



LEP – Sub Committee

LEP - Lancashire Skills and Employment Board

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Skills & Employment Hub Update

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Executive Summary

This paper provides an overview of the Lancashire Skills Hub activity since the last board meeting.

Recommendation

The Board are asked to:

- 1) Note the update
- 2) Approve the proposal that the September committee meeting be held at Myerscough College, to support attendance of the launch of the Food and Farming Innovation Technology Centre.

Background and Advice

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

- 1.1 The Lancashire Enterprise Adviser Network with Inspira has grown to 63 schools and colleges. As reported previously, the network is spread across Burnley and Blackburn with Darwen, and the 2016/17 roll-out areas: Blackpool, Morecambe, Preston, Pendle, Rossendale and Hyndburn. Discussions are underway with additional schools to achieve the Careers & Enterprise Company stretch target (72) by the end of June. Recruitment of an additional Enterprise Coordinator is underway.
- 1.2 All new schools and colleges are undertaking initial diagnostics and self-assessments with their Enterprise Coordinator and Enterprise Adviser. By the end of the academic year all schools and colleges will have plans in place including baseline information – which impact will then be assessed against.



- 1.3 Fifty-two Enterprise Advisers have been recruited to date. 65% are SMEs and 35% are large employers. Discussions are underway with an additional 13 employers across Blackpool, Pendle and Rossendale; the focus for the next month is to increase the engagement and recruitment of employers in Hyndburn. The support of both the Burnley Bondholders, Hive Business Network and Chambers of Commerce has been invaluable in both promoting the network and supporting the engagement of their members in the delivery of activities in schools which has resulted in an increase in encounters that young people have with employers. During the past quarter over 80 encounters took place with employers.
- 1.4 Priorities differ by school, however here are some examples from the last quarter in regard to the increase in employer encounters resulting from the network:
- Encounters in the workplace: two schools have had full year groups spending half a day with local employers on workplace visits. This has been followed by presentations to their peers about the companies they have visited.
 - Increasing encounters in Key Stage 3: pupils have undertaken work place visits, a borough-wide skills event and undertaken speed networking sessions, engaging in excess of 1600 young people.
 - Embedding encounters with employers into the curriculum: whilst a range of activities are planned across the year, for example, Business Leaders providing Year 10 Business Studies students with an insight into starting and running a business, students from a pupil referral unit spent time with Pendleside Hospice's Fundraising team to work as a team to plan and deliver a fundraising project, supporting the development of employability skills and the development of a Urban Geography project to support a unit of the curriculum in partnership with Burnley Council and employers located on Innovation Drive business park in Burnley.
- 1.5 The Careers and Enterprise Company Annual Conference was held on the 10th May. At the conference the Learn Live UK Lancashire project, funded through the activity funds, was held up as good practise in the use of digital media and engagement of schools in rural areas. Learn Live organises live broadcasts from SMEs in priority sectors into multiple schools. The conference also included a celebration with the introduction of regional awards - recognising one exceptional Enterprise Adviser by region. Locally, Joanne Pickering and Mo Isap were nominated by the Skills Hub and Inspira as inspirational advisers. Mo won the North West award with his linked school, Tauheedul Girls High School! See here for the press release: <http://www.lancashirelep-co-uk-liveadmin/news/archive/2017/blackburn-businessman-award.aspx>



- 1.6 As reported at the last meeting, The Careers and Enterprise Company has awarded two contracts for mentoring Lancashire: EBNW in the East of Lancashire and Preston, and Inspira in Blackpool and Morecambe. The Inspira mentoring provision is targeting 84 mentees in Years 8 to 10. A Mentoring Coordinator has been appointed, Leigh Ingleby and three Blackpool Schools have been engaged and 15 mentees identified to-date in one of the schools. 150 businesses have been contacted and 11 mentors have commenced training out of the 28 mentors that will be required. EBNW are supporting 7 schools along the M65 corridor, and have initiated mentoring with 66 mentees, with support from 31 business mentors that have been recruited and trained. The mentors will deliver a mix of one-to-one and group mentoring. 5 of the 7 schools have also undertaken employer visits, with a further 2 planned.
- 1.7 A grant funding offer has been received from The Careers Enterprise Company for 3 years of funding (2017/18 to 2019/20) for the Enterprise Adviser Network. Match funding is in place until the end of 2017/18 in Lancashire via Lancashire County Council. Further match will be need to be confirmed to continue activity; a business case will be formulated.
- 1.8 The Skills Hub delivered a workshop at the Annual LCC Chair of Governors Conference covering CEIAG, Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) and the apprenticeship reforms. 19 chairs attended, and 10 rated the workshop as excellent, 6 as good and 3 as satisfactory. Results include engagement with the Enterprise Adviser Network, Amazing Apprenticeship sessions and LMI workshops.

