

Hull and East Yorkshire LEP Last meeting of the Humber LEP Employment and Skills Board



Minutes of the Humber LEP Employment and Skills Board meeting held on Tuesday, 18 May 2021 commencing at 2.00pm, the Board met by virtual means using Microsoft Teams.

Attendance

Board Members

Stephen Savage (Chairman) - Private Sector
Kirsty Bark - Sonoco Trident
Catherine Bishop - Tigers Trust
Laura Botham - Siemens Gamesa
Danny Brett - Skills Network Lead
Andy Crossland - Humber Learning Consortium
Mick Heatlie - Private Sector Training Provider
Margaret Hicks-Clarke - Private Sector
Sharon Gamble - Hull City Council
Adam Greenwood - (for Professor Rebecca Huxley-Binns) University of Hull
Karen Linton - North East Lincolnshire Council
Mick Lochran - (for Mike Welsh) DN2 Group
James McIntosh - Private Sector
Leon Riley - John Leggott College
Steve Tomlinson - Hull City Council

Secretariat

Teresa Chalmers – Hull and East Yorkshire LEP
Gill Dillon – Hull and East Yorkshire LEP
Fiona Headridge – Hull and East Yorkshire LEP
Tracy Pallet – Hull and East Yorkshire LEP
Jon Whyley - East Riding of Yorkshire Council (Clerk)

Also attended:

James Newman - Hull and East Yorkshire LEP Chairman.

699 Welcome

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the final meeting of the Humber LEP Board as it was currently constituted. On behalf of the Board he welcomed James Newman, the Chairman of the Hull and East Yorkshire LEP who was attending the meeting to gain an insight of the Board's work.

700 Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Victoria Dixon - Department for Education (ESFA), Cassie Flanagan - British Steel, Liz Hutchinson - DWP, Professor Rebecca Huxley-Binns - University of Hull, Jen Vincent - Engineering UTC North Lincolnshire, Mike Welsh - East Riding College and Jo Woodhouse - Havelock Academy.

701 Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded of the need to make declarations of interest as appropriate when they occurred, to ensure the Board was probity compliant at all times. No declarations were made.

702 Minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2021

Agreed - That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

703 Matters Arising - There were no matters arising that were not covered on the agenda.

704 Business Discussion

Economic Recovery - What does this look like for the region and what is the skills role in this aspect?

The third iteration of the Humber Economic Impact Report had been commissioned and was in draft. It was recognised that the area was facing a number of significant challenges ahead particularly in achieving the five year hence GVA position originally envisaged. As part of this latest piece of work it was intended that there would be a workshop to inform the area's economic recovery. Overall there were local economic aspects that had cushioned the area from the worst effects of the pandemic, these included its strong manufacturing base, the activity around the Estuary and food production processes.

The level of employees who were on furlough was still significant, the self-employed government support was still very high and there had also been an increase in employment claims. At this challenging time there was also an increase in the number of incorporated companies which was positive but needed careful monitoring in terms of sustainability. There had also been witnessed a shift in employment attitudes with a number of those who had been displaced looking to embark on differing work lifestyles such as entrepreneurship, portfolio employment and a change of career sectors.

Although there were encouraging signs for the area, it was important not to lose sight of the ongoing impact of the EU exit as some problems were now only just starting to come to fruition, especially for SMEs. This position would need to be closely monitored with relevant interventions such as those delivered by the Growth Hub maximised. Other factors that exit from the EU had realised was the cost of visas for those entering the country, although at this stage the overall impact of this was too early to measure.

There had been discussions with the Monetary Committee of the Bank of England. This had identified the hospitality sector as having suffered significantly especially those in coastal areas. The economy had been expected to grow by 1.7% but the return had been 4% with a potential higher growth rate than anticipated. There were however changes expected when the furlough scheme came to an end which could well evidence a peak in unemployment levels in

September. The skills challenge was to put in place such arrangements that were able to meet the demands of new jobs.

Another positive for the area was the increased levels of investment and the emergence of new businesses which would create new jobs. Nationally and locally there had been seen increased production costs arising from costlier base products and as commodity prices increased there was no surprise in seeing inflated costs overall. Additionally wage inflation was becoming a concern arising from the shortages in various skill sectors arising from natural retirement of employees and there being a lack of replacements to refresh the employee pool. It was recognised that during lockdown there had been high levels of savings by individuals and businesses alike and therefore there was an anticipation that levels of these savings would be released back into the economy as the Covid restrictions lifted.

