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**Report to:** Employment and Skills Committee

**Date:** 23 January 2023

**Subject:** **Employment and Skills Programme Development and Future Delivery**

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Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

## 1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an update on the development of future funding priorities and programmes. This includes an update to the committee on:
- Future employment and skills programme pipeline
  - The Mayor's Green Jobs Taskforce including the outcomes of its commissioned research on green jobs for West Yorkshire. The views of the Committee are welcomed. Particularly with respect to commenting on the draft recommendations in the Taskforce's final report.
  - Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) and its development in West Yorkshire.
  - The launch of the Digital Skills Plan and the next steps towards the formation of the Local Digital Partnership.

## 2. Information

### Future Investment of Employment and Skills Programmes

- 2.1 In line with the priorities in the West Yorkshire Investment Strategy, Investment Priority 2; People and Skills current and future skills programmes are being developed to allow flexibility to respond to a changing labour market and funding sources. Thematic skills packages are in development and to enable delivery to happen at pace, a phased business case will be taken

through the Combined Authority's Assurance process that will combine skills packages and interventions.

2.2 Areas to be supported through future funding include:

- Support for **employers**, particularly addressing high growth areas, digitalisation, graduate recruitment and retention, workforce development and upskilling.
- Locally delivered support for **digital inclusion**, targeting diverse and disadvantaged groups, increasing the proportion of residents with digital skills for life and work.
- Developing the **workforce for the future** through upskilling educators, building education and training capacity and helping people of all ages and from all backgrounds to understand the career opportunities of the future.

Green Jobs Taskforce

2.3 The Green Jobs Taskforce was established to position West Yorkshire as a leader and set out recommendations, underpinned by evidence, to deliver the skills and jobs needed to address the climate emergency and achieve the mayoral pledge to create 1,000 well-paid (real living wage), green jobs for young people (aged 18-30).

2.4 The Green Jobs Taskforce has met over the course of the last twelve months to understand and reflect on the evidence and propose workable solutions. The taskforce has been set up to hear the voices and experiences of learners, employers and skills providers in this area.

2.5 The final meeting of the taskforce will take place early in 2023, the taskforce will be asked to provide final remarks on the recommendations, the launch and action plan. Once finalised by the Taskforce, the final recommendations will form high-level objectives which will inform an action plan.

2.6 The emerging recommendations have been informed by multiple stakeholders, including employers, public sector colleagues, educators and young people and a range of evidence including:

- Commissioned research from WPI Economics
- West Yorkshire Green Skills Youth Programme
- Skills Connect Bootcamps
- Community Renewal Funded projects, including 'Go Green Curriculum' in Wakefield and Retrofit Hub.

2.7 The draft recommendations have been mapped across different strategies and policies across the organisation, such as the Employment and Skills Framework and the Climate and Environment Action Plan.

2.8 Draft recommendations have been split into themes:

- Individuals - easy access to 'green' career advice, training options and jobs

- Educators - support education sector to respond to the green skills demand
- Businesses - support for businesses to decarbonise via upskilling and reskilling

- 2.9 Interventions are being worked up to aid the progress of the recommendations, these will be outlined as part of the action plan and next steps, they will prepare the economy, education and labour market to become a net-zero carbon economy by 2038. These will include support for employers, curriculum development and careers and inspiration.
- 2.10 A presentation to include an overview of the research findings, emerging recommendations and to facilitate a discussion on the draft recommendations will be given at the Committee meeting.

#### Local Skills Improvement Plans

- 2.11 The aim of Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) is to increase employer voice in the post-16 skills system. They are led by Employer Representative Bodies. In West Yorkshire, the Department for Education selected York and North Yorkshire Chamber and mid Yorkshire Chamber to develop a plan.
- 2.12 Whilst delivery plans have been endorsed by government the LSIP for West Yorkshire is emerging with a number of stakeholder events planned in the early part of the year.
- 2.13 The Mayoral Combined Authority will be asked to provide a statement of support to be submitted alongside the plan which will as a set of priorities and how these will be delivered.
- 2.14 The Committee Chair has written to James Mason, Chief Executive of the Chambers of Commerce to invite a senior representative to join the Committee to facilitate constructive engagement with the process and key stakeholders.

