**CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP**

**EMPLOYERS’ SKILLS AND EDUCATION BOARD – EXTENDED MEETING ON 17 JANUARY 2018**

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

In the absence of Clare Hayward, Meredydd David welcomed everyone to the meeting. List of attendees and apologies received at Annex A.

**2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING ON 8 NOVEMBER**

The note of the last meeting on 8 November 2017 was agreed. All actions from the last meeting would be covered in the various progress reports that were on the agenda for this meeting.

3. **PROGRESS REPORTS ON KEY PRIORITIES FOR THE EMPLOYERS’ SKILLS AND EDUCATION BOARD**

3.1. **Skills and Education Plan**

Pat Jackson noted that the Skills and Education Plan that had been developed and designed by the Employers’ Skills and Education Board in consultation with partners is now on the LEP website: [www.871candwep.co.uk/resources/skills-education-plan/](http://www.871candwep.co.uk/resources/skills-education-plan/).

Meredydd thanked all the employers and other partners for their contributions to the plan.

**3.2. Pledge**

In the absence of Paul Colman, Trevor Langston reported that the Pledge is continuing to operate successfully in Crewe, Macclesfield and Middlewich and is continuing to build partnerships and overall capacity. This includes working very closely with the Youth Federation to engage young people during out of school activities as well as in school.

**3.3 European Structural Funds Update**

Mark Livesey reported that of the approximately £120 million European Structural Funds allocated to Cheshire and Warrington around 50% had been committed and work was now in hand to prepare for further calls for projects to invest the remaining funds.

In response to concerns expressed by the Employers’ Skills and Education Board, the Local Enterprise Partnership had released £100K to fund addition support that would help partners to develop workable projects that addressed the priorities set out in the Skills and Education Plan.

At present the remaining European Funds must be committed by March 2019 (subject to current Brexit negotiations, this date might be extended) and spent by June 2021.

**3.4 Institute of Technology for Cheshire and Warrington**

**3.4.1 Energy Group**

Helen Nellist reported on the progress of the work to develop a funding model for the energy sector. She explained that a group of businesses in the Cheshire Energy Hub had identified the need for degree level apprenticeships in process engineering. The businesses together with TTE, Cheshire College, South and West and the University of Chester were now exploring how European Social funds might help to pump prime the initial development stages of the degree level apprenticeship. Helen noted that the training needs were not necessarily sector specific – they cut across sectors and included a focus on electrification and digital skills.

Helen noted that the Department for Education had issued guidance in October 2017 to clarify how the apprenticeship levy budgets might be used to match European Social Funds. The guidance had opened up the possibility of developing more comprehensive packages of training that included modules of qualifications as well as full qualifications.

As a next step, a meeting with a number of energy sector employers would be arranged to talk through the details of a proposed package of training that could be funded with a mix of apprenticeship levy budget and European funds.

As soon as an approach had been developed it would be shared with the Employers’ Skills and Education Board.

**3.4.2 Advanced Manufacturing**

Steve Collier presented a series of slides that proposed a regional approach to the national strategy that had been developed by the Automotive Council.

Steve explained that in discussion with James Richard (Network Rail) he had drawn on the Bentley experience and had developed a set of skills requirements that were effectively non sector specific. These included:

* Virtual reality engineering
* Cognitive ergonomics
* Robotics/automation
* Data visualisation
* New workforce thinking/behavioural changes
* Advanced logistics
* Electrification.

Steve suggested that the development of these skills were non sector specific and could be developed in collaboration with a range of different employers. This could create sufficient critical mass of students to allow for specialisation by some training providers (employers and colleges) and make the training financially viable to training providers.

Steve stressed that the non sector specific skills/knowledge must be underpinned with a set of core civil/structural/electrical/mechanical engineering skills.

Steve suggested that around 80% of training needs could be developed as collaborative regional provision with a further 20% company specific (‘polishing’ skills).

Martin Howlett commented that a similar model was being developed for digital skills.

Steve also referred to the opportunity to draw on the qualifications that were being developed nationally –e.g. the new Level 3 robotics/automation qualification that had been led by Jaguar Land Rover and had taken nearly 3 years to develop.

