

LEP - Lancashire Skills and Employment Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 28th September 2023 at 8.00 am as a Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Present

Wes Johnson (Chair)

Mark Allanson	Mark Davies
Councillor Karen Buckley	Nina Dixon
Peter Caney	Nicola Mortimer
Helen Crossley	Kate Quinn
Dr Fazal Dad	

Observers

Stephen Jones	County Councillor Jayne Rear
Sam Blenkinsopp (DWP)	Sharon Riding (DWP)

In Attendance

Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, Director, Lancashire Skills Hub
Kerry Harrison, Digital Skills Coordinator, Lancashire Skills Hub
Hannah Lysons, Democratic Services Officer, Lancashire County Council
Paul Evans, Assistant Director, Lancashire / North West, Cities and Local Growth Unit
Simon Lawrence, Director of Growth and Regeneration, Lancashire County Council
Heloise MacAndrew, Director of Law and Governance, Lancashire County Council
Pete Milsom, Partnerships Manager, UCAS
Carolyn Savage OBE, Head of Youth Apprenticeships Growth, Department for Education

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Vice Chair Peter Caney welcomed all to the meeting and introduced Wes Johnson as the new Chair of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board. A welcome was further extended to Nina Dixon, Forum Manager, Lancashire Work Based Learning Forum, who was attending her first meeting of the Skills and Employment Board as a Board member.

It was noted that this was the final Board meeting for Mark Allanson, who was thanked extensively for his length of service and contributions to the Skills Board.

Apologies had been received from Paul Jones, Jacqui Old CBE and Wendy Robinson.

2. Declaration of Interests

Nicola Mortimer raised a pecuniary interest in Item 13 on the agenda, and informed the Board that she would not be present at the meeting during consideration of this item.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 01 June 2023

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 01 June 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

Under Matters Arising, the Chair informed the Board that at the most recent Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board the grant offer from CEC for the Lancashire Careers Hub has been signed, match confirmed with the LEP and with the local authorities, and a contract variation agreed with Inspira to extend their contract for a further academic year.

The Board were also informed that the LEP Board had approved all recommendations regarding membership for the committee.

Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, Director, Lancashire Skills Hub, informed the Board that there remained an outstanding action from the previous Board meeting in relation to sending a letter to the Careers and Enterprise Company around caseloads and that this would be actioned in the near future.

5. Update regarding Lancashire 2050 and the County Combined Authority

Simon Lawrence, Director of Growth and Regeneration, Lancashire County Council and Dr Michele Lawty-Jones gave a verbal update regarding the move toward a County Combined Authority and updates on Lancashire 2050. The Board were informed that discussions about where the Skills and Employment Board will fit in County Combined Authority governance structures were in discussion.

The Board were thanked for their input into the Lancashire 2050 framework and the refresh of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework, as it was noted it will be helpful in influencing the shape of the Level 2 County Combined Authority deal.

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

6. Early Connect Pilot

Carolyn Savage OBE, Head of Youth Apprenticeships Growth, Department for Education and Pete Milsom, Partnerships Manager, UCAS gave a presentation to the Board on the Early Connect Pilot of which Lancashire would be one of 3 areas taking part in the pilot.

The Early Connect Pilot aims to increase the number of apprenticeship starts from Year 13 students, and provide them with more exposure to the opportunities available to them at the point of applying for University and Higher Education.

It was reported to the Board that the Skills Hub had since established a working group to take forward the pilot locally. It was suggested by Board members that the Hospital Trusts are represented at the working group to support the pilot.

The Board were supportive of the scheme and Carolyn and Peter were thanked for their presentation.

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

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7. Refresh of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework

Dr Michele Lawty-Jones presented a draft version of the refreshed Lancashire Skills and Employment Framework (circulated) for the Board's comment.

It was noted to the Board that feedback received from consultation events in May and June had been taken into consideration when preparing the new framework and that references to the potential future County Combined Authority and their priorities had also been included. As well as this, progress updates against the previous framework had been included to highlight the successes so far. It was noted that further details surrounding the priorities of Lancashire 2050 had been included and detail on how this links to the ongoing work of the Skills Hub as well as delivery targets for these objectives.

