

LEP - Joint Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 8th March, 2022 at 3.30 pm at the Savoy Suite 2 - The Exchange - County Hall, Preston

Present

Mike Leckie (Chair)

Councillor Dave Brookes

Councillor Christopher Dixon

Councillor Terry Howarth

Councillor Zainab Rawat

County Councillor Cosima Towneley

Councillor Matthew Vincent

In Attendance

Paul Evans, Assistant Director, BEIS, Cities and Local Growth Unit

Debbie Francis OBE, Chair, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership

Gary Halsall, Democratic Services, Lancashire County Council

Sarah Kemp, Chief Executive, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership

Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, Director of the Lancashire Skills Hub

Andy Milroy, Democratic Services, Lancashire County Council

Sam Parker, Democratic Services, Lancashire County Council

Laura Sales, Director of Corporate Services, Lancashire County Council and LEP Company Secretary

Andy Walker, Economic Development, Lancashire County Council

Matt Wright, Innovation Manager, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership

1. Constitution, Membership and Terms of Reference of the Committee

The report presented set out the Constitution, Membership and Terms of Reference of the LEP Joint Scrutiny Committee. In addition, in accordance with the Terms of Reference, the Committee was asked to consider the appointment of a Deputy Chair. There was one nomination received for the role of Deputy Chair, County Councillor Cosima Towneley, no other nominations were received and the Committee approved the appointment of County Councillor Cosima Towneley as Deputy Chair.

Resolved: The LEP Joint Scrutiny Committee:

- i. Noted the update on the Constitution, Membership and Terms of Reference of the committee, as set out in the report including that Mike Leckie had been appointed as the new Independent Private Sector Chair of the committee, and
- ii. Approved the appointment of County Councillor Cosima Towneley as the Deputy Chair of the committee.

2. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair, Mike Leckie, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Councillors James Flannery, Michael Hindley, Stuart Hirst and Peter Moss.

3. Declaration of Interests

None

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 24th March 2021

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2021 be confirmed as an accurate record.

5. Matters Arising

None

6. Introduction to Lancashire Innovation Ecosystem

Matt Wright, Innovation Manager, presented the report which set out an introduction to innovation policy, challenges and opportunities in Lancashire aimed at informing scrutiny members of the key issues to be considered.

The report set the scene for the innovation ecosystem in Lancashire, giving an introduction to the field of innovation, the trends and opportunities presented by innovation and technology and the emphasis placed on innovation in current and emerging LEP plans.

Innovation was a core component of the LEP strategy and was illustrated as a cross cutting theme in the Strategic Framework which set out the key sectors and activities which could benefit from innovation.

A Powerpoint presentation was delivered which covered the following key points:

- Introduction to the Lancashire Innovation Ecosystem
- LEP Strategic Framework and Innovation
- Defining Innovation
- Technology / Societal Challenges Driving Change
- Policy Arena
- Structures and Staff – LEP/LCC, etc
- Establishment of the Lancashire Innovation Board
- Delivery of an annual Innovation Festival
- Investing in Key Assets in our Mission Areas
- Specialist Help from Ideation and Peer Learning to Technology Advice,

- Incubation, Facilities, Labs and Investment
- Strategic Aims and Refreshment of the Innovation Plan
- Lancashire Innovation Strategy
- Frontier and Cross Sector Tiers

Comments and questions raised were as follows:

- It was felt that there was not enough innovation towards the agricultural sector. Agriculture was key and the committee was informed that the LEP sector groups included food and farming.
- It would have been helpful to have information on how the committee intended to back this particular strategy especially around the skills needed. Skills was a critical part of the innovation agenda.
- The committee enquired about where in the strategy was there information on the safe disposal of battery technology. The low carbon section of the strategy dealt with this.
- It was felt that the Cyber Section of the strategy could be a lot stronger. The committee was informed that there were real strengths around Cyber security. It was vital to actively counter Cyber security threats. This was central to the innovation plans.

Resolved: The Joint Scrutiny Committee noted and commented on the report enabling members to consider areas they might want to scrutinise further in terms of Innovation policy and delivery.

7. Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework: Future Workforce

Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, Director of Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub, presented the report building on the presentation and discussion at the last committee meeting which focused on the process undertaken to develop and refresh the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework. The report focused on one of the strategic themes: Future Workforce, and the work of the Lancashire Careers Hub and Enterprise Adviser Network in raising careers aspirations and enabling young people to make informed choices about their pathway into the world of work.

The report outlined how the Careers Hub was working in partnership with businesses across Lancashire to enable young people to gain a wide variety of insights into sectors, jobs and local companies, through employer encounters and experiences. The aim being to enable young people to secure good employment and to build a future talent pipeline that met the needs of Lancashire's economy now and in the future.

The Strategic Framework highlighted 4 strategic themes for Lancashire:

- Future Workforce
- Skilled and Productive Workforce
- Inclusive Workforce
- An Informed Approach

Comments and questions raised were as follows:

- Members thanked Michele for the update and all the work that was going on.
- It was important to help children and young people in care and build up their aspirations and develop and provide opportunities for them.
- It was felt that there did not seem to be a strategy for people who went into the creative arts and the environmental side of green jobs.
- There was a piece of work being done at the moment with the Food and Agriculture Sector informing it of careers provision.
- It was important to make young people aware of the different routes into employment.
- There were certain employment practices especially the building industry whereby a person came on an apprenticeship and received the requisite amount of training but when it came to the end of their apprenticeship they were put on the self-employed market. They were not enabled to develop their skills sufficiently to hold down full-time jobs. It was felt longer and more thorough apprenticeships needed to be considered. There had to be mere flexibility with the Apprenticeship Levy.

Resolved: The LEP Joint Scrutiny Committee noted the content of the report and reflected on the presentation at the meeting and the implementation of the Future Workforce strategic theme.

8. Any Other Business

There was an enquiry about an update on the Enterprise Zone at Warton. The LEP was actively looking at Warton at the moment with BAE Systems about what the proposition should be before the site was developed.

9. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would take place in September 2022, exact date, time and venue to be confirmed.