

EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PANEL

**MEETING TO BE HELD AT 2.00 PM ON WEDNESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER
2020**

**DUE TO COVID-19, THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD REMOTELY AND
WILL BE LIVESTREAMED HERE:**

**[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/CHANNEL/UCAZJNSGPQZZT41VIBN2
ZK9A/LIVE](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAZJNSGPQZZT41VIBN2ZK9A/live) (COPY AND PASTE THE LINK IN YOUR BROWSER)**

A G E N D A

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**
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for information only

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Signed:

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Managing Director
West Yorkshire Combined Authority



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PANEL HELD REMOTELY ON MONDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER 2020

Present:

Rashik Parmar MBE (Chair)	IBM
Martin Booth	Witt UK Gp
Mark Cowgill	Exa Networks
Richard Mason	Burberry
Liz Needleman	BT
Councillor Darren Byford	Wakefield Council
Councillor Ian Cuthbertson	City of York Council
Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Council
Councillor Patrick Mulligan	North Yorkshire County Council
Sam Alexander (Advisory Representative)	Your Consortium Ltd
Nav Chohan (Advisory Representative)	Leeds City Region Skills Network
Professor Margaret House (Advisory Representative)	Leeds Universities
Alex Miles (Advisory Representative)	West Yorkshire Learning Providers
Dr Peter O'Brien (Advisory Representative)	Yorkshire Universities

In attendance:

Brian Archer	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Peter Glover	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Catherine Lunn	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Sonya Midgley	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Mark Temple	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Ian Smyth	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Janette Woodcock	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Sophie Collins	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

40. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Imran Khan, Councillor Peter McBride, Councillor Jonathan Pryor, Councillor Adam Williamson, Simon Barratt, Colin Booth, David Cooper, Orlagh Hunt, Claire Paxman, Glynn Robinson, Amanda Stainton, Merran McRae.

41. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests

There were no items of disclosable pecuniary interests.

42. Exempt Information - Exclusion of the press and public

There were no items on the agenda requiring the exclusion of the press and public.

43. Minutes of the meeting of the Employment and Skills Panel held on 19 June 2020

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2020 be agreed and signed by the Chair.

44. Chair's update

The final Skills Commission meeting has now been held and the Chair invited Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe to give an update to the Panel.

The Chair also said that the Strategic Economic Framework and Economic Recovery Plans were endorsed at the meeting of the LEP Board held on 3 September 2020.

45. Employment and Skills Programmes

The Panel considered a report to update on the progress of delivery of LEP-led employment and skills programmes in the Leeds City region and how they have been adapted to support COVID-19.

COVID-19 has had a major impact on delivery and performance of the original programme target group of the Employment Hub programme in the last quarter. However, the Hubs have seen an increase in enquiries from people anticipating redundancy and leaving education. The main target group for the programme, those further away from the labour market pre COVID-19 are requiring a lot of hand holding and support and are not ready to move onto their next steps of further learning or employment.

The Panel was asked to note and comment on the progress of delivery of employment and skills programmes in the Leeds City Region.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (i) That the feedback and comments from the Panel be noted.

46. Labour Market Analysis

The Panel considered a report on the LEP's labour market intelligence programme for 2020/21. The purpose of the labour market intelligence work is to provide robust analysis of the City Region's labour market and skills needs to influence planning and action. The publishing of the report will be delayed to November this year to enable the report to reflect on the impact of COVID-19. As usual dissemination workshops will be held for stakeholders, but these will, this year, be in December.

A verbal presentation of interim key messages from the analysis was provided to the Panel at the meeting to inform discussion.

Members discussed the report and thanked officers and said the presentation had been excellent and informative.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report and verbal presentation be noted.
- (ii) That the Panel note the arrangements for the annual labour market analysis and the recommendation for publication to be at the end of November 2020 be supported.
- (iii) That the consideration and discussion of key messages from the presentation given to the Panel at the meeting be noted.

47. Economic Recovery and Future Employment and Skills Policy

The Panel considered a report to update on policy items relating to employment and skills in Leeds City Region and was asked to note the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and arrangements of the Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) function of the Panel.

The Panel welcomed Mark Temple who gave an introduction to the work of the Digital Skills Partnership and answered questions from the Panel.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and arrangements of the Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) be noted.

48. AEB

The Panel considered a report to update on plans for the Combined Authority to receive devolved powers to manage the devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) from 2021 and was asked to note the contents of the report.

Resolved: That the contents of the report be noted.

49. Climate

The Panel considered a report to update on Green Skills / Carbon Pathway work which was provided to start a conversation on its roles in tackling the Climate Emergency. The Panel was asked to consider the actions in the refreshed Employment and Skills plan that can address the Climate Emergency and to:

- Note the importance of Emissions Pathways study in determining how the City Region can meet its net zero carbon ambitions.
- Identify areas that it would like to explore in the next six months, including the refresh of the Employment and Skills Plan.
- Identify any net zero carbon skills related to opportunities that are important to them and to identify any known current gaps, especially in training provisions.
- To nominate a Tackling the Climate Emergency Champion to support this work.

The Panel discussed the contents of the report and said it had been very informative and the Employment and Skills Panel had a large part to play and would discuss further what needs to be done to take this forward.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That members form a small group to build a response to how the Employment and Skills Panel can be involved in tackling the climate emergency and bring back to the next meeting on 25 November 2020.

Report to:	Employment and Skills Panel
Date:	25 November 2020
Subject:	Employment and Skills Programmes

Director:	Brian Archer, Director of Economic Services
Author:	Catherine Lunn, Interim Head of Employment and Skills

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Panel on the progress of delivery of LEP-led employment and skills programmes in the Leeds City Region and how they have been adapted to support COVID-19.

2 Information

Apprenticeships and Employment

- 2.1 COVID-19 has had a major impact on delivery and performance of the Leeds City Region **Employment Hub** programme. Despite an increase in enquiries from people facing redundancy or leaving education (the main target group for the programme) we still anticipate a major increase following the end of the furlough scheme. However, those individuals furthest from the labour market pre COVID-19 are requiring a lot of specialist support on a range of issues and are not ready to move onto their next steps of further learning or employment which is impacting on the progression of individuals on the programme. Business engagement to identify employment or apprenticeship opportunities has also been impacted. A reconciliation of achievements has been undertaken which reflects that achievements at the time of writing (October 2020) in year two of delivery include:
- Engaged 3438 15-24 year-old participants against a profile of 3565 (96%). Of these:
 - 1074 participants, against a profile of 420 (256%), were recorded as being from ethnic minorities
 - 734 participants declared they had disabilities against a target of 341 (215%)
 - 1093 participants are recorded as having no basic skills qualifications against a target of 786 (139%)

- Of the participants starting the programme 534 have been supported with finding education/ training, employment or self-employment against a target of 1339 (40%), with a majority being supported into training
- 2085 businesses engaged against a target of 3354 (62%).

As reported previously, part of the Combined Authority response to COVID-19 we repurposed the Employment Hub to provide a 'one stop shop' for job seekers of any age and employers recruiting or making redundancies. At the time of writing we had supported 476 individuals and 67 businesses, which were referred to our Employment Hub programme delivery partners for support. The number of individuals seeking support has started to increase, particularly around the 25-39 age range. We expect these figures to continue to rise as the furlough scheme comes to an end and support and progression will be dependent on the implementation/situation in relation to any additional lockdown measures.

- 2.2 Interest in the **Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Service** from pledging organisations continues to grow. We are currently in negotiation with over a dozen organisations seeking to pledge funds, which if agreed will move us towards our £3m target. Having made our first match with pledges from Portakabin, a new marketing campaign has been released to showcase the contribution to the economic recovery by pledging companies and the role apprenticeships can play in facilitating our skills and employment priorities. Levy transfers mean that apprenticeship training fees will be covered 100% by the transferring company. However, we have had limited interest as yet from businesses offering new apprenticeship opportunities or their training providers. This probably reflects the position that many businesses have taken to postpone taking on apprentices until spring 2021.

The Levy Transfer Services webpages provide access to the registration form for training providers to request support on behalf of businesses.

www.the-lep.com/business-support/skills-and-training/apprenticeship-levy-support/

- 2.3 In the Chancellors summer announcements which provided a programme of support for young people affected by COVID-19, the DWP **Kickstart** programme was announced offering up to £6,000 to businesses offering job opportunities and support from November 2020. The Combined Authority have worked with local authority partners over the summer to ascertain roles in supporting the programme. Most West Yorkshire local authorities will become 'Gateway' agents supporting businesses through the Kickstart process. The Combined Authority launched a marketing campaign in September to raise awareness of the offer with support to refer enquiries to the local Gateway.

School Partnerships

- 2.4 The **Enterprise Adviser Network** is operating virtually. The Enterprise Coordinators are completing action plans with schools and colleges to look at alternative ways to achieving career outcomes. Our first regional workshop is

scheduled for next month to help enable new strategies and sharing of good practice across the region.

- 2.5 In **Bradford Opportunity Area** the focus is on co-developing virtual encounters and work experience with the support of strategic employer partners (“Cornerstones”) and working with partners to support schools virtually. We are also embedding the offer across the region to widen the reach of current employers to access more schools and colleges.
- 2.6 Linked to the extension agreed, **Raising Aspirations** (Business Rates Pool funded) grants for schools, projects are on track and positive stories from schools coming through. The first videos produced by Joseph Norten will be embedded throughout school to inspire their pupils.
- 2.7 The **Kirklees Careers Hub** has delivered a number of events via virtual platforms and due to launch the new Parental Resources in November. The aim of these is to inform, educate and empower those that influence young people when at the crucial decision-making age for pathways beyond year 11. More information on this in the resources section below. **The Special Educational Needs and Disability Careers Hub** (SEND) have been working on the alumni resource with the University of Derby. The role out and training for schools and colleges starts next month.

