**NOTE OF EMPLOYERS SKILLS AND EDUCATION BOARD MEETING ON 16 DECEMBER 2019**

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

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

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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 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.
* Paul Colman – Board members of Cheshire College South and West
* Paul Taylor – Director of Wire, Warrington
* James Richard – Director of 4WardFutures
* Bill Carr and Dhesi – applicants for Local Growth Fund.
* Peter Skates – general local authority involvement with Macclesfield College

1. **NOTE OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE EMPLOYERS’ SKILLS AND EDUCATION BOARD ON 13 NOVEMBER**

The note of the meeting was agreed, and the revised action list noted. All the actions listed would be picked up during the meeting except for the action to establish a group chaired by Julia Teale to review the options for improving the use of the apprenticeship levy. Nicola Merriman agreed to follow up this action with Julia. **ACTION NICOLA MERRIMAN**.

1. **TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE EMPLOYERS’ SKILLS AD EDUCATION BOARD**

The terms of reference were approved subject to checking the level of delegated authority (**ACTION PHILIP COX**) and revising the governance diagram to include reference to the Local Growth Fund (**ACTION PAT JACKSON**).

**5. PROGRESS REPORT ON ACCELERATE – FEED-BACK FROM SUBGROUP MEETING**

Phil Atkinson reported progress.

The subgroup had discussed the **Service Level Agreement** that is being developed between the University and the LEP. The key issues that need further work are the Governance Structure and the need to revise the definition of ‘delivery partner’ to reflect the role of the LEP working in partnership with the University and other partners to develop a pipeline of learners and aggregate demand via the independent brokers that are to be based in the Growth Hub.

The development of the **Dynamic Procurement System** is on track. The link to the process for identifying potential training providers has been sent out to all Members of the Employers’ Skills and Education Board and the network of independent training providers. Mini competitions will be held to identify deliverers of specific training programmes and the competitions will need to set criteria for quality of training offers (including social value) not just cost. The aim is to create sustainable training provision across Cheshire and Warrington.

A specification for an invitation to tender for **marketing and communications** related to Accelerate has been prepared and, subject to final comments, will be issued before the Christmas break.

In discussion, it was agreed that Catherine Walker would be asked to produce a one page note for all partners to use in discussion with employers. **ACTION CATHERINE WALKER**. Discussions with employers will need to be mindful of state aid issues.

Clare Hayward stressed the importance of maintaining a strong focus to ensure the effective delivery of Accelerate – it must deliver what the Employers’ Skills and Education Board want to achieve as well as the targets set by the Department for Work and Pensions. Members must take responsibility to help delivery.

Philip Cox noted that Accelerate is a major opportunity to demonstrate how local delivery works and how it can deliver a culture change in the development of skills that make a real difference to the take up of new technologies and business processes leading to improved productivity.

Clare noted that all the members of the sub-group had expressed an interest in joining the Accelerate Governance Board and Clare asked all the Members of the Employers’ Skills and Education Board to let her know if they would also like to join the Governance Board. **ACTION ALL MEMBERS**

Clare also noted that she had received a draft project planner from the University.

6. **LOCAL GROWTH FUND**

Bill Carr left the room for the discussion on the Local Growth Fund.

Pat Jackson presented the recommendations. Members were invited to note progress in issuing the first tranche of contracts of Local Growth Fund investments – including the changes in the total costs of the Cheshire College South and West investment – the total cost of the project is £541K lower but the investment rate is acceptable and outcomes are still good. Members noted the first tranche of investments and the slight change to the Cheshire College South and West investment.

Members were also invited to approve the second tranche of investments. Paul Tylor queried what would happen if the Carpe Diem project had to move premises as a result of ending of the lease. It was agreed that all investments should include a condition that if leases run out, alternative space should be provided within Cheshire and Warrington.