The Board were asked to consider the draft framework and provide comments via email by Friday 6th October so that the document can be approved at the next meeting of the Lancashire Leaders.

Resolved: The Board indicated their support for the updated framework, and noted the deadline to provide any further comments for improvements or amendments.

8. Update from the Lancashire Skills and 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:

- European Social Funding programme is coming to an end, and therefore no further reporting against those milestones will take place. It has been identified as a risk that the move to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will result in a fragmented approach across Lancashire and that gaps in funding will need to be filled through mainstream funding.
- Schools and colleges have achieved an average of 6.4 Gatsby Benchmarks against a target of 5, with them performing significantly above the national average on every one of the eight Benchmarks.
- Lancashire Careers Hub Annual Conference was a success, with over 190 delegates, focussing on the impact of careers programmes, work readiness and employability.
- Cyber Fairy Tales escape room activity developed by STEMFirst for primary schools received excellent feedback from the initial pilot. Work is being done to secure more funding for this in order to roll out further.
- Economic Inactivity research has been completed and a strong body of evidence created regarding Economic Inactivity in Lancashire, with proposed priorities and recommendations, influencing discussions with government regarding the evolving Combined County Authority
- 19 Skills Bootcamp providers have begun Wave 4 delivery, with 116 participants starting programmes as of end of June 2023.
- There is a risk that outcomes for Skills Bootcamp learners from Wave 3 will not be met by the end of September. The Skills Hub is tracking the progress of providers and lending support through employer engagement.
- The Early Connect pilot for Lancashire has been confirmed by DfE with UCAS, and funds offered to the Skills Hub for coordination.
- The Multiply Programme in the LCC area has achieved 110% of the Participant Target and 93% of profiled spend in Quarter 1, supporting over 1300 participants.
- Working on the design and implementation of a Data Observatory to support the Lancashire 2050 strategic themes and foster collaboration with data.
- Continued growth in businesses signing up to the Lancashire Skills pledge with a celebration event planned for 8th December.

Resolved: The Lancashire Skills and Employment Board noted the updates provided in 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) An update on the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework including the ongoing refresh and the process of the

approval.

- (ii) The recommendations for decision as outlined in the *National Skills Fund: Skills Bootcamps for 2024/25* report.

10. Any Other Business

None

11. Date of Next Meeting

Resolved: It was noted that the next formal meeting of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board is due to be held on 7th December 2023 at 8am as a virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams, and that the next informal meeting of the Board is due to be held on 9th November 2023 at 9:30am, location TBC

12. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved: The Lancashire Skills and Employment Board considered that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, 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. National Skills Fund: Skills Bootcamps for 2024/25

Nicola Mortimer left at this point of the meeting.

Dr Michele Lawty-Jones presented a report (circulated) which outlined the proposals for Wave 5 of the Skills Bootcamps to take place in 2024/25 as well as the funding proposals to deliver those bootcamps.

The Board discussed the ideas for Skills Bootcamps submitted via the market engagement events and the demand in the local labour market. It was agreed that certain ideas would not be included in the proposal to the DfE, as the Board considered that public sector intervention was not necessary for those areas at this stage.

Resolved: The Lancashire Skills and Employment Board:

- (i) Considered the opportunity to secure grant funds for further Skills Bootcamp delivery in Lancashire in 2024/25 and recommended to the LEP Board the acceptance of grant funds 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 Lancashire County Council

- (ii) Should further grant funds be approved and accepted, recommended to the LEP Board to extend the contracts for the Project Manager and two Project Officers, with delegation to the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer for approval subject to advice from HR, and that the grant funding provided can be used to meet redundancy costs associated with the extension.

14. FE Bursary Scheme with MOD and Strategic Command

Dr Michele Lawty-Jones and Kerry Harrison, Digital Skills Coordinator, Lancashire Skills Hub, provided a verbal update to the Board about the proposed pilot FE Bursary Scheme with MOD and Strategic Command.

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