

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PANEL
HELD ON THURSDAY, 30 MAY 2019 AT COMMITTEE ROOM A,
WELLINGTON HOUSE, 40-50 WELLINGTON STREET, LEEDS**

Present:

Rashik Parmar MBE (Chair)
Karen Milner
Mark Roberts
Glynn Robinson
Amanda Stainton
Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe
Councillor Patrick Mulligan

IBM
Paths and Progress
Beer Hawk Ltd
BJSS
Portakabin
Bradford Council
North Yorkshire County Council

In attendance:

Nav Chohan
Diane Towler
Tim Thornton
Alan Reiss
Ian Smyth
Michelle Burton
Peter Glover
Megan Hemingway

Leeds City Region Skills Network
Department of Work and Pensions
LCR Skills Network
West Yorkshire Combined Authority
West Yorkshire Combined Authority
West Yorkshire Combined Authority
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West Yorkshire Combined Authority

42. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Darren Byford, Councillor Imran Khan, Councillor Naheed Mather, Councillor Carol Runciman, Nick Bowen, Peter Duffy and Margaret House.

43. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests

There were no pecuniary interests declared by members at the meeting.

44. Exempt Information - Exclusion of the press and public

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

45. Minutes of the meeting of the Employment and Skills Panel held on 28 February 2019

Resolved: That the minutes of the Employment and Skills Panel held on 28 February 2019 be approved and signed by the Chair.

46. Chair's update

The Chair provided an update on changes in membership and the progress of a number of key topics.

Membership

The Chair advised a number of private sector members were coming to the end of their term of office, namely Peter Duffy, Tom Keeney, Karen Milner and Beverley Parrish. The Chair thanked those members for their contributions to the Panel.

It was noted that a new private sector member, Martin Booth, would be joining the Panel once appointments had been confirmed at the Combined Authority's annual meeting on the 27 June

Policy and Protocols

The Chair drew to the attention of members the new Conflicts of Interest Policy and Protocol and asked that they read and adhere to this.

Future Ready Skills Commission

The Chair confirmed that a meeting had taken place on 15 May 2019, which Nav Chohan, had attended. It was noted that progress was being made and the enthusiasm for this was evident at the meeting.

Personas

The Chair was keen to continue developing personas although it was proving difficult to involve practitioners in this work.

ESF Regional Bid

The Chair confirmed that a bid had been submitted in response to an ESIF 'Skills for Growth' of £2.9 million. If successful the activity would commence in January.

47. Local Industrial Strategy Development

The Panel was provided with an update on progress to develop a Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and to seek input on the strengths and opportunities in the new geography.

In early 2018, the LEP Board and the Combined Authority agreed that work would begin on the development of a Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) for Leeds

City Region. Sitting at the heart of a new, long term strategy policy framework, the emerging LIS will focus on bold steps aimed at boosting productivity and driving both inclusive and clean growth living for a post-2030 economy.

Alan Reiss, Director of Policy, Strategy and Communications, clarified that although talks were still ongoing with North Yorkshire in relation to the geography, it had subsequently been decided for the purposes of developing the LIS the current LEP will be working in the context of the Leeds City Region geography alone.

It was confirmed that the call for evidence had been completed and there would now be further external commissions to provide more evidence and to form an expert panel. The development of the strategy was now moving into consultation phase with the districts, who would advise who should attend.

A presentation was given to the Panel as to the Leeds City Region Economic Assessment. Highlights being:

- There is a productivity deficit issue in the region
- There is a link between skills being low and low productivity
- There has been a growth in higher paid workers more recently
- Skills shortages exist in specific areas; professional/ technical /engineers/ digital/ nurses/ construction and building.

The main message was that workforce development is key.

It was noted that in the context of the new single LEP, collaboration was still taking place on overlapping areas but it made sense to provide a focus on the specific regions separately, before then bringing it together to avoid a dilution of key regional issues and focal points.

Members asked what the role of the Employment and Skills Panel was in relation to the Local Industrial Strategy. It was confirmed that the Panel will define what shapes skills and employment, with the Skills Commission work overlapping in its development.

The Panel suggested that as similar issues exist in all Northern cities regarding the skills and productivity link there should be a joined up approach and asked whether existing work already been done by other cities. It was acknowledged that there was a need to attract the right businesses to the region. Members also suggested it would be beneficial to make existing sectors better skilled. For example developing a clearer development career pathway in healthcare to enable a worker to progress from being a carer role to a nurse.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That the Panel's comments and suggestions be noted.

- (iii) That the Panel recommended the Combined Authority endorse the proposed way forward.