In terms of training, many organisations were tending to concentrate spend on mandatory provision requirements as they awaited a clearer picture of the economic situation and furlough arrangements came to an end. There was a concern that with businesses putting off desirable training and dealing with mandatory requirements, there could be a pending bottleneck in training demand as requests were concentrated later in the year. On a positive note, some training providers had seen a surge in apprenticeship applications and the providers had experienced an increase in starts. Some companies had implemented a cap on recruitment but reported that they were maximising levy use on apprenticeships.

At further education and university establishments, students were now being taught face to face with on-site facilities being opened up and students were being encouraged to undergo regular Covid testing. A factor that had become noticeable during lockdown however was engaging with those who were considered to be non-traditional HE students, although it was possible that the potential to do this could be achieved via the continuing ESIF programme graduates that may wish to progress into higher education.

Overall, the number of positive Covid cases in the area was low, although it had been noted that positive tests in the under 20s were emerging. Efforts were concentrating on getting people to take up vaccinations which was generally going well. Further monitoring would be undertaken to assess the overall impact of the pandemic on businesses. The Growth Hub had been receiving some mixed messages from businesses about lateral flow testing and their responsibilities as employers, evidencing some confusion in that community.

Agreed – (a) That the report be noted, and

(b) that the offer of Andy Crossland to meet with the Humber Principals Group to discuss engagement with non-traditional HE students be endorsed. **Action - ML**

705 Board Achievements/Legacy

The Board gave consideration to a resume of some of its achievements since its inception based on the six strategic priorities identified in the Skills Plan and

the eight interventions of careers education, information, advice and guidance; young people/NEET; enterprise and entrepreneurship; workforce skills; influencing provision; apprenticeships; access to employment and economic inclusion and skills capital. This significant output was considered to reflect well on the work of the Board and was an enduring legacy that would provide a sound footing from which the new HEY LEP would be able to continue its work.

Agreed - (a) That the presentation be welcomed, and

(b) that the Board offers its sincerest thanks and gratitude to all those involved in this work.

706 HEY LEP/LEP Board Update

The recruitment drive for the HEY LEP Board had been completed and its inaugural meeting held on 19 May 2021. It reflected a diverse membership. Its remit would include a focus on those areas that were considered to warrant greater attention such as coastal areas and rural/agriculture. The Board would be developing an economic strategy which would align with the strategies of the two local authorities in its area. The next development stage was the creation of sub-boards which would include an employment and skills board which was a mandatory requirement.

The new Board would continue the role of supporting pan Humber issues and would not be insular in its concentration but consider the wider Humber brand which would include supporting and bringing to fruition exciting projects such as the Freeport. There would also be a focus across the wider Yorkshire geography in order to avoid duplication of effort.

Agreed - (a) That the report be noted, and

(b) that members of the present Board, who wish to be considered for the new HEY LEP Employment and Skills Board, submit an expression of interest to Teresa Chalmers, on the proviso that the application reflects the new geographical arrangements. **Action - All**

707 Labour Market Statistics and DWP Update

Details of the claimant count data for April 2021 was reported as well as comparisons with the previous month and March 2020. The data indicated that there was a decrease in the number of out of work benefits being claimed compared to the previous month. There were currently 47,000 employments furloughed although this figure could include those employees who held more than one position. Within this figure there were a high number of females. A significant factor on the current levels would be the cessation of the furlough scheme and whether employment positions would continue beyond this point.

Job postings had dipped in January and February 2021 which was likely to have been as a result of the latest lockdown as well as the impact of seasonal variations. The majority of the job postings were in the nursing and driving sectors. There was an optimism in the number of postings being seen but there was also an anticipation that there would ultimately be high levels of competition between prospective candidates.

As the Covid restrictions lifted effort would be concentrated on the economic impact of the pandemic and there was already evidence of new start-ups. Fortunately, the area had not seen problems of the same magnitude that had been experienced elsewhere and it was hoped that the new government programmes being introduced would provide additional support to keep people close to the work market and provide the needed assistance to get people into new roles if necessary.

Agreed - That the report be noted.

