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**Report to:** Employment and Skills Panel

**Date:** 2 March 2018

**Subject:** **Building Workforce Skills and Attracting Talent**

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## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 To present for the consideration of the Panel, a proposed approach to monitoring trends in local labour demand, focusing specifically on the City Regions three priority skill areas of construction / infrastructure, engineering and manufacturing and digital.

## **2 Information**

### **Advisory Group Report**

- 2.1 The group met on 2 February. Verbal updates were provided on the following activity:
  - Apprenticeship support to businesses
  - Development of higher level skills provision
  - Sector activity
  - Labour market information
- 2.2 The group discussed the opportunities available for businesses regarding degree level apprenticeships and how local opportunities can be increased. The Apprenticeship Ambassador network and the Career Learning Pilot, which the Combined Authority is taking part in, were also considered.
- 2.3 Discussion also took place about the difficulty some businesses have in recruiting suitably skilled people for higher level jobs and how to get people to

the right level for these jobs, particularly with the experience requirements of many of them.

### **Labour Market Information**

- 2.4 The Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Combined Authority produce a labour market analysis to an annual cycle, with an initial overview provided to Employment and Skills Panel in June and a full report published in September. The purpose of the analysis is to inform strategy and policy development within the LEP / Combined Authority but also to contribute to a better informed local labour market by, for example, helping individuals to make appropriate, well-informed choices about future learning and career opportunities and to assist education and training providers to develop curriculum strategies that reflect the needs of the labour market.
- 2.5 Much of the data that inform the report are produced on an annual basis or less frequently. However, there is demand for more timely analysis that will enable us to assess aspects of local trends on a more regular basis. This is of particular importance as we enter a likely period of economic volatility during which labour market conditions could change abruptly. Moreover, priority areas are dynamic and fast-moving, in particular the digital field.
- 2.6 The availability of “real-time” data relating to online job postings offers the opportunity to review on a continuous basis detailed trends in the level and profile of demand in the local labour market. The attached slide pack in **Appendix 1** provides an example of the kind of analysis that could be provided to the panel on a quarterly frequency.
- 2.7 This kind of analysis can be used in a range of contexts – for example, to inform the direction of careers campaigns or to inform dialogue with education and training providers. It is likely to be an important evidence source for the emerging Skills Advisory Panel.

### **Career Learning Pilot**

- 2.8 The Leeds City Region is one of five areas that have been selected by DfE to be part of the Career Learning Pilot, the outcomes of which will be used to design the national retraining scheme. The pilot will be two stage testing: what engagement activity will encourage adults currently in employment or re-entering employment who have a level 2 qualification, to consider their next career/learning steps at level 3 and above; and what level of funding subsidy (25%, 75% or 100%) will encourage individuals to pay for their learning. The subsidy will be passed by the ESFA directly to local providers.
- 2.9 As part of the pilot, a list has been provided from central government of the courses that will be eligible for a subsidy as part of the programme of which 15-25 can be chosen for the area. Eligible qualifications must be available for funding through Advanced Learner Loans, delivered by a provider who has the facility to administer these loans and must take less than 12 months to complete.

- 2.10 For the pilot in Leeds City Region qualifications proposed link to key growth sectors (manufacturing and engineering, construction and digital), along with leadership and management qualifications and progression opportunities for health and social care. For example;
- Level 3 diploma in engineering technology
  - Level 5 diploma in management and leadership
  - Level 3 diploma computer aided design
  - Level 3 certificate in web design and development
- 2.11 Officers are working to develop a costed delivery plan for the pilot, which will be submitted to DfE at the end of February. It is envisaged that outreach work will commence in March 2018 and subsidised training in September 2018.

### **Sector Activity**

- 2.12 To support the promotion of digital careers in the region the Combined Authority has held workshops across the region to discuss how opportunities within the sector could be promoted to encourage individuals to apply for roles and re-train where appropriate. The findings of these workshops will be used to shape a campaign aimed at promoting the opportunities in the digital sector within the City Region. The campaign will be launched in spring 2018.
- 2.13 A full application has been submitted by the Combined Authority for the ESIF Career Development Fund to develop “[re]boot”, a scheme to support individuals to retrain and move into digital and engineering careers. Assessment by the managing authority is awaited and following this delivery is expected to begin in spring/summer 2018.
- 2.14 The West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges has now received a contract from the managing authority to deliver the continuation of the Skills Service, which will be funded through European Social Fund until 2020. It is envisaged that delivery will commence in May 2018. In the interim, the Skills Service Advisors have been maintaining the Skills Service offer 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 Financial Implications**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

## **4 Legal Implications**

- 4.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

## **5 Staffing Implications**

- 5.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

## **6 External Consultees**

6.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

## **7 Recommendations**

7.1 Panel members are asked to:

- consider and provide feedback on the usefulness of the attached analysis in terms of content and format and highlight any further information requirements that could be addressed through this data source;
- comment on the qualifications proposed to be delivered through the Career Learning Pilot; and
- note and comment on the progress against the building workforce skills and attracting talent priorities.

## **8 Background Documents**

None.

## **9 Appendices**

**Appendix 1** - Labour Market Update slide pack