

NORTH EAST LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Thursday 26 January 2017 at 5.00pm

Held in the Boardroom, Northern Design Centre, Abbott's Hill, Gateshead

MINUTES

Present:

Andrew Hodgson	Chair, North East LEP
Farooq Hakim	BT
David Land	Drive 2 Business
Ammar Mirza	AmmarM (UK) Limited
Andrew Moffat	Port of Tyne
Heidi Mottram	Northumbrian Water Group
Mark Thompson	Ryder Architecture
Paul Varley	Oddballs
Councillor Simon Henig	Leader, Durham County Council
Councillor Iain Malcolm	Leader, South Tyneside Council
Mayor Norma Redfearn	North Tyneside Council
Professor Andrew Wathey	Northumbria University
Karen Redhead	Association of North East Colleges

In Attendance:

Michelle Rainbow	Skills for Business Manager, North East LEP
Richard Baker	Head of Strategy and Policy, North East LEP
Matt Ebbatson	Programme Manager, North East LEP
Ray Browning	Programme Manager, North East LEP
Paul Woods	Chief Financial Officer, NECA
Gillian Kelly	Sunderland City Council

Apologies

Gillian Hall	Watson Burton
Councillor Grant Davey	Leader, Northumberland County Council
Councillor Martin Gannon	Leader, Gateshead Council
Councillor Nick Forbes	Leader, Newcastle City Council
Councillor Paul Watson	Leader, Sunderland City Council
Helen Golightly	North East LEP Chief Operating Officer

1. WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR AND OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance.

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 24 November 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

Inward Investment

It was queried if any progress had been made with regard to the Economic Development leads getting together on inward investment. The Chair stated that he would pick this up with the Chief Operating Officer.

AH

3. SKILLS PRESENTATION

Michelle Rainbow, Skills for Business Manager delivered a presentation on the North East LEP's Skills Programme.

There were five key areas of the programme: -

- North East Ambition
- Education Challenge
- Excelling in Professional and Technical Education
- Higher Education Engagement
- Fuller Working Lives

The Board were advised of the rationale behind each programme, examples of the work being carried out and future plans. In relation to North East Ambition, guidance was being delivered on tackling assumptions about the appropriateness of jobs with regard to gender, ethnicity, class group etc.

The pilot scheme 'Good Career Guidance', developed from the Gatsby report, was running until the end of August 2017 and each school and college taking part in the pilot was achieving at least one of the eight benchmarks. There were over 40 case studies arising from the pilot, there had been an increase in the number of careers and business governors in schools and an increase in the quality of careers related provision. There was also a huge amount of collaboration between schools and career professionals and the project was influencing policy at a national level.

Enterprise Advisors had been essential in helping schools to achieve benchmarks and there were currently 70 Enterprise Advisors in the network with 40 schools having been matched to an advisor. It was hoped to make these relationships sustainable beyond the end of funding for the pilot. The

benchmarks would be rolled out to all interested schools, there were currently 16 in the pilot and 40 had adopted the benchmarks. It was also planned to increase the number of Enterprise Advisors so that 80 could be matched by the end of 2017/2018.

It was intended to look at benchmarks for primary schools, as research had shown that career limiting ambitions can start at age nine and that there was a falloff in achievement after Key Stage 2. Funding was currently being sought to roll out a primary version of the benchmarks to 10% of primary schools.

Research on the pilot was to be done at a PhD level and a suite of labour information market studies had been prepared. The team was also working closely with the recipients of careers enterprise funding and was focused on those most likely to become 'NEETs' (not in employment, education or training).

The Education Challenge was aimed at reducing the gap between the highest and lowest performing schools and getting all schools to be judged to be good or outstanding. This work relied on peer to peer learning and this was how the majority of schools were taking up benchmarks. The LEP was working with Schools North East to look at professional development opportunities and a proposal was being developed for European Structural Fund (ESF) funding to support a school governance project.

It was intended to work with providers and the educational establishments in order to deliver the capacity and facilities to excel in technical and professional education. It was highlighted that the Industrial Strategy Green Paper called for two distinct pathways post-16 – academic and technical – and was encouraging more high level apprenticeships.

There was a need to increase engagement with higher education and it was important to support universities as anchor institutions within the economy. Michelle advised that she had engaged with the team who would be running the pilot HEFCE project on how knowledge transfer was driving the economy.

Another workstream of the Skills Programme was aimed at reducing inactivity levels in the 50+ workforce and the retention of crucial skills as the younger demographic dipped. A task and finish group had been formed to look at this theme, which was aligned with the health and employability agenda. There was potential to retrain the existing workforce using the Apprenticeship Levy and there was an event being held in April for HR professionals across the North East and aimed at encouraging those who have active policies in this area to explain what the benefits would be.

It was noted that the programme was great to provide a longer term foundation for skills but there were also skills shortages at the present time. Technology companies were looking for skilled workers and it was queried what was being done to attract skills from other parts of the UK and the world to the North East.

