

LEP – Sub Committee

LEP - Skills and Employment Advisory Panel

Private and Confidential: No

Date: Wednesday, 8 September 2021

Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework: six-month progress report

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Executive Summary

The paper provides a high-level summary of progress against each of the four strategic themes in the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework and associated challenges for the six-month period from January 2021 to June 2021.

The paper also outlines the fluid environment resulting from the pandemic, and the wider policy environment locally and nationally, and makes a recommendation to delay the refresh of the Framework and to review this position at the end of March 2022.

Recommendation

- I. The Skills and Employment Advisory Panel are asked to note the contents of the paper and the progress against the Framework by theme
- II. Committee members are asked to support the recommendation that the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework remains as is, and that the refresh is put on hold and that the position is reviewed at the end of March 2022, and that this recommendation is made to the LEP Board

Background and Advice

1.0 Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework

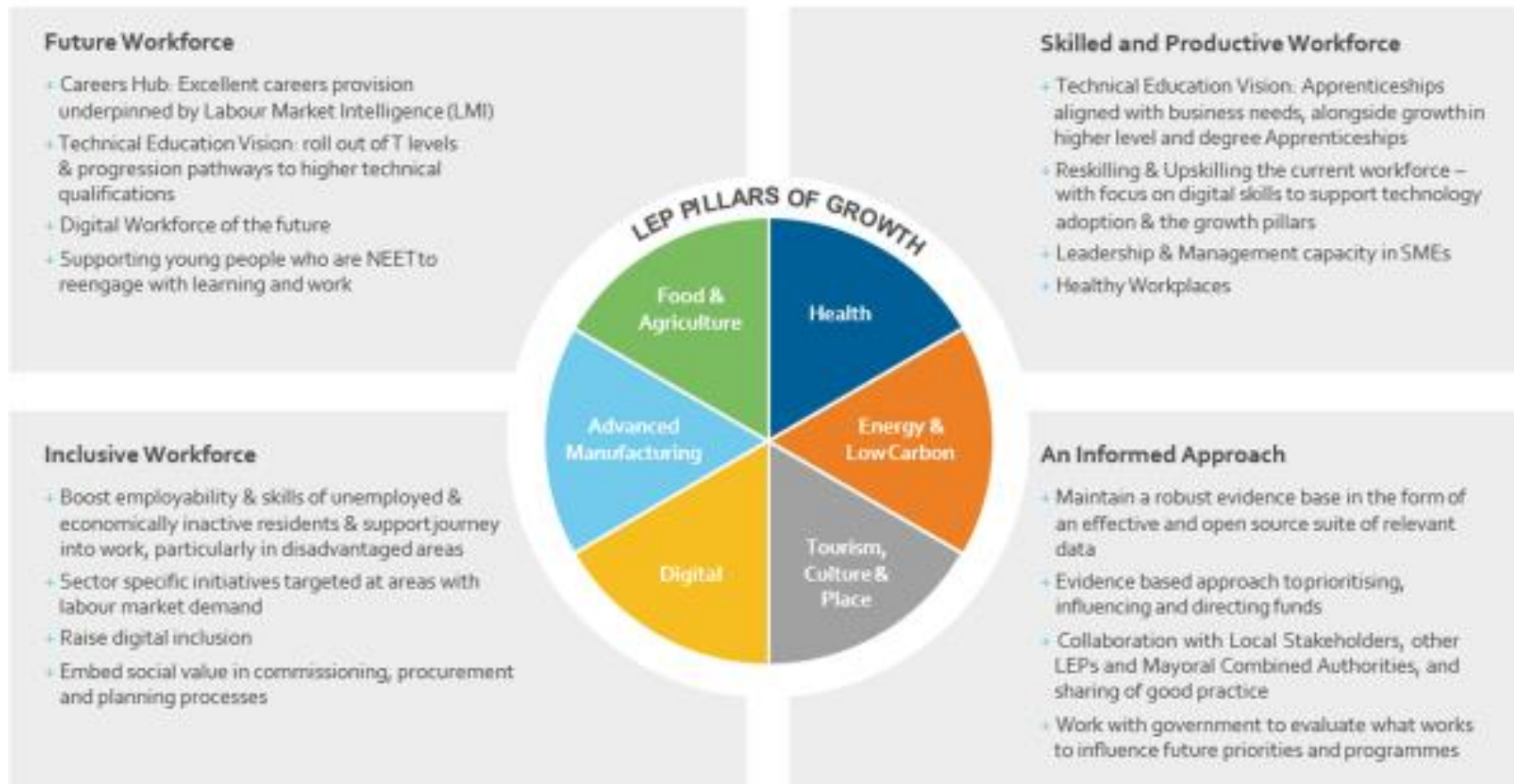
- 1.1 The Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework was refreshed and published in January 2021, following consultation with partners and stakeholders. The previous Framework had been published for a 5-year period from February 2016. Due to the impact of the pandemic and emerging local and national strategies and policies, it was agreed that the framework would be a one-year document, rather than a five-year document as per the previous publication.