Karen Hughes noted that there was also an opportunity to link to work that the University of Liverpool was developing with Unilever.

**3.4.3 Logistics**

In the absence of Neil Warren and Gary Byrne, Pat Jackson reported that a meeting between Yungheinrich, Eddie Stobart, AO, local colleges and Job Centre Plus had recently taken place and had already identified opportunities for employers to work with Job Centre Plus to promote the logistics sector to Job Centre Plus clients.

Neil Warren was also keen to arrange a follow up meeting with a wider group of employers in the logistics sector to agree priorities for training packages.

**3.4.4 Recent Developments at Daresbury**

Phil Atkinson presented a series of slides outlining recent developments and presenting a vision for the new training facility at Daresbury. Phil explained that he is bidding for £4 million support from Liverpool City Region and is also keen to collaborate with partners in Cheshire and Warrington. Phil explained that he is keen to encourage other training providers to deliver training within the planned facility at Daresbury and suggested that Cheshire and Warrington might provide a letter of support for Daresbury’s bid to Liverpool City Region.

**3.4.5. Engineering Model Adopted at Reaseheath**

Dave Kynaston presented a series of slides to illustrate the model (the Eden project) of partnership working amongst food engineering businesses working with Reaseheath College.

**3.4.6. Live Vacancies**

Trevor Langston demonstrated the National Apprenticeship website that is sourced by many associated websites that are used by schools to demonstrate career and training opportunities to young people. The demonstration illustrated the lack of STEM related apprenticeship opportunities currently posted on the website by employers in Cheshire and Warrington – this prompted a discussion about the dangers of sending misleading information to young people about the career and job opportunities in Cheshire and Warrington.

**3.4.7 Guidance Issued by the Department for Education to Potential Applicants Seeking to Bid for Funding to Support Institutes for Technology**

Pat Jackson referred to the slides that she had recently circulated summarising the guidance recently issued by the Department for Education. She also reported back on the briefing session that she had attended in London. Pat highlighted the key messages from the briefing session:

* The need for the Institute for Technology to operate at sufficient scale to make a demonstrable impact;
* The importance of the Institute for Technology to add real value to existing provision – particularly the importance of increasing Level 4 and 5 skills
* The importance of the Institute of Technology having a distinct physical identity as an independent institution

Pat also reported that a recent survey of local FE colleges suggested that they currently provide around 3,300 Level 4 and 5 qualifications of which around 2,000 might be specified as science, technology, engineering or math (STEM) related.

**3.4.8. Report Back on Meeting with College Principals**

Meredydd David reported back on a meeting held on 11 January where College Principals had considered Department for Education guidance to applicants wishing to apply for Government funding for Institutes of Technology.

Meredydd noted that the Principals fully supported the work undertaken by the Employers’ Skills and Education Board to develop an Institute for Technology in Cheshire and Warrington that supported groups of employers working together with local training providers to develop a more coherent, better quality curriculum offer across Cheshire and Warrington. They were keen to ensure that the momentum of this work continued.

Principals were concerned about a number of aspects of the recent guidance issued by the Department for Education. They noted that the Department was only offering capital funding and suggested that the conditions associated with the funding – in particular the need to create a new institution with a distinct physical identity would distract the Cheshire and Warrington partners from their core objective of focusing European Structural Funds on revenue support for an Institute of Technology in Cheshire and Warrington.

**4. Breakout Session to Review the Options for Creating an Institute of Technology in Cheshire and Warrington**

Attendees broke up into two groups to consider:

* The benefits and potential blockages to delivering the Institute of Technology model proposed by the Department for Education
* Feasible alternative practical approaches to the model proposed by the Department for Education

The following points were noted in the feed-back from the breakout session:

