



LEP – Sub Committee

LEP - Skills and Employment Advisory Panel

Private and Confidential: No

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Skills for Jobs White Paper: Skills Accelerator trailblazers

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Executive Summary

This paper provides background to the Skills Accelerator trailblazers, which resulted from the Skills for Jobs White Paper that was published in January 2021. This is background information for presentations from the N&W Lancashire Chamber of Commerce and The Lancashire Colleges regarding the recently announced Lancashire trailblazers.

Recommendation

- I. The committee are asked to note the contents of the paper as background information to the presentations from partners.
- II. The committee are asked to support collaborative working and support from the Skills Hub to the Chamber of Commerce and The Lancashire Colleges regarding the successful implementation of the trailblazers

1. Skills for Jobs White Paper and launch of the Skills Accelerator

- 1.1 The Skills for Jobs White Paper was published in January 2021. As previously reported in the summary paper presented to the committee, the White Paper sets out a range of reforms aimed at tackling skills gaps and shortages, which in turn will contribute to improved productivity and international competitiveness. A key aspiration was to place employers at the heart of defining local skills needs.
- 1.2 In April 2021, the Department for Education (DfE) launched the Skills Accelerator prospectus, inviting applications for trailblazers under two new initiatives outlined in the White Paper: Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) and Strategic Development Funding (SDF). It is intended that the trailblazers will run from September 2021 to the end of March 2022, informing future government policy regarding the roll out of the aspirations outlined in the White Paper.



2. Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) and Strategic Development Fund (SDF)

- 2.1 The LSIPs, which aim to build on the work of LEP and MCA Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs), were open to employer representative bodies, with specific reference to Chambers of Commerce, working in collaboration with local colleges and providers. The trailblazers aim to add value to the work of SAPs by testing approaches to working with employer members to understand technical skills training needs within a local economic geography, with the intention that a collaborative plan be developed with providers to meet employer needs. It is intended that LSIPs will play into the review of the accountability of providers, particularly colleges in ensuring that their offer meets the needs of the local economy.
- 2.2 The SDF trailblazers, which were open to colleges working collaboratively across an economic geography, provide capacity building funds, both capital and revenue, to enable colleges to better meet local skills needs identified through local skills analysis.
- 2.3 It was intended that both trailblazers would address reskilling and upskilling challenges within the current workforce, including those presented through industrial digitisation, green growth and recovery from the pandemic, as well as help inform the needs of our future workforce.

3. Lancashire Trailblazers

- 3.1 Collaborative proposals were submitted on behalf of the three Lancashire-based Chambers by the N&W Lancashire Chamber of Commerce for the LSIP and by Myerscough College on behalf of The Lancashire Colleges (TLC) for SDF. The Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub supported the development of the proposals and a letter of support for each was provided by the LEP. The LSIP proposal was cross-sector, whilst the SDF proposal was specifically focused on the skills challenges associated with Low Carbon and net zero ambitions, referencing the collaborative research recently undertaken with the Work Foundation.
- 3.2 Both submissions were collaborative and articulated a collegiate response to addressing the skills challenges across the LEP area. Both submissions were successful. Lancashire is one of eight areas across the country which secured both the LSIP and SDF trailblazers (see here for the full list: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-accelerator-trailblazers-and-pilots/skills-accelerator-local-skills-improvement-plan-trailblazers-and-strategic-development-fund-pilots>).
- 3.3 At the time of writing the paper, both the Chambers and colleges were in discussion with DfE regarding the grant offers, eligibility of funds and the scope of the grant funding agreements. A presentation will be provided by the Chambers and colleges to the Lancashire Skills and Employment Advisory Panel on September 8th.



- 3.4 It should be noted that the DfE expect Skills Advisory Panel's (SAPs) to work with LSIP trailblazers to specifically ensure that the DfE SAP grant for analytical work is spent on complementary activity to that funded through the LSIP. Discussions have commenced to ensure that this is the case with the N&W Lancashire Chamber of Commerce, and to support the sharing of local labour market intelligence.
- 3.5 An email to the Chambers and the Skills Hub has been received from the Skills Accelerator team at DfE recognising the strength of the partnership in Lancashire, asking for information about the joint approach locally to help inform the development of the national Trailblazer guidance.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 The committee are asked to reflect on the information and presentations provided and to support a partnership approach, with the Skills Hub working collaboratively with the LSIP and SDF partnerships to share local labour market intelligence and support the success of the trailblazers.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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N/A

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A