

NOTE OF EMPLOYERS SKILLS AND EDUCATION BOARD MEETING ON 17 JULY 2019

1. Welcome and Introductions

Pat Jackson welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that Clare Hayward was unable to attend and had asked Pat to Chair the meeting. All Members asked Pat to send their good wishes for a speedy recovery. The list of attendees and apologies is at Annex A.

2. Declarations of Interest

Pat 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.

3. Virtual Institute of Technology/Skills for Growth

3.1 Feed-back on sub-group meeting to discuss branding

Pat Jackson presented a positioning road map that Clare Hayward had prepared following the sub-group meeting. All Members agreed that this was a good summary of the values that they wanted to be associated with the Virtual Institute of Technology/Skills for Growth investment programme.

Members spent some time discussing Clare's summary of the proposed names that might be used to describe the investment programme. There was a general consensus that 'Accelerate Cheshire and Warrington' was the preferred option provided that it also had associated with it a short, descriptive strap line such as 'future skills pipeline'. **ACTION : All Members to adopt 'Accelerate Cheshire and Warrington' as name of the investment programme and Charlie Woodcock to use the name in the development of the website.**

3.2 Current work in preparation for the start of the investment programme

Charlie Woodcock and Maud Duthie summarised progress to date:

- The University had successfully responded to 3 rounds of questions from the DWP appraisal officer and had received a letter confirming this.
- The results of the appraisal are expected to be presented to Cheshire and Warrington's European Programme Committee on 24 July.
- There is still concern that once approval in principal is given the DWP process for issuing an offer letter will introduce further delays. Charlie asked for support in continuing to put pressure on DWP to complete all remaining processes asap. **ACTION Charlie Woodcock and Pat Jackson**
- With the possibility of further delays before the investment programme starts the University will explore the possibility of extending the end date of the programme. Charlie reminded Members that the investment requires engagement with 19,000 learners.
- The University has already started to recruit staff to run the programme (advertises for two posts issued and most of the rest to be issued next week).
- The University is also planning to start the roll out of the purchasing framework on 2 August. They will be using a dynamic purchasing system.
- Charlie and Maud are very keen to start some detailed conversations with a few key businesses to establish in more detail the type of training they want to procure. Andy Moore agreed to start work with the University on this. **ACTION Charlie Woodcock, Maud Duthie and Andy Moore**
- If roll out of the programme can start in September, full implementation should be achieved in January 2020.

- Members asked for the terms of reference of the Management Board and a programme of meeting dates asap. They stressed the need for a meeting of the shadow Board in September **ACTION Charlie Woodcock and Maud Duthie**
- Members also asked for a breakdown of key tasks and rate determining inputs required to achieve full implementation in January 2020. **ACTION Charlie Woodcock and Maud Duthie**
- It was agreed that a set of key performance indicators should also be developed with the Management Board **ACTION Charlie Woodcock and Maud Duthie**

On behalf of all Members Paul Taylor thanked Charlie and Maud for all their work to date.

4. Note of last meeting on 19 June 2019

The note of the meeting was agreed.

5. Action list and any matters arising that are not on the agenda

Members reviewed the action list. Most actions had been completed or were on the agenda for this meeting.

6. Progress reviews

6.1 European Social Funds

Pat Jackson explained that Cheshire and Warrington had additional European Social Funding (ESF) as a result of an 11.5% change in exchange rates. This additional funding would be allocated following a bidding round later in the year. Clarification was currently being sought from DWP around whether the funds could be merged within investment priorities 1 and 2 without further allocation to subheadings or if funding could be reallocated between subheadings to allow some ability to tailor the next bidding round to current skills challenges. The LEP is also challenging the DWP's proposal not to reallocate any underspends from earlier investments back into the Cheshire and Warrington budget. DWP are proposing that any underspends should be moved into a national budget fund. Members agreed that DWP's proposed approach should be challenged.

6.2 Digital Skills Partnership

Pat reported that Sarah Williams, the Digital Skills Partnership coordinator will start work on 5 August. An early priority will be the setting up of a Management Board.

As a result of being awarded a Digital Skills Partnership, Cheshire and Warrington has been offered support from Google who have already started to deliver a training programme to some of the 1,000 students who are taking part in the National Citizenship summer school programmes across Cheshire and Warrington.

Cheshire and Warrington had also been made aware of an opportunity to bid for funding to support digitalisation of assessments in local schools and colleges. In response, Sarah and Pat have worked with the colleges and Local Authorities to submit a bid to NESTA.

6.3 Pledge Partnership

Pat reported that a key priority for the Pledge had been to engage with all local schools and colleges before the summer break.

Meetings have been held with 94% (59 of the 63) secondary schools and colleges in Cheshire and Warrington and some schools and colleges have already got an employer allocated to them as an enterprise advisor and more will be allocated in the next quarter. The original target of 74% of schools and colleges engaged by this date has been exceeded as a result of the interest generated by the Pledge launch and early groundwork by the team. Local Pledge planning meetings have also started to take place. Members agreed that it would be important to engage a strong group of employers in these meetings.

Engaging small and medium sized businesses – particularly digital and STEM related businesses will be a challenge.

By the end of June nine youth organisations, ranging from small groups for young carers, through to the district-level Scout leaders have met the Pledge team. This initial contact has allowed them to shape their offer to a wide range of youth organisations.

