**CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON LEP**

**NOTE OF EMPLOYERS SKILLS AND EDUCATION BOARD MEETING ON 19 JUNE 2019**

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

Clare Hayward welcomed everyone to the meeting. A list of attendees and apologies is at Annex A.

1. **Declarations of Interest**

Clare invited Members to declare any interests. The following standing items were noted:

* Paul Colman – involvement in the development of the Pledge partnership network across Cheshire and Warrington.
* Clare Hayward – working for Cirrus recently named the best leadership and management/HR Consultancy at the CIPD Management Awards. Cirrus now offer apprenticeships as part of their overall service to businesses.

1. **Presentation and follow up discussion with Ofsted inspector about the new Ofsted framework and the need for training providers to demonstrate how their curriculum reflects the needs of the local labour market**

Clare welcomed Marina Gaze to the meeting and thanked Dhesi for arranging the presentation.

Marina presented a series of slides.

In the subsequent discussion the following points were made:

* The importance of strengthening links between employers and training providers was highlighted and reflected fully the views of Members
* The growing demand for work placements and the need for these to be in businesses that reflect the local economy – Members highlighted their concerns that fewer than 2% of current work placements are digital or STEM related.
* Members were also concerned at the levels of bureaucracy associated with organising work placements.
* Concerns that T levels will result in a narrowing of the curriculum and too much specialisation which will not reflect the nature of current and future employment where individuals often need to acquire different skills at the same level of qualification e.g. moving from mechanical to electrical and digital focus jobs. The nature of funding encourages this narrowing of the curriculum.
* In the light of the discussions it was agreed that the one-page menu of opportunities for businesses to engage with the Pledge needed to focus more on the potential business benefits of engaging with schools and colleges. **ACTION Trevor Langston**

Clare thanked Marina for her presentation.

1. **Note of last meeting on 17 April and matters arising**

The note of the last meeting was agreed. There were no matters arising that were not on the agenda.

1. **Action List**

Members reviewed the action list. The following additional point was noted:

* Clare to follow up meeting on 31 May where the branding of the ‘Institute of Technology’ was discussed. Clare will draw together a summary of the conclusions of the meeting. All who attended the meeting agreed that it had been very useful. **ACTION Clare Hayward**
* The action list will be updated **ACTION Pat Jackson**

1. **Updates**
   1. **Pledge Partnership Update**

Trevor Langston reported that the launch of Cheshire and Warrington’s Pledge was scheduled for Friday 21 June with 246 scheduled to attend including 71 different business organisations and 55 training providers.

In the subsequent discussion the following points were made:

* Members queried the extent of stakeholder (particularly small and medium sized business), engagement in the Pledge. Trevor noted that links with the Growth Hub, the Inward Investment Team and the Digital Skills Partnership would help to extend stakeholder engagement. It was agreed that we needed a stakeholder engagement plan for the Pledge as well as the wider work of the Employers’ Skills and Education Board. **ACTION Trevor Langston and Pat Jackson**
* Employers who attend the launch will be surveyed **ACTION Trevor Langston**
* Work was progressing on the development of measures of success and impact of the Pledge. This will include assessment of social value. Trevor will share current draft **ACTION Trevor Langston**.
* The Pledge Management Board has already met. Trevor will share the membership of the Board and the revised terms of reference of the Board. **ACTION Trevor Langston**
* It was agreed that the Membership of the Board should be reviewed once the Pledge is fully operational and measures of success and impact are in place. **ACTION Trevor Langston to review membership of Board (in about 6 months).**

**6.2 Data and Labour Market Intelligence**

Pat Jackson reported on recent meetings of a working group of colleges and local authorities about how the LEP could add value to the data and intelligence work they already undertake by investing the £75K allocated to the LEP for the data and intelligence needed to inform the additional functions of a Skills Advisory Panel.

Meetings had taken place with RCU, EMSI, Cambridge Econometrics and Metrodynamics and suggested approaches had been developed. These proposals will now be shared with partners and with DfE to ensure we are meeting the funding criteria. **ACTION Pat Jackson to share proposals with working group and Paul Taylor**. A further meeting of the working group is scheduled for 7 July.

**6.3 Local Growth Fund**

Clare reported that the LEP had received a number of very interesting responses to the consultation on how best to invest £5 million Local Growth Funding in specialist equipment needed to deliver digital and STEM related learning to as wide a group of Cheshire and Warrington residents as possible.

A conference call with a number of Members of the Employers’ Skills and Education Board and the LEP Board was held recently to review the response and as a result had proposed three invitations to bid:

* a maximum of five investments of up to £20,000 each for specialist equipment that can be taken into schools, colleges, libraries and other community centres or could be easily accessed from key locations.
* a maximum of two investments of up to £250,000 each for specialist equipment that can be used to deliver digital and advanced engineering training and education that are particularly important to improve the competitiveness and raise the productivity of one or two specific groups of employers or sectors of industry within Cheshire and Warrington.
* a maximum of five investments of between £500,000 and £1,000,000 for specialist equipment that can be used to upskill and reskill the existing workforce so that we can transform digital and advanced manufacturing skills across all sectors of business in Cheshire and Warrington. In general, the specialist equipment will be sufficiently generic to enable as many businesses as possible to transform their business practices at a faster pace and through cross-sector collaboration.