Careers

- 2.8 The Combined Authority’s adult re-training programme, **[re]boot**, is part-funded through European Social Fund (ESF) and gives adults the chance to upskill, gain new skills/qualifications and improve their employment options particularly within key regional sectors, focused on construction, digital, manufacturing & engineering and the fast growing creative sector. Since its launch in November 2019, the programme has supported over 300 individuals to upskill.

To ensure all contractual targets are met we have appointed an additional independent training provider, Go Train who are new to the Leeds City Region. They will deliver additional training courses. This provision runs alongside current delivery and will commence in November 2020 accompanied by a marketing / awareness raising campaign to ensure the requisite number of learners are recruited.

Hands-on and practical training courses were suspended during the tight lockdown restrictions. Through risk assessments and the implementation of social distancing measures, some of these have resumed albeit with smaller learner numbers. A course to upskill mechanics in hybrid vehicle technology will be delivered socially distanced.

The programme will continue to market courses to those who have been made redundant through the pandemic. Additional marketing and awareness raising campaigns are planned and will be ramped up started in November to align with the demise of the employment support schemes.

The [re]boot career changers content continues to be the most viewed section on the FutureGoals website. In the last month, the [re]boot page received 1,361-page views and 1,064 unique page views.

- 2.9 Following the release of a DfE tender to bid for a **Digital Bootcamp pilot** (up to £4million to cover 3 geographical areas nationally) to deliver a series of adult digital and / or technical skills bootcamps across the Leeds City Region between November 2020 – March 2021 the Employment and Skills Team await the outcome of their application. Digital Bootcamps formed part of the Prime Ministers Lifetime Skills Guarantee announcements in September 2020.

Insights from this initiative will help inform the development of the £2.5b National Skills Fund and will also support in achieving the aims set out in our COVID-19 recovery plan.

The bootcamps will be employer-led training initiatives that test delivery models in a small, manageable way and will develop innovative adult training and re-training courses that link directly to local digital and technical skills needs.

Building on the success of attracting individuals to the [re]boot programme and supporting the local economy to address recovery after COVID-19 it is proposed that the Combined Authority would act as the lead partner.

The Bootcamp will support individuals from disadvantaged groups such as BAME, women and those unemployed due to COVID-19 or those looking to upskill. It would create an opportunity to develop innovative and responsive adult training that addresses the needs of unemployed adults and those who need additional skills to progress in their current employment.

Delivery of provision will be designed in collaboration with employers and will guarantee interviews and job outcomes for participants. Provision will not be bound by existing accreditation and will have the flexibility to meet needs of employers directly. Currently, under existing adult skills programmes training is restricted by Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) through ESF delivery and prevents employers, colleges and private training providers from developing courses that meet the needs of employers.

- 2.10 To support the transition of young people during the pandemic, a targeted marketing campaign to promote the [FutureGoals education and training](#) page to young people (at risk of becoming NEET), parents and stakeholders from August – October which resulted in 2,559 interactions with the website. Local authorities, partners and education providers have been actively sharing collateral on their own social media channels.

As part of the campaign the **FutureGoals** website has added an additional function which allows individuals to register their interest for additional careers support. Contact forms are shared with Local Authorities who are providing support to individuals through the ESF funded Employment Hub programme.

[FutureGoals Remote](#) launched between May and July in response to COVID-19. The resources are a series of brand new free interactive activities to help young people develop employability skills from home during the lockdown. Since the start of the academic year, the FutureGoals Remote webpage has continued have an acerated number of downloads and has had 2,314 visits since launch and 987 downloads of the resources.

- 2.11 A series of **virtual work experience** videos and resources are in development to support employers and education providers offer experiences of the workplace to students which have become increasingly difficult for schools to undertake. Work experience has never been so important, particularly for those students who don't have positive role models around to learn about and understand the world of work.

The virtual work experiences will include virtual tours within key sectors and a 2-way interaction with employers and young people.

The first of 5 videos/resources will be launched in November with a full launch of the resources in Careers Week in March 2021. They will be shared around the network of 180 schools and colleges and will be available on the FutureGoals website.

- 2.12 A series of new **parental engagement resources** have been developed to help support parents and carers to have constructive conversations with their children about their child's future career options.

As part of the Kirklees Careers Hub, the Parental Engagement; removing barriers to social mobility working group identified the need to support parents and carers to have greater awareness of the different education and career options available to their children, as well as improve parents and carers low confidence in engaging effectively with their children about their opportunities, choices and aspirations.

The resources will be available from November 2020 and will be launched across all 180 schools and colleges in the EAN network as well as a further targeted digital marketing campaign to reach parents directly. The Parental Engagement resources will be available on FutureGoals.co.uk

- 2.13 An insight lead review of the **FutureGoals website** is currently taking place with the aim to improve the sitemap and user journey, ensuring each of our key audiences can easily and simply access the relevant careers inspiration and support for them. This work will continue until the end of the year will include reviewing the FutureGoals website sitemap and infrastructure architecture.

Delivery Agreements

- 2.14 A **Delivery Agreement** report highlighting assessment and analysis of 2018/19 available data on our FE College performance in line with the agreed benchmarks in the original Delivery Agreements will be published early in 2021.

Skills for Business

2.15 The **Skills for Growth** programme, supporting businesses to engage with the full breadth of the education system, has recruited and trained a team of eight Business Partnership Advisers, a Team Leader and a Contracts Officer. The team started in September and are working closely with the local authorities' business facing teams to engage a wide range of businesses to connect with our education offer. Go Higher West Yorkshire (GHWY) are supporting links with universities and collating the business support available from HE. Reporting of business engagement will start in December following the Programme Inception Visit from DWP.

2.16 The Local Digital Skills Partnership Manager and Skills for Growth team are working with the West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges (WYCC) to engage businesses with local colleges to develop courses. The Let's Talk Real Skills Programme is piloting new courses aligned to business demand.

3. Clean Growth Implications

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

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

6. Staffing Implications

6.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

7. External Consultees

7.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

8. Recommendations

8.1 The Panel is asked to note and comment on the progress of delivery of employment and skills programmes in the Leeds City Region.

9. Background Documents

None.

10. Appendices

None.

Report to: Employment and Skills Panel

Date: 25 November 2020

Subject: **Local Digital Skills Partnership and Adult Education Budget Update**

Director(s): Alan Reiss, Director Policy, Strategy and Communications

Author(s): Mark Temple & Craig Moffatt

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To update Panel on activity of the Local Digital Skills Partnership (LDSP) and formation of Board and associated governance, and to seek feedback on how best to engage with the Panel to ensure alignment of priorities.
- 1.2 To update Panel on progress with devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) preparation and next steps.

2 Information

Local Digital Skills Partnership (LDSP)

- 2.1 In the Digital Strategy, published in March 2017, the Government set out its commitment to improving the digital skills capabilities of individuals and organisations across England. It was recognised that a partnership approach was required to drive up digital skills. As a result, the Government announced the formation of a National Digital Skills Partnership bringing together public, private and charity sectors and key regional stakeholders to develop a more collaborative, coordinated, and innovative approach to meeting the digital skills challenge.
- 2.2 The West Yorkshire Combined Authority is the seventh area to secure funding for an LDSP through its ambitious devolution plans. This partnership will bring together the region's leading employers, SMEs, digital entrepreneurs, representatives from the Combined Authority and LEP, DCMS, as well as universities, colleges and other training providers.
- 2.3 This public-private partnership will help identify what digital skills provision is needed across the West Yorkshire and, importantly, encourage partners to work together strategically to address these and emerging needs, and to

attract and retain investment and talent in the region. The aim is to deliver maximum, sustainable impact at scale and to ensure that local people form the talent pool needed for local business, with key themes focused on:

- To inspire the growth of digital skills across West Yorkshire by reducing the digital divide with opportunities for all
- To transform digital skills through adoption across SMEs of West Yorkshire to grow the local economy and boost productivity
- To inspire and influence the workforce of the future by collaborating with education providers and employers to ensure the future generation have the skills to meet the needs of the economy

2.4 The challenge was significant prior to the current pandemic but has been amplified as a result. We now have the opportunity to develop sustainable programmes to enhance digital skills growth, support the recovery, and contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive economy. The following statistics highlight both the challenge and the opportunity:

- 11.9m people in the UK do not have basic digital skills
- 1.9m households in the UK are still without connectivity and therefore increasing isolation
- 22% of adults within West Yorkshire do not have Essential Digital Skills for Life
- Only 42% of adults in West Yorkshire have Essential Digital Skills for Work
- £84.5bn could be added to the UK economy if all SMEs attained Basic Digital Skills
- SMEs with only basic digital skills benefitted by an additional £103k in turnover in 2018, this had increased to £262k in 2019
- 51% of businesses have pivoted online through the pandemic to engage with customers more
- 46% of UK businesses have increased automation, post lock-down. However, only 46% expect their use of digital to increase in the future.

2.5 The West Yorkshire LDSP was formally launched on 15 October 2020, with over 90 attendees and including an introduction from the Minister for Digital & Culture Caroline Dineage, and keynote speeches from Councillor Hinchcliffe, Kersten England, Andrew Wright, Amir Hussain and contributions from Lloyds Banking Group, BT, and Good Things Foundation.

2.6 Specific details of interventions, key priority actions and success factors will evolve following the convening of initial board meeting on 23 November, with a detailed plan and success factors to be developed for review.