48. Further and Higher Education Offer to Businesses

Tim Thornton from Huddersfield University representing the LCR Skills Network attended on behalf of Professor Margaret House to give a presentation on the Further and Higher Education offer to businesses.

Key points were:

- There are three gold rated institutions in the LEP area; Leeds, York and Huddersfield
- The LEP area accounts for roughly 20% of the UK student population
- There are opportunities to work collaboratively
- There is a net inflow of graduates in the region
- Work based learning frameworks are key

The Chair commented that there should be links to industry to enable skills development and that the research agenda needs to align to the Region's ambitions.

Members commented that innovation and skills are also important and are often missed. They felt that innovation requires skilled employees and a strong flow of graduates, and that connections with businesses should be viewed as 'anchors for growth' rather than purely skills development to facilitate economic growth.

It was noted that Universities were setting targets themselves as to annual business interactions and would welcome targets from the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). The issue of Intellectual Property (IP) rights was of concern as often this was a barrier to sharing information and therefore a barrier to innovation.

The Panel was presented with a report from Nav Chohan, Chair of the LCR Skills Network and Principal of Shipley College, about how Colleges are responding to the current and future skills needs of businesses. The paper offered suggestions for how both Universities and Colleges may work together with the Employment and Skills Panel to address major challenges and opportunities.

Main points highlighted were:

- The delivery agreements with the seven further education colleges in West Yorkshire were key to improving alignment with and responsiveness to economic demand.
- When students see a clear pathway to a job via a course they are likely to sign up.
- The ESIF funded 'Let's Talk Real Skills' project delivered by the

Combined Authority is to define a set of sectors that will be explored in detail. The sector's career routes will be defined in order that pathways to employment can be created with the appropriate companies and individuals.

Resolved:

- (i) That the presentation contents and Panel comments be noted.
- (ii) That the contents of the report and Panel comments be noted.

49. Careers Policy Statement

The Panel was presented with a report on the draft policy statement on All Age Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance.

At the September 2018 meeting of the Employment and Skills Panel it was agreed that the refreshed Employment and Skills Plan will consist of thematic policy statements, each of which will be separately developed and approved by the Panel. The statements will ultimately be presented via an online resource (currently under development) that will incorporate the LEP's entire policy framework, providing a more agile and flexible system which will be easier to update and will be accessible to the public. Two policy statements have been approved by the Panel to date, relating to higher level skills and apprenticeships.

The Panel was asked to comment on and approve the draft policy statement on careers.

The Panel welcomed the draft overall but asked for a number of amendments to be made, and for the policy statement to then be re-circulated for approval.

The Panel also included:

- Consideration to be given to whether the policy statement was sufficiently ambitious.
- Emphasis to be placed on the role of employers.
- A clearer offer to employers on how to engage with education.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That the draft policy statement on careers be amended and re-circulated to the Panel for endorsement.

50. Employment and Skills Programmes

The Panel was provided with a report on the progress of the delivery of Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership - led employment and skills programmes in the Leeds City Region and was asked to note and comment on the report.

Enterprise in Education

The Panel noted that there were currently 13 staff working in the Enterprise Advisor Network with businesses and schools.

The campaign 'Give an Hour' was targeting businesses who had never been involved before.

Leeds City Region Employment Hub

Members were provided with contact details for local Employment Hubs.

Apprenticeship Grant for Employers

The revised grant (revised following feedback from the Panel) was re-launched on 13 February 2019. It was reported that demand had still continued to be low and the grant would remain under review due to the low take-up.

Skills Capital

The Panel was asked to note that no further funding was available and lobbying continued for more investment.

Social Prescribing Pilot

Members were informed that an evaluation of the completed Work Wellness Service project in York was underway and initial indications are that it appears to have been a success.

The Halifax Work Wellness project had now been established and to date was looking positive.

The Panel queried whether the project should be evaluated with all other social prescribing pilots taking place, as the issue of doctors dealing with non-medical issues was widespread. Michelle Burton agreed to action this.

Sector Skills

It was noted that the reboot programme which was part-funded by the European Social Fund (ESIF) was now progressing after initial delays, with contracts being signed. The programme was intended to stimulate up-skilling of, and new careers for, adults. Specifically to retrain in skills shortage areas.

Delivery Arrangements

The Panel was informed that Cllr Hinchcliffe had invited Principles and representatives from the seven FE institutions to a roundtable discussion in June to agree next steps and future working based on the outcomes of reviewing their Delivery Agreements.

Members were keen to ensure that colleagues responded to the skills needs in the creative section.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That Michelle Burton explore the possibility of evaluating the Work Wellness projects against other social prescribing projects.

51. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 12 September 2019 at 2pm in Committee Room A, Wellington House Leeds.