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**Report to:** Inclusive Growth and Public Policy Panel

**Date:** 8 March 2021

**Subject:** **Employment and Skills Framework**

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## **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 To seek the views of the Inclusive Growth and Public Policy Panel on the region's refreshed Employment and Skills Framework.

## **2. Information**

- 2.1 This report provides members with an update on refreshing the region's skills and employment plan, which was last considered by the Panel in September 2020. At its meeting on 24 February 2020, the LEP Board endorsed an approach of using a flexible framework to promote the region's approach to promoting Employment and Skills, including high level priorities, indicative actions and a sectoral focus, whilst allowing more detailed plans to be formed in response to events and opportunities, including emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Review of existing policy**

- 2.2 The review of the existing Employment and Skill Plan has included:
- Discussions with key partners and LEP panels, and a comprehensive analysis of progress against the existing priorities.
  - An extensive consultation and engagement phase on the strengths, challenges and refreshed priorities with over 200 key stakeholders and partners including employers, business intermediaries, Local Authorities, universities, colleges, students, headteachers and VCSE organisations.
  - An online Your Voice survey ran for four weeks in August and September, receiving 113 responses.

## **Vision**

- 2.3 West Yorkshire is the largest labour market in the Northern Powerhouse, with strengths in manufacturing, financial and professional services, and the rapidly developing fields of digital and healthcare technology. Our diversity, rich cultural heritage and geography makes West Yorkshire one of the country's best places to live, study and work.
- 2.4 The Framework vision is for West Yorkshire to be a world-leading region where investment in skills, training and education, and support from employers go hand in hand to create a diverse, inclusive, and highly skilled workforce with good jobs, leading to sustained improvements in the quality of life for all.
- 2.5 We want West Yorkshire to be a place where:
- There are no barriers to people taking up, progressing and succeeding in learning and work, and where they are supported into good employment.
  - Employers recognise the value of a diverse workforce and invest in their talent to develop the skills that will improve productivity and support progression in the workplace.
  - Individuals value lifelong learning and are able to make decisions about their development, informed by quality, relevant careers information based on the reality on the ground.
  - World class teaching and training provides flexible learning opportunities that align to the strategic needs of the local economy

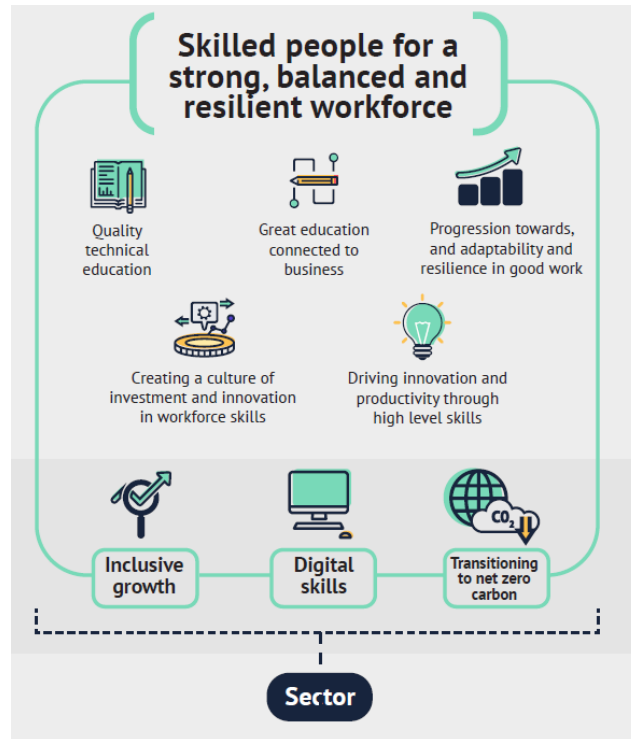
## **Refreshed Priorities**

- 2.6 Following the review, consultation and engagement phases, the Employment and Skills Panel agreed that the five main priorities remained broadly correct, subject to being refreshed to capture some of the main changes in landscape and to ensure they are future-proof. The priorities have been refreshed as follows:

<b>CURRENT</b>	<b>PROPOSED</b>
More and better apprenticeships	Quality technical education
Great education connected to business	Great education connected to business
Employability, accessing jobs and realising potential	Progression towards, and adaptability and resilience in good work
Building workforce skills and attracting talent	Creating a culture of investment in workforce skills
Raising the bar on high level skills	Driving innovation and productivity through high level skills

- 2.7 In addition to these priorities, the Framework has three cross cutting themes:
- Inclusive growth;
  - Digital skills; and
  - Working towards net zero.