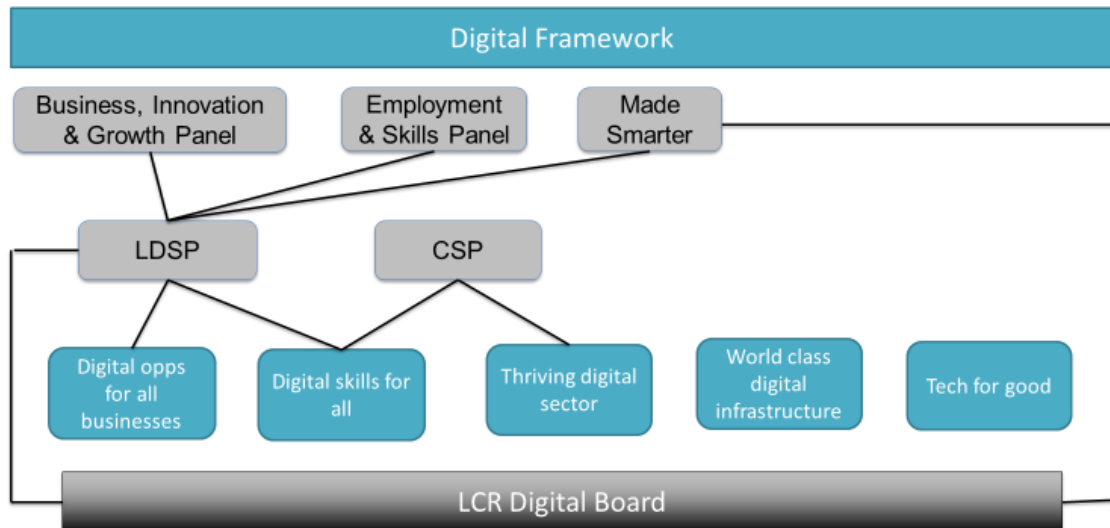
Adult Education Budget (AEB)

- 2.7 The work to prepare for AEB devolution has progressed rapidly with the following key milestones taking place:
- The AEB Strategy was approved by the Combined Authority on 4 September
 - A provider briefing event was held on 17 September with over 113 attendees. 80% of these were independent training providers with the remaining attendees, from colleges and local authorities
 - Launch of a dedicated [AEB website](#) which hosts the AEB Strategy, a film on the provider event and links to procurement activity
 - Stage 1 of the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for contracts of services went live on 28 October.
- 2.8 Achieving readiness by 1 August 2021 is contingent upon the projected timescales agreed with DfE being met. Key workstreams to deliver this continue at a pace, and include legal and procurement preparation (drafting funding rules, and contracts and agreements), consultation and policy work (to ensure that the approach is fully consulted on and that this consultation is accessible); and systems development (ensuring that the ICT, Finance and Data arrangements are in place to support contracting and payments).
- 2.9 Next steps are:
- Approval by the Combined Authority of the AEB governance process (November 2020)
 - Commissioning for 2021/22 provision (October 2020 – March 2021)
 - West Yorkshire allocation confirmed by DfE (March 2021)
 - Delivery and management begin (1 August 2021)

3 Governance & Board Formation

LDSP Governance

- 3.1 The LDSP will align with Employment and Skills Panel, Business Innovation & Growth Panel and Made Smarter Board, with close alignment to Consortium of Skills Partnership and Digital Board.



Board Formation

- 3.2 Development of a formal LDSP Board is the next stage in the evolution towards tangible action to build upon the great local work ongoing within West Yorkshire.
- 3.3 The Board will be formed of both large businesses (national and regional), SMEs, sector experts, skill providers, educators, third sector, as well as Combined Authority engagement in alignment with wider strategic aims. The Board will be under-pinned by additional partnerships engaged to support “task and finish” activity to deliver specific programs of intervention and support.
- 3.4 LDSP Board will meet bi-monthly initially, to develop priority focus areas (skills gaps), methodology of delivery and evaluation as well as measures of success. Priority focus areas or skills gaps will be developed by building regional insight to create evidence of need and opportunity of impact, with a more specific and detailed actions formulating beyond initial Board meeting in November

AEB Governance

- 3.5 AEB governance will be strategically led by the Combined Authority, supported by the Employment and Skills Panel, while business as usual decision making can be more efficiently dealt with at officer level. The proposed governance structure will be presented to the Combined Authority at the end of November.
- 3.6 This decision-making model reflects the role of the Combined Authority as the accountable body for AEB, and it is consistent with the AEB Strategy which endorses a collaborative approach to delivery across the region, including establishing local ‘AEB Performance and Partnership Groups’ to closely scrutinise area delivery and performance against need and demand.

3.7 The governance structure and decision-making process has been developed in close consultation with the development of the Assurance Framework to ensure that the proposals align with broader Combined Authority governance, MCA objectives and requirements.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no immediate financial implications directly arising from this report.

5 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no immediate legal implications directly arising from this report.

6 Staffing Implications

6.1 There are no immediate staffing implications directly arising from this report.

7 External Consultees

7.1 No external consultations have been undertaken, specifically on this report.

8 Recommendations

8.1 The Panel provides feedback on the progress to date, and how best to align engagement of LDSP with the Employment & Skills Panel in the future.

8.2 The Panel is asked to note and comment on the progress to date and next steps in preparation for AEB devolution.

9 Background Documents

None

10 Appendices

None

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Report to: Employment and Skills Panel

Date: 25 November 2020

Subject: **Employment and Skills Policy Updates**

Director: Alan Reiss, Director of Policy, Strategy and Communications

Author: Sonya Midgley, Policy Manager

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To update the Panel on national policy changes in relation to Combined Authority and LEP policy and strategy.
- 1.2 The Panel is asked to comment on the implications for a local approach of the national policy changes and Wave 2 Institutes of Technology (IoT).
- 1.3 The Panel is asked to agree the forward workplan for the Employment and Skills Plan and note the next steps for the local skills plan.

2 Information

- 2.1 On 29 September, the Prime Minister's Exeter College speech made a number of announcements about national skills policy that follow from the 2019 Conservative election manifesto. This was followed by a statement from the Secretary of State for Education on 1 October that headlined further national policy reforms, with a focus on technical skills and the creation of £2.5bn National Skills Fund. The key areas are detailed below.

National Skills Fund

- 2.2 The £2.5bn **National Skills Fund** will remain a national programme and will replace the National Retraining Fund. The funding will be used for:
 - Bootcamps – Leeds City Region were asked to submit a bid through a competitive process
 - Fully funded level 3 qualifications

FE Reform White Paper

- 2.3 A white paper is expected this year and is expected to set out the Government's direction for a stronger role for colleges at the heart of their local communities, supporting economic development with a focus on technical education at levels 4 and 5.
- 2.4 There is currently no further detail on how this will operate with a joined up local employment and skills system, and levels of investment.

Institutes of Technology (IoT)

- 2.5 In September 2019 up to £120m additional funding was announced for a second wave of IoTs in areas currently without one.
- 2.6 An IoT is a new type of employer-led institution that brings together further education provision with university partners and employers. IoTs specialise in delivering higher technical education in STEM subjects that will drive growth in key sectors such as advanced manufacturing, construction and digital.
- 2.7 IoTs are a key part of the government's technical education reform to provide a high-quality technical education pathway for young people, and people of all ages looking to upskill or retrain. They have been created to meet the following objectives:
- Significantly increase the number of learners with higher technical skills which are crucial to national, regional and local productivity growth;
 - Attract a wide range of learners to maximise the social as well as the economic impact of this new type of institution; and
 - Improve the occupational competency of learners to meet the needs of employers now and in the future.
- 2.8 Applications for an IoT should cover a LEP area and must include:
- 2 named FE core partners, with
 - 1 named HE core partner
 - 3 name employers core partners relevant to the IoT's specialism
- 2.9 The initial deadline for submission of Wave 2 applications is 14 December 2020, with successful applicants announced in Summer 2021. Delivery will commence in the academic year 2021/22.
- 2.10 The panel will be given a verbal update on whether bids from City Region partners are likely to proceed, and asked to consider how IoTs could support the employment and skills priorities of the Region both now and in the future.

Further national skills policy announcements

- 2.11 Several further skills and employment policy announcements have been made in recent months, particularly in response to COVID-19, including:

- **FE Transformation Fund:** £1.5bn capital funding to support the conditions, improvement and upgrading of FE estate
 - **National review of Levy Transfer approach/rulings** to include increased funding for SMEs and removal of funding for new Level 8 Apprenticeships
 - £111m for expansion of **traineeships**
 - £32m for **recruiting extra career advisers**
 - £17m for **Sector Based Work Academies** in England
 - £101m for **school and college leavers** to take high value level 2 and 3 courses
 - **Youth Hubs:** 33 hubs have been announced nationally. While West Yorkshire didn't get a formal Hub, our Local Authorities are working closely with DWP to replicate the offer based around the LEP Employment Hub programme
 - **Kickstart:** £2bn to support employers to offer 5-6 month work placement to unemployed young people (aged 16-24) on Universal Credit
- 2.12 A Government consultation on the review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below in England has been launched. This is a large, complex review seeking to identify which qualifications should sit alongside T Levels and A levels¹. The consultation will close on 15 January 2021². Alongside this, there is a call for evidence on the level 2 qualifications to identify what works well and needs to be improved for post-16 learners. The call for evidence is open until 31 January 2021.³
- 2.13 The details and implications for regional delivery of these national policies are still emerging, with the role of Combined Authorities and SAPs remaining unclear. The SAP role is to identify local challenges and opportunities and help local areas plan for what is needed for skills, and the lack of devolution in the current proposals presents significant challenges in planning and delivering for local need, including alignment with the planning for devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) in West Yorkshire from next year.

