

MCA - EDUCATION, SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

TUESDAY, 15 JUNE 2021 AT 1.00 PM



Present:

Councillor Sir Steve Houghton CBE (Co-Chair)	Barnsley MBC
Nigel Brewster (Co-Chair)	Private Sector
Councillor Lani-Mae Ball	Doncaster MBC
Councillor Denise Lelliott	Rotherham MBC
Councillor Tim Cheetham	Barnsley MBC
Helen Kemp	MCA Executive Team
Kevin Straughan (substitute)	Sheffield CC

In Attendance:

Helen George	Assistant Director - Skills & Employment	MCA Executive Team
Rob Harvey	Senior Programme Manager	MCA Executive Team
Wendy Dodson	Senior Programme and Performance Manager	MCA Executive Team
Roger Wild	Senior Development Manager	MCA Executive Team
Jacque Chambers	Consultant	MCA Executive Team
Nici Pickering	Strategic Marketing Manager	MCA Executive Team
Angela Foulkes	Chair of Skills Advisory Network	
Gill Richards	(minute taker)	

Apologies:

Professor Chris Husbands		
Kate Josephs	Chief Executive	Sheffield CC

1 **Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were noted as above.

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

None.

3 **Urgent items / Announcements**

None.

4 **Public Questions of Key Decisions**

None.

5 **Minutes from Last Meeting**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2021 be agreed as a true record.

6 **Adult Education Budget (AEB) Update**

A report was submitted which updated the Board on the overall readiness for the devolution of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) including an update on the commissioning process.

Members were reminded that the devolved AEB was being commissioned through two strands. Strand one was to continue to provide grant funding to nine Local Authority and Further Education Colleges based in South Yorkshire.

All grant providers had been offered a core grant which would match the value of their grants provided in 2018/19. An additional 15% growth funding had also been offered to providers as long as the additional funding was aligned to key delivery priorities. Details of the amounts of funding offered were contained within the report.

Members were informed that there was an issue with Northern College who were currently going through the FE Commissioner's Structure and Prospects Appraisal. To ensure residential provision for South Yorkshire residents the Authority had proposed that the current residential uplift of 4.7% would apply until 2023/24.

With regard to the Prince's Trust programme in Doncaster, a proposal had not been submitted via the procurement round. Discussions were ongoing as to how the provision could be delivered.

Strand two was the procurement round which had been split into four lots:

1. Supporting residents into employment.
2. Provision for adults in employment, self-employed or at risk of redundancy.
3. No young person left behind.
4. Test and Learn Adult Key Worker Model.

There had been a total of 191 bids received.

Successful providers had been selected and were detailed at Appendix A to the report.

Due to the timing of the report not aligning with the procurement process, officers would write to members of the ESE Board to confirm the contractors who had been successful in securing AEB contracts separately.

It was noted that funding of £2,791,136 had been received to support the additional National Skills Funding offer around Full Level 3 Qualifications for adults in priority sectors. A summary of the current offer was contained within the report.

The Authority expected to have a closer working relationship with providers. The Authority would increase engagement starting with the Grant letters which would reinforce key priorities and would also include an Onboarding event and an initial visit from the Programme Performance Unit prior to delivery starting in August.

It was noted that the Communications and Marketing team had developed a Communications plan to support AEB Devolution, details of which were listed in the report.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7

Skills Strategy Roadmap

A report was considered which sought Members' support for proposals to commence the development of a Skills and Employability Strategy. It also sought agreement for the overall approach and proposed timeline and members' feedback on emerging themes for the strategy to help prioritise the forward plan of work.

It was proposed that the skills strategy should comprised of three key components:

1. A solid evidence base which set out the current skills position in South Yorkshire.
2. A robust labour market overview providing the backdrop to current labour market intelligence and signalling direction of travel for skills demand in the future.
3. A skills strategy document which set out how the mechanisms and levers of strategic influence would be used, partnership working and funding.

