



CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON LEP - EMPLOYERS SKILLS AND EDUCATION BOARD MEETING ON 18 JULY 2017

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Clare Hayward welcomed members of the Board to the meeting. Clare noted the apologies received, and welcomed Phil Atkinson (Head of Technical, Mechanical and Vacuum Engineering at Daresbury) to the meeting.

2. OVERVIEW OF DARESBUURY

Phil Atkinson welcomed the Board members to Daresbury and gave a short presentation about the extent of the international collaborative research work undertaken at Daresbury. Phil highlighted the success of the Daresbury campus including the role of the Hartree Centre and the £300m collaborative project with IBM. He also spoke about Daresbury's 'big computers', CLARA and the Extreme Light Infrastructure project.

In discussion Phil also spoke about Daresbury's recent open week which had attracted 7,500 visitors on the public day.

Board members were very impressed by the presentation and the international collaboration involved in the cutting-edge research undertaken at Daresbury. Members asked if Phil could provide a list of key points that they might use to promote the work of Daresbury and highlight the importance of continuing to invest in this important national asset.

Phil also offered to host a further meeting of the Board and arrange a tour of the facilities. It was agreed that a future meeting of the Board might be held at Daresbury – starting with a tour to include the Board and the other individuals who had attended the Institute of Technology workshop on 13 June. **ACTION**

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Dame Pat Bacon had previously asked the Board to note that her husband chairs the Crewe Pledge.

Jenny Clucas had previously asked the Board to note that Cogent Skills are sub-contractors to Calderdale College and partners with the Career Enterprise Company.

The Board agreed that we should refresh any declarations of interest and Clare Hayward asked Pat Jackson to write to all Board members and invite them to declare any interests. **ACTION**

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

Clare Hayward noted that the actions from the previous meeting had been completed or were included in the agenda.



5. FEED-BACK FROM LAST LEP BOARD MEETING ON 21 JUNE

Clare Hayward reported that she had updated the Board on the progress that had been made in relation to developing the skills strategy: In discussion the LEP Board agreed that:

- The focus should remain on inspiring and communicating and in rationalising the number of initiatives that were being put to employers and providers;
- Progress should continue to be made in putting employers at the heart of the skills strategy going forward. In doing that, it would be important to reach the SME community as well as the corporates;
- Work on progressing the Pledge model and enabling it to roll out across Cheshire and Warrington should continue. A business plan was being pulled together, which could lead to a bid for money to pump prime this work;
- Work around developing the Institute of Technology model should continue and it was recognised that this would be of value to the sub-region with or without the Government's endorsement;
- The skills agenda should establish strong links with future SEP refreshes to ensure resultant activity was aligned;
- The progress that had been made around diagnosing the problems around the targeting of European funding was welcome. Again, the Board welcomed the idea of bending existing and future funding towards the clear priorities that were being identified.
- It may be useful to discuss the cross-cutting skills issues at a future LEP Board awayday..

6. OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PLAN

Mark Livesey gave a presentation about the refreshed strategic economic plan. The plan was launched on 7 July.

Mark explained that delivery plans – including a skills and education, a transport and a housing delivery plan would sit beneath the overall strategic economic plan.

In the subsequent discussion members:

- queried how the skills and education plan would sit with the delivery plans for transport, housing and major infrastructure projects.
- discussed the mobility of graduates and the relative attrition rates for graduates and apprentices
- considered the need to 'over-train' to compensate for the growing mobility of graduates and apprentices and suggested this might be an issue to address with the Institute of Technology
- highlighted the problems of parking and accessibility as factors affecting graduate attraction into Cheshire and Warrington
- noted that the apprentice levy is an opportunity to develop skills within Cheshire and Warrington but might be hindered by outdated views of apprenticeships
- discussed the importance of branding areas and expressed interest in the development of a marketing strategy for Cheshire and Warrington



- noted the need to reconsider the changing nature of jobs (as highlighted recently at a North-West Business Leaders dinner).

It was agreed that representatives of Board members (Paul Taylor and Paul Colman) would meet to ensure skills and education issues would be fully reflected in the transport and housing delivery plans. **ACTION**

7. SKILLS PLEDGE

Paul Colman tabled a note on the Skills Pledge. Paul noted the following progress:

- plans for a programme of 250 co-ordinated events in Crewe and the development of key messages to local schools
- positive initial discussions on the development of Skills Pledges in Warrington and Chester
- positive discussions with the 3 local authorities and all the FE colleges
- collaboration with the Youth Federation and a very positive discussion with the North-West Business Leaders
- active support for the Skills Pledge from the Cheshire Business Leaders (CBL) network who see the Pledge as a major initiative to help reduce duplication

As next steps Paul Colman would develop a more detailed business plan, to include a governance structure, as the basis of an application for European Structural Funds later in the year. **ACTION**

8. INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Paul Taylor reported on progress to date. He noted very strong support from Cheshire Business Leaders for the concept of an Institute of Technology and their plans to host a breakfast meeting with a group of Chief Executives Officers (CEOs) and key decision makers in mid-September with the aim of securing senior level commitment and agreeing a governance structure involving CEOs of key businesses.