2. European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF)

- 2.1 In terms of procurement, the Stage 2 applications to the Active Inclusion call were appraised against strategic fit at the ESIF committee in January and DWP were appraising project applications against the recently introduced national benchmarks for value for money. During the appraisal period one project withdrew their application. Four Grant Funding Offers have now been issued, prior to the start of purdah, and one project application has been rejected. It is understood that the project was rejected due to the value for money assessment. Once projects have returned their signed GFAs, the lead applicant will be invited to be part of the Lancashire Adult Forum so that the project can be integrated into the mapping, referral processes and skills escalator.
- 2.2 Two Stage 1 applications were submitted to DWP against the 2.2 Skills for Growth call which was issued earlier in the year. Appraisal of the projects by DWP has been delayed. It is hoped that the appraisal will be completed prior to the ESIF committee on the 27th June, so that the committee can consider strategic fit and, if approved, applicants can then proceed to Stage 2.
- 2.3 The Skills Hub and Sean McGrath are in discussion with DWP in relation to future calls. DWP have indicated that the focus at present is contract management and spend, as opposed to procurement of new activity, however



work is underway to develop the 2.1 Leadership & Management in preparation for future calls.

3. Growth Deal Skills Capital

- 3.1 The 16 projects that were approved are being monitored by the Growth Deal Programme Team. A number have completed the capital phase and outputs are now being monitored. The majority of projects are progressing as planned. One project is awaiting planning permission (Fleetwood Fire Training Centre) due to a change in the nature of the facility.
- 3.2 Discussion is taking place between projects, the Skills Hub and SKV to plan launches and PR. It is anticipated that Energy HQ (Blackpool and The Fylde College), the Food and Farming Innovation Technology Centre (Myerscough College) and the Teaching Hub (University of Cumbria in Lancaster) will all launch in September. The launch of the FFIT has been scheduled to take place after the Skills and Employment Board on the 7th September, and so it is proposed that the meeting take place at the College – board members are asked to make a note of the date in their diaries.

4. City Deal

- 4.1 The City Deal Skills and Employment Steering Group, chaired by Lis Smith Principal of Preston's College, last met on Wednesday 1st March. Skills and employment data is being fed into the City Deal annual report by steering group members as per the agreed City Deal skills and employment metrics.
- 4.2 A process to support inward investment opportunities with a skills and employment offer as been developed which includes the ESF Skills Support for the Workforce and Access to Employment projects.

5. Events

5.1 'Value of Experience' Conference

- 5.1.1 The 'Value of Experience' Conference took place on Tuesday 25th April, organised in partnership with the DWP Fuller Working Lives Unit and the local DWP team in Lancashire. As per discussion at the Skills & Employment Board in February, the event aimed to raise awareness of the ageing workforce in Lancashire, highlight the publication of the Fuller Working Lives publication, and support employers to retain, retrain and recruit older workers by sharing research and good practice.
- 5.1.2 Unfortunately the Minister was unable to open the conference due to the announcement of the general election and purdah, however the senior civil servant, Lis Robinson presented, as did one of the Business Champions for Older Workers (Helen Webb, Chief HR Director from the Coop). Graham Cowley opened the event on behalf of the LEP.
- 5.1.3 In total 66 people registered for the event including SMEs, larger employers and Public Sector organisations; 46 attended on the day (excluding DWP representatives, attendees from the Skills Hub, facilitators and presenters and



market place representatives which took the total to c62). 20 evaluation forms were completed – 85% said that the conference met or exceeded their expectations. The research/stats, case studies and networking were cited as most useful; a number of employers said that they would review their recruitment and training practices as a result of attending and were keen to receive more information about the projects offering support, as well as the apprenticeship levy, Skills Hub and DWP.

- 5.1.4 A task and finish group is being brought together to take forward the actions from the conference, and to continue working with the DWP Fuller Working Lives Unit; this includes piloting targeting of National Careers Service activity at older workers and learning from the older workers apprenticeship pilot in Surrey.

5.2 National Festival of Making

The National Festival of Making took place in Blackburn earlier in May. The Skills Hub sponsored two activities: 1) a pop-up textiles factory, provided by The Alliance in partnership with local employers; and 2) a paper plane activity at the festival and allied packs for school activities. In relation to the former, 28 textiles companies contributed to the stand, and the stand was visited by approximately 600 people, of which 180 took part in 'have a go' activities. 18 of the visitors have been referred to the ESF 'Access to Employment' project for support to access jobs in the sector, and many of the younger people who engaged with the stand went away interested in apprenticeship opportunities, for example: *"I didn't know there were even apprenticeships in the sector – can't believe it! I'm going to show our teacher"* (Copley High School pupil). The paper plane folding table and activity proved hugely popular with young people and was positioned with providers of engineering apprenticeships. The Festival organisers stated that a plane was made every 90 seconds over the weekend, resulting in around 700 planes being made. A teacher pack to go with the folding table is being developed in partnership with STEMfirst, for use with schools in the new academic year to promote STEM skills and engineering.

5.3 Lancashire Business Growth Forum

- 5.3.1 The Lancashire Business Growth Forum, organised by CBP, on Thursday 2nd March, had a focus on the work of the Skills Hub and skills and employment. It aimed to raise awareness of the key projects championed by The Skills Hub (including the Enterprise Adviser Network and the ESF projects) under three key banners: Inspire, Recruit and Upskill.
- 5.3.2 Under each of the themes of Inspire, Recruit and Upskill a business presented to the forum about how the project they were engaged with had helped them and the presentations were followed with a marketplace for businesses to speak directly to each project.
- 5.3.3 Approximately 80 businesses attended and positive feedback was received from delegates in regard to the speakers, content and flow. Direct referrals were made on the day to all projects.



