

Appendix: Economic Recovery Plan - Panel discussion summaries

Employment and Skills Panel

The following opportunities were highlighted by the panel:

- Doing things differently and levelling the playing field for work experience and work placement opportunities delivered through virtual means allowing employers to facilitate placements for a greater numbers of students.
- Change how the apprenticeship levy and other existing skills funding can be used and as a tool for economic recovery
- Focus on supporting SMEs with the entrepreneurial skills needed to ensure business resilience including better use of skills in the workplace. There is an immediate need to upskill the existing workforce with digital skills.
- Defining the West Yorkshire proposition as a place to (re) locate your business as recruitment and working practices change

The panel also highlighted some of the critical needs in recovery

- Financial support for the FE /HE sector which is experiencing dramatically falling learner numbers which increase competition for learners and will impact of the viability of some providers
- Long-term unemployed will be pushed further from the labour market as competition for jobs is increased and this should be closely monitored, and existing plans e.g. Skills Commission recommendations should be implemented
- Digital inclusion is key barrier for many to participate in the labour market and access training; both support for learning providers to adapt to blended models of delivery is needed as well as support for individuals to have the right IT equipment and develop the skills to use it.
- Monitoring of health impacts should be included in the recovery plan from young people who through previous recessions have suffered negative impacts both economically and on their well-being to those long -term unemployed, many with complex health needs, who will be pushed further from the labour market
- Support for virtual placements and coordination of employer support should be regional to support delivery of qualifications including new T Levels
- Well-being and mental health support is need especially for those young people who are having a very different learning experience to previous years and /or may have faced additional challenges as part of social distancing measures. This will impact on the performance and social engagement.

Business, Innovation and Growth Panel

The following opportunities were highlighted by the panel:

- Building on the success of the productivity pilot that has successfully delivered across two windows and will be important to help businesses that can improve and grow over the recovery period
- A greater emphasis on developing business leadership and progressive business cultures
- Building on the strengths of the region's universities and promoting of innovation, recognising the current challenges faced by HEIs and the important role innovation will play in build business resilience.
- Cybersecurity is a potential growing market opportunity for the city region, where we have many good businesses already, but need to also get more young people interested in careers in cybersecurity.
- There is an opportunity to make the most of what partners are doing to support delivery in the plan
- Capitalise on the Asian business community, and the potential opportunities these can unlock in terms of international trade

The panel also highlighted some of the critical needs in recovery:

- Apprenticeships – many businesses are not in a position to recruit apprenticeships, which is having a negative effect on potential applicants as well as to the training sector
- Recognising the difficult position of certain sectors, including arts and culture and retail, hospitality and leisure, and thinking about what appropriate support could be provided
- The end of the transition period having a big impact on businesses, particularly those in international supply chains and exporters – we still want to look to promote the regional overseas and to encourage exporting.
- The plan should look to outline the measures of success in a clear way to help partners to see what contribution they need to make to fulfil the plan
- Digital divide has shown its importance in response, and will be important for the recovery – including for resilient supply chains
- Have to ensure that health inequalities issues are written across the plan – as health is such an important determinant also of productivity

Inclusive Growth Panel

- The spotlight on **inclusion and inequalities** has never been greater:
 - The sudden economic downturn and an uncertain recovery has created the potential for a lost generation of young people - unable to get into the labour market and becoming NEET.
 - Over 50's are leaving the jobs market permanently and prematurely;
 - Communities disproportionately affected in terms of health and economic impacts eg BAME groups, and deprived places/ neighbourhoods.
 - Important role played by the voluntary and community sector (VCS) recognised in terms of connecting with the people and communities that need the most assistance, eg people on zero hours contracts, deprived communities, and faith groups. The role of the VCS should be to ensure the most excluded benefit from recovery.
 - Rise of global social unrest, including through the Black Lives Matter movement
- Agreement that a step-change regional **action plan** is needed:
 - Recognises interlocking priorities – eg wellbeing, skills, connectivity and good work – as set out in the draft IG Framework.
 - Targets a few key priorities with high impact is better than ‘jam spreading’
 - Learns from previous best practices, eg 1980/90s style targeted interventions, designed around specific groups and excluded neighbourhoods (SRB, City/Rural Challenge, LEGI etc) with a view to creating new enterprise and jobs within communities.
 - Delivers supply side programmes (eg skills) needed, not only more infrastructure investment – eg training support for furloughed workers soon to be made unemployed.
 - Seeks devolution of national programmes – eg support for young people.
 - Focuses on job retention – it is much harder to create new ones – and mindful of the risk of communities being left behind.
 - To fulfil its potential role, the 3rd sector will need appropriate support and investment to ensure resilience and sustainability – this has proved challenging for Districts, and clarity is needed on any regional role, eg regional voice and co-ordination in order to promote learning and resilience and provide a strategic interface with public and private sectors.
 - Social unrest has a negative impact on productivity – plan needs a stronger drive for social justice.
 - Agreed the draft Economic Recovery Plan represents a good starting point – need to ensure an Inclusive Growth programme has dedicated regional funding, not just funding for the IG aspects of other priorities.

Green Economy Panel

The following opportunities were highlighted by the panel:

- The arts and cultural sector make a big difference in terms of livelihoods and wellbeing. Inclusion needs to be diversity of viewpoints and experience.
- Reflect more on what resilience means – opportunities for local / regional businesses to help make the supply chain more resilient with less dependence on global interests.
- A big opportunity for widespread change to the economic system to address social, health and environmental weaknesses/inequalities. Also need to focus on national questions around funding, tax structures etc. The response needs to be a combination of systemic change and getting people back on track.
- See success in terms of wider prosperity/social indicators rather than GDP.
- Focus on marginalised groups allowing them to access digital opportunities. How do we make tendering processes less onerous and build local economies better - opportunity to reframe climate emergency.
- Focus on inclusive transport that meets needs of different people, particularly facilitating short, local journeys.
- Work closely with infrastructure providers (utilities, networks) on projects of national importance e.g. to accelerate low carbon and whole system projects.
- High quality cycling infrastructure, embracing electric bikes.
- People working/staying at home more often will increase domestic emissions, underlining the importance of energy efficiency and retrofit projects.
- Construction sector is a key economic and employment driver, which can be reshaped to focus on carbon impact. Lots of opportunities around retrofit, new materials and new technologies (e.g. heat pumps), which to be successful needs to be done at scale. Needs to be backed up with a focus on skills.
- Ensuring a 'Just Transition' is critical.