
Report to: Employment and Skills Panel

Date: 27 November 2019

Subject: **Skills Advisory Panel governance arrangements**

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

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1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1. This report seeks approval for proposed changes to the governance arrangements of the Employment and Skills Panel to reflect the requirements of its Skills Advisory Panel remit.

2. Information

- 2.1. Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs) have been initiated by government and their purpose is to bring together local employers and skills providers in order to develop a shared understanding of local skills needs and to define clear skills priorities. These deliberations are under-pinned by an evidence-based approach grounded in high quality labour market analysis.
- 2.2. At the Employment and Skills Panel meeting of the 28 February 2019 it was agreed in principle that the ESP should take on the SAP functions as part of its existing remit, since they were largely within the scope of its role, and the terms of reference for the Panel were subsequently amended by the Combined Authority to reflect this. Small changes to the governance arrangements of the ESP, including the addition of a voluntary sector representative to the Panel, were also agreed.
- 2.3. As part of a formal review of each LEP's approach to SAP implementation, the Department for Education has provided feedback on our proposed governance arrangements and identified two further areas where it believed action was required to meet the standards set out for SAPs. For Leeds City Region these were as follows:

- I. More detail to be included in the ESP's Terms of Reference or an appendix to this, regarding the specific SAP responsibilities that the ESP will undertake.
 - II. There is a need for more education and training providers to be members of the Panel to inform the skills discussion and to provide a better balance with the number of employer and local government representatives. Providers also need to be voting members to give them equal status to employer members.
- 2.4. There are currently 6 employers, 8 councillors and 4 non-voting education and training providers represented on the Employment and Skills Panel. Our recently appointed representative from the voluntary and community sector is also closely involved in education and training.
- 2.5. DfE have accepted that these issues may be addressed as follows
- I. **ESP to approve a protocol that clarifies the ESP's role and responsibilities as a Skills Advisory Panel.** This can be approved with immediate effect by the Panel and further adapted, amended or developed by the ESP as and when required. The text of the proposed protocol is provided as appendix A to this paper.
 - II. **To revise the current membership of ESP to include two additional education and training provider representative as a non-voting member.** DfE have accepted that the current practice is to appoint non-voting representatives of organisations, rather than individuals themselves, which provides the organisations with a degree of flexibility in terms of who attends. They have also noted that in practice to date decisions have been made by consensus rather than by a formal vote.
- 2.6. It is proposed that the additional members be appointed from the membership of the Leeds City Region Skills Network, with Nav Chohan, who is chair of the Network, to advise on the appropriate process for making these appointments.

3 Financial Implications

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

4 Legal Implications

- 4.1 The membership of the ESP is a matter to be determined by the Combined Authority.

5 Staffing Implications

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

6 External Consultees

6.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

7 Recommendations

7.1 It is recommended that Employment and Skills Panel members approve the draft protocol setting out the ESP's specific responsibilities with regard to its role as the Skills Advisory Panel for Leeds City Region.

7.2 It is also recommended that ESP recommend that the Combined Authority revise the membership of ESP to include 2 additional non-voting members who will represent education and training providers.

8 Background Documents

None.

9 Appendices

Draft protocol setting out the Employment and Skills Panel's specific role and responsibilities as a Skills Advisory Panel.