

**Minutes for the Meeting – Skills & Employability Commission
Monday 4th September 2017, 5:30pm – 7:30pm**

Location: Nottingham Trent University, room 025, The Pavilion Building, Clifton Campus

Attendees (Members):

Melanie Ulyatt (MU), Professor Edward Peck (EP), Allen Graham (AG), Cllr Sam Webster (SW), Joe Battye (JB), Ian Greenaway (IG) Charlotte Potter (CP), Dr Darren Clark (DC), Alan Smith (AS), Nicola Mcoy-Brown (NM), David Ralph (DR), Diane Beresford (DB), Phil Crompton (PC), Cllr Sarah Russel (SR)

Attendees (Other)

Nicki Jenkins (NJ), Andrew King (AK), Matt Wheatley (MW), Katrina Woodward (KW), David Kirkham (DK)

Apologies:

Dawn Ward (DW), Martin Rigley (MR), David Hughes (DH), Rachel Musson (RM)

Agenda:

1. Introductions, Terms of Reference and Review of Priorities and LEP Commitment
2. Funding Employment and Skills Provision in D2N2
3. Institute of Technology – Overview of the Opportunity and Process
4. Area Based Review – D2N2 Report and Legacy Group

MU welcomed all attendees to the meeting. All Members introduced themselves.

1. Introductions, ToR

MU introduced the purpose of the meeting. DR provided an update and stated the ‘Step Change’ for skills has not been achieved. The LEP are currently reviewing the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) which is planned to be published in early 2018. The evidence is that the Step Change objective will remain as the key challenge. DR said as the Commission there needs to be clarity about the ‘what’, the focus needs to be 2 or 3 key items which can be done well, and the Commission needs to be held to account on delivery – FE, HE, LAs etc. The expectation is for Members to go away from the meeting with tasks. DR stated the fundamental challenge is schools and progression to FE/ HE and employment.

The draft ToR was presented.

ACTION: Members to review the draft ToR and provide updates and changes by 26th September 2017.

MU presented the Priorities and LEP Commitment document (later in the meeting). It was suggested members review the document and provide feedback. Initial thoughts were raised by NJ and DR. NJ said the focus was not clear and in total there are 24 actions. DR suggested as a Commission we have 3 clear priorities these are (1) Funding Strategy (2) Employability Strategy with Schools (3) IoT. DR went on to say there needs to be ownership of the strategy, however there is an issue with partners working as an area. We need to work as an area operationally and the Ask is that

Action	Date
1.1	26/09/17

when the refreshed SEP is published there needs to be a shared skills plan. DR stated LAs should have a shared schools strategy but it hasn't happened. He went on to state the LEP is not the answer to everything and that as a Commission the following needs to be asked 'What is the difference the LEP can make regarding skills? What does the LEP have as a lever to skills? SR asked who needs to understand the document presented, is it business, people, or the Commission. SR stated there are too many acronyms, and the document should be more straightforward. Questions were raised asking what the step change is – DR said it is 'performance'.

ACTION: Members to review the Priorities and LEP Commitment document.

1.2

26/09/17

2. Funding Employment and Skills Provision in D2N2

MW presented an update on ESF in relation to commissioning the 2nd part of the programme. He said there are two main questions; the 'what' and the 'how'. MW highlighted the 'cliff edge' - when a lot of the programmes currently being delivered via ESF are set to finish (July 2018). These are YEI in Nottingham and all the ESFA provision - across skills, employment, careers and young people. All ESF funding has to be matched at a rate of 50%. There is a lack of information as to there being any further opt-ins or national match (for example match at source which was available in the first programme through DWP, ESFA and Big Lottery). There also appears to be a lack of local match. The LEP has a framework of outputs. All programmes need to be commissioned by Qtr. 1 2019 (2 years from Article 50 being signed in regard of Brexit). MW provided a short overview of external changes since the first part of the programme was commissioned (2015-2019). The refresh of the SEP is a deep dive analysis of the local economy which includes reviewing Inclusive Growth (being carried out by NTU) and a Productivity Review (being carried out by Nottingham University). In respect of ESF, due to the lack of quantitative data and the programmes commencing later than anticipated the LEP commissioned independent research to provide qualitative data to feed into future planning. The LEP is consulting with the Skills Officers Group as to 'what' we want to commission. It was agreed at the last ESIF Committee to present to the next ESIF Committee meeting (8th November) clarity re match funding, and what to commission using ESF.