1.2 The refreshed Framework was amended in February 2021 to incorporate the Local Skills Report, as required by the Department for Education (DfE) and republished. There were no fundamental changes, rather additional information incorporated regarding local labour market intelligence, achievements to-date and expectations of partners, and an annex of collaborative case studies.

2.0 Six-month progress report

2.1 Rather than provide the usual Skills Hub update, for this meeting a high level review of progress against the priorities and objectives has been produced, including progress to-date and challenges for the committee to review and note. The review is presented by each of the Framework's four strategic themes: Future Workforce, Inclusive Workforce, Skilled & Productive Workforce and Informed Approach.

2.2 As a reminder the summary page of the Framework is provided overleaf (or please refer to the printed Framework mailed to you earlier in the year).



Interactions with Enablers

Infrastructure

Investment in skills infrastructure
Embedding social value
Building construction skills & workforce of future.

Mental Health

Building the resilience of our Future Workforce.
Healthy workplaces driving up productivity and health and well-being.

Finance & Inward Investment

Supporting inward investment through skills base offer and supporting recruitment

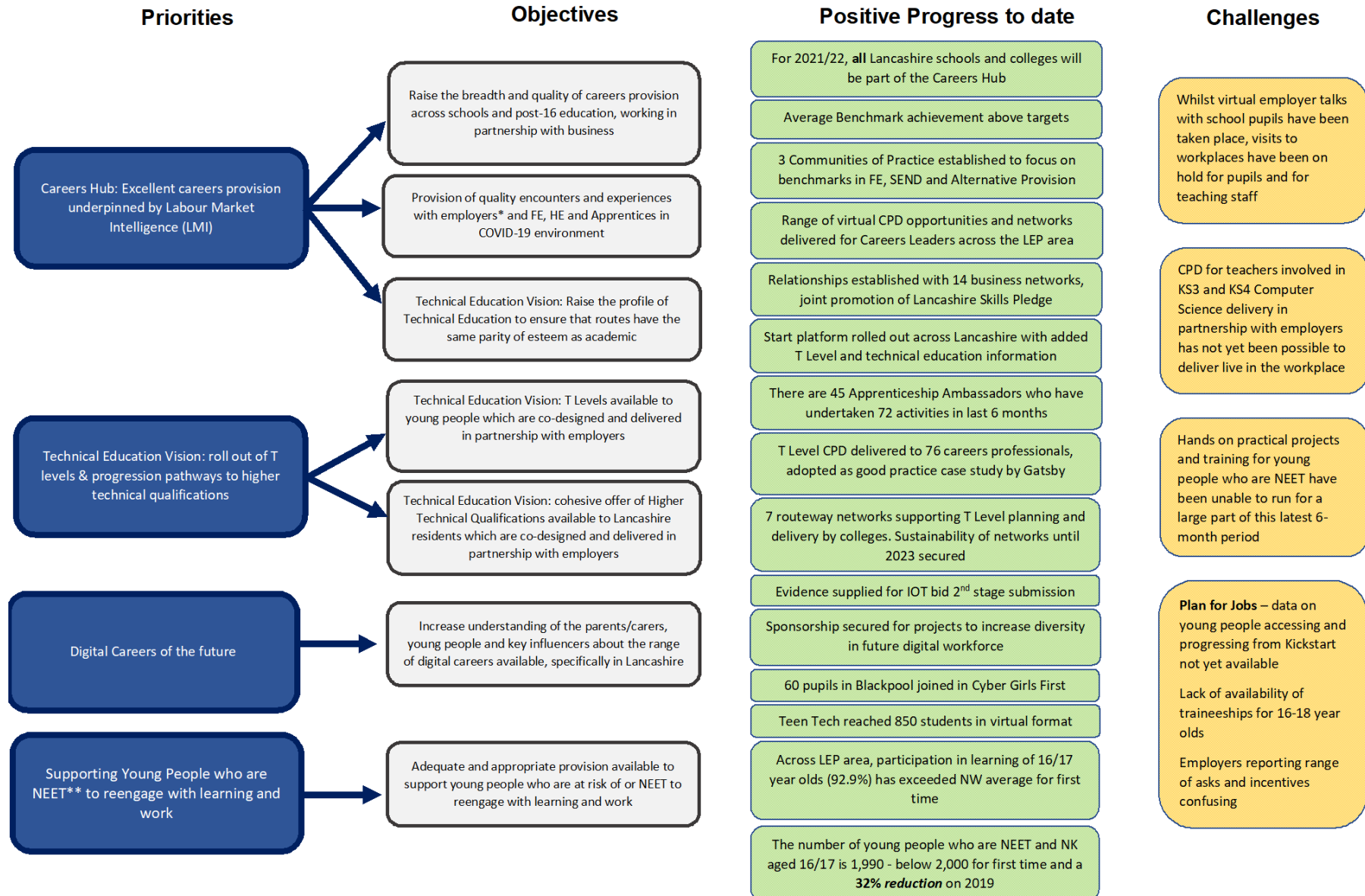
Stakeholder Engagement

Businesses, providers and stakeholders engaged in the implementation of joint objectives.

