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

Date: 17 November 2020

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, and update on devolution of Adult Education Budget (AEB) and the Employment and Skills plan refresh.

2. Information

- 2.1 The panel met on 14 September 2020.

Employment and Skills Programmes

- 2.2 The **Enterprise Adviser Network** has become a virtual network during the lockdown period. Due to school and college closures, employer encounter activity was not been possible, however as schools and colleges adjust to alternative ways of working this work is now progressing in the new academic year.
- 2.3 During the spring/summer lockdown period the team focused on providing schools with much-needed online careers support for young people at key transition points in their education.
- 2.4 The **Kirklees Careers Hub** delivered a number of events via virtual platforms including:
- Preparing for Ofsted - CPD. Delivered to 29 Careers Leaders and SLT from schools and colleges. The event was delivered in collaboration Calderdale and Kirklees Careers (C&K).
 - A Virtual Kirklees Careers Hub CEIAG Network Meeting.
 - Teacher CPD delivered to Careers Leaders and SLT supported by a Cornerstone employer and the Advanced Mathematics Support Programme.

- 2.5 A targeted **FutureGoals** marketing campaign has continued over the summer period. The all age website has evolved and now has specific resources based on the different audiences, meaning a more targeted and structured approach can be taken.
- 2.6 Improvements have been made to the [FutureGoals education and training](#) page to support young people predominantly aged 16-19 in our region who may be at risk/already are NEET (not in education, employment or training). This includes links to local support including the Employment Hubs, National Careers Service exam helpline and The Prince's Trust as well as information about colleges, sixth forms, FE, universities and apprenticeships in our region and information if the young person wishes to get a job or start their own business.
- 2.7 [FutureGoals Remote](#) launched between May and July in response to COVID-19. The resources offer a series of brand new free interactive activities to help young people develop employability skills from home during the lockdown. The activities feature in-demand skills identified by employers in the latest Leeds City Region [Labour Market Information Report](#), including digital, communication, problem solving and creative skills, and are designed to help young people to develop their employability and careers awareness. The FutureGoals Remote webpage has had 2,115 visits since launch and 584 downloads of the resources.
- 2.8 The Combined Authority's adult re-training programme, **[re]boot**, is part-funded through European Social Fund (ESF) and gives adults the chance to upskill, gain new skills/qualifications and improve their employment options particularly within key regional sectors, focused on construction, digital, manufacturing & engineering and the fast growing creative sector. Since its launch in November 2019, the programme has supported over 200 individuals.
- 2.9 Procurement activity has taken place to appoint an additional provider/s with deliver.
- 2.10 During the restrictions we have undertaken targeted marketing to promote [re]boot to graduates, furloughed staff, and more recently those unemployed through COVID-19. Between 1 May and 30 September 2020, the [re]boot web page has had 9,801 unique views and 10,932 page views/hits.
- 2.11 The Apprenticeship **Levy Transfer Service** was launched on 1 November 2019. Levy payers initially paused discussions on Levy Transfer in the spring but many are now keen to resume this activity with a view to utilising unspent levy payments to support apprenticeships as part of economic recovery planning. We are currently in discussions with a number of large national and local businesses and announced our first Levy Transfer from Portakabin in September. LEP Board members are asked to encourage their networks to engage with the team via <https://www.the-lep.com/business-support/skills-and-training/apprenticeship-levy-support/>

- 2.12 The £9m part-ESF funded **LCR Employment Hub** programme, launched in January 2019, is being delivered in partnership with Local Authorities and will support over 6,000 young people aged 15-24 to access apprenticeships and employment. In April 2020, the Employment Hub was re-launched to respond to the COVID-19 crisis with a wider client group. The Employment Hub can support people to seek employment and apprenticeships (including furloughed or redundant workers) and can support businesses to recruit. Since the relaunch in April to date of writing the report we have had 452 enquiries from individuals, mainly who are unemployed, and recruitment support requests from 59 businesses.
- 2.13 A marketing campaign on the support offered via the Employment Hub programme launched in September in anticipation of an increase in redundancies due to the winddown of the furlough scheme. In addition, the LEP are promoting the Kick Start programme for 16-24 year olds, referring businesses who are keen to offer job opportunities to one of the many Gateway agencies.
- 2.14 The **Skills for Growth** programme, supporting businesses to engage with the full breadth of the education system from primary schools to universities, has officially started. A team of ten have been recruited, who will work closely with the local authorities' business facing teams to engage a wide range of businesses to connect with our education offer.

Devolution of the Adult Education Budget

- 2.15 The work to prepare for **AEB** devolution has moved on a pace with the following key milestones taking place:
- AEB Strategy was approved by the Combined Authority on 4 September
 - A provider briefing event was held on 17 September where we had over 113 attendees, 80% of these were independent training providers with the remaining attendees, from colleges and local authorities
 - Stage 1 of the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for contracts of services went live on 28 October.
- 2.16 Achieving readiness by 1 August 2021 is heavily contingent upon the projected timescales agreed with DfE being met. Key workstreams to deliver this continue at a pace and include legal and procurement preparation (drafting funding rules, and contracts and agreements), consultation and policy work (to ensure that the approach is fully consulted on and that this consultation is accessible); and systems development (ensuring that the ICT, Finance and Data arrangements are in place to support contracting and payments).
- 2.17 Next steps for AEB:
- Commissioning for 2021/22 provision (October 2020 – March 2021)
 - West Yorkshire allocation confirmed by DfE (March 2021)

- Delivery and management begins (1 August 2021)

Employment and Skills Plan

- 2.18 The work on the Employment and Skills Plan refresh continues with consultation taking place with ESP members and externally during the summer. It was anticipated that the plan would be signed off during the autumn. However due to anticipated policy changes and reforms around the employment and skills agenda during the winter the ESP will be briefed on new timelines and approach at their November 2020 meeting.

Green Skills

- 2.19 The Panel considered a report to update on Green Skills/Carbon Pathway work which was provided to start a conversation on its roles in tackling the Climate Emergency. The Panel was asked to consider the actions in the refreshed Employment and Skills plan that can address the Climate Emergency. A roundtable discussion is to be held in November to identify the actions that need to be taken with key skills partners in the region to tackle this agenda.

2.20 Employment and Skills Policy

There have been a plethora of announcements during 2020 about support for employment and skills being impacted by COVID. The Combined Authority have regular discussions with local and national colleagues at both DfE and DWP about local response and provision. We also have ongoing collaborative discussions around future policies, for example introduction of the National Skills Fund and the level 3 entitlement from April 2021.

3. Clean Growth Implications

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

4. Financial Implications

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

5. Legal Implications

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

6. Staffing Implications

- 6.1 There are no implications associated with this paper.

7. External Consultees

- 7.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 That the report of the work of the Employment and Skills Panel be noted.
- 8.2 That the progress towards devolution of AEB is noted.
- 8.3 That the work towards the refresh of the Employment and Skills plan refresh is noted.

9. Background Documents

- 9.1 None.

10. Appendices

- 10.1 None.