

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PANEL
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 28 JUNE 2017 AT AHEAD PARTNERSHIP,
PINSENT MASON OFFICES, 1 PARK ROW, LEEDS**

Present:

Stephanie Burras CBE (Chair)	Ahead Partnership
Ian Billyard	LCR Skills Network
Nick Bowen	LCR Headteachers' Advisory Network
Julie Colley	Avalon Group
Professor Margaret House	LCR Skills Network
Councillor Imran Khan	Bradford Council
Merran McRae	Wakefield Council
Karen Milner	Paths and Progress
Beverly Parrish	Parrish Environmental Consulting
Councillor Mohammed Rafique	Leeds City Council
Joanna Robinson	Mansfield Pollard
Councillor Carol Runciman	City of York Council
Amanda Stainton	Portakabin
Diana Towler	Department of Work and Pensions

In attendance:

Caroline Allen	WYCA
Michelle Burton	WYCA
Sue Cooke	WYCA
Farzana Chowdhury	WYCA
Rebecca Collier	WYCA
Christian Denison	WYCA
Peter Glover	WYCA
Phil Hunter	Bradford Council
Emma Longbottom	WYCA
Catherine Lunn	WYCA
Sonya Midgley	WYCA

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Susan Hinchcliffe, Cliff Lunn and Dan Sutherland, Simon Barratt, Peter Duffy, Michael Holgate, Tom Keeney, Glynn Robinson, Sue Soroczan.

2. Minutes of the meeting of the Employment and Skills Panel held on 17 March 2017

Minutes of the meeting of the Employment and Skills Panel held 17 March 2017 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Declarations of interests

The Panel Chair (Stephanie Burras) declared an interest explaining that the Ahead Partnership held an interest in one of the European funded education business programmes which were referenced in reports contained within the agenda.

4. Governance

The Panel was provided with a report which was introduced by the Chair and set out the proposed changes to the governance arrangements for LEP Panels.

It was reported that at its meeting in May, the LEP Board had approved a revised model of governance integrating the LEP Panels into the decision making structure of WYCA through the development of an advisory committee structure reporting back to the LEP and WYCA. This would provide enhanced two way engagement between the private and public sector, increasing transparency and enabling faster and more streamlined decision making.

The revised governance arrangements were scheduled to be considered by WYCA at its meeting on 29 June and, if approved, would be effective from 1 September 2017. A similar report was being considered by each of the affected Panels and all Panel members had received a separate letter about the proposals. Panel members were given the opportunity to ask questions about the proposals and seek clarification on anything which they felt was unclear.

The Panel discussed the proposed arrangements and provided feedback.

Resolved:

That the report and next steps in the process be noted.

- (i) That existing Panel members would be included in the membership unless they notified WYCA that they wished to opt-out.
- (ii) That declarations of interest forms and guidance notes for completion be emailed to Panel members in due course.
- (iii) That the Panel be provided with an email address for the Head of Legal and Governance Services should they have queries to raise outside of the meeting.

5. Influencing the skills system

The Panel were provided with a report seeking endorsement of delivery agreements with FE colleges in West Yorkshire, which would influence the alignment of activity – including that funded through the Adult Education Budget – with the ambitions set out in the Leeds City Region Employment and Skills Plan. Draft documents were included with the papers and the following feedback was provided.

- The Panel welcomed the draft delivery agreements and noted that significant progress had been made in anticipation of a devolution deal.
- The process of developing the agreements had been very useful and had enabled WYCA and the LEP to develop a stronger understanding of college delivery.
- Colleges had been very collaborative and this was thought to reflect the strength of the existing relationship between the colleges, the LEP and WYCA.
- Local Authorities should have an involvement in the ongoing monitoring of progress towards the ambitions set out in the delivery agreements.
- In the next phase of work, a workshop would be held for Local Authorities to come together and share good practice.

Peter Glover gave a presentation to the Panel summarising headline labour market information. The annual labour market report for 2017/18 would be launched at a workshop to be held in September. An update was given on a meeting of implementation group to oversee progress towards the recommendations set out in the report of the West Yorkshire Area Review.

Resolved:

- (i) That the delivery agreements with West Yorkshire Colleges be endorsed.
- (ii) That the update regarding the implementation of the West Yorkshire Area Review and the headline messages for the Labour Market Analysis for 2017/18 be noted.

