

## **LEP - Lancashire Skills and Employment Advisory Panel**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 12th June, 2019 at 8.00 am at the Committee Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston.**

**Present:**

Amanda Melton- Chair

Mark Allanson	Gareth Lindsay
Neil Conlon	Lynne Livesey
Andrew Dewhurst	Joanne Pickering
Ruth England	Bev Robinson
Dean Langton	Dr Lis Smith

### **Government Advisers**

Paul Evans - Assistant Director, Cities and Local growth Unit, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Stephen Jones – Head of FE Territorial Team (Lancashire, Knowsley and St Helens) ESFA.

### **Observers**

Chris Hebblethwaite, District External Relationship Manager, Department for Work and Pensions.

Sinead O'Sullivan - Director, Career Learning, Analysis, Skills and Student Choice Directorate, Department for Education.

Jamie Zucker – Skills Advisory Panels Policy Lead, Department for Education.

### **Also in attendance**

Cassie Houlden, Associate Director, Ekosgen.

Lisa Moizer, Coordinator, Lancashire Skills Hub, Lancashire County Council

Kerry Harrison, Digital Skills Coordinator, Lancashire County Council

Mike Neville, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Lancashire County Council

Paul Faulkner, Local Democracy Reporter, Lancashire Post

## **1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

The Chair introduced Sinead O'Sullivan and Jamie Zucker who would be attending the meeting as an observers and welcomed Paul Faulkner, Local Democracy Reporter to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Lindsay Campbell and Dr Michele Lawty-Jones.

The Chair informed the meeting that Councillor M Townsend had ceased to be a member of the Panel as he was no longer the Lancashire Leaders lead member on Skills and Employment following a change in administration at Burnley Borough Council. It was noted that the Lancashire Leaders were in the process of identifying a new lead member who would be invited to fill the vacancy on the

Panel in due course.

**Resolved:** That members of the Panel place on record their thanks to Councillor Townsend for his contribution to the work of the Panel and the former Skills and Employment Board.

## **2. Declaration of Interests**

The Chair, Gareth Lindsay, Lynne Livesey, Bev Robinson and Dr Lis Smith all declared an interest in relation to item 5 on the agenda as the organisations they represented were involved in the delivery consortiums for the European Social Fund activity referred to in the report.

## **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd April 2019 and Matters Arising**

Lisa Moizer reported that applications for the position of Voluntary and Community Sector representative on the Panel had been received and it was expected that interviews would be held in early July.

With regard to the £16m underspend in the Growth Deal programme it was reported that on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 2019 the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board would consider the recommendations of the Growth Deal Management Board regarding the identification of priority schemes for funding. Those members of the Panel who had been consulted on the skills capital schemes were thanked for their contributions.

**Resolved:** That the updates given at the meeting are noted and the Minutes of the meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2019 are confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

## **4. Up-date from the Lancashire Skills & Employment Hub**

Lisa Moizer updated the Panel on activity by the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub since the last meeting and highlighted the following.

- The Hub was working with partners to promote the 'Give an Hour' campaign as part of the wider Lancashire Skills Pledge. It was noted that the campaign would run over 2 months and sought to drive more involvement from businesses to offer employer encounters and a further update on the outcomes of the campaign would be presented to the next meeting.
- The Careers Hub was in the first year of the pilot and to date has already achieved the first year target. This current performance placed Lancashire joint second when judged against Careers and Enterprise Company data for the 20 pilot Careers Hubs across the Country.

- 250 representatives from across Lancashire were due to attend the Annual Lancashire Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hub Conference on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019 which was an opportunity to share knowledge/experience and identify examples of best practice. It was noted that seven institutions were expected to receive awards for achieving all 8 Gatsby benchmarks.

Members of the Panel recognised the progress made in relation to achieving the Gatsby benchmarks but stressed the importance of embedding such targets into a system that would help young people achieve careers and have real impact.

The Panel discussed the Apprenticeship Action Plan and acknowledged the importance of engaging with partner organisations to provide quality apprenticeships which employers would consider beneficial. Whilst the draft plan was welcomed it was noted that the future development and provision of apprenticeships was subject to external influences which the Panel had no control over. However, it was reported that similar concerns had been identified as part of the Auger Review of post 18 provision and would be the subject of future discussions with Government.

**Resolved:**

1. That the Apprenticeship Action Plan, as set out at Appendix 'C' to the report presented, is approved.
2. That future reports to the Panel include iterative updates regarding the Apprenticeship Action Plan that are focused on impact.

**5. European Social Funds – Education and Skills Funding Agency Opt-in Projects Development Plans**

Lisa Moizer presented a report on development plans for three ESFA Opt-in projects in Lancashire which had been developed in partnership by the successful contract provider, Strategic Partnership Managers and the Skills and Employment Hub Director as desirable/achievable outcomes in view of the reduced resources that were available.

**Resolved:** That the development plans for the following ESFA Opt-in projects in Lancashire, as set out in the Appendices to the report presented, are approved.