SW raised a concern that we seem to always be playing catch up and commissioning programmes to a one size fits all methodology without necessarily recognising different challenges, different skills levels. SW stated flexibility and it is important to look at all opportunities for local match.

ACTION: Members were asked to review opportunities for match and to use Technical Assistance to support this as appropriate.

2.1

MW explained ESF fits with the skills strategy and we are refining what we want to buy with the local focus taken into account. The question remains however can we retain local and match the funding. JB raised a query re evidence and it not being in one place.

ACTION: Reports to be made available to Commission members through OneDrive. 2.2

ACTION: The LEP skills website to be updated. 2.3

Adam Jeffrey (AJ) of Chimera joined the meeting. AJ provided a thorough overview of the Consultancy Report commissioned to review the current ESF programmes.

A number of questions were asked of AJ. SW asked if there was anything through the consultation which came out re BMEs, parental engagement, worklessness households and preparation to work. EP suggested the report would be useful if it split out the 'strategic' and 'operational' aspects. NJ said ESF is about social inclusion and there is a need to meet current and future challenges. IG agreed parental engagement is important, that employability is still being treated as a 'bolt-on', and to be successful we need 'a whole school approach'. IG stated his concern with funding and bidding – and stated we should not lose sight of what we are aiming to do. Questions were raised about impact, and if it is known what difference the programmes are making. DR stated we have little evidence of what works which is why the consultancy report was commissioned.

Action: Report to be made available to members. 2.4

Action: Report to be split out to show strategic and operational aspects. 2.5

3. *Institute of Technology – Overview of the Opportunity and Process*

EP presented a PowerPoint as to how we could progress with the IoT. The presentation included an overview of the opportunity and process. EP made a strong reference to the Skills Mismatch report and to the three key sectors which would fit the IoT criteria, these being IT, MedTech and Engineering. EP stated the IoT support of these three sectors would create a template to then support other areas particularly those also raised in the Mismatch report, for example Health and Social Care and Retail, to name a few.

EP suggested Members review key questions and provide comment to the LEP.

Discussion and Key Questions:

- Do colleagues have any more intelligence to add?
- What views do colleagues have on the IoT approach?
- How should the Skills Commission most effectively test employer views?
 - Via the Chamber of Commerce
 - LEP Board
 - D2 and N2 Skills and Employment Boards
 - Growth Hub
 - Sector groups
 - The Federation of Small Business
- How will the IoT stimulate learner demand?
- What role should other stakeholders assume e.g. local authorities?
- What views do colleagues have on the proposed funding for an IoT?
 - Capital and revenue funding

EP asked the Commission to agree in principle to pursue an IoT, stating it is a competitive process with no guarantee of success, and for the governance to sit with the Commission. EP suggested a 'working group' be convened of IoT interested partners.

Initial questions were raised, particularly around funding, the potential of utilising future ESF funding, e.g. to provide a year of support for delivery, and the interrelation with the Higher Skills Development programme. PC questioned how and where the 6th Forms fit into IoT, and the potential for duplication.

Members agreed in principle to pursue an IoT and for the governance to sit with the Skills Commission.

ACTION: LEP to send out to Members a copy of the IoT presentation and key questions for comment and feedback, and to arrange a meeting in September of IoT interested partners.

3.1

4. Area Based Review – D2N2 Report and Legacy Group

AK (on behalf of DW) gave an overview of the recently published ABR report and the role of the Legacy Group. AK stated the FE Group is meeting the following week.

ACTION: Further details to be brought to a future meeting.

4.1

Actions

Action Ref	Action
1.1	ACTION: Members to review the draft ToR and provide updates and changes by 26th September 2017.
1.2	ACTION: Members to review the Priorities and LEP Commitment document.
2.1	ACTION: Members were asked to review opportunities for match and to use Technical Assistance to support this as appropriate.
2.2	ACTION: Reports to be made available to Commission members through OneDrive.
2.3	ACTION: The LEP skills website will also be updated.
2.4	ACTION: Report to be made available to members.
2.5	ACTION: Report to be split out to show strategic and operational aspects.
3.1	ACTION: LEP to send out to Members a copy of the IoT presentation and key questions for comment and feedback, and to arrange a meeting in September of IoT interested partners.
4.1	ACTION: Further details to be brought to a future meeting.