Green Skills Partnership

- 2.14 On 9 November, a 'Green Skills Partnership' roundtable meeting was held with members of this Panel, employers and training provider representatives.
- 2.15 The purpose of the roundtable was to progress discussions at the last Panel meeting on the actions that are required to identify the skills needs and gaps in provision to address our climate change priorities in relation to skills.
- 2.16 A verbal update can be provided at the meeting.

¹ <https://consult.education.gov.uk/post-16-qualifications-review-team/review-of-post-16-qualifications-at-level-3/>

² Responses are encouraged and should be directed to post16.level3andbelowreview@education.gov.uk.

³ <https://consult.education.gov.uk/post-16-qualifications-review-team/level-2-and-below-call-for-evidence/>

Employment and Skills Plan

- 2.17 At its March meeting, the Panel agreed to refresh the Employment and Skills Plan, which is due to expire at the end of this year. It was agreed that the priorities for the Employment and Skills Plan will be developed with key partners and stakeholders through a programme of consultation and engagement and would be informed by key strategies and policies such as the LEP's annual labour market report.
- 2.18 At its meeting in September, the Panel considered emerging priorities from the consultation and based on the available evidence and performance of the local labour market.
- 2.19 With the ongoing economic crisis due to COVID-19 and the anticipated national policy reforms outlined above, the refreshed employment and skills plan priorities will also take into account these national changes and implications for the local labour market of the current economic upheaval.
- 2.20 The next steps to develop the emerging priorities, prior to the plan being published in 2021, are:
- Continued engagement with partners and stakeholders on the emerging priorities, particularly where gaps were identified through consultation, for example 'older workers'.
 - A joint workshop with the Business, Innovation and Growth Panel will be arranged for members to explore priorities. This will follow publication of FE reform white paper and therefore date to be advised.

Local Skills Plan

- 2.21 Under their Memorandum of Understanding with the Department for Education, all Skills Advisory Panels are required to produce a Local Skills Report before the end of March 2021. Reports are to be updated on an annual basis with a fuller version refresh every two years.
- 2.22 Local Skills Reports set out each area's unique skills landscape, their progress on skills-related activities, any successes or challenges they have faced, as well as future local skills plans. They will serve as a single consistent report across all SAPs that helps to grow their influence, engage local partners and feed intelligence into central government and the national Skills and Productivity Board (SPB).
- 2.23 The Employment and Skills Panel serves as the Skills Advisory Panel for Leeds City Region and will be asked to sign-off the draft Local Skills Report for the area at its meeting on 23 February 2021.

3. Clean Growth Implications

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

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

6. Staffing Implications

6.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

7. External Consultees

7.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

8. Recommendations

8.1 The Panel is asked to comment on the implications for Leeds City Region of the national policy changes, including IoTs.

8.2 The Panel is asked to note the progress and next steps of the Employment and Skills Plan and the local skills plan.

9. Background Documents

None.

10. Appendices

None.

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Report to: Employment and Skills Panel

Date: 25 November 2020

Subject: **Skills Commission**

Director: Alan Reiss, Director of Policy, Strategy and Communications

Author: Sonya Midgley

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To update the Panel on the Skills Commission's final report and its blueprint and recommendations
- 1.2 To share proposed actions for next steps, including implementation of its recommendations in Leeds City Region

2 Information

Background

- 2.1 As previously reported, over the last 18 months the Skills Commission has been undertaking a review in order to create a blueprint for a future-ready post-16 skills system with a focus on devolution. The Commission is made up from leading thinkers from business, education, trade unions and think tanks, and is Chaired by Councillor Hinchcliffe. The focus on devolution has distinguished this Commission's work from the other national skills commissions and reviews.
- 2.2 The Commission began with a review of the effectiveness of the post-16 skills system, and considered three key areas:
 - **Technical education and training;** from level 2, the basic threshold for employability, through to levels 4 and 5 and beyond, equipping people for professional-level employment.
 - **Careers information and inspiration;** interventions that seek to assist individuals, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers.

- **Workforce skills**; upskilling of staff in the workplace to address business needs, re-skilling and upskilling of individuals in response to a changing labour market – including people in employment as well as out of work and utilising available skills fully in the workplace to drive competitiveness and productivity and earnings.
- 2.3 The Commission produced an interim report in November 2019 and shared its findings following in-depth analysis of the key themes above, and wide consultation with key stakeholders. The interim report sets out the '10 things that needs to change' in the skills system.
- 2.4 The report was well received and helped to position the Combined Authority as a thought-leader on skills policy. Government have committed to considering the final findings of the Skills Commission as part of the 'minded-to' devolution deal.

Final Report and recommendations

- 2.5 The Commission published its final report 25 September and held a virtual launch that included attendance from over 100 delegates including senior government officials.
- 2.6 The virtual report launch included speakers representing TUC, CBI, Produmax (locally based SME), AoC and JRF and was Chaired by Councillor Hinchcliffe.
- 2.7 The Commission's final report sets out a blueprint for a post-16 skills system that better meets the needs of local economies and is able to respond to future challenges and opportunities in the workplace. The report argues the case for a **radical shift required in funding and local leadership** and makes nine recommendations to government, they are:
- **Ensure the funding system offers fair access** regardless of age, level of attainment, background and learning route alongside reversing the long-term decline in adult training
 - Empower areas to design services around the individual to **address complex and interrelated health, employment and skills** issues
 - Everyone should have right to **quality information about jobs and careers**, no matter what their stage in life.
 - **Employers should take greater ownership of their talent management and skills development**, aided by a joined-up approach to business support that means they can find the help they need, regardless of the route they take to find it
 - In order that people can gain the right skills needed for good quality work in their area, **all adult skills and careers funding needs to be devolved**
 - Recognise that areas are best placed to understand their own skills requirements and **implement statutory five-year strategic skills plans** to make it happen
 - To ensure that training meets the current and future skills needs of regional labour markets, **delivery agreements with skills providers** should be put in place, supported by investment funding

- Large-scale **public infrastructure** projects designed to level up areas should include an additional skills premium of up to 5% of the total budget to maximise
- **The Apprenticeship system needs national review** to make it work more effectively, and this should include recognising and resourcing areas as the key route to employers and individuals

2.8 The report is published alongside a series of technical papers that detail the rationale and proposals for each of the nine recommendations above and are available via <https://bit.ly/35Y4Asg>. The executive summary is appended to this report.

Implementation of the recommendations

2.9 A number of actions and further engagements are proposed to deepen the impact of the work of the Commission, including further discussions with government departments and a mayoral roundtable.

2.10 A communications plan will continue to engage Commissioners and seek to place op-eds within trade press.

2.11 A full analysis of the national policy changes to date and proposed action points for implementation of the recommendations for the Combined Authority has been undertaken, and the main actions for immediate implementation are listed below:

- Use the findings of the Commission to inform the new **Employment and Skills Plan** (2021-2025) as a key document of the Strategic Economic Framework (SEF)
- **Adult Education Budget (AEB) strategy** implementation and the devolution of the adult education budget to West Yorkshire for implementation from August 2021 will allow greater responsive, place-based and innovative skills solutions rather than the current national programme which provides a blanket approach. The AEB process will extend the use of provider delivery agreements with grant and commissioned training providers as recommended by the Commission.
- The **Economic Recovery Plan** uses the learning from the Commission to identify the key priorities for employment and skills in the short, medium and long term. This includes creating skills and training opportunities for future jobs in the green economy and supporting SMEs to make the best use of the skills available in the workforce to support productivity.
- Implementation of the **local digital skills partnership** secured through the devolution deal to address digital skills shortages and key issues around digital inclusion will address future-skills needs.

2.12 The final report of the Skills Commission has been submitted to Government, and pro-active engagement has been secured from relevant senior officials

and policy teams within the Department for Education and Education and Skills Funding Agency. These discussions will continue in order to influence the evolution of future Government policy.

2.13 In addition, consideration should also be given to the following:

- Ensuring that the Combined Authority's investment strategy is aligned with the Commission's recommendation of creating skills funding for every public infrastructure project. The Commission argues that large-scale public infrastructure projects designed to level up areas should include an additional skills premium of up to 5% of the total budget, this might be made a condition of the West Yorkshire Investment Strategy or made a condition of commissioning / contracting.
- Further actions to support the findings of the Commission to secure engagement with government departments and progress the devolution agenda.

2.14 Work is ongoing to plan how the national recommendations impact on local priorities. Further detailed and costed proposals will be developed following the further anticipated national policy announcements. An update paper can be provided following any further national policy announcements.

3. Clean Growth Implications

3.1 The report findings will be used to determine skills priorities in the revised Employment and Skills plan as a key document of the Strategic Economic Framework.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

6. Staffing Implications

6.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

7. External Consultees

7.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

8. Recommendations

8.1 The Panel is asked to note and comment on the final Skills Commission blueprint and recommendations.

8.2 The Panel is asked to consider how the findings of the final report can be used to inform the work of the LEP and the Combined Authority and how its recommendations could be implemented locally.

9. Background Documents

None.

10. Appendices

App 1 – Executive Summary Future-Ready Skills Commission final report

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Future-Ready Skills Commission

A Blueprint for a Future-Ready Skills System

September 2020

Rethinking skills for the 21st century

This report is the culmination of two years of research and analysis by the Future-Ready Skills Commission. In that time the world has changed.