NEET ('Moving On') – Appendix 'A'  
 Skills Support for the Unemployed ('Access to Employment') – Appendix 'B'  
 Skills Support for the Workforce – Appendix 'C'

**6. Lancashire Skills Pledge**

Lisa Moizer gave a presentation on the Lancashire Skills Pledge which aimed to provide a single point of contact to support businesses wishing to access information about employer facing skills and training initiatives and to receive

recognition for their engagement in upskilling, recruiting and inspiring people.

It was reported that there would be Skills Pledge Partners to provide a service to link businesses with the appropriate organisations for each Pledge, for example, the Lancashire Work Based Learning Executive would provide a brokerage role for businesses interested in using apprenticeship training (whilst acknowledging that other providers were available) and, if considered appropriate, would refer businesses to the National Apprenticeship Service

In considering the Skills Pledge members of the Panel discussed the need to collaborate with organisations such as Boost and the Burnley Bond Holders to encourage a variety of businesses to engage. It was also suggested that any participating business which had not allocated all of their Apprenticeship Levy should be encouraged to transfer any underspend to other smaller employers to assist them to take on apprenticeships.

The Panel noted that large employers often used their purchasing power as a way to encourage greater engagement in areas such as social responsibility and it was suggested that the employer facing skills Pledge Dashboard be developed to assist all businesses to capture relevant information/evidence of activity.

With regard to promoting/celebrating the Skills Pledge it was suggested that specific branding be developed which could be used on certificates or plaques to show the commitment of partners. In the longer term it was proposed that awards could be provided to recognise achievements.

**Resolved:** That the comments of the Panel, as set out above, be referred to the Skills Hub Director and taken into account when developing the Lancashire Skills Pledge in the future.

## 7. Digital Skills Research

Cassie Houlden, Associate Director from Ekosgen, gave a presentation on a study on the digital landscape in Lancashire which, amongst other things, had involved agreeing definitions for the digital sector/digital occupations, identifying current and future business skills need, establishing a baseline for the digital landscape of Lancashire and reviewing digital training and learning, including identifying any gaps in provision.

When considering the findings of the study members of the Panel made the following comments.

- It was suggested that digital skills were underrepresented in national and local figures, especially when the use of IT and digital technology was prevalent across the economy and wider society.
- The Panel acknowledged that digital infrastructure was vital and the provision of broadband coverage across Lancashire had been challenging.

- There was concern that the number of hours of computing taught in secondary schools had fallen by around 30% between 2012 and 2017 and that interest in the subject had reduced following the phasing out of the ICT GCSE exam from the national curriculum in England and its replacement with computer science.
- It was reported that there was currently an issue around the quantity and quality of teachers in secondary school teaching computer science and that more teachers with an interest in the subject should be encouraged to retrain and broaden their skills to address the shortfall.
- It was suggested that opportunities for schools to collaborate with colleges in order that students could access high quality IT resources should be explored for the future. Touch typing was also suggested as an essential skill which should be taught in secondary schools.

**Resolved:** That the comments of the Panel are noted.

## 8. Reporting to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership

**Resolved:** That the following matters be reported to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board.

1. The approval of the Apprenticeship Action Plan, as set out at Appendix 'C' to the report presented earlier on the agenda.
2. The approval of development plans for the following ESFA Opt-in projects in Lancashire, as set out in Appendices 'A' to 'C' of the report presented earlier on the agenda.
  - NEET ('Moving On') - Appendix 'A'
  - Skills Support for the Unemployed ('Access to Employment') - Appendix 'B'
  - Skills Support for the Workforce - Appendix 'C'
3. The comments of the Panel in relation to the Lancashire Skills Pledge.

## 9. Any Other Business

Bev Robinson informed the Panel that she had been involved in the Auger Review of post 18 education which had looked at investment, funding and training.

Lynn Livesey reported that UCLan had recently appointed Professor Graham Baldwin as Vice Chancellor who would take up his new position on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019.

Neil Conlon referred to work done by Calico to include as a condition of any planning permission the requirement for applicants to produce an employment

skills plan which can then be validated.

**Resolved**

1. That the updates given at the meeting are noted.
2. That a report on the findings of the Auger Review of post 18 education be presented to the Panel in October 2019

**10. Date of Next Meeting**

The Chair informed the meeting that following a consultation with all members of the Panel regarding future arrangements for meetings it was proposed that the Panel continue to be held at 8.00am on Wednesdays at County Hall, Preston. It was also suggested that future meetings be held in The Exchange suite of rooms which were considered to be a more informal setting than the current Committee Rooms.

**Resolved:**

1. That the next scheduled meeting of the Panel be held at 8.00am on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019 in the Albion Suite in The Exchange at County Hall, Preston.
2. That arrangements for future meetings of the Panel be made on the basis of meetings being held at 8.00am on Wednesdays in one of the meeting rooms in The Exchange on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of County Hall at Preston.