networks are keen to inspire young people and showcase the fantastic businesses in the locality with view to growing a future pipeline of talented young people.
- 5.3 Excellent feedback has been received from the Careers and Enterprise Company on activity to-date, who visited Lancashire in February to undertake a review and attend two roundtable events with local partners. Mike Damms represented the LEP and the Chamber of Commerce at the afternoon event with the HIVE network and Blackburn with Darwen Council and partners.
- 5.4 It is hoped that the network can be expanded to further areas of Lancashire next academic year (from September 2016).

5.5 Lancashire has also been confirmed as a pathfinder area for DWP and JCP with the deployment of Job Centre Plus staff to work collaboratively in schools to improve the knowledge of opportunities within the local labour market and employability skills, targeting young people at risk of NEET. The pathfinder will focus on the pilot areas for the Enterprise Adviser Network, in the short-term, to test the model and enable a co-ordinated approach with the schools involved.

5.6 A steering group has been established to oversee the Enterprise Adviser Network and the JCP Pathfinder, as well as the Careers Inspiration work with the National Careers Service, with view to drawing in more CEIAG providers to encourage co-ordination and collaboration across Lancashire. The steering group reports to the Skills and Employment Board and is chaired by the Director of the Lancashire Skills Hub.

6. European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF)

6.1 In relation to the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) opt-in, the tender for young people at risk of or not in education, employment or training (NEET) was released in January. The call has now closed and the local consortium of Lancashire Colleges and Work Based Learning providers has been successful. Work is underway in regard to 'Skills Support for the Workforce', with view to a second tender being released in April. This will be followed by 'Skills Support for the Unemployed'.

6.2 The invitation to tender (ITT) for the project under the DWP opt-in was released on Monday 14th March. This Provision is aimed at reducing the worklessness of disadvantaged people, particularly in those wards across Lancashire that demonstrate the highest levels of out of work claimants. The Provision will provide tailored support through individual 'Key Workers' and an action plan for participants which will contain activities that will tackle barriers to employment. A briefing event was held on March 22nd and was attended by 17 providers. The Skills Hub is currently involved in the evaluation of the tenders and strategic fit.