Our primary scope was to design a blueprint for a devolved skills system, from post-16 education through to adult skills and career development, that better meets the needs of local economies, and is able to respond to future challenges and opportunities in the workplace.

Then there was COVID-19, the economic impact of which is being felt hardest by those already least able to cope.

Without efforts to support these groups with jobs, skills and training in a way that fits with the reality on the ground in local labour markets, we risk damaging the life chances of a whole generation and setting back our ambitions to build a fairer and more inclusive economy.

Unless we radically change our attitude towards skills and training and embrace the UK becoming a higher skills labour market, we cannot meaningfully change living standards for the better.

We have to say goodbye to an era when many of us used to leave formal education after school, college or university and feel that our time of learning was done, and what we knew by our late teens or early 20s should be enough to last us a lifetime of work. Training and learning must be a life-long process to make sure our skills and knowledge remain relevant and our job prospects positive

Equally, we have to overturn the attitude whereby too many employers fail to see the value of training. Too often, they treat it as a tick-box exercise in meeting statutory requirements in areas like health and safety, rather than developing the potential of their workforce.

As this report argues, we need a skills entitlement from school to retirement and every major point of a working life in between, backed up with independent careers advice and information so people can understand how an investment in skills will be of benefit, and support from employers and the state.

Employers need to be able to find people with the right skills, and individuals must have a right to careers advice and training that helps them make informed choices that will help them get on in life.

For this to be effective, it needs to be delivered at a local level, informed by labour market information and backed up with structures and funding to address an area's current and future skills needs.

Local areas and regions are best placed to understand the dynamics of their own labour market and what skills, industries and sectors are most in demand, guiding learners in a way that best suits the needs of local businesses and the economy.

As we emerge from COVID-19, addressing health inequalities has never been more important. We need to build a resilient economy, creating a forward-looking skills system, based on the needs of the people, businesses and local economies it is intended to serve.



Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe

Chair, Future-Ready Skills Commission
Chair, West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Leader, Bradford Council

Introduction

The Future-Ready Skills Commission was launched in 2019 to undertake a review of the post-16 landscape in England as one of the most centralised systems in the UK and indeed the world. This review differs from the many that have preceded it with an explicit focus on designing a blueprint for a devolved skills system.

The Commission was concerned with evidence presented from a range of stakeholders and leading thinkers on improving the existing system so that it better able to respond to local labour market needs. The blueprint and recommendations in this report exemplify the power of policy experts, employers, training providers and trade unions working collegiately to improve the skills systems for learners from all backgrounds and social standing.

The ability of local areas and regions to have the powers and funding to respond to what is needed in the local labour market is critical for the economic prosperity for all. This is even more acutely needed in times of economic crisis where local leadership from business, skills providers, trade unions and government is more pivotal to being agile and better placed to respond the labour market need. Never has this been demonstrated more sharply than during the COVID-19 pandemic which has deepened inequalities in communities and challenged the funding structures employed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

The Commission would like to thank everyone who has been involved to challenge and shape the thinking for the blueprint, in particular, our critical friends, elected Mayors and colleagues at MCAs and the GLA.

In November 2019, we published our interim report¹ that set out the evidence that had been considered to date and presented ‘10 things that need to change in the skills system’. We now present in this final report the blueprint of *how* the system should change.

¹ <http://futurereadyskillscommission.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Future-Ready-Skills-Commission-Interim-Report-2019.pdf>

10 things that need to change



1 **Careers information** needs to be relevant to the local labour market and empower individuals to make informed decisions



2 Employment and skills should be **integrated within local housing, transport and environment** strategies



3 The local approach to **skills, employment and health needs to be joined** up to support progression to work



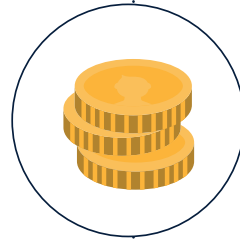
4 The **skills offer for businesses needs to be simplified** through coordination at the level of functional economic areas



5 **Investment in technical education** and skills should be increased to sustainable levels



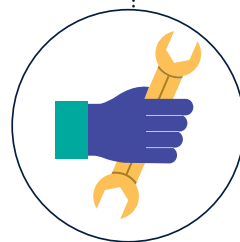
6 **Greater collaboration is needed** in order to spread good workplace practices to improve business performance and productivity



7 The learning **offer should be simplified and made more affordable**, with the right level of finance that removes barriers to access and supports progression in learning



8 **Employers need to be motivated** to train and re-train staff and support progression at all levels, including those in lower paid work to gain higher level skills



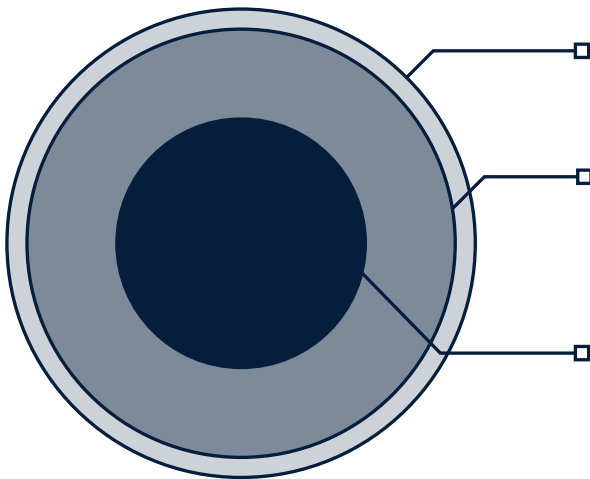
9 Local areas should have **strengthened responsibilities for planning the provision of technical education** and training so that it is responsive to local economic priorities



10 **Employers need greater influence** over the design and delivery of technical training to ensure it is responsive to local economic priorities

Our blueprint for a future-ready skills system

The current national skills system is complex, highly centralised and does not meet the needs of all the people, businesses and local economies it is intended to serve



Local

- Delivers adult skills programmes and neighbourhood-level services
- Has strong relationships with employers

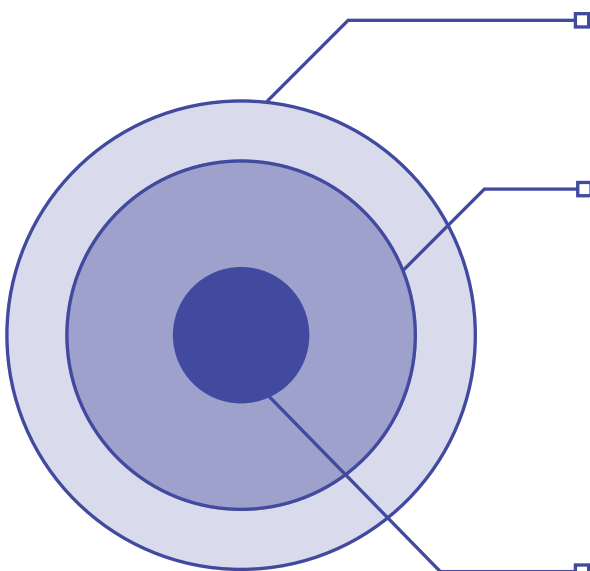
Regional

- Manages delivery of short-term skills and training funding – often received through competitive bidding process and with specific contract outputs
- Has strategic relationships with providers and strong relationships with employers through Growth Hubs

National

- Highly centralised, with 'one size fits all' commissioning of skills programmes and campaigns
- Delivery of Adult Education Budget devolved to Mayoral Combined Authorities and Greater London Assembly, with some specific, limited further responsibilities devolved on a case-by-case basis

We propose a devolved system that is responsive to the needs of local labour markets and able to meet future challenges and opportunities in the workplace



Local

- Designs and delivers services to individuals and employers, including all-ages careers provision
- Delivers integrated work, health and social provision
- Integrates skills with other services that can provide wraparound services

Regional

- Skills and employment embedded within regional economic strategies
- Devolved responsibilities and funding for skills-related budgets over a five-year timeframe
- Retains additional funds to support the skills needs of regional labour markets where large-scale publicly-funded infrastructure projects are delivered
- Provides holistic skills support for individuals and businesses – commissions and delivers all-ages careers support, providing support for adults to re-train and a recognised leadership role working with employers
- Strategic role working with learning providers, with formal delivery agreements and a recognised relationship with FE Commissioner
- Has strategic relationships with providers and strong relationships with employers through Growth Hubs

National

- Sets key principles, policy frameworks, guidance, high-level priorities, and nationally-recognised qualifications, allowing flexibility in how these are achieved at a regional level
- Establishes frameworks, quality standards and monitoring agencies to ensure consistency, best practice and improvement across all regions – includes scrutiny and the ability to intervene with providers where necessary

We propose a devolved skills system that is responsive to the needs of local labour markets and able to meet future challenges and opportunities in the workplace



Responsibility for delivery



Our recommendations

- 

Ensure the funding system offers fair access regardless of age, level of attainment, background and learning route alongside reversing the long-term decline in adult training
- 

Empower areas to design services around the individual to address complex and interrelated health, employment and skills issues
- 

Everyone should have right to quality information about jobs and careers, no matter what their stage in life
- 

Employers should take greater ownership of their talent management and skills development, aided by a joined-up approach to business support that means they can find the help they need, regardless of the route they take to find it
- 

In order that people can gain the right skills needed for good quality work in their area, all adult skills and careers funding needs to be devolved
- 

Recognise that areas are best placed to understand their own skills requirements and implement statutory five-year strategic skills plans to make it happen
- 

Ensure that training meets the current and future skills needs of regional labour markets, delivery agreements with skills providers should be put in place, supported by investment funding
- 