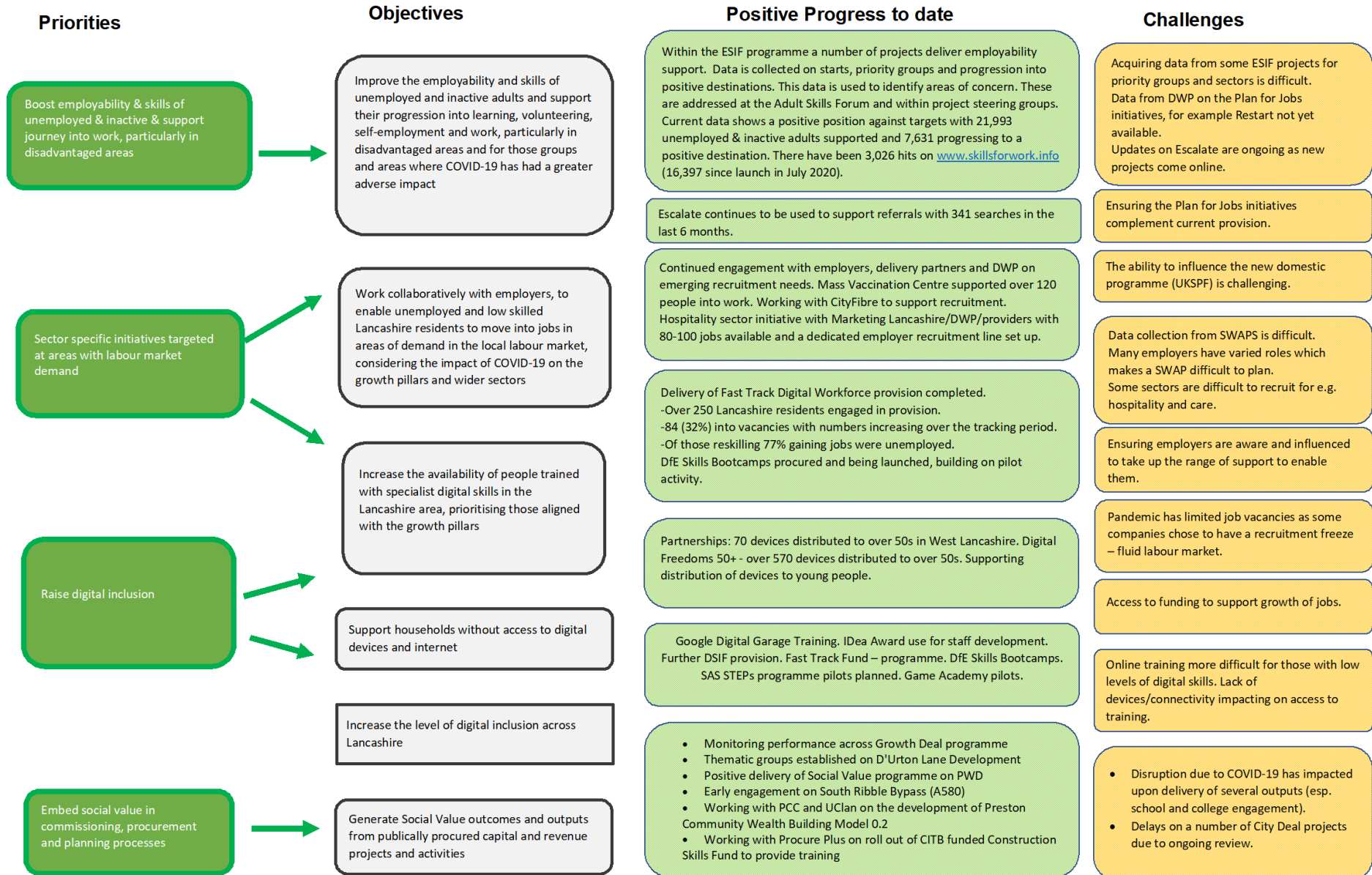


- 2.3 High level progress is provided against the four strategic themes in the charts on the next four pages. This includes challenges to progress, many of which are associated with the impact of the pandemic.

