
Report to: LEP Board

Date: 29 November 2017

Subject: Employment and Skills Panel

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 The seven Delivery Agreements with West Yorkshire colleges, which were published in the summer have been well received and attracted local and national interest. These were developed following the area review and provide building blocks for strategic discussion with colleges about the current and future provision in line with economic need and in preparation for devolution of the Adult Education Budget (AEB). First reviews are currently taking place. It is anticipated that reviews will take place twice a year with an annual report produced and possible refresh of the documents.
- 2.2 In addition, and in support of AEB devolution, meetings have been held with community learning teams in the West Yorkshire local authorities and Independent Training Providers (ITPs) [largest by contract value] who receive contracts and funding to deliver AEB activity in our locality. It is hoped that we can develop informal agreements with the ITPs to influence their delivery in our region to ensure it is responding to local and identified need.
- 2.3 Annual assessments of the financial health of colleges were published on 15th November, with two major West Yorkshire colleges affected by Notices to Improve.
- 2.4 Good progress is being made in completing the Skills Capital programme reported elsewhere on this agenda. New or refurbished facilities have now been completed and opened in the following colleges:
- Shipley College – refurbishment of two listed buildings at Saltaire
 - Kirklees College – new build of Process Manufacturing Centre
 - Selby College – extension of Aspiration Building
 - Wakefield College – new build of Advanced Skills & Innovation Centre
 - Leeds City College – refurbishment of Printworks III

- Bradford College- dental equipment for Advanced Technology Centre (Nordec)
- Calderdale College – refurbishment of Elsie Whitely main campus building.

2.5 Construction is now underway on the three remaining capital projects at:

- Leeds College of Building – Hunslet Road Phase II- new build Flexible Construction Innovation Centre
- Kirklees College – Dewsbury Learning Quarter – refurbishment of Pioneer House & new build campus
- Leeds City College – Quarry Hill campus – new build of health & creative/digital campus.

2.6 The Chair of the CA has written to the Secretary of State for Education inviting her to visit LCR to see the excellent use made of the Skills Capital investment to date and to open dialogue regarding future devolution opportunities within the skills agenda.

3 More and Better Apprenticeships

3.1 The Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE) programme was devolved to WYCA in summer 2015 with the aim of encouraging more businesses to offer apprenticeships. The devolution of the grant allowed us to set criteria that responded to our local priorities. Registration for the grant is now closed but processing of final claims will be ongoing until March 2018. To date the grant has supported:

- 3,057 SMEs to offer apprenticeships
- Provided 3,504 grants with a value of £5,982,400

3.2 Throughout the autumn, a telemarketing and support campaign will be running aimed at companies who have paid the apprenticeship levy. This will be run by the LEP Skills Service, who will undertake skills diagnostics with businesses and support with skills planning to ensure that businesses understand how to maximise their levy contribution. National reports and local feedback suggest that Levy companies across LCR are either not planning to utilise their contributions or are deferring any plans/decision at this time.

4 Raising the Bar on High Level Skills

4.1 The LEP have are providing support to colleagues within the HE and FE sector to enable them to offer a wide range of higher and degree apprenticeships. A recent bid for development funding will see the introduction of a range of degree apprenticeships in a wide range of occupational areas from September 2018, offering 340 apprenticeship opportunities.

4.2 The West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges are developing a partnership to submit an Expression of Interest to develop an Institute for Technology (IoT) aimed at developing digital skills provision. IoTs will have employers at the heart of their leadership and governance, and in the design and delivery of curriculum. IoTs will

strengthen and grow provision to fill gaps in the market; they will focus particularly on technical skills at levels 4 and 5 but will extend to degree level and above (level 6+) to strengthen routes into higher levels of technical education, as well as directly into employment. LEP endorsement will be required for the eventual bidding process.

5 Great Education Connected to Businesses

- 5.1 A team of 7 Enterprise coordinators have so far recruited 129 business volunteers to work with 136 schools at a strategic level. There are 160 secondary schools within the region and the ambition is that they will all be engaged in the programme by the end of the academic year. Last academic year, the Enterprise Adviser programme created over 21,000 new employer encounters for young people in our region.
- 5.2 The LEP has received funding from the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) to increase activity in the Opportunity Area (OA) of Bradford. A key aim of Opportunity Areas is to build young people's knowledge and skills and provide them with the best advice and opportunities, including working with organisations such as the Careers and Enterprise Company, the Confederation of British Industry, the Federation of Small Businesses, and the National Citizen Service.

6 Building Workforce Skills and Attracting Talent

- 6.1 A policy statement for "good growth" in procurement was endorsed in 2016 by the LEP Board and the Combined Authority. Following this, Employment and Skills clauses were 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.
- 6.2 10% of the overall marks were allocated to good growth and suppliers gave details on how they would embed the following agenda's into their work:
 - 1) Employment
 - 2) Apprenticeships and traineeships
 - 3) Skills development
 - 4) Engagement with schools, colleges and universities
 - 5) Opportunities for SME's and local suppliers
 - 6) Environmental and carbon reduction benefits
- 6.3 The WYCA procurement team is working to continue to embed the Good Growth policy into future procurement exercises.
- 6.4 Working with colleagues from DWP and 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.

- 6.5 To support the promotion of digital careers in the region a Business Development and Marketing Officer (Digital Skills) has been recruited. This role will launch a campaign aimed at promoting the opportunities in the digital sector within LCR and will secure employer sponsorship to continue and further develop the campaign.
- 6.6 Funding has been secured from Government to develop a Leeds City Region HS2 Skills and Supply Chain Growth Strategy. Arup are working with colleagues at Leeds City Council and have consulted with partners on the content of the strategy, which will include a range of suggested interventions to support local people to engage with HS2 and data relating to skills requirements. The draft strategy will be submitted to Government in November 2017.
- 6.7 The Skills Service closed for new grant applications on 31 March 2017. All training was completed by 30 June 2017 and final payments to businesses were processed by 29 September 2017.
- 6.8 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. It is envisaged that this contract will commence in January 2018. 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.
- 6.9 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.
- 6.10 Government has made manifesto commitments to develop a Career Learning initiative and to establish Skills Advisory Panels to advise it on local employer intelligence relating to Brexit and vocational education implications. It has also launched a Flexible Learning Fund to support the Further Education sector in delivery learning to adults that is both flexible and easy to access. Staff from WYCA will be working with DWP, WYCC and providers to facilitate submissions to the fund to ensure they are responding to future Universal Credit client needs.

7 Employability, Accessing Jobs and Realising Potential

- 7.1 The final phase of the Headstart project is currently in planning stage and will focus on piloting a social prescribing model in partnership with York City Council and York based GP surgeries. The pilot will work to encourage clinical staff to prescribe non-clinical services (for example employment support) and will be working in a very

targeted way to develop research data. This pilot will link closely to the inclusive growth work of the Combined Authority.

- 7.2 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.

8 Recommendations

- 8.1 That the LEP Board notes the work of the Employment and Skills Panel.