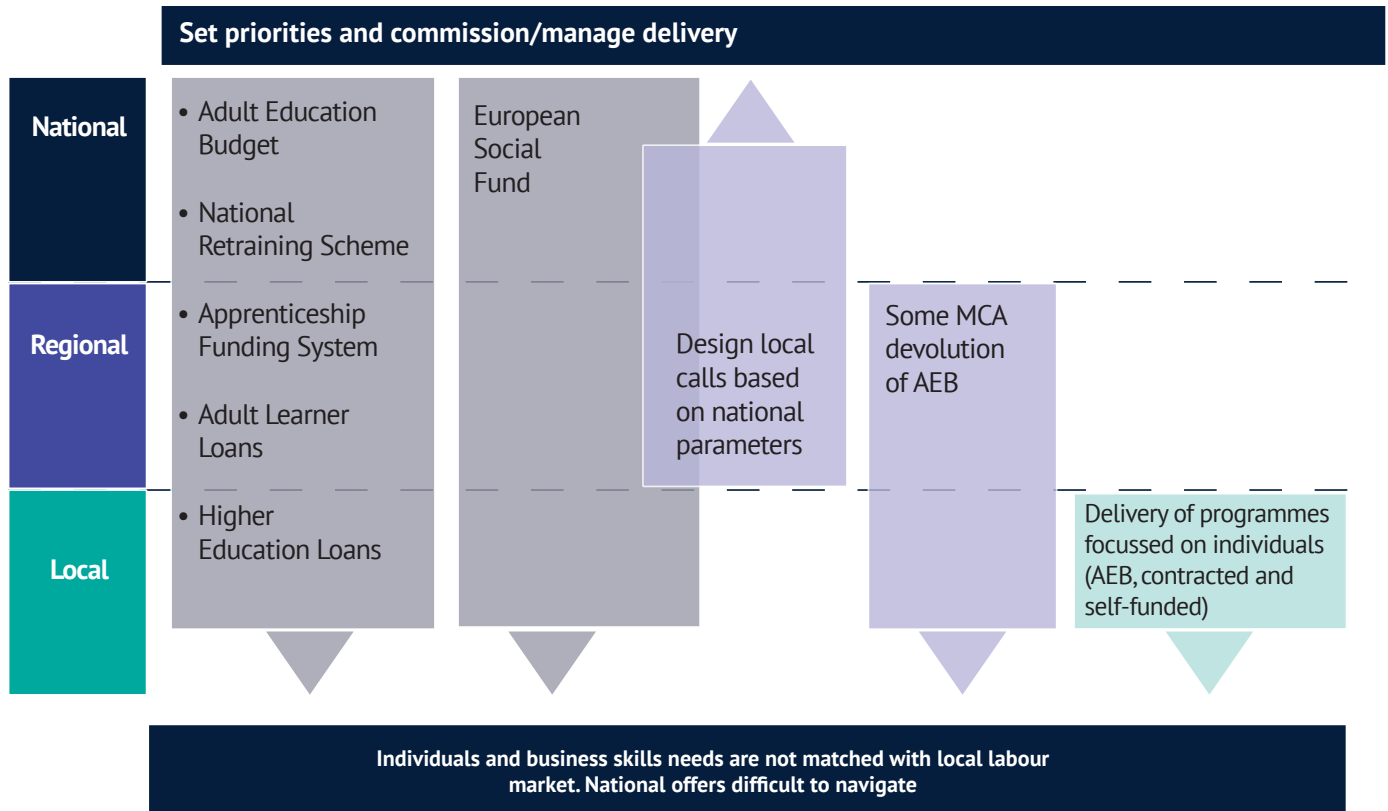
Large-scale public infrastructure projects designed to level up areas should include an additional skills premium of up to 5% of the total budget to maximise their economic potential
- 

The Apprenticeship system needs national review to make it work more effectively, and this should include recognising and resourcing areas as the key route to employers and individuals

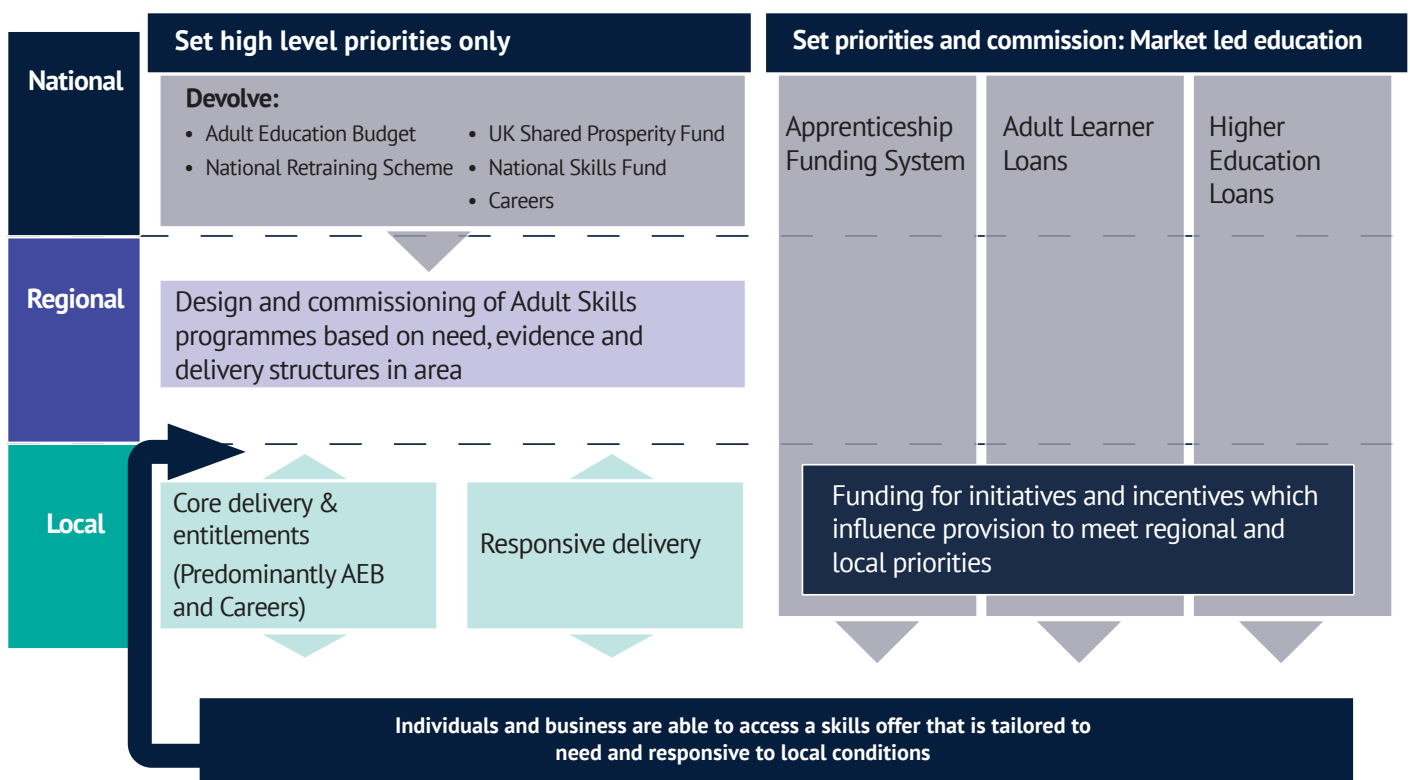
The current skills and training system is made up of many disparate sources of funding, with responsibility led by different government departments and shared between various bodies, resulting in a fragmented system that lacks a coherence and complementarity.

A radical shift of funding and local leadership is required to respond to the needs of the local labour market. This will create opportunities for employers, colleges and training providers to collaborate in a strong and accountable regional skills system that can meet labour needs and is able to respond to economic shocks.

Adult Skills System - Current



Adult Skills System - Proposed



A fully devolved adult skills system with responsibility for funding and delivery at a local or regional level will create benefits for education and training institutions, employers, individuals, and the economy as a whole. Critically it will equalize opportunities for different labour market groups and accelerate inclusive growth with local leadership accountable for ensuring that economic investment builds social capital for communities.

Institutions will be more resilient and benefit from:

- Greater financial stability in a reformed system
- Enhanced community role
- Bigger market for learning among individuals and employers
- Delivery of more flexible and innovative delivery models
- Stable funding and investment opportunities, delivered through strategic plans to meet the needs of the regional labour market
- Increased relationships with employers
- A holistic and strategic skills system that meets local labour market needs
- Augmented recognition of the value of skills
- Opportunity to influence the shape of skills provision in regional areas

Employers investing in their workforce can benefit from:

- A better skilled workforce that contributes to improved business performance and profitability.
- A more responsive system that provides employers with the skills they need
- A system that is easier to engage with – simpler and more flexible
- Closer involvement and strategic relationships with education
- Strengthened business leadership and management
- Reduced costs for staff recruitment through improved talent management and retention

Individuals investing in their learning can benefit from:

- Better employment and career prospects
- Better pay
- Easier and more flexible access to learning across a range of settings
- Greater opportunities to re-train
- Improved career management skills, with a clear understanding of the value of learning and training
- Enhanced understanding of the opportunities in the local labour market

The Economy will be more resilient and benefit from:

- Greater economic resilience linked to a more skilled workforce
- Better alignment between the skills that people have and the skills the economy needs, leading to increased productivity
- A more flexible and dynamic labour market reflecting better career adaptability of individuals
- More of the high-level skills needed to drive innovation
- More people active in the labour market
- Less inequality between regions of the country and different labour market groups
- A better return from the investment in skills for all parties
- Better quality of work

Report to: Employment and Skills Panel

Date: 25 November 2020

Subject: **Good Work**

Director: Alan Reiss, Director of Policy, Strategy and Communications

Author: James Flanagan, Head of Public Service Reform

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To seek views on possible options for encouraging the creation of good work and the adoption of better employment behaviours and practices across all sectors of the regional economy.

