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**Report to:** Employment and Skills Panel

**Date:** 19 June 2020

**Subject:** **Employment and Skills Plan**

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## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Panel on the workplan to refresh the Employment and Skills plan.
- 1.2 A presentation on the key elements of the refreshed plan will be given, and the Panel is asked to comment in order to inform the development of the plan.

## **2 Information**

- 2.1 The current Employment and Skills Plan runs until the end of this year. Since it was written significant progress has been achieved. There have also been significant change and uncertainty in the skills landscape, including devolution of the Adult Education Budget (AEB), the economic impact of Covid-19 and the impact of the UK's exit from the European Union.
- 2.2 The Panel agreed at its last meeting to refresh the Employment and Skills Plan, and agreed to consider the following to fulfil its duties as a Skills Advisory Panel (SAP):
- Proposals from the Future-Ready Skills Commission
  - Business Plan priorities from employment and skills programmes
  - Framework for proposed Employment and Skills Plan
  - Forward workplan for consultation on Employment and Skills Plan
  - Economic Recovery / Covid-19 response
  - Labour Market Intelligence
- 2.3 In line with the new Strategic Economic Framework (SEF) that is due to replace the Strategic Economic Plan, the refreshed Employment and Skills Plan will need to remain dynamic and flexible to both address the current and

future skills needs. It will also need to consider how it contributes to the Combined Authority's four priorities;

- Boosting Productivity
- Enabling Inclusive Growth
- Delivering 21st Century Transport
- Tackling the Climate Emergency

2.4 The refreshed plan will also need to take into account the ambitious devolution deal agreed for West Yorkshire including devolution of Adult Education Budget, and government consideration of the findings of the Future-Ready Skills Commission, as well as recognition of the well-regarded Delivery Agreements in place across the City Region. A full list of the skills elements of the devolution deal are included in the document at Appendix A.

2.5 The refreshed Employment and Skills plan will therefore set out the City Region's vision and ambitions in relation to its priorities, as well as the actions that we and our partners can take over the next five years, to 2025.

2.6 The refreshed plan will cover the geography of West Yorkshire, while also having regard for programmes and projects that involve partnership work across the functional economic area of the region, in particular European-funded projects with delivery in York and North Yorkshire.

2.7 A consultation based on the existing priorities and proposed emerging themes will take place over Summer. Feedback will be used to inform the update of the plan and will be shared for discussion at the Employment and Skills Panel meeting in September. The plan will be published in early 2021.

2.8 Current themes and priorities in the existing Skills Plan includes:

- Raising the Bar on High Level Skills
- More and Better Apprenticeships
- Great Education Connected to Business
- Employability, Accessing Jobs, and Realising Potential
- Building Workforce Skills and Attracting Talent

Many of these continue to be a priority for the region, despite the progress that has been made over the last four years.

2.9 It will be also be necessary to consider both short- and long-term priorities for the Region, and also incorporate plans being developed to support recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic alongside an ambitious five-year vision.

2.10 The proposed timescales and plans for the refresh are as follows:

- Stage 1: Scoping and appraising current priorities (May – July 2020)
- Stage 2: Consultation with key stakeholders and partners, and open consultation (July – September 2020)
- Stage 3: Preparation and sign-off of the refreshed plan (October – December 2020)

- 2.11 An appraisal of the priorities in the existing Employment and Skills Plan has been undertaken and is included at Appendix A. The first part of the document details the strategic work undertaken on the employment and skills agenda, including the commitments secured in the devolution deal. This is followed by examples of Combined Authority and partner programmes and projects. The list is not exhaustive but has been collated with input from key partners ahead of a full consultation programme. The second part of Appendix A details the full list of priorities from the current plan and a current position statement.
- 2.12 Slides summarising the work of the employment and plan skills refresh is included at Appendix B and will be presented at the meeting.
- 2.13 The Panel is asked to consider the following questions:
- Is there anything else that should be considered as part of the scope?
  - Does the vision statement capture the ambition for employment and skills in the City Region?
  - What are the key priorities that must be included in the plan?
  - What are the key elements that must be included in the plan?
  - How do we ensure the relevant priorities for the SEF are addressed in the Employment and Skills Plan?

### **3 Financial Implications**

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

### **4 Legal Implications**

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

### **5 Staffing Implications**

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

### **6 External Consultees**

- 6.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

### **7 Recommendations**

- 7.1 The Panel is asked to note and comment on approach to refreshing the Employment and Skills Plan.
- 7.2 The Panel is asked to comment on key elements and priorities for a revised Employment and Skills Plan.

**8 Background Documents**

None

**9 Appendices**

Presentation

Appendix A – Review of priorities from Employment and Skills Plan 2016-2020

Appendix B – Presentation on refreshed Employment and Skills Plan