Paul noted recent Central Government announcements about Institutes of Technology and suggested that further announcements from Ministers were expected in September.

Members discussed the need for an Institute for Technology in Cheshire and Warrington. They agreed that the Institute of Technology should not be a building but should focus on driving up the quality training and education provision and encouraging groups of employers to work together with training and education providers to:

- pool knowledge and resources,
- establish a critical mass of learners and
- develop coherent packages of training and education with a strong focus on STEM and digital skills and the key sectors identified in the Strategic Economic Plan.



Members emphasised the importance of not under estimating the resources needed to develop a business plan for an Institute of Technology and the opportunities for learning from the experiences of Jaguar Land Rover and other employees developing similar concepts in the North West.

Paul Colman highlighted the opportunities of the Institute of Technology with a focus on employers in key sectors and key geographies adding real value to the development of the Skills Pledge and a coherent programme of support that put employers at the heart of inspiring, informing and communicating about new technologies, job opportunities and progression routes.

Pat Jackson tabled the latest note on the plans for an Institute of Technology.

Next steps would include the planned business breakfast hosted by Cheshire Business Leaders and further discussions with individual members who might draw groups of employers in key sectors together with providers, local authorities and other key partners to start mapping out the scope of collaborative work to:

- pool knowledge and resources,
- establish a critical mass of learners
- develop more innovative approaches to encourage larger employers to over train to meet the needs of smaller businesses
- develop coherent packages of training and education with a strong focus on STEM and digital skills and the key sectors identified in the Strategic Economic Plan. **ACTION**

9. PROGRESS ON COMMUNICATIONS HUB

In the absence of Jane Ingram and Emma Garbutt, Pat Jackson reported that the proposed meeting to scope the purpose of the communications hub had not yet taken place because of difficulties in contacting key people with in Lloyds.

It was agreed that a meeting should be arranged as soon as possible – to involve, if possible, Jim Carroll, Paul Colman, Gary Steen (TalkTalk and LEP BOARD member), Steve Bellairs (Skills and Growth Co), Jane Ingram or Emma Garbutt. **ACTION**

10. ESF Future Bidding Round

Mark Livesey reported that a paper on the future ESF bidding round was to be considered at the next meeting of the sub-regional Management Board of Local Authorities Chief Executives and the LEP. Of the £112 million ESF budget £50 million was still to be allocated to projects. The allocations would address the strategic priorities of the Employers' Skills and Education Board including the importance of inclusive growth.

It was proposed that a working group, chaired by Mark, would be established with the local authorities to oversee the preparation of documents setting out the priorities for the next bidding round. It was also proposed that sub-groups on key areas would be established including a sub-group on skills and education (chaired by Pat Jackson).



Mark would report progress on the development of a delivery plan and calls for bids at the next Employers Skills and Education Board meeting on 6 September.

Members expressed some concerns that employers were not represented on the working group and Mark agreed to reflect further on this issue. **ACTION**

11. CONCLUSIONS

Clare Hayward thanked all the Board members for their contributions.

Clare summarised the following key actions:

- **ESF next bidding round** should reflect the Employers' Skills and Education Board priorities
- **SEP Delivery Plans** - Paul Taylor and Paul Colman would work with Mark Livesey to ensure the transport and housing delivery plans reflected the skills and education priorities
- **Skills Pledge** – Mark Livesey, Clare Hayward and Pat Jackson would review the draft business plan including the proposed governance structure
- **Communications Hub** – Pat Jackson would contact Jim Carroll with a view to arranging a meeting to start scoping the communications hub and the different customer journeys for key groups.
- **Institute of Technology** – Paul Taylor would organise the Cheshire Business Leaders Breakfast in mid- September with the aim of being ready to submit a proposal to the Government in the Autumn.
- **The next Board meeting** should include some creative time to consider the shape of the future ESF bidding round and the priorities for the Institute of Technology in Cheshire and Warrington. The meeting might be in 2 parts so that a wider group of employers and partners could contribute to the creative thinking session.

12. AOB

There was no any other business.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Next meetings:

- 6 September (13.30 to 15.30 hrs) venue to be confirmed (possibly UTC or Siemens).
- 11 October (14.00 to 16.00 hrs)
- 8 November (13.30 to 15.30 hrs)
- 6 December (14.00 to 16.00 hrs)