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**Report to:** LEP Board  
**Date:** 19 September 2017  
**Subject:** Employment and Skills Panel

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## **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 To provide the LEP Board with an update on the work of the Employment and Skills Panel (ESP).

## **2 Re-Shaping the Skills System**

- 2.1 In July 2017, Delivery Agreements were published with each of the seven FE Colleges in West Yorkshire, following the LEP Board's endorsement at its last meeting. The agreements are available to view at <http://www.the-lep.com/research-and-publications/> and set out individualised and measurable expectations of how Colleges have agreed to work toward LEP and CA priorities for the Leeds City Region. The agreements will influence how the Adult Education Budget (approx. £56m per annum) is utilised as well as broader college provision and are an important next step in strengthening broader relationships with colleges. The publication of these agreements was reported as a national first by FE Week <http://feweek.co.uk/2017/07/27/yorkshire-colleges-first-to-publish-targets-in-56m-aeb-pre-devolution-deal/>.
- 2.2 Next steps will include:
- Performance management of the Delivery Agreements by WYCA;
  - A workshop to be carried out with LA officers in September 2017, to explore how their AEB allocation is utilised and how success is measured and used to inform delivery;
  - Engagement with the largest independent training providers of AEB.
- 2.3 Good progress has been made towards a number of the recommendations set out in the report of the West Yorkshire Area Review of Post-16 Education.
- 2.4 Discussions have been taking place between various parties interested in the proposal to establish a single Aire Valley College (including Craven College, Shipley College and the Keighley Campus of Leeds City College).

### **3 Embedding Inclusive Growth in Employment and Skills Services**

3.1 At their meeting on 1 September 2017, the Panel considered proposals for embedding Inclusive Growth in Employment and Skills services, including the following:

- Influencing providers: Outcomes for the most dis-advantaged groups identified in Delivery Agreements with WY Colleges.
- Enterprise in Education: Providing enhanced activity for 6,000 of our most disadvantaged young people.
- In-work progression: Published research report in July 2017 into models of in-work progression in low-wage sectors <http://www.the-lep.com/news-and-blog/news/new-report-finds-sector-based-support-can-help-bus/>.
- Launched “skills support for in-work claimants” project at LCR Skills Conference on 20 July.
- Skills Service: signposting available for businesses to engage with schools, recruit apprentices, train lower paid staff, etc.
- Local employment on major schemes: following LEP Board endorsement, WYCA is implementing social value in procurement policy for all schemes with a value of £0.5m or more.
- Apprenticeships: Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE) offers enhanced grant to employers taking on their first apprentice (16-24 years old) when they pay the apprentice the living wage.

3.2 The Panel will continue to identify areas where more could be done and the LEP Board awayday will consider Inclusive Growth and Industrial Strategy.

### **4 More and Better Apprenticeships**

4.1 The Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE) is now closed to new registrations.

**Phase One** (Apprentice Starts 1 August to 31 December 2015 – financial year 2015/16) saw 1126 business receive grants totalling £2,279,000.

**Phase Two & Three** (Apprentice Starts 1 January to 31 December 2016 – financial year 2016/17) saw 1598 businesses receiving 1819 grants totalling £3,066,800.00.

**Phase Four progress** (Apprentice Starts 1 January to 31 July 2017 – financial year 2017/18)

Registrations for phase 4 closed on 4 August 2017. Over 1100 registrations have been received for Phase 4 and are currently undergoing initial eligibility checks. Checking and processing of payments will continue to March 2018.

4.2 A marketing/awareness campaign on Apprenticeships ran over the summer, mainly via social media. The campaign, #Letstalkrealtraining, was supported by a telemarketing campaign which contacted businesses who had already received some

LEP support but not for Apprenticeships. Skills Service Advisers are visiting companies to advise them on support available in relation to workforce development including how to make the most of Apprenticeships.

## **5 Raising the Bar on High Level Skills**

5.1 At the annual LCR Skills Network conference, a £3.5m European Social Funded project “Reach Higher” was launched. This project will be delivered by the West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges with the aim of widening participation in high level skills, particularly in skills shortage sectors and among under-represented groups. Activity will include support for work placements, internships and conversion programmes.

## **6 Great Education Connected to Businesses**

6.1 The Enterprise Adviser Network (EAN) is now working with 136 secondary schools in Leeds City Region, and 123 businesses. 4,509 encounters<sup>1</sup> between employers and young people took place through the network between April and July 2017, of which 1,199 employer encounters were delivered to disadvantaged learners. The team has also signposted to partner activity, generating an additional 3,421 encounters.

6.2 Funding from Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) to increase activity in the Opportunity Area (OA) of Bradford will be used to recruit an additional Enterprise Coordinator and a Lead Enterprise Coordinator. As well as delivering activity to improve social mobility in schools in Bradford, the Lead Coordinator will develop and implement an enhanced delivery model targeted at disadvantaged learners across the City Region, and will manage the growing team of Enterprise Coordinators.

6.3 A careers campaign is being developed with the aims of:

- Simplifying and enriching messages about careers choices
- Raising awareness and influencing opinions of key influencers about City Region’s key sectors and its career opportunities
- Addressing misconceptions about the North and instilling a sense of pride amongst young people that they are from and part of Leeds City Region

## **7 Building Workforce Skills and Attracting Talent**

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

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<sup>1</sup> A ‘meaningful’ encounter with an employer is defined as one in which the student has an opportunity to learn about what work or further study is like, or what it takes to be successful at the workplace or learning provider. Students should be encouraged to reflect upon and share what they have learned from such experiences.

7.2 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

7.3 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. 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.

7.4 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.

7.5 A programme of activity is being developed to address acute sector skills shortages:

- Digital skills
- Infrastructure and Construction
- Manufacturing and Engineering

7.6 This activity 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.
- Funding is being sought to provide support for people to re-skill and access careers in skills shortage areas, particularly through a digital bursary scheme and to support women to access employment in 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.

## **8 Employability, Accessing Jobs and Realising Potential**

- 8.1 At its meeting on 1 September, members of the Employment and Skills Panel recommended that the final phase of the Headstart project (City Deal funded activity to support people to access employment) should focus on piloting activity to support individuals aged 50 or over experiencing mental health issues to remain in work. This group has been identified as experiencing particular barriers to accessing and remaining in employment. The outcome of this pilot would be shared with stakeholders to inform the direction of employment policy development in Leeds City Region.
- 8.2 The LEP published a report in July 2017 exploring approaches to progression from low pay. The report is available to view here <http://www.the-lep.com/LEP/media/New/Enterprise%20Advisers/Report-Progression-from-low-pay-in-Leeds-City-Region.pdf> and shows that a sector-based approach to support could help to address in-work poverty in the City Region. The report concluded that a sector-based approach provided a logical and tailored point of entry through which to support businesses to improve staff progression and, in turn, address low pay and in-work poverty.
- 8.3 At the annual LCR Skills Network conference, a £2m European Social Funded project “More Skills, Better Jobs” was launched. This project will be delivered by the West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges with the aim of tackling in-work poverty through skills development. The project will pilot approaches to in-work progression and will implement sectoral approaches, targeting individuals who don’t traditionally engage with training as well as engaging with employers directly.

## **9 Recommendations**

- 9.1 The LEP Board is asked to note the contents of the Panel update.