

LEP - Lancashire Skills and Employment Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 8th December, 2022 at 8.30 am as a Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

Present

Alison Robinson (Chair)

Mark Allanson
Peter Caney
Neil Conlon
Dr Fazal Dad
Gareth Lindsay

Nicola Mortimer
Bev Robinson
Professor Wendy Robinson
Neil Shaw

Observers

Paul Evans

Stephen Jones

In Attendance

Dr Michelle Lawty-Jones, Director - Lancashire Skills Hub
Andy Milroy, Democratic Services Manager (Companies), Lancashire County Council
Joanna O'Donnell, Project Manager (Skills Bootcamps), Lancashire Skills Hub
Holly Tween, Democratic Services Officer, Lancashire County Council

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Kate Quinn, Stephen Sykes, Liz Tapner, Councillor Karen Buckley and Ruth England.

The Panel noted it was Neil Shaw's last meeting, and thanked him for his work.

It was noted that the Local Authority CEOs were identifying a replacement for Neil and that there had been several expressions of interest from the LEP Sector Groups to replace Lindsay Campbell and fill industry representative vacancies. Neil Conlon volunteered to join the informal interview panel, and Peter Caney volunteered also, if Neil was unavailable.

2. Declaration of Interests

Nicola Mortimer advised of a conflict of interest in that she is the programme lead for Tech Lancaster, which holds a Skills Bootcamp contract, and that ideas had been submitted to the Wave 4 call to Lancashire Skills Hub. Nicola took no part in

the discussion or vote on this item.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 1st September 2022

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2022 are confirmed as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

None

5. Lancashire Careers Hub - Progress to July 2022 and priorities for this academic year

Mark Bowman and Kay Vaughan from Inspira gave a presentation (circulated) outlining activities, progress, and achievements during the last academic year, and setting out priorities for the coming academic year.

Peter Caney outlined the work of the Lancashire Cornerstone Employer Group, who had been developing their strategic priorities and objectives, and aligning them with the new CEC employer standards, Lancashire Skills Hub priorities and Lancashire Skills Pledge activities. He gave an overview of their strategic themes: inspiring, preparing, and collaborating.

In response to a question, it was noted that although performance against benchmarks 1, 5 and 6 was presented, all benchmarks were monitored, and Kay Vaughan agreed to circulate the performance data for Lancashire across all benchmarks at the end of the term.

Resolved: the Skills and Employment Advisory Panel:

(i) Noted the information; and

(ii) Agreed that Kay Vaughan would circulate performance data for Lancashire across all benchmarks at the end of the term.

6. National Skills Fund: Skills Bootcamps

Michele Lawty-Jones, Director of Lancashire Skills Hub and Joanna O'Donnell, Skills Bootcamp Manager, presented the report (circulated) outlining the work on Digital Bootcamps across Lancashire.

It was highlighted that a further £100k had been allocated from Department for Education (DfE) to enable further Skills Bootcamps to be delivered during financial year 2022/23.

The process for building a pipeline of ideas to inform a proposal to DfE for further Skills Bootcamp funds in financial year 2023/24 was outlined, and an overview given of the proposal submitted. Risks were also highlighted. DfE had indicated that they would provide feedback on the proposal early in January to enable contracts with existing providers to be extended, subject to performance and a further procurement process to widen the Lancashire Skills Bootcamp offer.

Resolved: the Skills and Employment Advisory Panel:

- (i) Noted the progress and allocation of funds from DfE in-year.
- (ii) Considered the opportunity to secure grant funds for further Skills Bootcamp delivery in Lancashire in 2023/24 and agreed to propose to the LEP Board that grant funds are accepted should the application to DfE be successful, with a delegation to the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer to review and agree the grant funding offer and terms and conditions, give due consideration to any procurement considerations and agree and enter into any legal agreements required to protect the interests of the LEP; and
- (iii) Agreed that, should further grant funds be approved and accepted, the Panel would support the extension to contracts for the Project Manager and Project Officer, subject to advice from HR with delegation to the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer for approval.

7. Local Skills Improvement Plan and Skills Advisory Panel Policy

Michele Lawty-Jones presented the report (circulated) outlining the DfE policy regarding the introduction and funding of Local Skills Improvement Plans and changes to policy and funding regarding Skills Advisory Panels and Local Skills Reports.

Resolved: the Skills and Employment Advisory Panel

- (i) Noted the update; and
- (ii) Agreed to recommend to the LEP Board that the title of the committee revert to the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board.