Work was ongoing to articulate the skills offer whilst also looking at the assets available in universities and businesses and how responsive these were. A number of industries had gone to universities and colleges for support, it was necessary to identify requirements and the developing smart specialisation skills strategies would articulate specific gaps. If ESF funding was available, then it was hoped to shape calls to ensure that these were reflective of what industry was saying it needed in relation to skills.

The Board were interested to know which schools were seeking business governors and it was noted that the Chair was meeting with Skills North East the following week to look at the advanced governors' model.

The Enterprise Advisors initiative was very important and it took around two months to match an advisor with a school. Members of the business community were encouraged to keep volunteering to be involved, whether at the strategic level or to join the pool of advisors who carried out work in schools in relation to their own business. It was suggested that a call to action could be put out to business organisations to see who might be interested in supporting schools.

All

There were three colleges involved in the pilot and information had been organised to be rolled out to other colleges. The Area Based Review had provided some feedback from employers and one criticism had been that they were not always aware of the specialisms offered by colleges. There was a lot of help being provided to help navigate apprenticeships and the Chair suggested that this needed to be picked up in the Business Growth Hub.

Having thanked Michelle for her presentation, **the Board AGREED that the information be noted.**

4. SEP REFRESH

The Board received a report setting out the current position in relation to the refreshed Strategic Economic Plan.

At the last Board meeting, the draft Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) had been discussed and the LEP team were asked to re-visit a number of elements of the plan. The economic data and targets set had been reviewed and a significant number of bilateral conversations had taken place with Board members and stakeholder organisations.

Discussions had taken place with the Economic Directors and it had been concluded that the Better Jobs target should be upgraded to 70%.

It was planned to hold three briefing events to go through more detail with the LEP Executive Team, Board Members and Sub-Board Members prior to the launch of the SEP at the Gateshead Hilton on Friday 10 March. A piece of work had begun to look at the evaluation of the SEP.

It was noted that it was great to see the university sector so widely referenced within the plan but there was no explicit statement about the university's economic role which had been reflected in other documents. It was also felt that design could come through more clearly as a theme and that there was a missed emphasis on culture and arts.

This area would be reviewed and it was stated that there had been a lot of engagement with the culture sector about how this was reflected and this would be a continuing dialogue. The design element would be looked at through the Innovation Board.

It was confirmed that there would be an associated report on the consultation for the refresh of the plan which would be published on the website. It would be necessary to develop a dissemination plan for after the launch on 10 March.

The next steps for the SEP would be reviewed and clarified for Board Members.

RB

The Board AGREED that the Strategic Economic Plan be approved and NOTED the next steps.

5. BUDGET 2017/2020

The Board received a report providing an update on the Revenue Budget for the 2016/2017 financial year, a proposed budget for 2017/2018 and medium term planning budget for the two year period 2018/2019 and 2019/2020.

The Board AGREED that: -

- (i) the update on the 2016/2017 budget be noted;**
- (ii) the 2017/2018 budget be approved; and**
- (iii) the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 budget planning be approved.**

6. FUNDING UPDATES

This report was strictly confidential as it contained commercial information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person or organisation and was not for wider circulation.

7. DELIVERY PLAN 2016/2017 UPDATE

This report was strictly confidential as it contained commercial information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person or organisation and was not for wider circulation.

8. DEVOLUTION UPDATE

The Board received a report advising them of the outcome of the meeting between North East business leaders and the seven North East Local Authority leaders which had taken place on 5 January to discuss devolution in the North East.

The business leaders agreed a set of key principles on which to seek the Government's support and move the agenda forward. A letter had been sent to the Secretary of State seeking support for the principles and requesting an early meeting with him, the North East LEP and the business representative organisations. At the current time there had been no response to the letter.

The Board NOTED the content of the report.

9. TRADE OPPORTUNITIES WITH INDIA

The Board received an update on a visit made by Ammar Mirza to India at the beginning of the year representing the Federation of Asian Business. There was a move towards establishing relationships with the North East and this had been discussed with DTI.

The Board were advised of the sectors which were particularly interested in linking with the region and it was suggested that the local authority economic directors come together to look at this opportunity moving forward.

The Board NOTED the update and SUPPORTED the development of trade opportunities with India.

LEP Team

10. NECA THEME UPDATES

(a) Economic Assets and Infrastructure

The Board received a report providing an update on the progress being made in delivering the Economic Assets and Infrastructure SEP theme.

Councillor Malcolm advised that the Invest North East England (INEE) team had a coordinated stand at MIPIM UK as part of a 'northern' corner.

The Economic Development and Regeneration Advisory Board would receive a presentation at its next meeting from NEECC on a trade mission for which they had received funding. The Board would also appoint a private sector Vice-Chair at the meeting.

The Board NOTED the update report.

(b) Employability and Inclusion

The Board received a report providing an update on the progress being made in delivering the Employment and Inclusion SEP theme.

The Board NOTED the update report.

(c) Transport and Digital Connectivity

The Board received a report providing an update on the progress being made in delivering the Transport and Digital Connectivity SEP theme.

The Board NOTED the update report.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the LEP Board would take place on Thursday 23 March 2017 at 5.00pm.