2. Information

- 2.1 Too few people in the region's economy are currently in good work, in terms of enjoying high quality, secure, well paid employment:
- In-work poverty is a significant problem – 271,000 WY employees (29% of the total) are not currently in good quality work (ONS definition based on the Taylor Review), so for example they are paid below the real living wage.
 - Poor mental health (15.1% of people in West Yorkshire suffer from depression and anxiety compared to 13.7% nationally) is not just a wellbeing problem, it increases the risk of permanent exclusion from the labour market. This contributes to West Yorkshire lagging England's employment rate (74% vs 77%).
 - Various inequalities mean that many of our communities face barriers to securing good work, eg BAME, disabled people, and mothers who want to work (especially lone parents), all suffer from higher than average levels of unemployment, also in terms of pay gaps, and opportunities for employment and progression (ie underemployment and lack of social mobility); and
 - The region a productivity challenge – there is correlation between low pay and lack of workforce diversity and lower innovation and productivity.
- 2.2 The Good Work Standard approach (also sometimes known as a Good Employment Charter or Pledge), secures commitments from – and gives

recognition to – employers in terms of driving positive employment behaviours and practices.

- 2.3 The model, if effectively designed, resourced and implemented is considered to have the potential to address the in-work poverty, wellbeing, inequality, and productivity issues set out above. As such, it is a key commitment of the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan which seeks to deliver an inclusive economic recovery.
- 2.4 The September meeting of the Inclusive Growth and Public Policy Panel identified various merits of developing a standard (or charter) for this region and agreed that options should be prepared for considering the most appropriate model, for example designing an entirely bespoke approach, implementing an existing established approach, or working up an approach which builds on an established model. For each option, the Panel suggested the following common principles should apply:
- Relevance to all sectors and irrespective of business/organisation size;
 - Aligns with any local and national approaches and so does not duplicate effort and confuse employers; and
 - Covers a range of employment-related themes, such as fair pay, workforce voice, health and welfare, leadership, and equality, inclusion & diversity.
- 2.5 Also in September, the NP11 and the Convention for the North committed to adopting good employment charters across the North, setting a common definition of good work for the whole of the North, and encouraging more employers to commit to high standards.
- 2.6 Factoring in the above views about the most appropriate model for the region, following potential options for consideration are set out below:
- Option 1 – implementing an existing model;
 - Option 2 – building on an existing approach; and
 - Option 3 – a bespoke model.

Option 1 – implementing an existing model

- 2.7 There are various examples of good work standards, charters and pledges, both in existence and in development locally, nationally and internationally. The Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter is particularly relevant to our region, in part because it has been developed with regional and pan Northern expert and stakeholder involvement, eg ACAS, Chambers, Universities, and the CIPD.
- 2.8 Membership of the GM Charter requires employers (irrespective of their size or sector) to demonstrate minimum standards across the following 7 characteristics (full details are included at Appendix 1):
- Secure work;
 - Flexible work;
 - Real living wage;
 - Workplace engagement & voice;

- Recruitment practices & progression;
- People management; and
- Health and Wellbeing.

- 2.9 The GM charter has been launched and operational for several months. It is being delivered on behalf of GMCA by an independent Charter Implementation Unit. This is a dedicated resource which is funded for at least three years and is considered a critical success factor by enabling a consistent, rigorous approach to promoting the charter and assessing the suitability of applicants. The unit also provides the necessary capacity to consider a sectoral focus, eg potentially targeting the health and social care sector to address its historic low levels of productivity and pay. To date, the unit has engaged with 230 employers, of which 115 are signed up as supporters of the Charter, and 20 are full members that collectively account for more than 200,000 employees.
- 2.10 Alignment of the GM charter with other local and national approaches is considered to be important to avoid duplication and unhelpful competition. Where other charters or standards exist and which are consistent with the GM charter, there are reciprocal arrangements agreed so that membership of a local charter gives automatic membership of the GM charter, and vice versa. Where local initiatives take the form of business engagement in work and skills support and delivering local economic and social goals, employers joining the GM charter will be linked into this provision. A similar pragmatic and reciprocal approach could be adopted in our region.
- 2.11 Adopting an existing model such as the GM Good Employment Charter is considered to offer the opportunity for rapid implementation of a robust approach, subject to ensuring alignment with local approaches, and putting in place fit for purpose and delivery arrangements.

Option 2 – building on an existing approach

- 2.12 There are however potentially some issues which suggest that any existing model may need to be further developed and built upon to better fit within the current West Yorkshire context:
- Although not identified as a headline GM good work characteristic, the principles of enabling equality, diversity, and inclusion are understood to be woven into each individual characteristic. In Appendix 1, under the Recruitment standard, for example, the requirement is for selection processes to be designed to eliminate unconscious bias. A possible alternative view is that equality, diversity and inclusion should be treated as a headline characteristic in its own right. There would therefore likely need to be regional discussion and agreement on this point which could re-shape the model to some extent.
 - The GM characteristics were developed and finalised before the advent of the pandemic. It may therefore be useful to consider any changes needed because of the health and economic impacts of Covid-19. It is understood that GM is undertaking a similar review which has identified a number of potential issues, including the following:

- Employees at greater health risk not being disadvantaged by employers' response;
- Managers adopting new ways of working to keep teams united while working from home; and
- Greater focus on mental and physical health of the workforce.

2.13 The GM charter requires members to commit to paying the Real Living Wage, which is potentially a challenge to some employers in all sectors. Increasing unemployment levels due to lockdowns and tiered restrictions is likely to place downward pressure on wages, creating further challenges around commitment to the Real Living Wage. Therefore, some consideration would need to be given to requiring West Yorkshire employers to sign up to paying the Real Living Wage.

Option 3 – a bespoke model

2.14 The option of developing an entirely bespoke model which does not adopt - or adapt - an existing approach would have benefits, including:

- Maximising local engagement and buy-in from all sectors and stakeholders; and
- Developing criteria or standards that are fully reflective of local views of what better employment looks like, and therefore likely to prove most effective in the long run.

2.15 Option 3 also has potential drawbacks including:

- Compared with adopting (or adapting) an existing model, the increased lead time to launch a bespoke model could be significant. Depending on the various stages of engagement, consultation and evidence gathering required, the development period for a bespoke approach could be between 12 and 18 months, based on the experience of others.
- Subject to Panel views, Options 1 and 2 show that a broadly relevant and robust model that could be adopted (and adapted, as necessary, to fit the current regional context) already exists, and this would also be in line with the Convention for the North and NP11 commitment to progressing a common approach across the North;

3. Clean Growth Implications

3.1 There are no clean growth implications directly arising as a result of this report.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

4.1 The report identifies the opportunity to develop a Good Work Standard, or similar model, for the region, which will have a clear focus on delivering an inclusive economic recovery.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising as a direct result of this report.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 There are no legal implications arising as a direct result of this report.

7. Staffing Implications

7.1 There are no staffing implications arising as a direct result of this report.

8. External Consultees

8.1 No specific or official external consultations have been undertaken in relation to this report.

9. Recommendations

9.1 The Panel is requested to:

- Note the regional proposal to develop and deliver a fit for purpose approach to encouraging better employment behaviours and practices across all sectors of the economy to deliver an inclusive economic recovery.
- Consider the three options set out in Section 2:
 - Option 1 – implementing an existing model;
 - Option 2 – building on an existing approach; and
 - Option 3 – a bespoke model.
- Provide advice to the LEP Board on any preferred option.

10. Background Documents

10.1 There are no background documents referenced in this report.

11. Appendices

11.1 Appendix 1 – Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter

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Charter Membership Criteria

The Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter is a voluntary membership and assessment scheme which has been created to help deliver good jobs with opportunities for people to progress and develop, along with a thriving and productive economy. The Charter aims to improve employment standards across all GM employers regardless of size, sector or geography.

The criteria below set out the minimum standards expected of a Charter Member across the seven characteristics of good employment. The standards are underpinned by principles enabling equality, diversity and inclusion. They have been developed through a process of co-production to set aspirations for excellence yet provide flexibility to ensure employers of all sectors and sizes can be part of the Greater Manchester Good Employment movement.

Secure Work

Charter members will be expected to provide evidence that employees have security over their income and can manage their work and non-work commitments more easily through:

- Contracts that reflect actual hours worked, including the ability to have contracts reviewed and adjusted if actual hours regularly exceed contracted hours, with zero hours contracts ultimately only for those who want them. The review would take place after 12 weeks of employment and following that every six months.
- A guaranteed minimum number of hours in the advert and job description for any role and no exclusive zero hours contracts.
- Where an employer is offering hours to an hourly-paid worker, they give four weeks' notice of the times that they will work (to aid household planning) and commit to pay people for those hours in the event of cancellation. [This does not preclude an employer offering staff hours in addition to their contracted hours with less than four weeks' notice.]
- After 12 weeks of continuous employment in a role, agency workers are offered the same pay and conditions as direct employees. After 12 weeks and then every six months, formal consideration is given to offering agency and temporary staff members a permanent position.

