**CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON LEP**

**NOTE OF KEY POINTS AND ACTIONS FROM EMPLOYERS SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT BOARD MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 8 MARCH**

List of those who attended meeting and apologies received at Annex A

The meeting was an opportunity to talk through the emerging skills strategies and identify the key priorities for joint action.

1. **Welcome and introductions**

Clare Hayward welcomed members of the Board to the meeting and invited everyone to introduce themselves. Clare noted the apologies received.

1. **Minutes of last meeting and follow up actions**

Clare Hayward noted that there were no actions arising from the last meeting.

1. **Development of the Skills Strategy**

Pat Jackson presented a series of slides outlining the emerging skills strategy and priorities of action and invited comments. A series of issues and points were raised which are all captured.

Members broke up into two groups to discuss whether the emerging priorities had been correctly identified and to rank the priorities in order of importance.

The feed- back from the two groups was very clear that the skills strategy should focus on one major priority – putting employers at the heart of informing, inspiring and communicating regularly with young people (primary and secondary) and their parents, showing career pathways and progression routes – exciting them about new technologies, offering work experience, apprenticeships and jobs and working with training providers to shape provision.

The Board all agreed that if this main priority was addressed fully they would also deliver on their other three priorities:

* Graduates – retaining and attracting graduates to enable businesses to grow
* STEM – better performance in GCE math, stronger take up of STEM subjects with clear progression routes and more higher level STEM apprenticeships
* Helping Individuals to get a job – supporting individuals who want a job or want to start a business.

In further discussion, it was agreed that in delivering the main priority it would be important to consider how to segment and target young people and their parents and key groups of employers.

It would also be important to develop a web-site(s) to enable parents, young people, graduates, and employers to access information about employer-led show casing events, training opportunities, work experience, career pathways and progression routes

It was agreed that the following actions would be completed over the next month:-

* Paul Chapman in consultation with other Board members would draft a short one page paper setting out a series of proposed actions to deliver the main priority – putting employers at the heart of informing, inspiring and communicating with young people about new technologies, career opportunities and progression routes.
* Karen McKean and Pat Jackson to review the size of the business base in Cheshire and Warrington and agree how to segment the Board’s work around key groups of employers and /or key locations.
* Review Local Growth Fund, ESF and other key projects to see how they can contribute to the Boards’ main priority. It was suggested that each project should also be invited to a future Board meeting to explore this issue in more detail.
* Clare Haywood and Pat Jackson would report progress to the next LEP Board meeting on 22 March.

1. **Devolution**

Mark Livesey provided a short progress report on devolution. He explained that all the local authorities had agreed to devolution on a Cheshire and Warrington basis with a combined authority and a mayor. A devolution deal was currently being prepared for submission to Ministers.

The local authority leaders are keen to progress the bid as soon as possible but there had been a significant shift of approach by HMG who were now applying less pressure for an early submission of the devolution deal. The next step would be a Ministerial meeting to discuss the proposed deal.

1. **AOB**

5.1 **Area Based Review** (ABR)

Mark Livesey reported that a Strategic Forum had been established to oversee the implementation of the ABR recommendations and a Ministerial decision about the planned merger of South and West Cheshire Colleges was imminent.

5.2 **Local Growth Fund**

Mark Livesey reported that Cheshire and Warrington LEP had been awarded a Local Growth Fund budget of £43.28 million. This is the highest per capita budget awarded to date but is significantly less than the original £150 million bid. It had been agreed that some of the £43.28 million would be allocated to skills projects but these would need to demonstrate a strong alignment to the emerging skills strategy and associated priorities for action.

5.3 **Promotion of apprenticeships and use of £5K funding**

Pat Jackson reported that part of the budget had been used to fund the production of a series of videos focused on the benefits of apprentices to small STEM related businesses.

1. **Dates of Next Meetings**

It was proposed that future meetings would be held at 08.30hrs on Wednesday 5 April and Wednesday 3 May. Pat Jackson to send invitations to members.

Annex A

**EMPLOYERS SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT BOARD MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 8 MARCH**

The following attended the meeting:

* Clare Hayward (Chair)
* Paul Colman (South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry)
* James Richards (Network Rail)
* Jim Carroll (Mobica)
* Paul Taylor (Taylor Business Park)
* Karen Mc Kean (Cheshire and Warrington Growth Hub)
* Steve Collier – representing Lynne Williams
* Mark Livesey (LEP)
* Pat Jackson (LEP)
* Susanne Klein (LEP Erasmus student)

**Apologies**

* Meredydd David (Chair of Provider Group)
* Neil Warren (Jungheinrich)
* Jo Tipa (National Skills Academy Nuclear)
* Jane Ingram (Halifax/Lloyds Banking Group)
* Jenny Clucas (Cogent Skills)
* Mark Roach (Grosvenor)
* Eilis Rattigan (Waters)
* Christine Lowry (Q Hotels)
* Pat Bacon (Health sector)
* Derek Lucas (Redxpharma)