D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership People and Skills Advisory Board

Date: Thursday 18 June 2020, 10:00-11.30
Venue: Zoom Meeting

MINUTES OF MEETING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendees</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kath Mitchell (Chair)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jane Howson (Deputy Chair)</td>
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<td>Andrew Marsh</td>
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<td>Ian Bond</td>
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<td>Julie Beresford</td>
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<td>Julie Richards</td>
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<td>Mike Firth</td>
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<td>Natalie Gasson</td>
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<td>Nick Booth</td>
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<td>Nicola Caley</td>
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<td>Pauline Anderson</td>
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<td>Peter Bramall</td>
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<td>Pratibha Hindocha</td>
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<td>Rachel Quinn</td>
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<td>Sajeeda Rose</td>
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<td>Sarah O’Hara</td>
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<td>Sonja Smith</td>
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<td>Veronica Dennant</td>
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<td>Maureen Vieyra (note taker)</td>
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<th>Apologies</th>
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<td>Cate Edwynn</td>
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<td>David Wright</td>
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<td>Gary Parsons</td>
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<td>Iain Peel</td>
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<td>Joe Battye</td>
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<td>Karen Manuel</td>
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<td>Katrina Starkie</td>
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<td>Nathan Clements</td>
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<td>Nicki Jenkins</td>
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<td>Nicola Lees</td>
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<td>Nicola McCoy-Brown</td>
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<td>Sue Fielding</td>
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<td>Trudi Waldram</td>
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<td>Will Morlidge</td>
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This project is part-funded by the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020 in England.

Sensitivity: Internal
1. **Welcome and introductions**

RQ welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that all the papers had been circulated prior to the meeting.

She advised that with reference to the presentation sent the previous day work was being conducted to identify key actions and big-ticket areas of focus. A lot of discussion had taken place at the previous People and Skills Advisory Board meeting which included the impact of COVID-19 which was reflected in the outcomes.

KM reminded participants that it was important to keep abreast of what was happening at Government level. There had been a lot of Asks at different places across the region. HMG had sent a communication during the previous evening to universities and FEs asking how quickly they could upskill and how we could deliver. Responses were requested to be sent back as soon as possible.

This Board had set out the different Asks that had been received so far so that these could be aligned. Members were asked to keep RQ notified about any requests that were received so there was a central overview of skills packages across the region.

Whatever was returned needed to be the most competitive and coherent, so HMG had an understanding of the pathway of skills. This included skills and packages and how they would impact on unemployment.

It was also important to determine how best to work with businesses so that employees did not miss out on the potential to gain further qualifications.

HMG wanted to know how our skills agenda would reduce unemployment by Christmas. The region is responding well but significant risks across the region implied we would be in recovery for quite a while.

**ACTION:**
16. KM to send RQ and SR details of the communication from HMG to universities and FEs.

2. **Apologies**

Please see above.

3. **Conflicts of Interest**

None were declared at the beginning of the meeting and members were asked to declare any conflicts of interest as they arose.
4. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The Minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting and there were no matters arising.

Number 10 from the Actions Log had been added as an additional agenda item as it had not been circulated. This item is critical and is continually changing.

5. D2N2 Digital Strategy – People and Skills

The D2N2 Digital Strategy Presentation had been circulated to members the day before the meeting and RQ spoke to it.

The meeting was advised of the 7 strands of the national Digital Strategy (2017), 4 strands are really important at local level:

1. Building world class digital infrastructure for the UK
2. Giving everyone access to the digital skills they need
3. Making the UK the best place to start and grow a digital business
4. Helping every British business become a digital business

ONS researched the needs and identified that across the UK 21% of adults lack 1 or more of these 5 digital skills:

1. Digital Foundation Skills
2. Communication
3. Handling information and content
4. Transactions
5. Problem Solving

Evidence also showed 8% of adults having none of these skills.

Roles that required digital skills paid on average 29% more and SMEs utilising digital tools and transactions being significantly more productive that their non-digital competitors. Eighty Two percent of all advertised roles now include a digital component; making digital skills vital to both the individual and the economy.

