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Report to: Employment and Skills Panel

Date: 4 December 2017

Subject: Building Workforce Skills and Attracting Talent

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consult the Panel on the work to progress the priorities and actions in the “Building Workforce Skills and Attracting Talent” priority of the Employment and Skills Plan.

2 Advisory Group Report

- 2.1 The group met on 27 October. Verbal updates were provided on the following activity:
- Apprenticeships support to businesses
 - Development of higher level skills provision
 - Skills Service
 - Sector activity
- 2.2 The group welcomed the support being given to businesses to make the most of apprenticeships in the context of the levy and were interested in the development around degree level apprenticeships. They commented that the introduction of the apprenticeship levy has given an opportunity for businesses to re-consider their recruitment practices.
- 2.3 The group were interested in the investment from the LEP in a Business Development and Marketing Officer (Digital Skills) and offered to support the role in the development of work to promote the digital sector.

3 Sector Skills

- 3.1 A ‘Maximising Good Growth Benefits through Procurement’ Policy Statement was endorsed previously by the LEP Board and the Combined Authority. The initial phase of implementing this policy statement is that Employment and Skills clauses were included in the invitation to tender to be part of the consultancy framework for the West Yorkshire Transport Fund, in order to maximise the local employment outcomes generated by the scheme.
- 3.2 10% of the overall marks were allocated to good growth and suppliers gave details on how they would embed the following agenda’s into their work:

- 1) Employment
- 2) Apprenticeships and traineeships
- 3) Skills development
- 4) Engagement with schools, colleges and universities
- 5) Opportunities for SME's and local suppliers
- 6) Environmental and carbon reduction benefits

- 3.3 Work is ongoing with colleagues in the WYCA procurement team to continue to embed the Good Growth policy into future procurement exercises.
- 3.4 Working with colleagues from DWP and Local Authority officers, an Employment Brokerage model has been developed to support successful tenderers to meet their employment and skills requirements, and to support positive outcomes (eg schools engagement, apprenticeships, jobs for people previously unemployed) to be generated by major schemes. This approach will be piloted when the West Yorkshire Transport Fund contracts are in place, and adapted if required before being fully rolled out and widely promoted. We are also promoting this offer to potential inward investors who may require support with recruitment.
- 3.5 To support the promotion of digital careers in the region a Business Development and Marketing Officer (Digital Skills) has been recruited. This role will launch a national promotional campaign and secure employer sponsorship to continue and further develop the campaign.
- 3.6 An outline application was submitted for the ESIF Career Development Fund to develop [re]boot, a scheme to support individuals to retrain and move into digital and engineering careers. Following an assessment by the Managing Authority the application has been accepted at outline stage and may progress to the submission of a Full Application. Delivery is expected to begin in April 2018.

4 LEP Skills Service

- 4.1 The Skills Service closed for new grant applications on 31 March 2017. All training was completed by 30 June 2017 and final payments to business were paid by 29 September 2017.
- 4.2 The total contract figures regarding this contract are:
- 3702 enquiries received
 - 3238 businesses engaged
 - 2096 skills assessments have been completed
 - 1521 grant applications awarded
 - 10449 people have been upskilled
 - £3.13m grants have been approved
- 4.3 An overview of the awarded grants is shown below:

Total number of grants awarded by area

District	Cumulative number of grants awarded	%	Cumulative value of grants awarded	%
Barnsley	79	5%	£163,886.66	5%
Bradford	164	11%	£348,629.91	11%
Calderdale	64	4%	£111,683.72	4%
Craven	21	1%	£35,584.83	1%
Harrogate	117	8%	£261,506.09	8%
Kirklees	202	13%	£410,264.43	13%
Leeds	525	35%	£1,054,304.69	34%
Selby	22	1%	£78,438.52	3%
Wakefield	190	12%	£322,640.37	10%
York	137	9%	£340,338.74	11%
	1521	100%	£3,127,277.96	100%

Total number of grants awarded by sector

Sector	Cumulative number of grants awarded	%	Cumulative value of grants awarded	%
Construction and Low Carbon	199	13%	£388,220.13	12%
Creative & Digital	303	20%	£665,002.36	21%
Finance & Business	445	29%	£831,394.68	27%
Hospitality & Tourism	62	4%	£127,907.72	4%
Manufacturing & Engineering	445	29%	£1,030,036.64	33%
Medical Technology	30	2%	£36,326.30	1%
Transport & Logistics	37	2%	£48,390.13	2%
	1521	100%	£3,127,277.96	100%

- 4.4 A number of businesses who had grants allocated to them have chosen not to complete the training or fewer individuals have completed the training that initially planned, therefore the final figures are lower than the figures previously reported.
- 4.5 The West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges has submitted a Full Application to deliver the continuation of the Skills Service, which will be funded through European Social Fund until 2020. A letter has been received stating that DWP intend to award the contract, therefore it is expected that delivery will commence from January 2018.
- 4.6 In the interim the Skills Service Advisors have been maintaining the Skills Service brand and providing a comprehensive training and skills planning service to support businesses to identify skills gaps and skills development needs linked to business growth objectives, including apprenticeship support.
- 4.7 An evaluation of the Skills Service has been undertaken and a summary of the findings will be presented at the meeting.

5 Recommendations

5.1 The Panel is asked to:

- Note the update from the Advisory Group;
- Consider the learning points from the Skills Service evaluation and how this could shape any future funding opportunities;
- Note and comment on the progress of activity against the “Building Workforce Skills and Attracting Talent” priority.