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

Date: 22 November 2018

Subject: **Digital Framework and Digital Skills**

Director: Alan Reiss, Director of Policy, Strategy and Communications / Sue Cooke, Executive Director of Economic Services

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1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide the Employment and Skills Panel with an update on the development of the Leeds City Region Digital Framework and Digital Skills programmes and seek endorsement for the adoption of the Framework.

2. Information

Background

- 2.1 As previously reported, over the last 12 months work has been progressing to develop a Digital Strategy for the whole of the City Region.
- 2.2 The overall ambition is for the Digital Framework is to provide a framework for investment and a collective narrative/ ambition for 'digital' across the whole City Region.
- 2.3 The Framework sets out to articulate an approach to the digital economy and to the development of digital capability across the City Region's population and institutions that sets the direction of travel and encourages all the other actors in the region to align with both the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Combined Authority and each other.
- 2.4 One of the five outcomes detailed in the Framework is *digital skills for all* – ensuring everyone in Leeds City Region has the opportunity to develop the skills they need to thrive in the digital economy. The key principle behind this outcome is to develop and evolve a joined up pipeline for digital skills to meet the needs of businesses and citizens:
- Inclusion/ basic skills; Ensure everyone has basic digital capability to ensure no one is excluded from opportunities because of a lack of digital skills and can operate in a digital society.

- General skills: Look at opportunities for improving outcomes for those who have basic digital skills, but lack the confidence and knowledge to make the most of the digital economy, whether at work or beyond.
 - Advanced skills: ensure that the Leeds City Region develops, attracts and retains the talent needed for higher skilled roles.
- 2.5 To ensure as much buy in and support to the Framework as possible from people who will ultimately be impacted by it, an online consultation was launched in July using the Combined Authority's new Engagement Hub *Your Voice*. The consultation provided a starter for ten in terms of ambition and suggested interventions, with a view to gathering much wider input to shape the Framework.
- 2.6 Over 100 responses to the survey were received. 75% of responses were from individuals, 14% from businesses and 11% from organisations.
- 2.7 95% of respondents strongly agreed with our approach in respect of digital skills. The following areas relating to digital skills were identified as important: increasing social mobility into digital roles; increasing the number of apprenticeships; and developing robust pathways into the sector.
- 2.8 Feedback received through the consultation process has now been incorporated into the revised framework.
- 2.9 The five outcomes of the framework will be owned by various existing Panels and Boards. Working groups will report directly to Panels.

Outcome	Panel	West Yorkshire Combined Authority officer lead
Digital opportunities for all businesses	BIG / ESP	Sarah Bowes/Henry Rigg
Digital skills and inclusion for all	Skills – ESP Inclusion – Inclusive Growth and Public Policy Panel	Peter Glover / Emma Longbottom James Flanagan/Sarah Bowes
Digital Sector	BIG Panel	Tony Corby/ Sarah Bowes
World class infrastructure	Place Panel	Justin Wilson
Tech for good	BIG Panel / LEP Board	Sarah Bowes/ Kate Gifford/ Tony Corby

Digital Skills

- 2.10 The Digital Framework builds on much existing good practice and activity taking place across the City Region, with digital skills already identified as a key priority sector within the Leeds City Region Employment and Skills Plan in 2016. In order to address the issues identified, a number of programmes are in development and delivery, as detailed below.
- 2.11 The Discover Digital website launched in August alongside social media channels. The aim of the campaign is to inspire individuals into digital roles, to promote digital skills across our key industry sectors and to demystify digital careers. Since the launch, the website has had 1,224 new visitors and over 9,600 individual page views with users staying on the site for an average of 3 minutes and visiting on average 6 pages each. This is a considerable amount of time to spend on the site and shows that the traffic being driven is of a high quality, with each person engaging with the site. The campaign has also reached over 80,000 people through social media channels. (See Appendix 1)
- 2.12 Digital Skills is also a major component of #futuregoals, the careers campaign targeting young people, parents and key influencers with information about career opportunity in skills shortage and growth sectors in Leeds City Region. (See Appendix 2). Digital business volunteers are working with schools as part of our Enterprise Adviser Network. For example, Lloyds Banking Group have arranged a Bradford schools Digital Skills Event in November and Asda's Technology Team have set digital competitions to young people from a number of schools across the region.
- 2.13 Delivery Agreements with the seven FE colleges set out how the institutions can better respond to the needs of the economy, including by addressing digital skills shortages.
- 2.14 As previously reported the Combined Authority submitted a full application to a competitive European funding call to develop a programme named [re]boot to support graduates and career changers into key sectors. Confirmation has now been received from The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) that the outcome of the application was successful. Procurement of sub-contractors has commenced. Delivery is expected to commence in January 2019.
- 2.15 An Expression of Interest is being developed for submission to Government to develop a Local Digital Skills Partnership (LDSP). If successful, the partnership will work with the national Digital Skills Partnership, Government, local businesses and providers to develop and deliver digital skills training for individuals and businesses. It is Government's intention to launch three LDSPs by April 2019. This will include an officer spending two days a month in Whitehall, building relationships with DCMS and other Government departments and various stakeholders keen to support local regions.
- 2.16 Working with District Partners, a submission will also be developed for the Digital Skills Innovation Fund, which if successful will support people from

underrepresented groups and disadvantaged backgrounds to increase their digital skills.

- 2.17 Working with partners including Local Authorities and DWP, an offer will be developed to ensure that everyone has basic digital capability to ensure no one is excluded from opportunities because of digital skills, and everyone can operate in a digital society.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications in endorsing this strategy. Specific activities may require future funding, this will be requested separately.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report

5. Staffing Implications

- 5.1 Staff will be recruited to deliver the new [re]boot project and other projects should applications for funding be successful.

6. External Consultees

- 6.1 Consultation and engagement has taken place through the following routes: Chief Executives; BIG Panel; ESP; private sector pre consultation workshops; local authority workshops; public engagement via YourVoice; twitter; LinkedIn.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 That the Employment and Skills Panel notes the update.
- 7.2 That the Employment and Skills Panel consider the digital skills programmes that are planned and are currently being delivered and consider any gaps in provision.

8. Background Documents

- 8.1 None

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 Images from *Discover Digital* campaign

Appendix 2 Images about digital careers from *#futuregoals* campaign

Appendix 3 Digital Framework ambitions