

LEP - Lancashire Skills and Employment Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 1st June 2023 at 8.00am as a virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

Present

Alison Robinson (Chair)

Councillor Karen Buckley	Nicola Mortimer
Peter Caney	Kate Quinn
Helen Crossley	Bev Robinson
Dr Fazal Dad	Professor Wendy Robinson
Mark Davies	Liz Tapner
Gareth Lindsay	

Observers

County Councillor Jayne Rear	Helen Warren DWP Amanda Buchanan DWP
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In Attendance

Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, Skills Hub Director, Lancashire County Council
Sara Gaskell, Strategic Partnerships Manager, Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub
Hannah Lysons, Democratic Services Officer, Lancashire County Council
Joseph Mount, Skills and Economic Intelligence Officer, Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub
Simon Lawrence, Director of Growth and Regeneration, Lancashire County Council
Dr Sakthi Karunanithi, Director of Public Health and Wellbeing, Lancashire County Council
James Farr, Managing Director, ThinkUK

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Jacqui Old CBE and Mark Allanson.

2. Declaration of Interests

None

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 02 March 2023

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 02 March 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

Board members were reminded that the requested workshop session between the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board and the Lancashire Innovation Board has now been arranged and the session is scheduled for 19th June at 3pm and is being hosted by UCLAN. Further details of the meeting have been circulated.

5. Recommendations Regarding Membership

A verbal update was given by Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, Director of Lancashire Skills Hub, on recommendations regarding future Board membership.

It was noted to the Board that the Chair Alison Robinson, and FE representative Bev Robinson would be retiring in the coming months and therefore there was a need to nominate a new Chair, and a new FE representative.

The Board were asked to consider the recommendation put to them of Wes Johnson, Chair of Lancashire College to fill the role of the Chair of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board. It was noted to the Board that a nomination for the FE representative vacancy would be filled in September.

The Board were further asked to consider whether it was appropriate to appoint the new Chair as a LEP Director, given that central Government are minded to cease funding of LEPs from March 2024 and therefore there is a strong possibility of LEPs being merged into Local Democratic Functions.

The Board were also asked to consider the nomination of Nina Dixon to replace Gareth Lindsay as the representative from the Work Based Learning Forum.

Peter Caney was recommended to step into the role of Vice Chair which had remained vacant since the resignation of Neil Conlon.

Thanks were given to both Alison Robinson and Bev Robinson for their hard work and dedication to the Skills Board over the course of their appointment.

Resolved: The Lancashire Skills and Employment Board:-

- (i) Accepted the nomination of Wes Robinson to fill the role of Chair of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board,
- (ii) Accepted the nomination of Nina Dixon to fill the role of the representative from the Work Based Learning Forum,
- (iii) Accepted the nomination of Peter Caney as Vice Chair,
- (iv) Agreed not to appoint the Chair as a director of the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership, pending further direction on the future of the LEP,

(v) Agreed that the above nominees be put to the LEP Board at its next formal Board meeting for approval.

6. Lancashire 2050

A verbal update was given on the progress being made with regards to Lancashire 2050.

The Board were informed that the first consultation event which was held on 26th May was successful with a high turnout, and that the second consultation event was due to be held on 8th June. It was reported that during the event many themes came through strongly as being of the utmost importance going forward, such as:

- Economic Inactivity and it's link to health and wellbeing
- Employment Prospects being embedded within curriculums
- Dedicated employer involvement
- Aligning provision to meet evolving needs
- Funding issues
- Low carbon issues
- Transportation issues

Simon Lawrence, Director of Growth and Regeneration, Lancashire County Council, provided the Board with a verbal update on the progress being made with a Devolution deal for Lancashire and its impacts on the Lancashire 2050 plan with reference to education and skills.

Resolved: The Lancashire Skills and Employment Board noted the verbal updates provided.

7. Economic Inactivity in Lancashire: Health and Wellbeing and the Economic Threat of Inactivity

James Farr, Managing Director of Think UK, gave a presentation (circulated) on the ongoing research into Economic Inactivity in Lancashire where the focus was to understand the relationship between the increasing number of individuals who are becoming economically inactive and their health and wellbeing requirements.

It was noted that the final report was not yet completed, however the five recommendations for Lancashire based on the preliminary evidence were as follows:

- 1) A healthy, resilient Lancashire;
- 2) Better management of health at work to stem the number of people leaving work and becoming economically inactive;

- 3) Targeted, timely interventions to get people back at work at the earliest opportunity;
- 4) Enhancing support offers to those who are already economically inactive and claiming benefits, with a focus on those under 40;
- 5) Leverage Lancashire 2050 to build a better system response.

Board members commented that it would be beneficial to see a breakdown of data relating to their particular areas of interest in order to allow them to understand how to begin to combat economic inactivity in their areas/sectors.

Board members further commented that due to a lack of EU funding, it may prove difficult to put into place measures to achieve the recommendations but were open to working together to overcome obstacles.

James was thanked for the presentation and for the work that had been done so far.

Resolved: The Lancashire Skills and Employment Board noted the presentation as delivered.

8. Update from the Lancashire Skills & Employment Hub and partners

Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, presented a report (circulated) providing the Board on an update from the Lancashire Skills Hub and partners structured against its strategic themes. The following key points were highlighted:

- Inclusion Community of Practice conference held on 11th May was a success and provided actions to be taken forward to understand how to better support young people with SEN and from alternative providers to transition into work.
- Teen Tech Festival took place for the first time as a face-to-face event, which was hailed as a brilliant day with press releases to follow.
- The Skills Hub is working with the unitary and district councils to influence and map provision following the end of the ESF projects that will be funded via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), however NEET is not deemed a priority in every area.
- As the ESF programme closes and the transition to UKSPF is undertaken, mapping work is being undertaken with the unitary and district authorities.
- The Skills Hub was successful in securing the remaining £900,000 funding for financial year 2023-2024 and has thus been awarded £3 million for Wave 4 (2023/24).
- Ongoing work around labour market intelligence, and continuing to see growth in the number of businesses signing up to the Lancashire Skills Pledge.

Resolved: The Board noted the updates contained within the report.

9. Reporting to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership

Resolved: It was agreed by the Board that the following items would be presented to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board:

(i) The recommendations around the proposed changes in membership of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board.

(ii) The recommendations for decision outlined in the *Lancashire Careers Hub – Grant Offer for 2023/24* report.

10. Any Other Business

None

11. Date of Next Meeting

Resolved: The next formal meeting of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board is scheduled for Thursday 7th September 2023 at 8:00am. The meeting will take place virtually via Microsoft Teams.

12. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved: Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Board considered that the public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there would be a likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the appropriate paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as indicated against the heading to the item.

13. Lancashire Careers Hub - Grant Offer for 2023/24

Dr Michele Lawty-Jones presented a report (circulated) on funding which has been allocated by the Department for Education to the Careers and Enterprise Company for the national network of Careers Hubs and the grant offer received for the coming academic year.

Resolved: The Lancashire Skills and Employment Board:-

(i) Agreed to accept the grant in principle and delegated final sign off to the Chief Executive of the LEP in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the Director of Law and Governance.

(ii) That the match funding is confirmed from the LEP's budgets, subject to confirmation of the LEP's budget and business plan for the 2023-24

financial year.

(iii) Write to the Careers and Enterprise Company to ask they pay due regard to case loading and to ensuring that targets are driven by quality over funding.

(iv) Agreed that the contract with Inspira is extended for a further year