With regard to the solid evidence base as mentioned in 2.1, it was confirmed that there was a comprehensive list which could be shared.

In answer to a question from Cllr Ball it was confirmed that production of a draft report by September was achievable.

The draft report would be an analysis of the database and the labour market information which would probably bring up additions to the priority list, especially around graduate retention and attraction. Areas of higher need would be pinpointed through stakeholder engagement.

R Wilde confirmed that the local authority strategies had been taken into account.

Members agreed the importance of the strategy being a 'living' document and that stakeholders should be involved at every stage of development.

RESOLVED – That the Board agree:

- i) The overall approach to the works and skills strategy structure and the timeline proposed.
- ii) The proposed scope of the skills and employability strategy based on emerging priority themes.
- iii) The process to enable the commissioning of Labour Market Intelligence research and consultant analysis of evidence base.

8 **Careers/Labour Market Intelligence (LMI)**

A report was submitted which provided an update on activity relating to careers provision within South Yorkshire. It provided information on steps taken to merge two Careers and Enterprise Company funded hubs and also presented some proposals for future development of the MCA's approach into all-age careers service within South Yorkshire.

Cllr Ball was supportive of the recommendations but commented that it was important to make the Skills and Apprenticeship Fair accessible to all and questioned whether the Careers Operational Group would be able to make funding decisions.

H Kemp agreed that the Skills and Apprenticeship fair needed to be accessible and confirmed that a number of options were being considered, including a virtual event, should the pandemic situation require it.

With regard to funding decisions, this was a matter for the Board to determine but it was felt that funding decisions should rest with the Board to ensure transparency and openness and provide robust governance.

A Foulkes commented that the Skills Advisory Network had discussed the skills event at length and the following points had been made:

- The event should focus around traineeships and apprenticeships.
- In this instance, the event should focus on 19-30 year-olds.
- Questions around ownership and financing of the event.
- Preference for a face-to-face event if possible.
- Recommend a 5-year piece of work.
- Potential to take out as a roadshow for greater reach.

N Brewster questioned the feasibility of providing an all-age careers service across South Yorkshire with everyone having the same experience of the service, especially as each authority already had some level of provision. It was important to work out exactly what was trying to be achieved and by whom.

The Chair agreed stating that this situation was replicated in every area of the MCA's work in the sense of what belonged locally where there was local authority or other provision and where the MCA needed to plug any gaps whilst supporting the local authorities at the same time.

Cllr Lelliott informed the Board of a well-attended Jobs Fair that had been held in Rotherham for the last nine years which sounded very similar to what was being planned. There was an opportunity to work in partnership to build on what had already been achieved.

H George commented that N Brewster's point was valid. The paper was not trying to set out the answer to all of the issues around an all-age careers service. It was positive that CEC funding was available to bolster careers activity for young people but this was not the service needed for all residents, there was a need to understand what needed to be delivered through careers advice for everyone.

K Straughan commented that Sheffield CC was very supportive of the strategy in many ways but there needed to be an added value purpose to what was already being provided and to tie into local agendas.

The Chair commented that all the points should be fed back to the working group.

Cllr Lelliott queried whether the SAN was aware of Rotherham's Leaf event and had it been factored into discussions.

A Foulkes replied that SAN had not been aware of the event.

One action from the SAN Board had been to create a small group to map out what was being done and create a specific plan. Details of the Leaf event had now been noted and would be fed into discussions.

Cllr Lelliott commented that it was important to complement what was already being done and not duplicate. Working together to bring the event into a central location would be a positive move.