* Concern at the timing of the introduction of T levels and the availability of end-point assessors at Levels 4, 5 and above.
* The need to maintain the momentum of the current innovative work to create an Institute for Technology in Cheshire and Warrington and to avoid being distracted by preparing a bid for Department for Education funding.
* The concerns about a lack of revenue funding offered by the Department for Education
* The view that the Institute for Technology model proposed by the Department for Education would not be sustainable or financially viable and would result in displacement of existing provision.
* There was a consensus that the Cheshire and Warrington Institute for Technology model did not need a new building – it should be more about a collaborative approach that is built around existing facilities in colleges and employers premises and uses European Social Funds to pump prime the revenue costs of developing and delivering a more coherent and higher quality curriculum offer based on a hub and spoke model.
* All recognised the potential for an innovative, distributive model for an Institute for Technology model in Cheshire and Warrington where different colleges and employers share specialist training facilities. There was a recognition by employers of the need for training providers to adopt a more collaborative approach with more distance learning and teachers rather than students moving around multiple sites across Cheshire and Warrington to deliver specialist training.
* General agreement that Cheshire and Warrington should not bid for Department for Education funding in the first bidding round but should continue to work on the innovative approach favoured by employers and training providers and then potentially bid in a second round.
* Attendees at the meeting confirmed that work should continue to work towards delivering the vision for a Cheshire and Warrington Institute for Technology – as developed by employers and other key partners. Consideration should be given to the right way to badge the Cheshire and Warrington’s Institute for Technology – it should probably not continue to be badged as an Institute for Technology.

**5. Conclusions**

Meredydd thanked all attendees to the extended meeting of the Employers’ Skills and Education

**CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON LEP Annex A**

**EMPLOYERS SKILLS AND EDUCATION BOARD MEETING ON 8 NOVEMBER 2017**

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

* Meredydd David (Acting Chair)
* James Richards (Network Rail)
* Nicola Merriman (National Skills Academy Nuclear)
* Steve Collier and Julia Teale representing Lynne Williams (Bentley Motors)
* Fraser Kearney (Cheshire and Warrington Growth Hub)
* Trevor Langston representing Paul Colman (South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce)
* Phil Atkinson (Daresbury)
* Mark Livesey (LEP)
* Pat Jackson

**Apologies**

* Clare Hayward
* Neil Warren (Jungheinrich)
* Paul Colman (South Cheshire College)
* Paul Taylor (Taylor Business Park)
* Jim Carroll (Mobica)
* Jenny Clucas (Cogent)
* Dame Pat Bacon (Health Sector)
* Lynne Williams (Bentley Motors)
* Margaret Cheshire (Essar Oils)

**Extended Meeting including:**

* Chris Smith (Tiger Trailers)
* Paul Kelly (BAE Systems)
* Bill Carr (IOD)
* Nerys Price-Jordan (Silver Lining Furniture)
* Karen Hughes (United Utilities)
* Nichola Newton (Warrington and Vale Royal College)
* Dhesi and Helen Nellist (South and West Cheshire Colleges)
* Chloe Taylor (Cheshire West and Chester Council)
* Tracy Cosgrave representing Rachael Kay (Macclesfield College)
* Martin Howlett on behalf of Chris Hindley (Youth Federation)
* Kerry Kirkwood (Sir John Deane’s Sixth Form College)
* Dave Rowlands on behalf of Andrew Bridge (CITB)
* Linda Dean (Total People)
* Nick Smith (TTE)
* Charlie Woodcock (University of Chester)
* Lee Barber (Warrington UTC)
* Denise Proctor (WEAVE)
* Dave Kynaston (Reaseheath College)
* Heather Hayes (Growth Hub)
* Roz Atherton representing Julian Cobley (Skills and Growth Co)
* Tim Smith (Warrington and Co)

**Apologies from extended invitees includes:**

* Frank Jordan (Cheshire East Council)
* Mathew Grant (Priestley College)
* Gary Byrne (Eddie Stobart)
* Andy Farrall (Warrington Borough Council)
* Charlie Seward (Cheshire West and Chester Council)
* Kerrie Salisbury (AO)
* Chris McLinden (University of Liverpool)
* Chris Doherty (Bio Hub, Alderley Park)
* Dave Terry (Crewe UTC)
* Juliette White (Astra Zeneca)
* David Brennan
* Lesley Coombes (Unilever)
* Jonathan Guest (Atkins)
* Clare Pattendale (Astra Zeneca)
* Gary Steen (Talk Talk)
* Daren Butterworth (Senior Aerospace BWT)