

LEP - Lancashire Skills and Employment Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 10th December, 2015 at 8.00am at the Room A05 - A Floor, County Hall, Preston.

Present:

Joanne Pickering – Chair (part)

Lindsay Campbell
Steve Gray
Paul Holme

Amanda Melton - Chair (part)
Bev Robinson
Andy Wood

Observers

Alison Knight, Senior Operations Manager – Cumbria and Lancashire District for Work Services Directorate North West England.

Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, Lancashire Skills Hub Director.

Cat Settle, Head of Apprenticeships and Local Growth, Liverpool, Cumbria and Lancashire.

In Attendance

Mr A Good – Head of Service Financial Management (Development and Schools) Lancashire County Council.

Lisa Moizer, Manager, Lancashire Skills Hub.

Mike Neville, Company Services Team, Lancashire County Council.

Andy Walker, Head of Business Growth, Lancashire County Council.

Andy Hirst, Cambridge Policy Consultants Ltd,

Andrew Heydeman – Careers Inspirational Team Leader, National Careers Service Team, North West and Staffordshire.

As Amanda Melton had been delayed, the Deputy Chair, Joanne Pickering, took the Chair and started the meeting.

1. Welcome and Apologies.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that apologies for absence had been received from Mark Allanson and Graham Haworth.

The Chair also welcomed Andy Wood and Lyndsay Campbell to their first meeting as members of the Committee together with Alison Knight, who was attending for the first time as an observer. All those present introduced themselves.

2. Declarations of Interests.

No declarations were given at this point in the meeting.

Note – As Amanda Melton, Bev Robinson and Steve Gray were all connected to organisations which had made bids for Growth Deal Skills Capital funding during Round 1 and had similarly made bids in Round 2 they would all be excluded from the discussion of the report at item 12 on the agenda.

3. Appointment of new members of the Committee

It was reported that the LEP Executive Committee on the 23rd November, 2015, had approved the appointment of Andy Wood and Lyndsay Campbell, making the current membership of the Committee 10 with one vacancy for a private sector representative.

4. Minutes of the meeting on 22nd October 2015.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 22nd October 2015 are confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

5. Matters Arising.

The Committee noted the following updates in relation to matters in the Minutes.

- Since the last meeting details of contact points at FE Colleges in Lancashire had been circulated to the members of the Committee for information.
- The views of the Committee in relation to the evolving devolution agreements had been fed back to Officers in relation to ongoing discussions around the Combined Authority and asks of Government. It was anticipated that a further report regarding developments would be presented to the next meeting.
- The Government had recently announced that Lancashire would be the subject of two separate Area Reviews and Lancashire Colleges were commissioning a review of data in preparation for that.

Resolved: That the above updates are noted.

6. Update from the Lancashire Skills Hub.

A report was presented to update the Committee on activity involving the Lancashire Skills Hub since the last meeting.

It was reported that arrangements were being made for the first meetings of the Sector Skills Development Partnerships and in response to a query Lisa Moizer confirmed that the Skills Hub was working with South Ribble Borough Council to develop a specific group focused on construction and the opportunities which will result from the City Deal.

Resolved: That the updates set out in the report presented are noted.

Amanda Melton joined the meeting at this point and took over as Chair.

7. ESIF Update

Michele Lawty-Jones updated the Committee on the European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

It was reported that the total revised allocation for ERDF and European Social Fund for Lancashire (after exchange rate changes) was £188.28m with ERDF at £112.94m and ESF at £75.34m. A revised table of figures was circulated at the meeting showing the indicative allocations by priority area. The figures had been revised in accordance with a successful request to the managing Authority to balance allocations in accordance with the priorities in the ESIF Strategy.

Michele informed the meeting that that following slippage throughout the year on the launch of procurement the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) had announced that it would move to 2 year projects rather than 3 year and the Skills Hub was working with the SFA to reconsider activity in line with the revised timetable.

It was also reported that a number of workshops were planned in the New Year in connection with the ESIF pipeline of projects to bring together local partner organisations with similar activities or target clients to develop new ideas, facilitate collaboration and avoid duplication of effort.

Resolved:

1. That the report and updates are noted.
2. That the Committee is kept informed of further developments.

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

Andrew Heydeman – Careers Inspirational Team Leader from the National Careers Service Team, North West and Staffordshire, gave a presentation on Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) in Lancashire.