RESOLVED – That the Board:

- i) Note continued investment by the Careers and Enterprise Company in South Yorkshire and the potential to use the opportunities for further CEC funding for 2021/22 and also the move to a single Hub to renew and strengthen the focus on careers activity.
- ii) Note the continuation of the Opportunity Area in Doncaster and that the START platform provided a first step towards an all-age careers service.
- iii) Approve the recommendation to carry out scoping with partners.
- iv) Approve a proposal for the MCA to establish a Careers operational Group to co-ordinate activity with partners across South Yorkshire.
- v) Approve a proposal to apply for CEC Incubation funding for a project with pupils and parents/carers.
- vi) Approve the recommendation to host a South Yorkshire Skills and Apprenticeship Fair.
- vii) Note the Authority's work to develop relevant accessible Labour Market Intelligence.
- viii) Agree that filling gaps in the Careers Education Information and Guidance was a skills priority should further funding become available within the MCA.

9

Skills Bank 3

A report was submitted which sought approval of the shape of the Skills Bank 3 Operating Model and funding of the future regional Skills Bank programme. It also sought agreement to the development of a specification for the future programme which took into account previous decisions made and the agreed options presented at Appendix A to the report.

A group consisting of local authorities, the Chamber of Commerce, private sector employees, LEP members and Skills Board members had met to go through all the elements of the Operating Model and how they linked to Skills Bank principles.

The group had looked at a range of options and made recommendations which were summarised at Appendix A.

The Board were asked to consider the options and recommendations made by the stakeholder group to agree to move to the next stage of work in developing the specification.

Cllr Ball commented that it was positive that social value was included as an outcome but it was very difficult to measure and would need to be managed and evidenced effectively. The examples at Appendix A were quite broad and would be difficult to demonstrate. DMBC had a social values outcomes framework which provided commissioners with discussion points on how social value could be achieved through the commissioning and procurement process.

and would be happy to provide officers with sample documents. This was welcomed.

N Brewster commented on the lack of consequences for the non-achievement of social value outcomes and that there was a need to be more robust in this area.

RESOLVED – That the Board:

- i) Accept the recommendations made by the stakeholder group.
- ii) Agree to a specification being developed based on previously approved principles, economic and social value outcomes and the operating model as presented in the report.

10 **Skills Support for Redundancy**

A report was considered which gave details of the provisions in place to provide skills support for people being made redundant in South Yorkshire in preparation for them finding new roles. The report also recommended further work to help prepare for an increase in redundancies should that arise.

It was noted that the current support package was available to businesses with 15 or more employees and comprised of three elements:

- DWP funded Rapid Response to Redundancy.
- National Careers Service delivered in South Yorkshire through Prospects.
- Skills Support for Redundancy delivered by the Growth Company.

The package was triggered once a business identified a threat of redundancy and notified DWP.

Examples of support packages in other areas had been looked at where significant improvements had been made by putting effort into the way that intelligence was gathered and used by the Redundancy Team.

It was noted that there was a gap in support for employees of organisations with under 15 employees which needed to be filled.

It was noted that each local authority had support available and there was also duplication in intelligence gathering.

N Brewster commented that there was an urgency around this and that the points in 2.6 around securing better outcomes for individuals and employers who were coming through and understanding how the gap in support for small employers could be stemmed needed to be addressed immediately.

Current programmes within the MCA and LEP's control should be looked at to see if they could be flexed to add value e.g the Skills Bank. More needed to be done and more quickly.

RESOLVED – That the Board:

- i) Note the current mix of provision available.
- ii) Note the learning from other areas.
- iii) Approve further work by the MCA to lead some joint work with partners to develop a coherent offer as described in 2.6 within the report.

11 **Skills Advisory Network (SAN) Update**

A Foulkes gave a verbal update on the work of the SAN.

A report was considered which contained an Apprenticeship Hub proposal with seven key elements which were detailed within the report.

It was noted that it was critical that the Hub be independent of any specific training providers and impartial.

Cllr Ball commented that it was vital to ensure there were local gateways to support residents in accessing the scheme. She agreed with all the actions needed but existing work must be taken into account.

RESOLVED – That the Board agree that officers work with the SAN and stakeholders to develop a fully costed proposal for the Apprenticeship Hub which would be brought to the September meeting of the Board.

12 **Any Other Business**

None.

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