The second tranche of bids were approved, and it was agreed that these should go to the LEP’s Performance and Investment Committee later this week for ratification. **ACTION PHILIP COX AND PAT JACKSON**

Pat Jackson reported that there were two remaining bids that are still being processed. The processing of one of the bids is almost complete and should be ready to go the January meeting of the Employers’ Skills and Education Board. The other bid is the subject of discussion with Warrington Vale Royal College, Warrington UTC and Priestley College. A progress report on this project will come to the next Employers’ Skills and Education Board meeting. **ACTION PAT JACKSON AN SARAH WILLIAMS**

To encourage collaboration a meeting is planned on 21 January where all the investments will be show cased and encouraged to identify synergies and opportunities for collaborations. The meeting will also be an opportunity to identify any gaps in provision. Clare asked for the projects to be mapped in terms of geography and the skills gaps they are designed to address.

The following Members agreed to act as mentors to the investments:

* Paul Taylor – Carpe Diem
* James Richards – Reaseheath Dairy
* Bill Carr – Digital Hive
* Dhesi – Youth Federation
* Andy Moore/Julia Teale – Cheshire College South and West (large and smaller investments)
* Phil Atkinson – Warrington Vale Royal larger investment
* Nicola Merriman – Warrington UTC
* Stephen Fitzsimons – Elluc and Live Wire
* Peter Skates – Astra Zeneca
* Nicola Dunbar – Macclesfield College and Warrington and Vale Royal (smaller investment)
* Paul Colman – Reaseheath Controlled Environment

All the mentors will be invited to the meeting on 21 January. **ACTION SARAH WILLIAMS**

Quarterly updates will be provided to the Employers’ Skills and Education Board and each mentor will be invited to comment on the progress of the investments they are mentoring. **ACTION ALL MEMBERS**

It was noted that the members of the Pledge team will also be shadowing the investments.

Clare stressed the need to involve more employers in the 21 January event. **ACTION SARAH WILLIAMS**

**7. DATA AND LABOUR MARKET INTELLIGENCE**

7.1 **Terms of Reference of the Data and Labour Market Steering Group**

The terms of reference were agreed subject to modifying the governance diagram to include the Local Growth Fund.

7.2 **Labour and Learning Market Assessment**

Pat Jackson reported that the assessment had been presented to the Data and Labour Market Steering Group and they had recommended that a number of key issues should be highlighted to the Employers’ Skills and Education Board.

David Brennan presented a series of slides highlighting the issues that had been identified for escalation to the Employers’ Skills and Education Board by the Data and Labour Market Steering Group.

David noted that the assessment reflected a snapshot of a point in time and would only be of use if it informed and changes/has an impact on partners.

David also noted that the report is not yet complete – more is needed on HE, supply vs demand (as soon as the EMSI data is available), stock and flow into employment and issues of geography.

In presenting the slides David highlighted a number of key issues:

**7.2.1 Apprenticeships**

It was noted that achievement rates for all ages were better for local colleges compared with achievement rates achieved by training providers outside Cheshire and Warrington.

7.2.2 **Employment with Study**

Members discussed why ‘employment with study’ figures are so high (5.5 times higher) in Cheshire East and Cheshire West compared with the English average. Members suggested this might be the result of the Reaseheath cohort or using traineeships in a different way to England. It was suggested that we needed to look at trends over a period of time and explore further whether the outcomes were better or worse as a result of this practice.

**7.2.3 Skills Deficiency Summary**

It was noted that skills deficiencies reported in the 2017 Employers’ Skills Survey were higher in Cheshire and Warrington compared with national figures. David reported that the gaps and shortages are very ‘spikey’ and reflect differences in different sectors – further work was needed on this.

The current Employers’ Skills Survey included 80,000 responses nationally with 1,402 responses from Cheshire and Warrington.

Philip Cox commented that he was surprised that the gaps and shortages were not larger – given the job density in Cheshire and Warrington. In response Member noted that the data was 2 years old and pressures had increased significantly since then. It was also noted that Cheshire and Warrington jobs are being filled by significant numbers of people commuting into the area every day. There is a danger that if we retrain and upskill these people they will not be retained as workers in Cheshire and Warrington.