Over the summer the priority will be to focus on the employer recruitment campaign. This will engage a range of employers from all sectors – in particular, the priority sectors identified by the Local Industrial Strategy.

6.4 Update on the LEP Board/Subcommittee membership recruitment exercise

Pat reported that all the interviews had been completed and Philip Cox was taking recommendations to the next LEP Board meeting. Successful candidates would be informed over the next few weeks and then Members could review the need for additional non-voting members to be recruited. **ACTION Clare Hayward**

6.5. Local Growth Fund Consultation

Pat confirmed that the invitation to bid for investment by the Local Growth Fund had been issued and reflected fully the recommendations of the Employers' Skills and Education Board Education Board.

The LEP would appraise the bids and then invite Clare Hayward to moderate the bids on behalf of the Employers' Skills and Education Board. **ACTION Pat Jackson**

6.6 Local Industrial Strategy

Pat reported that the skills and education policy position paper that had been discussed by Members at their last meeting had been sent to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). BEIS were now seeking a meeting with the LEP to talk through the paper. The key asks in the paper would also be used to inform the development of briefing papers that were being prepared for the new Prime Minister. Pat invited any further comments on the policy position paper. **ACTION All Members**

7. Taking on the Functions of the Skills Advisory Panel (SAP)

7.1 Progress report submitted to DfE

Pat reported that the report that had been discussed at the last meeting of the Employers' Skills and Education Board had been submitted to DfE by the deadline. The plan for the Employers' Skills and Education Board to take on the functions of a Skills Advisory Panel was discussed and agreed.

7.2 Potential scope of influence – initial thought from DfE

Pat shared a slide to illustrate some initial thoughts on the potential areas of influence/interest to SAPs. Members queried the extent to which they would be able to exert influence on the curriculum of local schools and colleges and there was a discussion about how the Employers' Skills and Education Board might provide colleges with useful information to help them shape and plan their curriculum offers.

Dhesi suggested that the best way of taking forward the data and intelligence work was through the working/steering group that the LEP had convened to advise on how the funding allocated to the LEP by DfE for data and labour market intelligence should be used to add value to the data and labour market analysis that is already undertaken by the colleges and local authorities. The next meeting of the group is on 29 July. The conclusions and recommendations of the working/steering group will be reported to the Employers' Skills and Education Board.

7.3 Terms of Reference

Members reviewed their current terms of reference and requested the following:

- **Attendance** – a named deputy should attend only in exceptional circumstance

- **Frequency of meetings** – should be reviewed once the Pledge, Virtual Institute of Technology, Digital Skills Partnership management meetings become regularised.
- **Nature of meetings** - may want to hold the formal 'public' meetings on a bi-monthly basis with discussion forums, stakeholder meetings and task and finish groups operating between the main meetings.
- **Values and purpose** – the themes captured in the road maps recently prepared by Clare Hayward should be reflected in the terms of reference.
- **Functions of Skills Advisory Panel** – to be reflected in revised terms of reference
- **Membership and size of Board** – the Board membership should not increase significantly but there does need to be a strong stakeholder engagement plan with main Board meetings informed by stakeholders, task and finish groups, etc.

ACTION – Pat Jackson to draft revised terms of reference

7.4 Stakeholder Engagement

Members spoke about the range of stakeholders that need to be engaged and reviewed an initial list. They agreed that they did not want to set up new groups but to work with existing networks such as the Head Teachers' Groups in each of the Local Authority areas and those already working with the LEP and Marketing Cheshire. Nicola Merriman reported that National Skills Academy Nuclear are also developing a stakeholder map.

Members asked for a stakeholder mind map to be drawn up - Members would then review the map and develop it further. **ACTION Pat Jackson**

7.5 Data and Labour Market Intelligence

Building on the discussion about data and labour market intelligence Pat noted that colleges had advised that their major exercises on curriculum planning for September 2020 will take place in January to April 2020. The timeline for work needed to progress over the next few months was discussed.

Pat Jackson reported that she had drawn together in a draft paper existing data and labour market intelligence that has been prepared for the Local industrial Strategy. Members agreed to review the draft paper and feed-back suggestions of data sources that should be accessed. **ACTION All Members**

8. Any other Business

There was no further business.

9. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 18 September – venue to be confirmed.

In the interim, Clare Hayward has requested a conference call to be arranged for a quick update with Members. **ACTION Pat Jackson** to organise.

EMPLOYERS SKILLS AND EDUCATION BOARD MEETING ON 17 JULY 2019

The following members of the Employers' Skills and Education Board attended the meeting:

- Paul Colman (South Cheshire Chamber)
- Phil Atkinson (Daresbury)
- Paul Taylor (Taylor Business Park)
- Dhesi Jasbir (Cheshire College South and West – representing the FE Colleges)
- Nicola Merriman (National Skills Academy Nuclear)
- Louise Higgins (United Utilities)
- Andy Moore (representing Julia Teale from Bentley Motors)
- Tracy McDermott (representing Howard Sloan from Essar Oils)
- Pat Jackson (LEP)

Apologies

- Clare Hayward
- Julia Teale (Bentley Motors)
- James Richards (Network Rail)
- Howard Sloane (Essar Oil)
- Faye Van Flute (Lloyds Banking Group)
- Jenny Clucas (Cogent)
- Martin Wood (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) – observer
- Philip Cox

Also attending Andy Devaney, Charlie Woodcock and Maud Duthie (University of Chester)