- 5.3.4 We are looking to do another joint event in October and have business beneficiaries present complete case studies, including the impact the project has had on the business, to generate further engagement with the projects.

5.4 Lancashire Residential Provider Forum

- 5.4.1 The Lancashire Residential Provider Forum took place on Tuesday 23rd May. The Health and Social Care (H&SC) Skills Partnership jointly created the input to the Lancashire Residential Provider Forum. The aim was to inform the Residential Providers of the work of the H&SC Skills Partnership and ask them to shape how the Skills Partnership engaged with them going forward to achieve the objective of upskilling the care sector workforce.
- 5.4.2 Out of 28 delegates 23 questionnaires were completed; from these 100% requested further information. Upskilling and recruitment were the themes of most interest. Delegates requested workshops and more detailed information via local events and emails.
- 5.4.3 The questionnaire will go out to the forum members who did not attend and the information will inform the H&SC Skills Partnership engagement action plan.

5.5 Other events

A range of presentations have been provided at a number of employer forums raising awareness of the Enterprise Adviser Network and ESF support. This includes, for example, the Skelmersdale Ambassador Network, Lancashire HR Forum, and other events.

6. Digital Advantage

- 6.1 The Digital Advantage Graduation and Prize Day took place at the Council Chambers at Lancashire County Council on Friday 19th May, which marked the end of the 2016/17 Digital Advantage delivery programme.
- 6.2 As reported previously, [Digital Advantage](#) is a Digital Skills Pop-Up Agency delivered by The White Room, and its main objectives are to:
- Provide young people, who have an interest in working in the creative and digital industries, with digital skills and help them gain real-world digital employability skills employers look for.
 - Provide inspiring digital careers advice and guidance to the young people and also their teachers and parents.
 - Provide accelerated access to digital apprenticeships.
- 6.3 Digital Advantage is delivered in partnership with a school or college and is run by industry experts who come from local businesses. Each group was tasked to create a digital app idea and film a pitch for it. The filmed pitches were judged by an industry panel and the winner was picked 'Dragon's Den style' on Friday 19th.
- 6.4 Here are links to the filmed pitched for you to see what fantastic ideas the Digital Advantage Graduates developed:



This link takes you to 9 of the 10, <https://vimeo.com/217452688/c1696a6fa8>, and this link the final pitch <https://vimeo.com/217815619/692849c653>.

The team from West Lancashire College won the monetary prize, together with ongoing support to help accelerate their business to market.

- 6.5 In total, ten schools and colleges were part of the Digital Advantage programme and 169 young people (exceeding the target of 120). There is a full evaluation currently taking place and a report will be shared with the board once completed.
- 6.6 We are now looking to co-ordinate an alumni project, with The White Room working closely with [Digital Lancashire](#), to bring together the DA graduates and local businesses with digital job and apprenticeship opportunities to enable the talent pipeline to flow into local businesses.

7. Institutes of Technology

- 7.1 As discussed previously and as per the Industrial Strategy, the Department for Education (DfE) are developing the criteria for the proposed Institutes of Technology (IoT). The DfE provided an input at the LEP Network Skills Leads meeting in April, and indicated that a call for proposals would be launched after the election. References in the Conservative Manifesto are not entirely consistent with the information provided at the meeting, so it is difficult to be absolutely clear at this stage about the positioning of the IoTs.
- 7.2 However, the DfE are expecting the LEPs to endorse one bid from their local area. It will be a highly competitive process, as the Government are anticipating funding 10-15 IoTs from the £170m pot referenced in the Industrial Strategy, in the first instance.
- 7.3 Information provided to-date indicates that IoT's aims will be to raise the prestige of technical education – as a credible high quality alternative to academic routes; address the technical skills gap at Levels 3, 4 and 5 in STEM based industries, meet local economic needs and enable the workforce to keep pace with rapid technological change.
- 7.4 From a LEP perspective priorities are reflected in the ABR Skills Conclusion slide pack: ideally an IoT in Lancashire would address the skills gaps in our STEM industries, join the dots on the Growth Deal investments that have been made in science, engineering and digital facilities and build a collaborative approach to engaging employers and upskilling the workforce – thereby closing the gap at Level 3 and above which currently exists in Lancashire. The approach would also need to incorporate digital skills and Industry 4.0.
- 7.5 Interested institutions have been encouraged to connect with the LEP before the launch of the prospectus, and collaborative discussions are currently being encouraged.



8. Apprenticeship Growth National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) Pilot

- 8.1 The Lancashire Skills Hub is one of two LEPs across the country who are working with NAS to pilot a closer working and data sharing approach that aims to create a joint approach linking national and local resources to support businesses to grow apprenticeships.
- 8.2 The pilot has begun by identifying which businesses in Lancashire are account managed by the national NAS team, and may lead to joint investment in business engagement with NAS.