

Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Limited

Private and Confidential: NO

Date: 13th September 2016

Lancashire Area Based Review (ABR)

Report Author: Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, Director of the Lancashire Skills Hub,
michele.lawty-jones@lancashire.gov.uk

Executive Summary

This paper provides background information to the Area Based Review (ABR) of Colleges. As reported at the May LEP Board, the review aims to deliver an infrastructure across England which is financially viable, sustainable, resilient and efficient with an offer that meets each area's educational and economic needs. The review in Lancashire is due to commence this month, with the first Steering Group scheduled on the 4th October. The paper provides an overview of the process.

The LEP and the Local Authorities have the opportunity to provide a 'skills conclusion' which will articulate high level outcomes which frame the review at the onset. A draft of the high level principles was agreed at the May Board, this has been developed further into a slide pack. LEP Board members are asked to comment on the draft slides.

Recommendations in relation to representation at the Steering Group are also provided.

Recommendation

The LEP Board is asked to:

- (i) Comment on the draft slide pack, which is mapped to the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework, and authorise the Chair of the LEP, with support from the Director of Economic Development and the Director of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub, to finalise the LEP's slide pack and input to the ABR.
- (ii) Endorse and consider the recommendations in relation to Steering Group membership.



1 Background Information

- 1.1 As presented and discussed at the June Board meeting, the ABRs, led and driven by Government and the FE Commissioner, will review the College infrastructure across England with view to delivering institutions which are financially viable, sustainable, resilient and efficient with an offer that meets each area's educational and economic needs.
- 1.2 The ABR guidance re-iterates the vital role of the FE sector in developing a technical and professional education system which meets the skills demands of the economy, including driving up the number of apprenticeships. Reviews should deliver:
- Institutions which are financially viable, sustainable, resilient and efficient, and that deliver maximum value for public investment.
 - An offer that meets each area's educational and economic needs.
 - Providers with strong reputations and greater specialisms.
 - Sufficient access to high quality and relevant education and training for all.
 - Colleges well equipped to respond to the reform and expansion of the apprenticeship programme.
- 1.3 The review in Lancashire is in 'Wave 4' and is due to commence this month. A steering group is being established to drive the review which will involve representation from the LEP, Local Authorities and each College's Chair of Governors and Principal / CEO. Secretariat is provided from the Joint Area Review Development Unit (JARDU). The first steering group is on Tuesday 4th October 2016.
- 1.4 As per other reviews, the LEP is required to produce a slide pack providing the economic context and challenges for the review.

2 Process

- 2.1 The role of the LEP is to contribute to the analysis of the current and future economic and educational needs of the Lancashire area.
- 2.2 Local Authorities also have a key role in contributing to the analysis of the current and future economic and educational needs in their local areas, including engaging school sixth forms in maintained schools to support analysis and to inform future deliberations about schools provision.
- 2.3 Governing bodies have a key role in the consideration of options and taking decisions on institutional recommendations. As institutions are independent, each will need to make its own decision on its future where necessary relying on its own independent advice on financial and legal matters.
- 2.4 In terms of process, JARDU are currently undertaking desk research which will be shared with Steering Group members, reviewing local, sub-regional and the regional environment and local provision, as well as financial health



and viability of current provision. This will be shared with members prior to the first steering group, and will build on the existing evidence base. JARDU will also provide briefings to the Colleges and Governing Bodies, and undertake College visits which will add to the desk research.

- 2.5 A schedule of 5 Steering Group meetings have been set; starting in October, and ending with the final meeting on the 21st February. The first meeting will set the context for the review, including inputs from the LEP and the Local Authorities on skills needs in the County and JARDU's desk research. The second meeting will provide an overview of the findings from the College visits and the developing options, including a response from the Colleges to the challenges set in the first meeting. The third meeting will focus on the options that have emerged, and testing. Meeting four will provide draft recommendations and meeting five will involve feedback from the Corporations on decisions in relation to the recommendations, agreement of the Area Review report, discussion about implementation and communications.

3 Progress to-date

- 3.1 As reported at the Board in June, a working group has been established to facilitate joint discussion between the LEP, evolving Combined Authority / Local Authorities and the Colleges to prepare for the review. The working group feeds into the Skills and Employment Board. The working group has been a useful mechanism to bring together key partners to prepare for the review.
- 3.2 The group has reviewed lessons learnt from other reviews, has met with JARDU to discuss the process and has focused on the collection of data to support the development of the slides packs for the first steering group. This includes data from the Local Authorities, the existing skills and employment evidence base (which underpins the Skills and Employment Strategic Framework) and clean data commissioned by The Lancashire Colleges (TLC). A draft slide pack has now been produced, providing the economic context and perspective. This will be brought together with the Local Authority slides; the Skills and Employment Framework has provided a joint reference point.
- 3.3 A shared vision in regard to the 'high level' outcomes (as opposed to options) is the desired outcome, prior to the review commencing. We set the scene and the challenges, and the Colleges respond to these in Steering Group 2, and the structural options are appraised against the challenges in 3 and 4.
- 3.4 An initial view of the principles, mapped against the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework, was reviewed by the LEP Board in June and supported. This has been used to develop the slide pack in Appendix 1. Board members are asked to review and provide comment, as the pack is further developed for presentation at the first Steering Group.



4 Membership of the Steering Group

- 4.1 As previously the Steering Group will include each College's Chair of Governors and Principal / CEO, and representation from the LEP, Local Authorities, and other stakeholders e.g. The Lancashire Colleges Executive Director and the Diocese of Salford and Diocese of Lancaster. West Lancashire College's Chair and Principal will also be included, although the College will be formally reviewed through the North East review as the College is owned by the Newcastle College Group (NCG). It is useful that both reviews are being undertaken in Wave 4.

- 4.2 The Skills and Employment Board recommend that Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, as Director of Skills and Employment attend and present the slide pack, and that Paul Holme, Skills and Employment Board member, represent the views of the LEP. Paul is an independent consultant who has a strong track record and history in the skills and employment sector and has been providing expert advice in the run-up to the review. The LEP Board may wish to consider whether a LEP Board member is also required.