#### The Digital Skills Plan

- 2.15 The Local Digital Skills Partnership (LDSP), with funding from DCMS, has created the region's first Digital Skills Plan after wide consultation. The Plan was launched on the 28<sup>th</sup> November, online, with a press release and link to the publication. The Plan has been received with enthusiasm across private, public, and third sector partners across the region.
- 2.16 To support the launch - led by the Employment and Skills Committee - 7 officials from DCMS visited West Yorkshire. Cllr Lewis, Chair of the Employment and Skills Committee, and Mark Roberts, LEP Chair, chaired a series of meetings with DCMS, WYCA officers, and diverse stakeholders across the region.
- 2.17 The sessions included a roundtable on Social Digital Inclusion. This included representatives from Local Authorities, 100% Digital, DWP, Born in Bradford, Good Things Foundation, Age UK, the libraries.

- 2.18 A further session took place with high-profile tech businesses in the region, hosted at Cognizant's new offices. Attendees included Mphasis, Production Park, EXA, Panintelligence, Sky, SkyBet, Kirklees Local TV, Amazon Web Services, IBM, Leeds Digital Festival. This meeting considered the strengths of the tech sector in the region, and how a Local Digital Partnership might add value to existing activity. The conclusion was that a Local Digital Partnership should try not to duplicate, but instead to simplify, connect and amplify.
- 2.19 Throughout the day, DCMS officials commented that they were inspired by what our region has to offer, particularly noting our extraordinary stakeholders. It was clear throughout the day that we are a proactive and collaborative region, keen to build on the successful relationship to date with DCMS, and a fantastic place for digital.
- 2.20 One of the results of the DCMS visit was an agreement between DCMS, Cognizant, WYCA and Lloyds, to host a 'female tech leaders dinner' to coincide with International Women's Day. The aim of this is to convene role models, to open discussions on barriers and opportunities for women in tech, and to promote the session to align with the aims of the Local Digital Partnership.

#### The refreshed Digital Framework (Digital Blueprint)

- 2.21 At the October LEP Board, members discussed the importance of a renewed focus on digital tech to support the region's ambitions.
- 2.22 Digital is a cross-cutting issue and has the potential to support every person and every business in the region. The wider digital agenda spans social inclusion, place making, business support, skills, and inward investment. This, therefore, does not fall under the remit of just one committee. We need to consider how we develop all our digital work using the expertise, knowledge and connections of all committee members.
- 2.23 The region's Digital Framework was published in 2019. Since then, the LEP's geographic remit has altered (in April 2021), moving to the five West Yorkshire districts. With the change in geography coinciding with increased digital adoption by residents and businesses during COVID, it is timely to refresh the Digital Framework and create an updated Digital Blueprint.
- 2.24 A refreshed Digital Framework will update on how lives are transformed by digital technologies and will include a coherent strategy for delivery and partnership working, which may be framed into three strands:
- **Place** – infrastructure, data and connectivity
  - **People** – inclusion, skills and confidence, entrepreneurs, and advanced skills (much of which can be informed by the Digital Skills Plan)
  - **Businesses** – clusters, transformation, inward investment, education providers (in partnership with businesses), capital.

- 2.25 To support this refresh, mapping of the digital tech sector in WY has been commissioned. The Clusters research will be used so that we can better understand and therefore support our digital tech ecosystem. This, in tandem with the outcomes of the LEP Deep Dive will inform the refreshed Digital Framework.

#### Local Digital Partnership

- 2.26 The Local Digital Skills Partnership is in its third and final year of DCMS funding. In creating the Digital Skills Plan, the LDSP has accomplished its core targets.
- 2.27 There is an opportunity, therefore, to explore how to build on the success of the LDSP including broadening the LDSP into a 'Local Digital Partnership (LDP)'. This Partnership would act as an engagement and consultancy panel to support any activity of a refreshed Digital Framework. DCMS is supportive of this.

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

- 3.1 The report outlines proposed interventions that will develop the skills and employment needs of individuals and businesses in West Yorkshire to tackle the climate emergency.
- 3.2 Recommendations will support the mayoral pledge to create 1,000 well paid, green jobs in West Yorkshire that will support the ambition to achieve net zero by 2038.
- 3.3 The crosscutting work on digital, covering people, places and business, will support work tackling the climate emergency. The Digital Skills Plan will support growth of digital skills and therefore movement into "better jobs" and more productive jobs within the region. This will include growth of skills across the region to enhance innovation across green sector to support climate challenges. Greater adoption of digital technologies by businesses will facilitate efficiency and waste by reduction. For example: customers will be enabled to make first contact online, reducing the need to travel; paperless offices and cloud storage use less resource and energy; delivery mapping technology optimises route plans to reduce carbon emissions. Digitally enabled infrastructure will accelerate progress towards clean, low-carbon, and resilient energy systems, as innovative urban planning, public services, and access are optimised. Examples may include smart streetlamps to self-cooling buildings to smart electric car chargers. The data captured by digitally enabled devices will provide diverse datasets on a wide range of topics, such as energy consumption, air quality, and traffic patterns.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.iea.org/news/empowering-smart-cities-toward-net-zero-emissions>