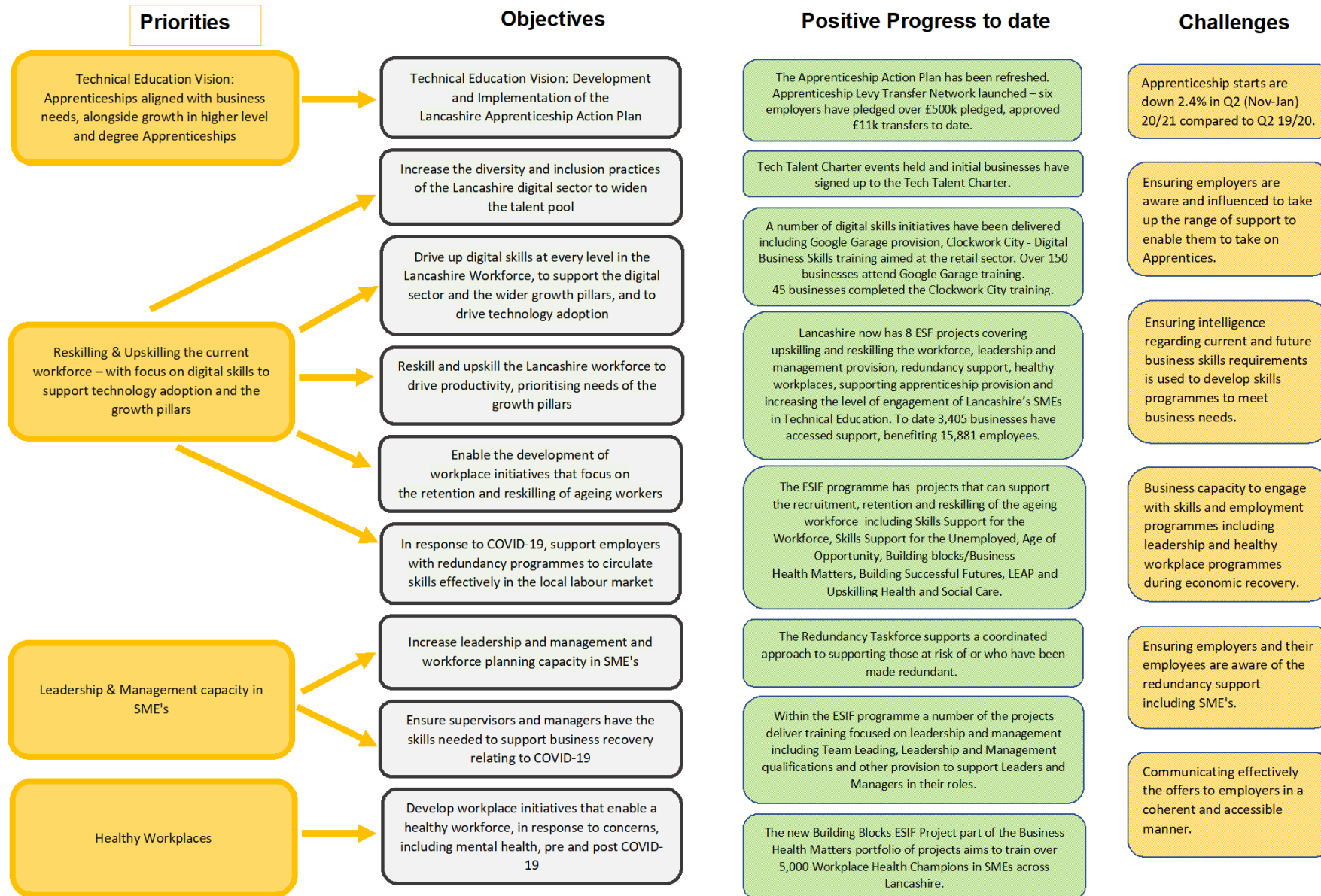
Theme: The Future Workforce



Theme: Inclusive Workforce



Theme: Skilled and Productive Workforce



Theme: Informed Approach

Objectives

Maintain a robust evidence base in the form of an effective and open source suite of relevant data

