

LEP - Skills and Employment Advisory Panel

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 8th September 2021 at 8.00am at the Zoom Virtual Meeting - Zoom

Present

Amanda Melton

Mark Allanson	Nicola Mortimer
Lindsay Campbell	Alison Robinson
Peter Caney	Bev Robinson
Neil Conlon	Neil Shaw
Ruth England	Stephen Sykes
Gareth Lindsay	Liz Tapner

Observers

Paul Evans, Area Lead, BEIS, Cities and Local Growth Unit
Stephen Jones, Head of FE Territorial Team, ESFA
Heather Murray, Senior Partnership Manager Lancashire, DWP

In Attendance

Sara Gaskell, Strategic Partnerships Manager, Lancashire Skills & Employment Hub
Tracy Heyes, Strategic Partnerships Manager, Lancashire Skills & Employment Hub
Sarah Kemp, Chief Executive Officer, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership
Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, Lancashire Skills & Employment Hub Director
Lisa Moizer, Lancashire Skills & Employment Hub Coordinator
Holly Tween, Democratic Services Officer, Lancashire County Council
Nathan Shoosmith, Intern, Lancashire LEP Team
Gaurang Agrawal, Intern, Lancashire LEP Team
Geoff Mason, Policy Manager, N&W Lancashire Chamber of Commerce
Trinley Walker, Policy Advisor, the Work Foundation
Melanie Wilkes, Head of Research, the Work Foundation

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed all in attendance, and extended particular welcome to Neil Shaw, Rossendale Borough Council CEO who had replaced Dean Langton as the Local Authorities representative Skills Lead.

The panel wished to place on record their thanks to Dean Langton for his work on the panel over the last few years.

Apologies had been received from Edwina Grant.

2. Declaration of Interests

Amanda Melton, Bev Robinson and Alison Robinson worked for organisations involved in the LSIP and SDF projects, covered in item 7.

Resolved: that the declarations be noted

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2021 and Matters Arising

The Panel considered the minutes and noted the following:

- The SAP grant had been approved by the LEP Board and the funds received from DfE
- Social Value had been due to be discussed at the informal meeting, but would now be taken to a future meeting
- All the recommendations regarding the Careers Hub had been approved by the LEP Board, and a further update would be given later in the agenda

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2021 are confirmed as an accurate record.

4. Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework - 6 month progress report

Michele Lawty-Jones, Skills and Employment Hub Director, presented the report outlining 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.

Each theme lead presented an update outlining priorities, objectives, progress and challenges for each theme.

The presenters responded to questions and comments from the panel.

Resolved: The Skills and Employment Advisory Panel:

- i. noted the contents of the paper and the progress against the Framework by theme
- ii. supported 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

5. Careers Hub and Enterprise Adviser Network – update paper

Michele Lawty-Jones, Skills and Employment Hub Director, presented the report updating on progress with funding for the Lancashire Careers Hub and Enterprise Adviser Network (EAN).

It was noted that the main grant from the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) had been accepted and the contract with the Skills Hub's delivery partner, Inspira had been extended. Inspira would be invited to the November SEAP meeting to provide an update.

Both applications for research and evaluation projects to CEC were successful and projects are expected to commence in September - October 2021.

Further funds had been secured from the Blackpool Opportunity Area (OA) under the twinning funds, to support the sharing of good practice and learning from Blackpool to wider Lancashire and vice versa.

Peter Caney reported that BAE Systems had approved sponsorship for two projects. These were Innovate Her, a project to inspire girls in secondary school about digital and tech careers, and CREATE Education, supplying 3D printers to school along with an education package. The projects will be targeted at females in secondary schools through the Careers Hub, to stimulate interest in digital and tech careers and increase take up of GCSE Computer Science, with the overall aim of increasing diversity in the Lancashire workforce.

Resolved: that the Skills and Employment Advisory Panel:

- i. Noted the contents of the paper and the funds secured to support Careers Hub and EAN activity across the LEP area
- ii. Noted that a further update on progress and priorities for the coming academic year would be provided at the November meeting by Inspira

6. Skills for Net Zero in Lancashire - Research Report

Stephen Sykes, industry rep for Low Carbon, introduced the presentation and reflected that the Work Foundation had engaged with the LEP's Energy and Low Carbon working group, and captured much anecdotal evidence gathered over the last two years, including feedback from local businesses.

Melanie Wilkes, Head of Research at the Work Foundation, and Trinley Walker, Policy Advisor at the Work Foundation, presented the findings of their research, highlighting their current work themes, the impact of skills gaps and what employers were doing in response, and recommendations coming out of the research.

It was particularly noted that the research had informed the LEP's new sector plan, had supported two successful funding bids and contributed to the planning of a comprehensive research plan with Lancaster University over the next 3 years.

The presenters responded to questions and comments from the panel, and were thanked for their attendance.

Resolved: that the presentation be noted

7. Skills for Jobs White Paper: Skills Accelerator trailblazers

Michele Lawty-Jones introduced the circulated paper giving background to the Skills Accelerator trailblazers, which resulted from the Skills for Jobs White Paper published in January 2021, a key aspiration of which was to place employers at the heart of defining local skills needs.

Collaborative proposals had been submitted on behalf of the three Lancashire-based Chambers by the N&W Lancashire Chamber of Commerce for the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) and by Myerscough College on behalf of The Lancashire Colleges for Strategic Development Fund (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.

Geoff Mason from the N&W Lancashire Chamber of Commerce gave a presentation on the Local Skills Improvement Plans, outlining the plan and particularly noting the good level of support offered from many different organisations across the county.

It was reported that the draft of the plan needs to be produced by the end of February 2022 with the final plan produced by end of March 2022. Strategic Focus Groups would be assembled and feed into the LSIP Board along with an employer group and stakeholder group. The primary aim of the LSIP is to enable providers to effectively respond to and address the technical skills needs of employers in a local area. Once skills gaps were identified, the LSIP could link with job centres, schools etc to signpost to upcoming opportunities.

Alison Robinson from The Lancashire Colleges group gave a presentation on the Strategic Development Fund, outlining the seven projects. It was reported that the bids had been completed at very short notice, and the projects must complete by the end of March 2022. The grant agreements were currently being finalised with DfE, after which the governance structure would be established.

The presenters responded to questions from the committee, and were thanked for their presentations.

Resolved: that the Skills and Employment Advisory Panel:

- i. Noted the contents of the paper as background information to the presentations from partners.
- ii. Supported collaborative working and support from the Skills Hub to the Chamber of Commerce and The Lancashire Colleges regarding the successful implementation of the trailblazers

8. Reporting to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership

Resolved: that the following items be reported to the LEP Board:

- Report on the 6-month progress report against the Strategic Framework and the proposal that the Framework refresh is put on hold and that the position is reviewed in March 2022.
- Discussion regarding the Skills Accelerator Trailblazers (LSIP and SDF) and support from the Skills Hub to the Chambers and Colleges regarding successful implementation.

9. Any Other Business

It was noted that Lynne Livesey was retiring and had therefore resigned from the committee. The panel wished to place on record their thanks to Lynne for her work and wish her the best for the future. A new higher education sector representative would be sought.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for 8am on 10 November 2021. Virtual/venue details would be confirmed nearer the time.