
Report to: Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership Board (LEP Board)

Date: 6 June 2019

Subject: **Employment and Skills Panel**

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1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide the LEP Board with a report on the work of the Employment and Skills Panel.

2. Information

Chair's update

- 2.1 The Chair informed the Panel that a bid had been submitted to an European Social Fund (ESF) call for proposals; **Skills for Growth**. The proposed bid is for £1,465,022 from ESF (to include an equal amount of match funding), with activity to complete by 31 Dec 2023.
- 2.2 Following consultation with LA officers, colleges and universities, the bid proposes a city regional approach, with local delivery, aligned with the Employment Hub and other programmes. A team of up to 10 Business Partnership Advisers will support businesses to navigate the complex education landscape and to support businesses to identify and develop projects (whether in schools, FE or HE) that will maximize positive impact on businesses, learners and communities. Advice will reflect the different offer available in different local authority areas and businesses may be supported to engage with schools, Further and Higher Education via work experience, apprenticeships, the new "T" levels, internships, undergrad/grad placements, and other initiatives.
- 2.3 A skills show will be procured, focusing on showcasing skills shortage and growth sectors, ensuring good coverage across Leeds City Region, with a value of £500,000 ESF and at least £500,000 match which the successful tenderer will be responsible for securing through sponsorship.
- 2.4 The Chair gave an update on the **Future-Ready Skills Commission** which held its third meeting on 15 May, focusing on careers information and inspiration.

Local Industrial Strategy Development

- 2.5 The Panel was updated on progress to develop a **Local Industrial Strategy** (LIS) for the proposed new LEP geography, which encompasses the areas of West and North Yorkshire. The Panel's views were sought on the strengths and opportunities in the new geography.

Further and Higher Education offer to Businesses

- 2.6 Nav Chohan (Chair of the Leeds City Region Skills Network and Principal of Shipley College) and Prof Margaret House (Vice Chair of LCR Skills Network and Vice Chancellor of Leeds Trinity University) gave a presentation to the Employment and Skills Panel about how **Universities and Colleges** are responding to the current and future skills needs of businesses, and how they can work together with the Panel to address major challenges and opportunities.

Careers policy statement

- 2.7 A draft policy statement on **careers** was shared with the Panel for comment and approval.

Enterprise in Education

- 2.8 The **Enterprise Adviser Network** and the Combined Authority's Enterprise Coordinators are currently engaged with 177 (89%) secondary schools and colleges. The network has delivered over 165,000 employer encounters, with over a third of the encounters with pupil premium learners. This includes 14,036 pupil premium pupils who have had at least two employer encounters, against the annual target of 12,000.
- 2.9 The **#futuregoals** careers campaign and activities aim to raise awareness of careers opportunities in skills shortage and high growth sectors. Young people are the primary target audience for the marketing campaign, with parents/carers and teachers as the secondary audience, using the relevant social media channels for age profiles. The campaign continues to out-perform its reach targets. During March and April 2019 the campaign has reached 10,700 young people, parents/carers and educators through a targeted marketing campaign, 90 teachers through employer-led CPD sessions and the website has had over 30,000 unique users.
- 2.10 A **Raising Aspirations Pilot** was launched on 4 April to all secondary schools and colleges in or able to join the Leeds City Region Enterprise Adviser Network. The pilot aims to support an increase in activity to raise aspirations amongst disadvantaged pupils by strengthening engagement with employers, widening pupils' experiences of jobs beyond their home communities and engagement with young role models working in priority sectors, including apprentices. Colleges, secondary schools or consortia of secondary schools will be able to apply for grants ranging from £7,000 to £50,000. Applications

should be submitted to enterpriseadvisers@the-lep.com by 21 June 2019 for delivery in the academic year 2019/20.

- 2.11 A **Kirklees Careers Hub** has been established in response to low levels of employment, high NEET figures (young people not in education, employment or training), and a high proportion of hard to fill vacancies. The Careers Hub is making progress in supporting schools to achieve the Gatsby benchmarks of good careers information, advice and guidance. The average number of benchmarks achieved by the 34 secondary schools and Kirklees College in the Hub is 3.6, against a national average of 2.3. This includes four secondary schools fully achieving all Gatsby benchmarks, among only 31 nationally.
- 2.12 The Combined Authority has been successful in its application to the Careers and Enterprise Company for a pan-regional **Leeds City Region SEND Careers Hub** to support young people with special educational needs and disabilities to develop a better understanding of careers opportunities and routes into employment and to have meaningful interactions with employers. The Hub will commence delivery in September 2019.