708 Local Skills Report

The Department for Education had requested all LEPs and Mayoral Combined Authorities produce a Local Skills Report to inform local providers and feed information into the national Skills and Productivity Board. This would set out the skills need for the area. Although the work focussed on the Hull and East Yorkshire LEP area, it also included the wider trends for the Humber. This piece of work would identify the area's strengths, needs, the strategy and the action plan to address these elements. Work to refresh the Local Skills Report would be carried out in November 2021 and this task would be undertaken with partners in order to develop actions.

Agreed - That the report be noted.

709 Skills Accelerator

The opportunity for Employer Representative Bodies and Providers to bid for two Department of Education forms of funding for the development of Local Skills Improvement Plans and the Strategic Development Fund was recently published. The LSIP would help bring employers, colleges, providers and other stakeholders together. The aim was to set out the key changes needed to make technical skills training more responsive to employers skills needs. The provision would be tailored to the challenges faced.

The Strategic Development Fund was for pilot schemes that would be used to explore how providers could work together to respond to local skills and innovation priorities. The scheme would support the development of high value curriculum offers in order to support longer term skills priorities, whilst enabling better and more efficient use of existing facilities, investing in further education and strengthening relationships with employers. It would also help the Department of Education better understand how funding could be utilised to help prioritise change.

As these two pilots would be nationally highly competitive, alignment of both would improve success chances. At the scoping meeting, chaired by the University of Hull, it had been agreed that the focus of the bid would be coastal, with green skills as an umbrella and that the Chamber would lead the LSIP with the TEC Partnership acting as lead for the SDF bid.

With both funding streams it was recognised that there would be a challenge, if successful, to commit to the required first year spending commitments. Both the

bids would be submitted based on the coastal economy priority with a focus on the green economy linked to Freeport.

Agreed - (a) That the report be noted, and

(b) that thanks be expressed for the support provided by partners in responding positively with the bid opportunities.

710 Mid Life MOT

The LEP was one of ten that had been successful in bidding to deliver a ten week pilot scheme to promote the Mid Life MOT digitally. The Humber Opportunities Portal had been used to target a social media campaign, whilst there had also been four workshops which had been attended by over 90 businesses. The media campaign had reached over 130,000 people. It was possible to analyse the elements of the MOT to understand better which had engaged most people.

The results of the campaign had been very pleasing and the information gleaned would be shared with the DWP to inform future direction. The content of the MOT had been copied and was now accessible via the LEP web page.

Agreed - That the report be noted and the LEP team and partners thanked for their efforts in this work.

711 Skills Humber Career Event

The Board received a report on the first Skills Humber virtual careers event that had been held. In total there had been 35 exhibitors representing a variety of employment organisations across the area. The event had witnessed over 2,000 attendees and whilst feedback had been mostly positive, a number of technical issues had arisen. All the feedback received would be assessed and evaluated. The expectation was that the event scheduled for 2022 would be face to face, subject to the prevailing circumstances at the time.

Agreed - That the report be noted.

712 Local Digital Skills Pilot Update

The Partnership had been established in 2020. As a result of the pandemic the work on this project had become more concentrated in working with partners to develop digital competence and capacity. There were seven strategy pillars of which skills was a major element. The LEP and the University of Hull had been the initiating organisations and had concentrated on three key work streams based on wraparound support of analysis of gaps, development of a self-assessment tool and the development of a portfolio of case studies. The priorities for the coming year's work were supply, demand and the future/horizon scanning.

At the end of the first year the project had secured staffing funding until September 2021, achieved its priorities and outputs and detailed its future goals. The project would continue to be Humber themed until September 2021 and it

was intended that there would be ongoing discussions about the project's long term future.

Agreed - That the report be noted.

713 Hull City Council Economic Strategy consultation

Members of the Board were requested to respond to the Hull City Economic Strategy consultation from their own organisations perspective, which was scheduled to close on 11 June 2021. This was of high importance given the new LEP would develop its strategy aligned to both local authority ambitions. The link to that exercise could be found at <http://www.hull.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/consultation-and-feedback/consultations-and-surveys>

Agreed - That the report be noted and members respond appropriately.

714 Any other business – No issues were raised.

715 Vote of thanks

Stephen Savage thanked all ESB members for their considerable efforts in driving the Humber LEP Employment and Skills Strategy, recognising collaborative partnerships had been a pillar in this delivery.

On behalf of the membership of the Board, Teresa Chalmers thanked Stephen Savage for his chairmanship, governance and stewardship of the Board as well the pleasure in working with him in overseeing its work. In response, he expressed the enjoyment he had gained from his role and wished all colleagues well for the future.