

MCA - EDUCATION, SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

WEDNESDAY, 29 JUNE 2022 AT 10.00 AM

SOUTH YORKSHIRE MCA, 11 BROAD STREET WEST,
SHEFFIELD, S1 2BQ



Present:

Dan Fell (Co-Chair)	South Yorkshire LEP
Councillor Lani-Mae Ball (Virtual Attendance)	Doncaster MBC
Councillor Robert Frost (Reserve)	Barnsley MBC
Councillor Martin Smith	Sheffield City Council
Jim Dillon	South Yorkshire MCA

In Attendance:

Helen George	Assistant Director - Skills & Employment	SYMCA Executive Team
Joseph Quinn	Innovation Project Director	SYMCA Executive Team
Sue Sykes	Assistant Director - Programme and Performance Unit	SYMCA Executive Team
Roger Wilde	Senior Development Manager (Education & Skills)	SYMCA Executive Team

Sarah Pugh (Minute Taker)

Apologies:

Councillor Sir Steve Houghton CBE	Barnsley MBC
Professor Chris Husbands	Sheffield Hallam University
Councillor Denise Lelliott	Rotherham MBC
Eugene Walker	Sheffield City Council

14 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were noted as above.

15 Declarations of Interest by individual Members in relation to any item of business on the agenda

Dan Fell declared an interest in the Skills Advisory Network, as his employer is currently involved in this work.

No other interests were declared.

16 **Urgent items / Announcements**

None.

17 **Public Questions of Key Decisions**

None.

18 **Minutes from Last Meeting**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2022 be agreed as a true record.

19 **Matters Arising / Action Log**

The Board noted that all matters arising would be addressed within the business of the meeting.

20 **Terms of Reference**

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Terms of Reference for information.

21 **Adult Education Budget - 2022/23 Grant Provider Commissioning Update and Reallocations Process**

The Assistant Director for Skills & Employment introduced a paper outlining a number of funding decisions which would underpin the commissioning of the Adult Education Budget for 2022/23, including providers' end of year forecasts.

Members expressed concern about the lack of performance updates from providers and asked if performance reviews were carried out. It was confirmed that performance reviews were carried out and at that point decisions could be taken about whether funding would continue, as contracts were just for one academic year. Members were informed that there was always a lag in the reporting of the data, and that often providers used reporting systems differently. There is no other way of making decisions other than based on the information provided in the paper.

It was highlighted that the purpose of the paper was to outline the principles and approach taken to funding decisions when the correct data was available.

ACTION: J Dillon and H George to reconvene the Board as soon as possible to consider this paper.

DEFERRED: no decision taken, pending further actions agreed as above

22 **Multiply - Update on the Investment Plan**

The Senior Development Manager (Education & Skills) presented an update on work undertaken to develop South Yorkshire's investment plan for Multiply –

the Government's adult numeracy programme and the initial skills priority of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The board were informed that an online platform was due to be launched, and the Government had identified an allocation of £7.256 million over a 12-month period; this will require an investment plan for the region. The MCA are engaging with Local Authority partners to separate this allocation from the Adult Education Budget.

The board questioned whether the paper focussed on too many thematic areas. Members were informed that a focus on innovation and testing in the first year will inform a refined focus and outcomes in the following 2 years.

RESOLVED: to approve Option 2 - agree to submit the investment plan.

23

Skills Bootcamps

The Senior Development Manager (Education & Skills) presented an update on Department for Education grant funding of £889,350 to deliver Skills Bootcamp provision across South Yorkshire. The paper notes four areas to target with funding beginning in July and August. Focus has been placed on upskilling those in work and moving the unemployed into the labour market. The focus on engineering and green construction was welcomed by Members.

Members enquired why employers needed to contribute to funding, how funding would be prioritised across areas, and whether the 250 identified participants could be reprofiled in September to continue engagement. It was confirmed that there would be flexibility in how funding was distributed, and that discussions have taken place to ensure the quickest start possible for participants.

A Foulkes offered to pass on learning from the Yorkshire and Humber Digital Skills Bootcamp which had already been commissioned.

ACTION: A Foulkes to share Digital Skills Bootcamp learning with R Wilde.

Members asked how different kinds of businesses would engage in the system. It was noted that the ESF Pathways Programme engages with the hardest to reach, and that a second round of bootcamps could be more thoroughly planned to ensure a diverse client cohort.

