

LEP - Lancashire Skills and Employment Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 7th December, 2023 at 8.00 am at the Teams Meeting

Present

Wes Johnson

Councillor Karen Buckley	Andrew Ireland
Peter Caney	Sarah Kemp
Helen Crossley	Nicola Mortimer
Dr Fazal Dad	Lisa O'Loughlin
Mark Davies	Liz Tapner
Nina Dixon	

Observers

Sam Blenkinsopp, DWP
Stephen Jones, DfE
County Councillor Jayne Rear, Lancashire County Council

In Attendance

Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, Director, Lancashire Skills Hub
Sara Gaskell, Manager, Lancashire Skills Hub
Kerry Harrison, Digital Skills Coordinator, Lancashire Skills Hub
Hannah Lysons, Democratic Services Officer, Lancashire County Council
Simon Lawrence, Director of Growth and Regeneration, Lancashire County Council
Geoff Mason, North and Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made by all in attendance.

Particular welcome was extended to the new FE representative, Lisa O'Loughlin, Principal and CEO of Nelson and Colne College, and the new HE representatives, Sarah Kemp, PVC of Lancaster University, and Andrew Ireland, PVC of UCLan.

Apologies had been received from Karen Quinn, Helen Warren, Paul Jones and Stephen Sykes. Sam Blenkinsopp attended on behalf of Helen Warren.

2. Declaration of Interests

None

3. Matters Arising

It was noted that a letter had been sent to the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) raising concerns regarding case loading, and a consultation was now underway with skills leads across the county around grant funding for the next academic year.

It was noted that the recommendations taken to the LEP Board regarding the Skills Bootcamps had been approved, and the outcome from the Department for Education was now awaited.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2023

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

5. Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) & Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF)

Geoff Mason, North and Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce presented an overview of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) including priorities and a roadmap, and work around developing collaborative business clusters and details of the pilot clusters. The collaborative work with the Lancashire Careers Hub regarding the work readiness of young people was noted.

Dr Fazal Dad, Blackburn College (on behalf of the Lancashire Colleges) presented an update on the Local Skills Improvement Fund 2023-25, including Skills for Sustainability; Digital, Cyber and AI Employability Skills; Farm to Fork; and the KPIs.

There was a time of questions and answers.

Resolved: that the update be noted

6. Lancashire County Combined Authority and Devolution

Simon Lawrence, Director of Growth and Regeneration, provided an update on the draft Devolution Deal for Lancashire, and the priorities of the proposed Combined County Authority.

The committee were pointed to three key documents: the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, the draft Combined County Authority proposal document, and the Devolution Deal document.

It was noted that a period of consultation had begun on 30 November and would run until 26 January. Committee members were encouraged to take part in the

consultation and to disseminate the information to employers including education, skills and employment providers and employees/residents to respond. The link to the website and the slides would be circulated to committee members.

Resolved: that:

- i. The update be noted
- ii. The link to the devolution website would be circulated to committee members for dissemination to their contacts

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

Dr Michele Lawty-Jones presented a report (circulated) providing the Board with an update from the Lancashire Skills Hub and partners. The following key points were highlighted:

- The draft and refresh of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework was endorsed by the Lancashire Leaders, and will move to publication in the new year
- Additional project funding had been secured from the Careers and Enterprise Company to support the work of the Lancashire Careers Hub
- Cyber Festival Education Day had been well attended and received
- Future Workforce – the limited offer of support for young people who are NEET continued to be an area of risk and had been raised with DfE
- New employment programmes supporting the integration of refugees and economically inactive residents had been launched across Lancashire
- Wave 4 Bootcamps had attracted 546 learners this year so far
- Social Value – a workshop had been held with the Lancashire 2050 theme leads for all 8 themes
- Productive Workforce – 30 colleges and school 6th forms had signed up to the Early Connect pilot
- Economic Inactivity – the task and finish group considering the outcomes of the research was ongoing and the Work Well Partnership Programme prospectus had been launched
- Informed Approach – the Skills Pledge Celebration was taking place on Friday and 110 employers were signed up to date

Resolved: that the update was noted

8. Reporting to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership

None

9. Any Other Business

None

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next formal meeting of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Board is scheduled for 8.00am on Thursday 07 March 2024, virtually via Microsoft Teams.

11. 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.

12. Update on activity aligned with the National Cyber Force

Dr Michele Lawty-Jones and Kerry Harrison, Lancashire Skills Hub, presented an update on activity aligned with the National Cyber Force.

A number of workstream groups had been established focussing on: Industry collaboration; research and innovation; infrastructure and preparing the sites; and people and skills. There were also a number of task and finish groups helping drive the work.

Activity was outlined which is engaging and raising the awareness of cyber careers throughout the educational journey, from primary through to Higher Education (HE). The Cyber Fairy Tales pilot with primary schools was a success and further funds were being sought from DSIT Cyber Local. The TeenTech virtual and physical events were planned for secondary schools in March and June 2023, with the physical event almost at full capacity. There was also much activity around Higher Education and post-16 students, and work was being done to promote the various events and summer courses that were available.

The Cyber Festival was a significant success, engaging primary, Further Education (FE) and HE students throughout the education day, with an engaging panel debate held over lunchtime with a number of VIPs.

It was noted that the UK Cyber Council were developing professional routes into cyber careers, to enable cyber professionals to achieve chartered status, and the Cyber Council had attended the People and Skills workstream group, and were engaging with colleges and university about aligning provision to enable those routes.

A workshop was being planned to consider recruitment campaigns and how best to amplify job opportunities locally. It was noted that initial job opportunities would likely include a number of general roles, as well as tech roles.

Resolved: that the update was noted