It was also noted that structurally, the economy in Cheshire and Warrington is skewed to higher skill levels.

**7.2.4 Future Skill Requirements**

Members noted the higher requirement for digital skills in Cheshire and Warrington compared with nationally and asked if this varied across different sectors.

It was suggested that the higher demand could be a result of the tighter labour market in Cheshire and Warrington (resulting in more skills shortages).

Members suggested that further work was needed to understand which employers have skills gaps and shortages and whether there are any specific age groups that should be targeted if we are to support business growth and improvements in productivity. This should inform the targeting of Accelerate.

**7.2.5 Young People’s Attainment, Disadvantage and Deprivation**

David noted that overall achievements were broadly in line with national figures. However, he highlighted the significant gaps in attainment between those on free school meals compared with the English average. This could be a result of underperformance of those on free school meals or better performance of those not on free school meals compared with the national performance.

Members queried why Level 2 figures for 19-year olds had gone down so much – was it a consequence of changes in the funding of the Adult Education Budget, the impact of the apprenticeship levy or something else?

Members noted the large variations in completion data at ward level – potentially there are some wards in Cheshire and Warrington where no adults are achieving a Level 3 qualification.

It was suggested that it would be useful to look at the recently released 2019 indices of multiple deprivation data and review current levels of people with Level 2 and 3 qualifications.

7.2.6 **FE Delivery Adult Level 3**

David noted that in 2017/18 only 136 adults achieved a Level 3 qualification and, apparently none attended discrete full-time adult courses. Members also asked David to check the data on ‘access to HE’ courses.

In discussion Members discussed possible reasons for low level of adult Level 3 completions. It was suggested this might be a result of more people undertaking work-based learning/apprenticeships.

All agreed that it would be useful to investigate further the Level 3 attainment data and, look at trends over time – once the 2018/19 data becomes available.

7.3 **Next Steps**

The LEP will draft a specification for the next phase of work that will be funded from what remains of the £75K allocated by the DfE. The aim is for the next phase of work to build on the work already undertaken and answer the questions and address the issues raised by the Data and Labour Market Steering Group during the first phase of work. The next phase of work is planned to start in late January/early February.

**8. Stakeholder Map, Branding and Communications Strategy**

Discussion on this item was postponed to the January meeting because Catherine Walker was ill and unable to attend the meeting.

**9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**9.1** It was noted that the final bid for European Social Funds to support unemployed and economically inactive people was approved by the DWP last week.

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Next meeting to be held on 15 January – Stephen Fitzsimons has agreed to host at Birchwood. Pat Jackson will confirm details. The next meeting will include a focus on branding and communications, progress on the Local Growth Fund remaining two bids and short (5 minute) updates on Accelerate, the Digital Skills Partnership, the Pledge and the ESF investment in support for the unemployed and economically inactive..

**CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON LEP Annex A**

**EMPLOYERS SKILLS AND EDUCATION BOARD MEETING ON 16 DECEMBER 2019**

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

* Clare Hayward
* Nicola Dunbar
* Andy Moore representing Julia Teale (Bentley Motors)
* Nicola Merriman (National Skills Academy Nuclear) – joined by phone
* Phil Atkinson (Daresbury)
* Bill Carr (Carpe Diem)
* Louise Higgins (United Utilities)
* Jasbir Dhesi (Cheshire College South and West – representing the training providers)
* Paul Taylor (Taylor Business Park)
* James Richards (Network Rail)
* Peter Skates (Cheshire East Council) – representing Cllr Barber,
* Stephen Fitzsimons (Warrington Borough Council)
* Philip Cox
* Pat Jackson (LEP)

**Apologies**

* Paul Colman (South Cheshire Chamber)
* Cllr James Barber (Cheshire East Council)
* Lisa Harris (Cheshire West and Chester Council)
* Martin Wood (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) – observer
* Charlie Woodcock (University of Chester)

**No response**

* Faye Van Flute (Lloyds Banking Group) – Faye has not been in touch for several months

Also attending Sarah Williams (LEP), David Brennan (advisor to LEP)