As the D2N2 region has a low skilled economy the figure of 21% was likely to be an underrepresentation of the local skills gap.

There is a high demand for digital occupations compared to other occupations in the D2N2 region. After public sector nursing and education roles this sector had the highest level of risk of lost income to the region due to the difficult in sourcing skilled employees. The potential loss of income to the region for programmer and software developer roles could be as high as £297m per annum for example.
Analysis of businesses contacting the Growth Hub indicated 31% of SMEs faced challenges meeting IT and digital support needs. A further 18% were seeking additional support for the skills needs of their industries.

Overall D2N2 productivity levels are around 14% lower than nationally, with the information and communications sector reportedly being 32% lower; a gap exacerbated by the local skills challenges.

Sectoral dynamics showed good growth in creative and digital sectors but there was scope for that to improve.

The meeting was shown the total vacancies, skills shortages, FE course completions and apprenticeship completions for selected secondary occupation groups in the region in 2016/2017. In 2018 D2N2 collaborated with the Centre for Progressive Policy on the publication of a Technical Skills Mismatch report that highlighted clear examples where there was high advertised demand but the qualifications being produced through the region’s skills system was lower than need.

Place, Poverty, Age and Disability all impacted on digital inequality and this had been exacerbated by COVID-19.

The LEP’s ambition through Local Industrial Strategy was explained and the meeting was advised that this framed the identification of local priorities. From the D2N2 perspective the priority was ensuring the LIS led to both Covid-19 recovery and to an increase in productivity and skills.

Rachel concluded the meeting by outlining some of the recent and current digital skills opportunities in D2N2. In particular the Digital Innovation Fund and its inclusion-based success into digital roles. The meeting was advised that universities could help with this and conversations were needed with universities to explore further. EU funded projects were also highlighted which aimed to improve the uptake on learning for unemployed and increase digital skills.

**ACTION:**

**17. SO’H to alert her support unit to link in with the Digital Innovation Fund.**

**Discussion and Questions**

KM thanked RQ for the comprehensive piece of work that had reflected some interesting data.

There was already an acknowledgement that we have to get skills embedded but the question was how, and whether or not the LEP was effective in engaging the right people in the right place. Skill was just one element of education so how could we upskill quickly.

RQ advised that key Asks could be used. With a big gap, mid-level qualifications and an FE or HE offer leading directly into industry is lacking.
Could access to the adult skills fund be brought forward to use specifically around digital skills?

There was a piece of work that needed to be completed to engage adult learners and young people.

JR: Digital industry sector is growing in terms of demand in skills for young people. Programmes were already being delivered at levels 2 and 3.

- Are the pathway and qualification infrastructure matching the LIS? Should we review the qualifications infrastructure?
- Is there an issue about not delivering the pathways employers require?

Lobbying needs to take place for enough flexibility to engage with adults. The demand is there, the qualifications are there, but these are not having the impact employers require.

JH: All applications are made online, so users needed to have a basic grasp of digital skills.

KM:
- Do we need to deliver all our courses online?
- What are the limitations of some of the skills?

NC: Computer rooms are not being used after school. It would be easy for these courses to be delivered online and it would be an easy way for a lot of the population to have access. A short course of key skills accredited into a PGSE programme (term or half a term) could give them a certificate to fill the gap in the market

- There are considerable resources on site in schools so could this link with businesses to offer courses to parents?

SO’H: There is a real difference between digital skills and science. Microsoft has a range of courses curated and a conversation could take place with them on how they can support us. We should not try to reinvent the wheel but use what is already available. This is about access and connectivity with many people not having even a phone that can get online.

NC: The school is about to distribute laptops already in the school and these will be replaced with new laptops HMG send. However, the biggest need after laptops was dongles as there are some students with no Wi-Fi access at home.

KM: We need to get the skills embedded and have conversations with employers as to what is required. We need clarity on the project before we approach Microsoft.

- What will be the impact in terms of employment?

There needs to be a compelling ask around how we are improving the community.

- Adult v youth v inclusive – these are all different groups so how do businesses engage with these three levels?