When discussing the associated report the Committee noted that the LEP had been successful in its bid to the Careers and Enterprise Company for an Enterprise Adviser Network which would be led by an Enterprise Coordinator. A pilot scheme was planned to run from January to August, 2016, involving the HIVE in Blackburn and the Burnley Bondholders. It was also reported that Lancashire was likely to be one of eight Pathfinder areas where Department of Work and Pensions and Job Centre Plus staff would work collaboratively in schools to provide CEIAG targeting young people at risk of becoming NEET.

It was suggested that the mapping exercise be expanded to include the Schools Forum, Chamber of Commerce and any specific local employers who provided good quality careers advice/information, such as BAE Systems.

The Committee also noted that the Via Partnership was referred to in the report as one of the largest providers of CEIAG services in the County and it was suggested that an update regarding the status of that Company be presented under Any Other Business.

Resolved: That a CEIAG Task and Finish Group be established to initially draw together the Careers Inspiration work, the Enterprise Adviser Network and the JCP Pathfinder, with view to including more CEIAG providers in the future (including the Youth Council and Young Apprenticeship Ambassador Network) to encourage greater co-ordination and collaboration across Lancashire.

9. Higher Level Vocational Skills Study.

Andy Hirst from Cambridge Policy Consultants Ltd, gave a presentation in connection with the study to review the market opportunity in Lancashire for higher level and degree apprenticeships.

In considering the presentation and associated report the Committee noted that many HEIs were in the early stages of developing their response to higher level and degree apprenticeships. It was suggested that greater clarity was required as to the type of qualification which was genuinely desired by employers so that HEIs could tailor their approach to the requirements of the market.

In response to a query Bev Robinson offered to produce some information to clarify the difference between Apprenticeships, Higher Level Apprenticeships and Degree Level Apprenticeships which would be circulated to the members of the Committee outside of the meeting.

On behalf of the Committee the Chair thanked Mr Hirst for his presentation.

Resolved:

1. That the Committee note the consultants report on 'assessing the existing and latent demand for higher level vocational skills in Lancashire' and consider potential actions at a future meeting.
2. That Bev Robinson produce some information to clarify the difference between Apprenticeships, Higher Level Apprenticeships and Degree Level Apprenticeships for circulation to members of the Committee outside of the meeting.

10. Any Other Business.

Mr Walker informed the Committee that in the best interests of the Company and

its creditors the Directors of the Via Partnership had recently agreed to place the Company into administration. In response to a query it was suggested that any interest in the intellectual property of the Company in relation to data held should be registered with the administrators.

Cat Settle reported that the Skills Funding Agency had a process for dealing with training providers in this situation and would be contacting other providers in due course in order to identify suitable alternative provision.

Resolved: That the decision of the Directors of the Via Partnership to place the Company into administration is noted.

11. Date of next meeting.

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee would be held at 8.00am on the 27th January 2016 in Cabinet Room 'C' – the Henry Bolingbroke Room at County Hall, Preston.

Amanda Melton, Bev Robinson and Steve Gray all left the meeting at this point as they represented organisations which had submitted bids for Growth Deal Skills Capital Funding in Round 2. Alison Knight also left the meeting at this point.

Joanne Pickering took over as the Chair for the next item of business.

12. Growth Deal Skills Capital

(Not for publication – exempt information as defined in paragraph 41 (Information provided in confidence relating to contracts) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. It is considered that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information).

Michele Lawty-Jones informed the meeting there was £12.6m of Skills Capital Round 2 funding available for allocation before the end of the 2016/17 financial year. Having examined the various expressions of interest received by the November deadline Officers received 10 suitable applications (totalling £922,168 from this round), details of which were set out in the additional papers circulated at the meeting, together with the recommendations of the Skills Hub and SFA.

Having considered each application in turn the Committee agreed recommendations to the LEP Board with specific conditions where necessary.

Resolved:

1. That, subject to the specific points raised through the appraisal being addressed, eight applications for Growth Deal Skills Capital Funding received in relation to Round 2 (totalling £8,005,668) as set out in the papers circulated at the meeting, are recommended for progression to full business case.

2. That the applicants for an additional two schemes (totalling £916,500) be requested to submit revised EOIs before progressing to full business case.
3. That details of the individual recommended projects and associated conditions referred to in points 1 and 2 above are presented to the LEP Board on the 15th December 2015 for determination.
4. That the reservation of the remaining £3,680,000 in order to support the outcomes of the Area Review in 2017/18 and 2018/19 be recommended to the LEP Board and Growth Deal Management Board.