

Employment and Skills Board

Report to the Humber LEP Board on Friday 18th September 2020

Report from Stephen Savage, Chair of the Employment and Skills Board

1. Summary

The data covering the current employment and labour market statistics, produced as part of the employment and skills analysis is included in the Chief Execs report on the board agenda. The ESB and Exec Team are continuing to work with employers, partners and government departments to share local intelligence and drive local interventions.

This paper provides the LEP Board with information on:

- An overview of current and new support mechanisms to help government deliver the Plan for Jobs.
- Business and provider feedback on recovery
- An update on the Local Digital Skills Partnership Pilot
- The DfE Skills and Productivity Board and local skills reports

Recommendations

- The LEP board to acknowledge the work taking place.

1.1. The Government's Plan for Jobs

1.2. The Chancellor announced the Plan for Jobs in July 2020 with a focus on supporting people to find jobs, increase skills, protect jobs in the hospitality sector and the creation of new jobs such as those in construction via the Getting Building Fund and the greener homes agenda. Ref - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-plan-for-jobs-documents/a-plan-for-jobs-2020>

1.3. The policy is now being delivered by a number of mechanisms including increased grants for employers who take on apprentices of an additional £2k for those under 25 and £1.5k for those apprentices over 25 and those with an Education, Health and Care Plan.

1.4. Other incentives include the launch of the Kickstart Programme for young people in receipt of Universal Credit aged 16 to 24 as outlined in the CEO's report. The LEP will consider the appropriate way to add value to this programme, either by working in support of the four local authorities and promoting and directing employers to this service, and/or becoming a formal intermediary once the further guidance is available. .

1.5. Traineeships for those aged between 19 and 24 have been remodelled to include additional incentive of £1k for employers who are willing to take on a

Trainee with a maximum payment of £10k. Education and Training Providers will be expected to participate in a tender process via the Education and Skills Funding Agency to develop their Traineeship cohort. The Government is looking for national coverage with a focus on high quality sectoral supply and demand which will lead to permanent jobs. Further guidance on this process is expected shortly.

- 1.6. Government has made further investment in the National Careers Service (NCS) to expand careers services for all; locally we have seen our partnership with the NCS service provider, the Education Development Trust develop and we are looking at more partnership opportunities to build on the Humber Jobs Fuse.
- 1.7. The expanded youth offer will include the measures described above with additional services. The JCP Work Coaches are in the process of being doubled, there are physical centres of support under development in the four local authority areas, the DWP Flexible Support Fund that provides unemployed people with training, work clothes and travel to interview has grown and there is an expansion of the sector based work academies.
- 1.8. These measures are all welcomed, however the Humber's employment data indicates that we are not yet able to quantify the full impact of the economic shock and our female and older workforce will face greater challenge in finding and securing suitable work. The ESB has asked the DWP for further clarity on any additional funding or schemes that will be established in the near future.
- 1.9. **Appendix A** demonstrates the current and new programmes that are in place, with a focus on those evidenced to need more support (e.g. 50+), Monitoring and evaluation of participation and outputs will be vital over the coming months to assess what more is needed that can be delivered using existing or new resources.

2. Business and provider feedback on recovery

- 2.1. ESB members have shared their recovery plans to date; all have adapted to increased usage of digital systems, recognising that these will remain in place post Covid due to improved efficiency and access.
- 2.2. Siemens Gamesa and British Steel are recruiting new employees, apprenticeship numbers are beginning to improve and students have returned in greater numbers to college and independent training providers. There has been a greater number of adults enrolling in comparison to the same stage of enrolment in previous years.
- 2.3. Further support for those who had experienced digital poverty has been put in place resulting in increased participation in online learning. The full use of education and training estates is still challenging due to the size of rooms and workshops and access/egress issues.
- 2.4. Matter of concern are the increased reports of safeguarding and well-being issues with providers responding and working with other authorities where necessary.

3. The Local Digital Skills Partnership

- 3.1. The Local Digital Skills Partnership one year pilot continues to implement the delivery of the three priorities; sharing of employer good practice via case studies, training to support the confidence and competence of individuals and companies and the development of a local digital benchmark tool.
- 3.2. Whilst still in development, an action group within the Partnership has reviewed the digital training currently available against the skills needed by individuals and employers. The draft diagram at (**Appendix B**) will be used to produce a local heat map to identify the density of provision and identify any gaps.

4. Skills and Productivity Board

- 4.1. In October 2019, Education Secretary Gavin Williamson announced a series of measures to help boost the nation's skills, this included establishing a national Skills and Productivity Board (SPB). This new committee is in the process of being established by the Department for Education (DfE) and will provide the Government with independent advice and analysis on skills mismatches to help ensure that the skills system is aligned to employers' future needs. LEPs will contribute to this analysis through the work of their Skills Advisory Panels (SAP). The Humber LEP's ESB incorporates the responsibility of the SAP.

4.2. Local Skills Reports

- 4.3. The DfE requires all Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs), in the Humber's case the ESB, to produce a Local Skills Reports (LSR) before the end of March 2021. The LSR will be updated on an annual basis with a fuller version refresh every two years. Funding has been allocated to LEPs to support this work.
- 4.4. The LSR will build on the evidence base by being a single consistent report which will be in place across all SAPs. The LSR will be used to help grow the influence of the SAP, engage local partners and feed intelligence into central government and the national SPB.
- 4.5. The LSR will set out each areas' unique skills landscape, progress on skills-related activities, any successes or challenges faced, as well as future local skills plans and will provide a clear and consistent view of local skills needs across areas in a relevant and engaging format for local partners
- 4.6. The LSRs will be a key source of local skills information that will enable cross-area comparison and feed local intelligence to the national SPB and central government.
- 4.7. Local Skills Report's will help to grow the influence of SAPs by:
 - **Acting as an engagement tool** - a vehicle through which SAPs can directly engage, influence and rally employers and providers to support the local skills agenda.

- **Being a 'go-to' document for everything local-skills related** - bringing together existing and new skills information into one consistent document common to all SAPs.
- **Clearly setting out key skills needs** – ensuring local skills needs are visible to local partners who can then engage with them.
- **Feeding intelligence to the national SPB and central government** - a consistent output common to all SAPs that the SPB can use to understand the needs and priorities of local areas and build a national picture of the supply and demand for skills.
- **Offering valuable insight and evaluation** – detail the progress made on current local skills initiatives and outline future skills plans to plug key skills gaps.

The Humber LEP's Employment and Skills Team will combine the requirements of the LSR with the refresh of the employment and skills strategy to support the Local Industrial Strategy. Stakeholder engagement to inform the LSR will begin in the autumn.

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