Evidence based approach to prioritising, influencing and directing funds

Collaboration with Local Stakeholders, other LEPs and Mayoral Combined Authorities, and sharing of good practice

Work with government to evaluate what works to influence future priorities and programmes

Positive progress to date

Interactive data dashboard created and published open source on website. Positive feedback from Colleges, third sector partners and Local Authority economic development officers.

2,500 views of evidence base page in the last 6 months, compared to 1,200 in the same period in previous year.

Partnership with Work Foundation to undertake research and publish the Skills for Net-Zero in Lancashire report.

Bespoke data dashboard created for each Lancashire College, positive feedback from Colleges regarding helping shape curriculum.

Provided data and analysis for the LEP Growth Strategy (LIS), Greater Lancashire Plan and Apprenticeship Action Plan.

Provided data and analysis for the Institute of Technology (IoT), Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and Strategic Development Fund (SDF) proposals.

Working with Local Authorities e.g. providing economic intelligence to inform levelling up, transport decision making and develop coherent Social Value approaches.

Collaboration with partners on Fast Track projects, IoT, LSIP and SDF bids.

Representation on national stage including All Party Parliamentary Group on T Levels, Digital Skills Partnership, sharing Lancashire's good practise from award winning Careers Hub.

Local Skills Report published. Positive feedback received from DfE Skills Advisory Panel Team. Report presented to Skills and Productivity Board as an example of good practice.

Took local young people and providers to House of Lords Roundtable on Youth Employment.

Responses to consultations on L2 and below quals, L3, Degree Apprenticeships and Flexible Apprenticeships. Work with IfATE, Gatsby and Sir John Holman on Occupational Maps developments and NCS visualisations.

Challenges

Balance between usability and robustness of evidence base – formalise feedback from stakeholders to identify any gaps in the dashboard.

No formal mechanisms in place to provide local data intelligence to influence the future UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Influencing DfE in regard to the Skills Advisory Panel evolution and the positioning alongside the Local Skills Improvement Plans and the Strategic Development Fund.



Positive progress to date

In the first 6 months of 2021, 30 businesses have registered onto the Lancashire Skills Pledge. In the same period 23 businesses activated 37 pledges.



3.0 Refresh of the Framework

- 3.1 If the framework was to be refreshed for January 2022, work would need to commence imminently to enable consultation with partners and stakeholders.
- 3.2 At present the local and national policy environment is relatively fluid, with several reviews, outcomes of pilots and trailblazers, and strategy and policy documents due to be published. For example, locally, the Greater Lancashire Plan, and associated Independent Economic Review and deep dives, the Growth Plan (previously the Local Industrial Strategy) and LEP Sector Group plans are due to be published. Nationally, the much awaited 'Levelling Up' paper is due in the autumn, alongside the outcome of the LEP Review. Policy and plans are being formulated with a plethora of consultations and trailblazers being undertaken by DfE, linked to the Skills for Jobs White Paper. This includes the trailblazers in Lancashire for the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and Strategic Development Fund, which will be discussed at the committee meeting. In addition, there are pilots due to commence through the Community Renewal Fund, as a precursor to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), with the anticipation of some form of framework and funding commitment in the spending review.
- 3.3 In addition the impact of the pandemic is continuing to affect employment and the implementation of skills and employment programmes linked to the Framework, including those under the 'Plan for Jobs'. It is hoped the easing of the lockdown measures and the success of the vaccination programme will positively impact on employment and programmes referenced in the Framework.

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 Discussion has been undertaken with the Chair of the committee in relation to the timing of the refresh, and it is recommended that the refresh is paused and revisited at the end of March 2022 when the policy landscape for the Framework is likely to be clearer and the impact of the pandemic will be less disruptive. In the interim, the action plans against each of the strategic themes remain relevant – at present there would be no radical changes based on local labour market intelligence or changes in government, LEP or Local Authority priorities.
- 4.2 Committee members are asked to support the recommendation that the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework remains as is, and that the refresh is put on hold and that the position is reviewed at the end of March 2022, and that this recommendation is made to the LEP Board.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
N/A		
Reason for inclusion in Part II		
N/A		