**Figure: Overview of the draft Framework**



- 2.8 The Framework also aims to address the key skills and employment barriers in each of our main standard industrial sectors, rather than identifying key sectors as in the previous plan. This will allow a broader engagement with employers as well as the City Region being better able to respond to the changing needs of sectors, particularly in the economic climate created by COVID-19 and EU Exit.
- 2.9 The proposed Framework, including relevant Labour Market Information, is set out for information in Appendix 1.
- 2.10 Several of the current LEP existing skills and employment related programmes support Inclusive Growth:

#### **Careers and retraining**

- **[re]boot** offers over 18-year-olds the chance to upskill, gain new skills/qualifications and enter employment within shortage sectors
- **#futuregoals** is an all-age careers platform and campaign that showcases jobs and careers in a range of sectors, created with employers.

#### **Education offer**

- **Enterprise Adviser Network (EAN)** works with 185 secondary schools and colleges to improve the destinations of young people.
- **Careers Hubs** enhance and target activity in Bradford and Kirklees as well as institutions across West Yorkshire with high SEND pupils.

- The pilot **Raising Aspiration Fund** has created employer co-designed provision targeted at students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- **Skills for Growth** programme enables SMEs to access education providers in a simple one stop approach with localised delivery.

### **Employment Offer**

- **Employment Hubs** deliver in partnership with Local Authorities to support young people aged 15-24 to access additional learning, apprenticeships and/or employment. They also engage businesses to support their workforce development including talent matching to job and apprenticeship vacancies. This programme has been extended in response to the COVID-19 crisis.
- The **Apprenticeship Levy Support service** helps businesses to either use their levy funds to recruit their own apprentices or transfer their unspent levy to other businesses seeking apprenticeship funding.

2.11 The Panel is requested to consider the opportunities for the Framework to maximise inclusive growth, including how best to:

- Address any gaps in the current provision of skills and employment support described at 2.10;
- Coordinate and provide access to training, work placements, transitional work, and job matching for disadvantaged unemployed people with eg SMEs;
- Remove barriers and ensure equality of access so that more disadvantaged learners can progress to higher levels of learning;
- Enable equal participation in the take-up of careers education for people of all ages, backgrounds, and career stage to support personal ambitions;
- Undertake outreach and engagement with disadvantaged groups, including through employer engagement in schools;
- Track the destinations of our young people, including those leaving care and at risk of becoming 'NEET'; and
- Target skills measures, eg for specific sectors, and young people with special educational needs.

### **Next Steps**

2.12 The Combined Authority will consider the Framework for endorsement at the meeting on 9 March. Subsequent publication of the Framework will follow, subject to purdah restrictions.

## **3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications**

3.1 The Employment and Skills Framework is designed to ensure that all skills programme development considers contributions to tackling the climate emergency and our ambitious target to be carbon neutral by 2038, and working towards net zero is a cross cutting theme in the Framework.

#### **4. Inclusive Growth Implications**

- 4.1 The Framework identifies Inclusive Growth as one of three cross-cutting themes, and is designed to align and support the delivery of the Inclusive Growth Framework.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

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

#### **6. Legal Implications**

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

#### **7. Staffing Implications**

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

#### **8. External Consultees**

- 8.1 Over 300 stakeholders were consulted as part of the plan's development, including a Your Voice survey. The consultation and the results of the survey are published at [www.yourvoice.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/esp](http://www.yourvoice.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/esp)

#### **9. Recommendations**

- 9.1 The Panel is asked to discuss the Employment and Skills Framework and its potential to drive inclusive growth, to inform the future development of the actions and interventions that will deliver the vision and priorities identified.

#### **10. Background Documents**

None.

#### **11. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Employment and Skills Framework