Leeds City Region Employment Hub

- 2.13 The Combined Authority has now signed a Funding Agreement with the Department for Work and Pensions to deliver a £9m **Leeds City Region Employment Hub programme**, including £4.5m European Social Funding. The programme will be operational until 31 December 2021. Delivered through Local Authority partners, C&K Careers and Leeds Beckett University, the Employment Hub will offer:
- Enhanced centralised careers, information, advice and guidance.
 - Intensive support of young people in preparation for employment (including apprenticeships), further learning or self-employment.
 - Establishment of local Hubs in six Local Authority areas (Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, Wakefield and York (incorporating Craven, Harrogate and Selby) who will provide a business engagement and talent matching service, particularly in relation to creation of new apprenticeship opportunities (building on the success and learning of the original City Deal wave 1 Apprenticeship Hub programme).
- 2.14 The project will support 15 to 24 year olds and businesses of any size with a particular focus on engaging with businesses who have never had apprentices before, which will be enhanced by opportunities to access to the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE).

Apprenticeship Grant for Employers

- 2.15 The revised **Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE)** relaunched on 13 February 2019 with new criteria which extend the grant to businesses with up to 249 employees across all sectors. The maximum grant amount has been increased to £2,500 from £2,000.

- 2.16 Despite these changes, take-up of the grant remains low and the offer will therefore remain under review. Contributory factors may include national changes to the employer co-investment (business contribution towards an apprenticeship training) reducing from 10% to 5% from 1 April 2019 and the main intake/employment period for apprenticeships being during the summer term.

Skills Capital

- 2.17 An update on the **Skills Capital** programme was included in the papers for the March panel meeting. Since then:
- Leeds College of Building – Hunslet Road Phase II – construction has completed and snagging is being undertaken. The building is fully open and operational to students. Refurbishment works on the North Street Campus have been completed.
 - Leeds City College – Quarry Hill Project – construction is ongoing with the facility on schedule to open to students in September 2019. Works will commence in the summer to complete a partial refurbishment works to the Park Lane Campus as part of the overall project.
 - Kirklees College - Dewsbury Learning Quarter Project – Springfield Centre was successfully opened to students in September 2018. Pioneer House is on schedule to open September 2020.

Social Prescribing Pilot

- 2.18 An evaluation of the **Work Wellness Service** project in York and Calderdale is now underway. The York Work Wellness Service project has now completed.
- 2.19 The Halifax Work Wellness project has been established at Beechwood Medical Centre in a deprived area of Halifax, with delivery commencing in January 2019. In January and February, the Work Wellness Advisor supported 148 clients, including 85 in-work and 72 in receipt of benefits. These clients presented with a wide-range of complex needs affecting their ability to access and remain in work, with issues including: homelessness, housing, domestic abuse, bereavement, education issues, mental health, financial support, employment advice, emotional support, fitness and wellbeing, carers' support and alcohol addiction.

Sector Skills

- 2.20 Officers of the LEP/Combined Authority are working with Local Authority colleagues, the West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges, Screen Yorkshire and businesses to develop an offer to the **independent TV production sector** to address acute shortages of editors and producers, particularly in the context of the relocation of Channel 4's national headquarters to Leeds.

- 2.21 The **Discover Digital** campaign engages adults across the region, from graduates to career-changers, looking to retrain or upskill into a digital role and to improve their digital skills. The campaign continues to provide a dedicated website to inspire career choices for individuals, where they can engage with businesses and training opportunities. The discoverdigital.org.uk website has had almost 5,000 new visitors since its launch nine months ago.
- 2.22 The **[re]boot** programme, part-funded through European Social Fund, will target underemployed graduates, career changers, and returners to the labour market, giving them the chance to upskill and re-train to access careers in key growth and skills shortage sectors – Digital, Engineering and Construction. A contract with DWP as the Managing Authority for ESF has now been signed by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Leeds Trinity University is a partner in the programme, and will commence training – including in production skills for the independent production sector – in May 2019. Another delivery partner is being procured.

Delivery Agreements

- 2.23 As reported at the last LEP Board meeting, formal reviews have been undertaken with the seven further education (FE) colleges in West Yorkshire against their **Delivery Agreement** commitments. The report recording the outcomes and findings from reviews will be published once the politically restricted period (“Purdah”) has ended.
- 2.24 Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe has invited Principals and representatives from the seven FE institutions to a roundtable discussion in June, following publication of the report, to consider next steps, future actions and collaborative working.

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 implications associated with this paper.

6. External Consultees

- 6.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 That the report of the work of the Employment and Skills Panel be noted.

8. Background Documents

None.

9. Appendices

None.