RESOLVED: Option 2 - Approve the progression of the outlined proposal. of the outlined proposal.

24

Skills Strategy - Update on Progress (Verbal)

The Assistant Director for Skills & Employment gave a verbal update on the Skills Strategy, informing the board that a consultant had been procured and would be bringing stakeholders together as an urgent priority. Experts in Further and Higher Education have been engaged with, and a body of material and ideas was to be taken forward by the consultant.

The Chair re-iterated his Declaration of Interest in this topic but noted that the University of Sheffield was undertaking similar work which may overlap with this in July. He also noted an overlap with Local Skills Improvement Plans.

Questions were put forward about the timeline for engagement across the region. The Interim Corporate Director of Business & Skills replied that a balance would be struck between credibility and ambition, and that engaging a consultant in this work would help with that, although there is no agreement yet as to exactly what this work would look like. It was also noted that work would take place in tandem with the University of Sheffield project and it would support the development of the strategy.

RESOLVED: that the Board noted the update.

25 **Apprenticeship Hub Proposal**

The Assistant Director for Skills & Employment presented a proposal for an Apprenticeship Hub, which was requested by the Board. This work would be undertaken jointly with the South Yorkshire Colleges Group, who would provide day-to-day leadership on the Hub. There was no ask for funding yet.

It was noted that the Hub would target both potential apprentices, as well as working with Chambers and employers.

A comment was made by the Board about the Manchester Youth Zone being a good model for engaging individuals with apprenticeships. The logistics of selection, and how it would be ensured that provision is not duplicated was queried. The board were informed that that the Hub would aim to find the best progression option for each individual, and not to place schemes in competition.

ACTION: H George to ensure that Officers from Local Authorities are involved in bringing together this work.

It was requested that the rapidly changing market and cost of living crisis should be taken into consideration in rolling out the Hub. It was stated that the ambition was to ensure easy access and proper signposting, and not to restrict individuals to any one route.

RESOLVED: to approve Option 1 - approve proposal for the joint SYMCA/ South Yorkshire Colleges Group Hub.

26 **Technology Skills Academy Proposal**

The Innovation Project Director presented a technology skills academy proposal. The Board was asked to support the exploration of the proposal, with a view to being provided with an informed assessment and proposal at a later date.

RESOLVED: to approve Option 2 - further exploration and assessment of the business case by SYMCA assurance process

27 **Grant Acceptance and Approvals Paper**

The Board was asked to approve and accept grants relating to Digital Skills Bootcamps, the Careers Hub network, and an AEB change request by Profound Services Ltd to take on second Level 2 learners.

The Chair asked for clarification on the consequences of approving the AEB change request. A Foulkes replied that there is a legal entitlement to a first Level 2 Qualification, which is funded through the AEB. There is no such entitlement to a second Level 2 qualification.

RESOLVED: to approve and accept grants to Skills Bootcamps and Careers Hub network, and to deny AEB change request.

28 **Skills Advisory Network Update**

The Senior Development Manager (Education & Skills) presented an update paper on the Skills Advisory Network, stating that allocations were outlined in the paper but that there had been delays with some commissions. An impact assessment for post-16 qualifications was not needed as a national assessment had already taken place. The proposal was instead that this funding would be allocated to green skills. The proposed changes to the memorandum of understanding for 22/23 therefore reduced spending allocated to objectives 1 and 2.

RESOLVED: to approve Option 2 - the board supports the changes and spend for the Memorandum of Understanding.

29 **Any Other Business**

It was asked what arrangements would be made for supporting members with considering restricted items in order to avoid disagreements.

ACTION: process for issuing restricted items and support for members on restricted items to be reviewed.

Post meeting note: training was provided to Members directly after the meeting with regard to accessing restricted papers.

The Chair noted that this was Helen George's final board meeting and thanked her for her work with the Board and the region.

Enquiries were made regarding what resources allocated to this Board would look like going forward. Jim Dillon replied that there would be challenges over the next few months, but that interviews are ongoing for the Assistant Director of Business & Skills.

In accordance with Combined Authority's Constitution/Terms of Reference for the Board, Board decisions need to be ratified by the Head of Paid Services (or their nominee) in consultation with the Chair of the Board. Accordingly, the undersigned has consulted with the Chair and hereby ratifies the decisions set out in the above minutes.

Signed

Name

Position

Date