Clare noted that in their response to the consultation Bentley Motors provided a digital strategythat focuses on the levels of expertise needed to ensure digital transformation from an overview and mind-set change through to subject matter experts. Bentley have agreed to share their digital strategy to help stimulate ideas and maximise the impact of digital transformation across Cheshire and Warrington. We will do this subject to Bentley confirming that they do not intend to bid for the funding.

A draft bidding document reflecting all these points had been circulated and it was agreed that the draft reflected the views of Members. A final bidding document will be issued by the end of June/early July. **ACTION Pat Jackson**

6.4 **Skills Advisory Panel**

Clare noted that the Employers’ Skills and Education Board will assume the functionality of the Skills Advisory Panel. The existing terms of reference of the Employers’ Skills and Education Board will be reviewed. The terms of reference should include reference to voting rights. **ACTION Clare Hayward and Pat Jackson**

Members stressed the need to ensure the Employers Skills and Education Board maintains clarity of purpose and continues to ruthlessly prioritise. All Members agreed that this approach had enabled us to deliver our significant achievements to date.

Members wanted to retain a relatively small Employers’ Skills and Education Board but did want to develop a much stronger stakeholder communication network by working through existing networks such as the secondary and primary head networks. A map of key stakeholder networks should be developed with a draft communication plan. **ACTION Pat Jackson**

Philip Cox reported that the current exercise to recruit Members to the main LEP Board and voting members to subcommittees would be completed by mid-July. Philip explained that the plan was to identify 5 employers with voting rights and one local authority representative with voting rights. Once voting membership is clear, we would need to consider whether the membership of the Employers Skills and Education Board will need to be extended to ensure a wider representation of employers from key sectors, including life sciences and energy. **ACTION Clare Hayward and Pat Jackson**

6.5 **Digital Skills Partnership**

Clare welcomed Sarah Williams to the meeting and congratulated her on her appointment as the Digital Skills Partnership Coordinator.

Clare thanked Members for their contributions to the launch of the Digital Skills Partnership on 19 May. All Members agreed that the event had been a success and that the students from Priestley College and Crewe UTC had been ‘inspirational’. Clare thanked Catherine Walker and Jane Wilson for helping to organise the event.

Clare noted that one of the Priestley College students who attended the event had taken the opportunity to speak to Bentley who had invited her to an assessment centre the following day and, as a result, the student had been offered an apprenticeship.

Maggie Philbin had also contacted Priestly College to invite a focus group of student to a meeting with the BBC about their future direction and Network Rail had also offered work experience to a number of the students and followed up with Maggie to link Network Rail STEM ambassadors with Teen Tech.

James offered to share details of the Network Rail STEM ambassadors. **ACTION James Richards**

Pat Jackson reported that NESTA had recently launched their EdTech Innovation Fund to make up to 20 investments in technology to support teaching and learning. Pat and Sarah had convened a group of local colleges and local authorities to explore the scope to develop a Cheshire and Warrington bid for the NESTA investment.

Sarah would now also be attending regular meetings of all DSP coordinators in London to share good practice and access support available nationally – including programmes of work with Google and Microsoft. It was noted that there was a real danger of being inundated with various national initiatives. Members stressed again the need to ruthlessly prioritise within the clear strategic approach developed by Members.

Next steps would also involve setting up the DSP Board. **ACTION Pat Jackson and Sarah Williams**

**6.6 Local Industrial Strategy – People theme including key challenges and asks of Government and involvement of Employers’ Skills and Education Board**

Pat Jackson reported that a draft skills and education contribution to the Local Industrial Strategy was being prepared to reflect the priorities of the Employers’ Skills and Education Board – as illustrated in the one-page summary. Members were invited to review the draft and feed back any comments to Pat Jackson**. ACTION All Members.**

**7 Any Other Business**

There was no further business.

The meeting closed at 15.30 hrs.

**CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON LEP Annex A**

**EMPLOYERS SKILLS AND EDUCATION BOARD MEETING ON 17 APRIL 2019**

The following members of the Employers’ Skills and Education Board are expected to attend the meeting:

* Clare Hayward
* Paul Colman (South Cheshire Chamber)
* Phil Atkinson (Daresbury)
* Paul Taylor (Taylor Business Park)
* Dhesi Jasbir (Cheshire College South and West – representing the FE Colleges)
* James Richards (Network Rail)
* Faye Van Flute (Lloyds Banking Group)
* Nicola Merriman (National Skills Academy Nuclear)
* Philip Cox
* Pat Jackson (LEP)

**Apologies**

* Julia Teale (Bentley Motors)
* Elaine Billington (United Utilities)
* Howard Sloane (Essar Oil)
* Jenny Clucas (Cogent)
* Martin Wood (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) – observer

Also attending Marina Gaze, Trevor Langston, Sarah Williams