8. Local Skills Improvement Plan - update from the N&W Lancashire Chamber

Geoff Mason, North West Chamber of Commerce, attended the meeting to give an update on the work of the sectoral focus groups.

He reported that the first series of sectoral focus groups had taken place, including transport and distribution, construction, hospitality, leisure and tourism, manufacturing, health and social care, and general services. Further groups would be held on farming and agriculture, and there would be links with existing

retail forums.

The groups were considering in depth the types of job roles impacted by changing technology, and those that employers are struggling to fill, and what the required skills were for those roles, and how the skills system can help support the development of those roles, especially with reference to emerging technologies, the move to net-zero, and increased digitalisation within different industries. The aim was that this would discover the specifics within each industry as well as the common threads across the wider picture. This would also be supported by surveys.

The findings through the Local Skills Improvement Plan would then be available for use by colleges and independent training providers to shape courses and curricula.

This work was intended to engage as many partners and employers as possible, particularly those who historically have been harder to engage. There was also a work strand to consider careers advice, attempting to capture people from all areas who were entering the workplace.

He reported that following a recent board meeting a plan of action for the next few months was being drawn up, which could be shared with the providers, the LEP and the Skills Panel.

Geoff was thanked for his update.

Resolved: that the update be noted

9. Lancashire 2050

Neil Shaw, Chief Executive Rossendale Borough Council, updated the meeting on Lancashire 2050, a long term Lancashire-wide strategic framework, which was launched at the Houses of Common as part of Lancashire Day celebrations. One of the themes was Employment and Skills.

It was noted that work was still ongoing on the related delivery plan, and contributions were welcome. In the new year, the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework would be brought for a refresh and would likely work as the delivery plan for the employment and skills theme.

The Lancashire 2050 could be found here: <https://www.lancashire2050.co.uk>.

Resolved: that the update be noted.

10. Update from the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub and Partners

Michele Lawty-Jones presented the report (circulated) giving an overview of activity since the last committee meeting.

She particularly highlighted the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The government had signed off the funding this week, and was now in conversation with local authorities who had submitted investment plans. The funding was less than previous levels under the European social funded programme, so it was expected that provision would be scaled back and there may be gaps.

She reported that some public health funding had been committed from Lancashire County Council for some research into economic inactivity, with contribution from Blackburn with Darwen Unitary Authority.

She also highlighted the work underway with DCMS around support for, and raising the profile of, cyber careers in Lancashire, linked to the work with the National Cyber Force; £100,000 had been committed to Lancashire by the DCMS under the Cyber Local Fund, which had to be spent by the end of March 2023. Work was underway with the Digital Skills Partnership Steering Group, NCF and DCMS to consider projects that could be invested in, e.g. targeting activity at primary level to start to engage young people in the world of cyber and considering how to increase community engagement with voluntary community organisations to create a pipeline.

Resolved: that the update be noted

11. Reporting to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership

Resolved: that the following items be reported to the LEP Board:

- (i) Regarding the opportunity to secure grant funds for further Skills Bootcamp delivery in Lancashire in 2023/24, the Skills and Employment Advisory Panel agreed to propose to the LEP Board that grant funds are accepted should the application to DfE be successful, with a delegation to the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer to review and agree the grant funding offer and terms and conditions, give due consideration to any procurement considerations and agree and enter into any legal agreements required to protect the interests of the LEP.
- (ii) Further to point 1 above, should further grant funds be approved and accepted, the Panel would support the extension to contracts for the Project Manager and Project Officer, subject to advice from HR with delegation to the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer for approval; and
- (iii) The Skills and Employment Advisory Panel recommend to the LEP Board that the title of the committee revert to the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board

12. Any Other Business

None

13. Date of Next Meeting and Programme of Meetings for 2023 / 24

The next formal meeting of the LEP Skills and Employment Advisory Panel is scheduled to take place on 2 March 2023 at 8:30am as a virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams.

Resolved: that the programme of meetings as set out below was noted:

Formal meetings:

Thurs 1st June 2023- 8.30-10.30am

Thurs 7th Sep 2023 – 8.30-10.30am

Thurs 7th December 2023 – 8.30-10.30am

Thurs 7th March 2024 – 8.30-10.30am

Informal meetings:

Thurs 6th April 2023 - 9.30-12.30pm

Thurs 9th November 2023 - 9.30-12.30pm

All formal meetings are scheduled to be held virtually using Microsoft Teams, the informal meetings are in person meetings – venue tbc.