## **4. Inclusive Growth Implications**

- 4.1 Skills programmes outlined in this report will work directly with those disproportionately affected in the labour market.
- 4.2 The work of the Green Jobs Taskforce and the recommendations are directly linked to inclusive growth in that they contribute to readying West Yorkshire's business base and workforce for a transition towards a net zero economy and delivering on the Mayor's pledge to create 1,000 good, green jobs. Prioritising future ready skills and supporting businesses to decarbonise and benefit from the opportunities the green economy brings are vital to achieving a fair and just transition for the region.
- 4.3 Supporting West Yorkshire's digital/tech ecosystem will positively contribute to recovery from the impact of the pandemic and to mitigate the effects of the crisis in cost of living and doing business. It is proposed that the original strapline of 'lives transformed by digital tech' is adopted in the revised version to ensure the focus remain on the positive benefits to the region's citizens. Delivery of the regional Digital Skills Plan will support inclusive growth across West Yorkshire. We expect to demonstrate progress, and measure take-up by underrepresented groups, through each Digital Skills intervention. Digitally enabled places will accelerate progress towards accessible and inclusive spaces and transport in our region. An exemplar focus may include residents in rural areas without access to fast broadband; as of 2021, 4% of people in Yorkshire and Humber remain offline, despite the fact that West Yorkshire's full fibre and gigabit coverage are both above the national average.

## **5. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 5.1 Our skills and workforce pipeline work will consider the impacts of people in everything it does. By its nature, we are seeking to ensure that the skills offer in the region will enable everyone in the region, regardless of their background to have a thriving future. As we develop programmes for delivery, we will work to be explicit in targeting equality and diversity.
- 5.2 The research conducted by WPI Economics did find that green jobs are much more male dominated than the economy as a whole. In addition, 98,275 jobs in West Yorkshire are in sectors at risk of decarbonisation, that's 9.2% of total employment in 2020 (compared to 10.5% nationally). 13% of people in employment in those sectors highly exposed to transition are non-White versus 11% nationally. While the green economy presents significant economic opportunities, some sectors and jobs will undergo significant change and may be at risk due to the transition towards net zero. This is why, the final report by the Green Jobs Task Force will have a specific recommendation and actions addressing specific challenges around EDI.
- 5.3 To support businesses in the face of the cost-of-living crisis, the recommendations and actions will consider support that enables organisations that are struggling to up/reskill staff, introduce ways of working that are greener and save money.

- 5.4 The Digital Skills Plan seeks to directly address socio-economic inequalities facing our population. Digital Inclusion is a central tenet of the plan, to be achieved through the growth/provision of digital skills and supporting the resolution of data poverty and the ongoing challenge of accessibility and connectivity. Digital exclusion is a key barrier to participation in social and economic activity. A refreshed Digital Framework will help us to maximise the opportunity that integrated digital policy, people and technology can offer to improve inclusivity.

## **6. Financial Implications**

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

## **7. Legal Implications**

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

## **8. Staffing Implications**

- 8.1 There are no current staffing implications at business case development stage.

## **9. External Consultees**

- 9.1 Employment and Skills Senior Officers and employers have been consulted on the content of this report.
- 9.2 Employers have been consulted on the content of this report.
- 9.3 Small, medium and large business organisations, Local Authority senior officers, independent training providers, colleges and universities and young people have been consulted on the recommendations of the Green Jobs Taskforce.
- 9.4 A range of stakeholders including Local Authority Skills Officers, universities, college, training providers, employers and third sector have been consulted on the Digital Skills Plan's development.

## **10. Recommendations**

- 10.1 The Committee is asked to note the next steps on employment and skills programme pipeline
- 10.2 The Committee is invited to share their views and comment on the research findings and proposed recommendations of the Mayor's Green Jobs Taskforce
- 10.3 The Committee notes the update on LSIPs

- 10.4 The Committee is asked to note the next steps proposed on the Local Digital Partnership.

## **11. Background Documents**

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

## **12. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Green Jobs Taskforce Presentation