Flexible Work

Charter Members will be expected to provide evidence of enabling a more flexible workforce to access a broad diversity of skills and talent:

- Designing jobs which flex wherever possible:

- Where people work (working from home; across different offices; mobile working);
- When people work (flexible start or finish times; annualised flexibility; compressed hours; project-based work; shift work); and
- How much people work (part-time; job sharing or job splitting; unpaid leave).
- Having a flexible working policy to:
 - Encourage flexible working where appropriate and reasonable;
 - Give every individual the opportunity regardless of circumstances to request and be considered for flexible working arrangements and for requests to be answered within 28 days;
 - Regular review of flexible working arrangements.
- Advertising all jobs with clarity on the possibility of job flexibility from the outset.

Real Living Wage

Charter members will be expected to provide evidence to:

- Demonstrate payment of the Real Living Wage to employees and details of plans to pay their contractors a living wage, as set out by the Living Wage Foundation.

Engagement & Voice

Charter members will be expected to provide evidence of a confident, empowered workforce creating an effective relationship between individuals, workforce and management

where opinions can be safely heard and shared through:

- Involvement of employees in decision-making and managing change through effective communication and consultation.
 - Placing as much emphasis on listening as talking.
 - Employers actively seeking views, taking account of what they hear from employees, and communicating regularly about employees' contribution to driving the organisation forward.
 - Ensuring that managers at all levels are committed to employees having their say.
 - Genuinely considering employees' views before decisions are taken.
 - Communicating and consulting with employees systematically and regularly.
- Engaging positively with trade unions, including:
 - Allowing access to the workplace by trade union organisers.
 - Making new staff aware of potential trade union membership.
 - Voluntarily recognising a trade union(s) where possible.
 - Providing adequate facilities and time for trade union duties, training and activities.
 - Not seek to derecognise a trade union(s) or dismantle collective bargaining machinery.
 - Implement collectively agreed terms and conditions.
 - Take part in collective bargaining arrangements where they exist.
 - Implement collectively agreed norms in the sector where possible.

Recruitment

Charter members will be expected to provide evidence of the recruitment of a diverse workforce drawing on the talents of all of Greater Manchester's communities through:

- Selection processes designed to eliminate unconscious bias;
- Inclusive and fair recruitment practices with equality and diversity issues integral to all;
- Recruitment processes which are anonymised, including the 'disability confident scheme' (or equivalent) and consistent with the 'ban the box' campaign (removing criminal record tick boxes from application forms, or equivalent);
- Job adverts which set out the potential for flexible working in the role and the number of hours to be worked (see Secure Work);
- Recruiting managers having completed equality and diversity training;
- Recruitment methods appropriate to the role and the candidate – e.g. with adaptable methods of communication, interviews and other activities;
- Recruitment processes, including the advertising of roles, which actively encourage the recruitment of a diverse workforce;
- Monitoring of the diversity of their workforce to understand its changing nature and progress toward greater diversity.

People Management

Charter members will be expected to provide evidence of:

- Clear organisational values and expected behaviours that align to the values, which are clearly demonstrated and confidently articulated by the workforce;
- Leaders and managers have developed a culture that ensure all employees enjoy a positive working life experience;
- Individual objectives that align with the organisation values and overall objectives;
- A performance management framework with 1:1 conversation with managers;
- An organisation development/training plan which ensures that all staff (including managers) receive appropriate training, during paid time, to enable them to do their job effectively, developing and using their skills and experience;
- Development opportunities to support aspirations for progression;
- Multi-source feedback and surveys that indicate the workforce feels valued, invested in and developed;
- Managers' role profiles which build in time to manage the workforce;
- An organisation induction programme;
- Grievance and disciplinary processes in line with ACAS guidance;
- Leaders protecting the workforce from bullying and harassment.

Health & Wellbeing

Charter members will be expected to support everyone to be a productive employee, accepting that all staff are individuals with differing needs, through providing evidence of:

- The commitment of senior leaders to developing a culture where employees have the ability to take ownership of their individual role in relation to creating a healthy and productive workplace;
- Systems to monitor staff wellbeing with a requirement to act on feedback with real and tangible outcomes;
- Acknowledging different life stages and supporting staff to thrive within their working environment, including adjustments for people with long-term conditions and disabilities;
- Acknowledging that mental health is a health and wellbeing issue that needs to be considered in relation to an organisation's wider values and objectives, with strategies subject to regular reviews;
- Managers having a specific objective to discuss employee wellbeing, with support in place to facilitate ongoing training and best practice;
- Internal and/or external support services for staff to access as and when they need them and the management of sickness absence in line with ACAS or equivalent guidelines.

Notice

This document provides a statement of best practice and the criteria listed above are not legally binding.

Supported by





Report to: Employment and Skills Panel

Date: 25 November 2020

Subject: **For information only: Key Policy Reports**

Director: Alan Reiss, Director of Policy, Strategy and Communications

Author: Peter Glover, Economic Evidence Manager

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To highlight to the Panel key policy reports produced by third-party organisations, including leading think-tanks. This is intended to keep Panel members informed about leading thinking on employment and skills issues, particularly the policy response to the Covid-19 crisis.
- 1.2 A short summary of each report is provided below, including a link to the full report so that Panel members can explore the report in more detail.

2 Information

Jobs, jobs, jobs: Evaluating the effects of the current economic crisis on the UK labour market, Resolution Foundation, 27 October 2020.

<https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/jobs-jobs-jobs/>

- 18-24-year-olds, Black, Asian and minority ethnic workers, and the low paid are heavily represented among those who have lost their job after being furloughed.
- A high proportion of the self-employed are receiving lower earnings than before the crisis with many receiving no government support
- People who previously worked in hospitality, leisure, or non-food retail are likely to be looking for a new job in one of those same sectors or administrative positions rather than extending their job search to less affected sectors.

Learning for Life: Funding a world-class adult education system, CBI, 19 October 2020

<https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/5723/learning-for-life-report.pdf>

Nine out of ten employees will need to reskill by 2030 at an additional cost of £13 billion a year. With COVID-19 now accelerating changes to the world of work, the UK must use this momentum to drive a national reskilling effort.

Recommendations include:

- Introducing SME tax credits
- Turning the Apprenticeship Levy into a Skills and Training Levy
- Introducing Career Development Accounts
- Extending flexible loans entitlement to adults of all ages and to accommodate shorter bitesize courses
- Turning 'Job Centres' into 'Jobs and Skills Hubs' which offer face-to-face support.

2020 annual report on education spending in England, Institute for Fiscal Studies, 3 November 2020

<https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/15150>

The report analyses the challenges facing each phase of education due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Further education colleges and sixth forms face challenges around education catch-up, but may also need to expand to accommodate extra students as apprenticeship and employment opportunities dry up. Higher education institutions are heavily exposed to financial losses as a result of pension scheme losses, declines in international student numbers and changes in domestic student participation.

Time to act - Tackling the looming rise in long-term unemployment, Learning and Work Institute, 19 October 2020

<https://learningandwork.org.uk/resources/research-and-reports/time-to-act-tackling-the-looming-rise-in-long-term-unemployment/>

This report explores the potential increase in long term unemployment as a result of the coronavirus crisis. It estimates that long-term unemployment could hit 1.6 million in 2021-22 – a 600% increase since the start of the crisis, and the highest level since 1994. The number of people becoming long-term unemployed in April and May 2021 could be up to three times higher than peak monthly referrals to the Work Programme introduced after the last recession.

Calls for a universal offer to all long-term unemployed people across the UK, but with devolved administrations and local government delivering the support at a local level.

Learning through lockdown: Findings from the 2020 Adult Participation in Learning Survey, Learning and Work Institute, 5 November 2020

<https://learningandwork.org.uk/resources/research-and-reports/learning-through-lockdown/>

The 2020 Adult Participation in Learning Survey explores people's experiences of learning since the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic. It found that there had

been high levels of participation in learning during lockdown. Over two in five (43%) – 22 million people across the UK – had taken part in some form of ‘lockdown learning’. However, those who could most benefit were the least likely to take part; for example, just one in three (34%) adults who were out of work took part in lockdown learning, compared to over half (52%) of those who were in employment.

Going further: The case for investing in Further Education and adult skills, IPPR, 3 November 2020

<https://www.ippr.org/research/publications/going-further>

Skills policy is crucial to our ability to ‘build back better’. Unlike the 2007/8 economic crisis, the impact of the Covid-19 downturn will be felt disproportionately in the labour market. The report concludes that up to 1 million people on furlough are in jobs that will not return.

Recommendations include:

- Commit to increasing per pupil spend for 16-19 years in colleges and sixth forms from £5,200 today to £8,300 by the end of the parliament
- Immediately establish a Job Training Scheme (JTS) as part of the ongoing reforms of the Job Retention scheme.
- Immediately suspend conditionality on people on Universal Credit who want to or are retraining.
- Build on the recent announcement of a level 3 entitlement for adults with the introduction of a maintenance loan on higher education terms for this group.
- Provide additional funding to fully fund the training component for apprenticeships for non-levy paying firms and introduce greater conditionality on the expenditure of the levy to target it at younger people.
- Invest in colleges as key institutions in supporting the ambitions of people, productivity and places.

Technical Breakthrough: Delivering Britain’s higher-level skills, Policy Exchange, 5 November 2020

<https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/technical-breakthrough/>

Argues that universities should take on a significant role in most localities. in the provision of levels 4/5 technical and vocational education and that the Department for Education restructuring fund should be used to support universities facing financial challenges in focusing on higher level technical skills and moving towards closer alliances with local FE colleges.

3. Clean Growth Implications

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

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

6. Staffing Implications

6.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

7. External Consultees

7.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

8. Recommendations

8.1 This paper is for information only.

9. Background Documents

None.

10. Appendices

None.