

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS COMMITTEE
HELD ON THURSDAY, 13 JULY 2023 AT MEETING ROOM 1,
WELLINGTON HOUSE, WELLINGTON STREET, LEEDS LS1 1DE**

Present:

Councillor James Lewis (Chair)	Leeds City Council
Professor Shirley Congdon (Deputy Chair)	Private Sector (LEP Board)
Councillor Silvia Dacre	Calderdale Council
Councillor Eleanor Thomson	Leeds Council
Councillor Graham Turner	Kirklees Council
Tim Craven	Private Sector Representative
Colin Booth	Advisory Representative (Further Education)
Dr Peter O'Brien	Advisory Representative (Higher Education)
Jo Ledgard (Advisory Representative)	DWP
Tim Thornton	Advisory Representative (West Yorkshire Skills Partnership)
Martin Hathaway	Advisory Representative Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce

In attendance:

Michelle Burton	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Michelle Hunter	WYCA
Sonya Midgley	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Phillipa Syers	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Philip Witcherley	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

41. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from cllr Khan, Cllr Kilbane, Milton Brown, Orlagh Hunt, Clare Paxman, Nav Chohan, and Alex Miles

42. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

43. Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no items that required which required the exemption of the press and public.

44. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 23 March 2023

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting be approved.

45. Chair's Update

The Chair started the meeting with an overview of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Pillar 3 – People and Skills.

The proposals for £14m of funding for people and skills had been aligned with the pipeline of programmes overseen by the Committee and had been tested at a sounding group on 28th June with over 200 stakeholders in attendance.

Members had the following questions and comments:

- That it was important to avoid duplication with the skills offer from local authorities and to address gaps. Work had been undertaken with partners to mitigate this risk and the focus would be on complimentary activity.
- Members welcomed the focus on practical help for individuals in the pipeline of projects.
- Members discussed the practicalities of match-funding and the how it could pose difficulties for those bidding the funding. Officers would bring a response back to a future meeting on the issue.

46. Governance Arrangements

Members considered a report that set out the governance arrangements approved at the Combined Authority annual meeting.

The TUC advised the Committee on changes to their advisory representative for the Committee.

Members suggested that the chairs of local skills boards should be invited to the Committee as advisory representatives.

Members questioned the cross working arrangements with other committees and whether there could be more comprehensive collaboration across the different agendas.

Resolved: That the governance arrangements approved by the Combined Authority at the Annual Meeting on 22 June 2023 be noted.

47. Influencing the System

Martin Hathaway provided a verbal update on the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) which had been submitted to the

Department for Education for approval by the Chambers of Commerce in West Yorkshire.

LSIPs aimed to increase the voice of the employer in the skills system as a key stakeholder to identify current and future skills needs and to date around 900 businesses had been consulted.

Members had the following questions and comments:

- Members asked for a full breakdown on the 900 employers consulted, including by the size of the business as well as the sector.
- The Committee asked at what point they would be able to see the LSIP in full. It was noted that the draft plan was being reviewed by the Department for Education before it could be shared more widely. It was agreed that the next stage of the plan would be presented to the Committee for comment.
- Members discussed some of the feedback given by the businesses consulted to date, particularly that several responses indicated that business did not value qualifications. Members stressed that public funding should be used to provide training for individuals to help them progress their careers.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

48. Devolved Adult Skills

Members considered a report that provided an update on the work underway on adult skills programmes.

On Multiply members noted that year one delivery met 82% of the DfE target in terms of engagement with individuals and providing numeracy support which equated to 57% of the financial profile.

An independent review had been carried out on AEB funded Community Learning. The review found considerable good practice amongst West Yorkshire providers and to improve the impact of the funding it was proposed to move towards a needs-based methodology in the allocation of community learning funding.

Members discussed the move towards a needs-based methodology and the possible reduction of the funding allocation to Calderdale Council and asked about the transitional arrangements. When moving towards a needs based methodology (such as UKSPF %s), WY grant provider allocations could be protected by allocating £125k top up of CL funds for WY. This will allow a 'top up' for Leeds, Bradford and Kirklees without reducing the financial allocation for Calderdale and Wakefield.

Members discussed methodology to address delivery of provision in significantly reduced guided learning hours (GLH). This included submission of planned hours, and a system to examining justification when planned hours are below 70% of GLH. 100% pure distance learning should be exempt to allow for further consideration. There was endorsement that we

should move towards a policy around guided learning hours with the intention of supporting quality training. This was strongly supported.

Resolved:

- (i) That the actions proposed following the Community Learning review be recommended.
- (ii) That the Multiply programme year 1 performance be noted.

49. Current and Future Employment Support activity at the West Yorkshire level

Members considered a report which provided an update on the development and performance of employment support services coordinated at a regional level.

Resolved:

- (i) That ongoing collaboration between DWP and West Yorkshire Combined Authority, and the opportunities this relationship presents with regards to better supporting service users accessing employment support provision across the region be noted.
- (ii) That the continued intention to use an allocation of UK Shared Prosperity Funding to fund the second year of delivery of Employment West Yorkshire, in order to allow the programme to continue in providing vital employment support across Local Authority areas be noted.
- (iii) That the approach to UKSPF commissioning be endorsed.
- (iv) That officers begin to develop an Employment Support Blueprint for West Yorkshire for discussion with this committee in the Autumn, which will allow residents to be better served through employment support services.
- (v) That key stakeholders be consulted during the development of the Employment Support Blueprint be considered and agreed. A draft Blueprint will come back to Employment and Skills Committee at a later date.

50. Development and Delivery of Regionally Coordinated Careers Activity

Members considered a report which provided an update on the development of careers support activity.

The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) had been awarded a £2.6 million contract from the Department for Education to deliver career-related learning programme.

The CEC had offered the combined Authority £32000 grant with a requirement for match funding. Members were critical of the amount of the grant offered by the CEC, which the committee felt was derisory and would have little impact on an important area.

Members noted the work underway to develop a West Yorkshire All Age Careers Blueprint which would intend to influence government and help guide delivery.

Resolved:

- (i) That the update provided to the Committee on developments and performance of careers support services coordinated at the regional level be noted.
- (ii) That the Committee's view with regards to the Careers & Enterprise Company's award to deliver a career related learning programme aimed at primary schools be noted.
- (iii) That the of the development of a West Yorkshire All Age Careers Blueprint be endorsed

51. Skills support for employers

Members considered a report that provided an update on the delivery of programmes to support employers to upskill and create a talent pipeline.

Members noted the update on the Skills for Growth programme as well as the development of the Workforce Development and Growth Skills package and Skills for Business interventions.

Resolved: That the approach set out in the report be endorsed.