6. Cross-cutting themes

The Panel was provided with a report on work to progress the priorities and actions in the cross-cutting themes in the Employment and Skills Plan: “More and Better Apprenticeships” and “Raising the Bar on High Level Skills” and which sought the Panel’s endorsement for the development of an action plan to progress the next steps regarding high level technical education.

The Panel welcomed the increase in apprenticeship numbers in Leeds City Region, in contrast to a national decline.

The Panel noted that WYCA had carried out research to analyse the pipeline of higher

and degree apprenticeship provision against the demand highlighted in the Labour Market Analysis. The key messages from the research included that there was a robust Higher and Degree Apprenticeship offer in Management and Leadership but colleges and Universities were expecting to offer far fewer places on STEM courses. It was reported that there was a particular risk of under-supply in Manufacturing and Engineering, and Digital skills. An anticipated ESIF call "Collaborating with business to develop skills provision" in Leeds City Region may provide funding to address this issue.

Resolved:

- (i) That the progress of activity against the More and Better Apprenticeships and Raising the Bar on High Level Skills priorities be noted.
- (ii) That the Panel noted the key messages and the next steps from the Higher Level Skills research and support be given to the development of an action plan to progress to the next steps.

7. Addressing sector skills shortages

The Panel was provided with a consultation report on plans to address sector skills shortages in the Leeds City Region. Emma Longbottom gave a presentation summarising the approach to be taken to address the issue. It was proposed that the "Building Workforce Skills and Attracting Talent" advisory group should have oversight of this work stream.

Resolved:

- (i) That the proposed approach to addressing sector skills shortages be endorsed and that the "Building Workforce Skills and Attracting Talent" advisory group should have oversight of this work stream.

8. Great education connected to business

The Panel was provided with an update on the work to progress the priorities and actions in the "Great Education Connected to Business" priority of the Employment and Skills Plan and news were sought on a proposal to extend #techgoals activity including by encouraging the take-up of "digital badges" in primary and secondary schools.

The Panel received a verbal update from Karen Milner following on from a meeting of the "Great Education Connected to Businesses" advisory group.

The Panel noted that there was currently no offer available for digital badges specifically for primary aged learners. If resource was available, the Panel would be keen to explore opportunities to increase uptake within secondary schools to address sector skills shortages and to pilot the development of digital badges for primary

learners.

Resolved:

- (i) That the progress of activity against the “Great Education Connected to Business” priorities be noted and supported.

9. Building workforce skills and attracting talent

The Panel was provided with a report on the “Building Workforce skills and Attracting Talent” priority, together with a verbal update from Michelle Burton on a meeting of its advisory group.

The Panel also received an update on the LEP Skills Service which had now closed as a grant funding scheme. It was noted, however, that advice was still available to businesses, particularly regarding Apprenticeships, and support was available for businesses to develop a training plan and to access appropriate training provision. The outcome of a European Social Fund (ESF) call to deliver a Skills Service project was awaited.

The Panel were asked to consider whether they would be interested in representing the Employment and Skills Panel on steering groups for two ESF projects to be delivered by the West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges:

- Reach Higher (widening participation in high level skills)
- More Skills, Better Jobs (skills support for in-work benefit claimants)

The Panel was reminded that the Leeds City Region Annual Skills Conference would take place on 20 July at Bradford College.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That Panel members contact Michelle Burton should they be interested in representing the Employment and Skills Panel on steering groups for the two ESF projects to be delivered by the West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges.

10. Employability, accessing jobs and realising potential

The Panel was provided with a report on “employability, accessing jobs and realising potential”. The purpose of the report was to consult the Panel on the work to progress relevant priorities and actions, in particular measures to encourage inclusive growth.

It was reported that Ruth Redfern had been seconded to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to act as Project Director for Inclusive Growth. The purpose of

the work was to ensure that all communities, including the most disadvantaged cohorts, were able to benefit from economic growth.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That the progress of activity against the “Employability, Accessing jobs and Realising Potential Priority be noted.
- (iii) That the range of measures proposed at 3.1 of the submitted report to encourage inclusive growth be noted.

11. Dates of future meetings

1 September 2017, 10.00am – 12.30pm

4 December 2017, 10.00am – 12.30pm

Members were reminded that future meetings would be held in public and would take place in Committee Room A, Wellington House, Leeds.