

Director: Sue Cooke, Executive Head of Economic Services
Author: Emma Longbottom



Report to: Employment and Skills Panel

Date: 1 September 2017

Subject: Building Workforce Skills and Attracting Talent

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consult the Panel on the work to progress the priorities and actions in the “Building Workforce Skills and Attracting Talent” priority of the Employment and Skills Plan.

2 Advisory Group Report

- 2.1 The group met on 4 August. Verbal updates were provided on the following activity:
- Skills Service
 - Sector activity
 - Labour market information
 - Apprenticeships support for businesses
- 2.2 The group welcomed the support being given to businesses to make the most of apprenticeships in the context of the national reforms and levy but felt that some providers’ inflexible model of course delivery remained a barrier to many businesses engaging with apprenticeships. In particular, some providers still only allowed apprentices to commence their course in September which doesn’t always meet business needs.
- 2.3 The group requested that the findings of the Skills Service evaluation should be discussed at their next meeting, and any learning used to inform future programmes.
- 2.4 The presentation on labour market information was well received and the group felt that it demonstrated a clear rationale for the activities they are overseeing. They were keen to see other data when it became available, particularly data on skills shortage vacancies (available early 2018) and primary research regarding the impact of Brexit in Leeds City Region. The group will consider whether further action is required in the context of this information.

3 LEP Skills Service

3.1 The Skills Service closed for new grant applications on 31 March 2017. All training was to be completed by 30 June 2017 and final payments to business will be processed by 29 September 2017.

3.2 As of 31 July 2017:

- 3742 enquiries received
- 2096 skills assessments have been completed
- 1663 approved applications
- 10339 people have been upskilled
- 3.93m grants have been approved

3.3 An overview of the approved grants is shown below:

Total number of grants approved by area

District	Cumulative number of grants approved	%	Cumulative value of grants approved	%
Barnsley	83	5%	£182,280.83	5%
Bradford	189	11%	£431,134.67	11%
Calderdale	74	4%	£152,270.28	4%
Craven	24	1%	£44,190.67	1%
Harrogate	127	8%	£310,756.30	8%
Kirklees	217	13%	£510,149.87	13%
Leeds	577	35%	£1,378,574.03	35%
Selby	22	1%	£88,137.90	2%
Wakefield	206	12%	£432,584.49	11%
York	144	9%	£402,624.66	10%
	1663	100%	£3,933,243.70	100%

Total number of grants approved by sector

Sector	Cumulative number of grants approved	%	Cumulative value of grants approved	%
Construction and Low Carbon	228	14%	£512,265.51	13%
Creative & Digital	338	20%	£819,704.64	21%
Finance & Business	468	28%	£1,015,664.00	26%
Hospitality & Tourism	66	4%	£145,248.06	4%
Manufacturing & Engineering	492	30%	£1,327,924.82	34%
Medical Technology	32	2%	£53,894.67	1%
Transport & Logistics	39	2%	£58,542.00	1%
	1663	100%	£3,933,243.70	100%

3.4 A number of businesses who had grants allocated to them have chosen not to complete the training or less individuals have completed the training than initially planned, therefore the final figures may be lower than currently reported.

3.5 The West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges has submitted a Full Application to deliver the continuation of the Skills Service, which will be funded through European Social Fund until 2020. News of the outcome of this application is still awaited.

- 3.6 In the interim the Skills Service Advisors have been maintaining the Skills Service brand and providing a comprehensive training and skills planning service to support businesses to identify skills gaps and skills development needs linked to business growth objectives, including apprenticeship support.
- 3.7 The following outcomes have been achieved during this interim period:
- 210 businesses engaged
 - 162 training plans completed
 - 68 skills diagnostics completed
 - 52 referrals to other LEP services
- 3.8 An evaluation of the Skills Service is currently being undertaken, focusing on the impact of the support provided on businesses' behaviour, productivity and growth as well as the economic impact. The final report will include a range of case studies which will detail how the training support provided has influenced business and individuals' practice and development.

4 Sector Skills

- 4.1 At its meeting in June 2017, the Panel discussed and endorsed the proposed approach to addressing acute sector skills shortages:
- Digital skills
 - Infrastructure and Construction
 - Manufacturing and Engineering
- 4.2 Progress and updates against the agreed activities includes:
- Meetings have taken place with businesses in key sectors to help inform the development of solutions.
 - To support the promotion of Digital careers in the region a Business Development and Marketing Officer (Digital Skills) is currently being recruited. Once in post this role will launch a national promotional campaign and secure employer sponsorship to continue and further develop the campaign.
 - An Outline Application has been submitted for European Social Funds, if successful this funding will be used to provide support for people to re-skill and access careers in skills shortage areas, particularly through a digital bursary scheme.
 - In addition the ESF funds would be used to develop a scheme to support women to the Engineering and Manufacturing sector.
 - Employment and Skills clauses have been included in the invitation to tender to be part of the Consultancy framework for the West Yorkshire Transport Fund, in order to maximise the local employment outcomes generated by the scheme.
 - Working with Local Authority officers, an Employment Brokerage model has been developed to support successful tenderers to meet their employment and skills

requirements, and to support positive outcomes (eg schools engagement, apprenticeships, jobs for people previously unemployed) to be generated by major schemes. This approach will be piloted when the West Yorkshire Transport Fund contracts are in place, and adapted if required before being fully rolled out and widely promoted.

- Funding has been secured from Government to develop a Leeds City Region HS2 Growth Strategy. Arup are working with colleagues at Leeds City Council to engage and consult with partners on the content of the strategy, which will include a range of suggested intervention to support local people to engage with HS2. The draft strategy will be submitted to Government in Autumn 2017.

5 Recommendations

5.1 The Panel is asked to:

- Note the update from the Advisory Group;
- Note and comment on the progress of activity against the “Building Workforce Skills and Attracting Talent” priority.