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Sensitivity: Internal
This Board needs to consider each of these three communities in all strategic decisions. Employees who are skilled in their current workplace and who are being made redundant may not have the necessary skills in the employment market.

6. **Delivering the Skills Elements of Local Industrial Strategy**

The D2N2 Strategic Skills Priorities in the LIS presentation had been circulated to members the day before the meeting and RQ spoke to it.

The impact of COVID-19 meant we needed to have a stronger focus on how to deliver the skills element of the LIS and has increased the urgency of some priorities. There is rising unemployment and the projected figures for the future are poor. The manufacturing supply chain, visitor economy and retail sectors are already feeling the impact.

Tech-enabled businesses are more resilient, so there is a need to encourage more of these kinds of businesses to the region and support those already in the area.

There will be a disproportionate impact felt by young people together with low skilled workers and those in low value jobs. Women are also at greater risk than men as a result of impacts. As a result, there needs to be more support for young people and those at risk of redundancy. Attempts need to be made to ensure that skills and apprenticeship budgets can be more flexible to support this and there may be a need to return to a model similar to the Future Jobs Fund to support adult reskilling and employment.

High quality pathways to industry-relevant skills will be even more important than before. An Institute of Technology in D2N2 is now a high priority to ensure our skills system aligns with the direction of local industries. Further information on this topic would be brought to the next meeting.

**ACTION:**

18. MV to add Institutes of Technology to agenda for meeting on 26 August

**Discussion and Questions**

KM thanked RQ for the presentation and for the clarity for following a digital strategy approach. Digital strategy would underpin the baseline skills for a number of other significant employment areas to enable the region to move forward.

The meeting was advised that HMG is looking for solutions now and it is important to ensure these are communicated effectively to Government. Members are asked to consider:

- How do we translate these asks into a coherent story to HMG?
- Are members going to add their commitment against these Asks?

The relationship with the LIS provides the hook to ensure there is clarity in what we do.
JR: HMG pledged around £1.6bn capital infrastructure for FE but nothing had been seen that confirmed a change in strategy as to how that money may be used. There appeared to be news from EFSA that some capital will be used for IT infrastructure. A new advisory group needed to be set up to support the largest apprenticeship providers to lobby HMG. There is a will nationally to capitalise on blended learning (online and physical). We should consider what an IoT looks like and how people will benefit across the region.

KM: KM declared a conflict of interest as Derby has submitted a bid for the first round of Institutes of Technology. There was scepticism that HMG would release funds for Institutes of Technology but there was a belief that it would release money for increased skills, employment and productivity.

RQ: We need agreement on what we can influence locally, what we can do ourselves and what we need to ask from HMG re policy etc.

KM:
- What can we do differently and better?
- How can we improve and impact more effectively?
- What happens to graduates at the end of their degree is not working well so how do we get graduates into work?

PA: PA advised that she recently took over leadership of special educational needs group and was pulling together a range of good practitioners in the City (Derby). A small group had been established to join this agenda together under SEND strategy and this will need supercharging. There was an insistence that preparation for adulthood started at year 9. More than happy to talk to anyone outside the meeting about this. It is believed that outcomes are very, very low re employment in Derby City. The skills element of it is mainly discharged through adult learning service. Anna Mimms is clued up and working across D2N2 and she has been part of successful bid for funding for employability. Look at the resource and maximise the resource and perhaps hold them to account through this group or the Local Resilience Forums?

KM: D2N2 Board is looking at what PA has said. Can PA provide a map across D2N2 to see where the best practice is?

PA: PA advised that there had been a capital investment ask. She was working with a consultant and was looking at the school estate but also all education estates and have managed to get the council to establish an Education Capital Strategy Board. This meets for the first time in July. Initially this will be a City Council group. It was assessing the net worth of the education/school estate across the City.

KM: There is a lot of space across the region.

- Is this about capital funding or infrastructure funding to make sure we are more engaged?

NB: Likes RQ’s table of different stakeholders.

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Sensitivity: Internal
• What offers we can make across those interfaces?

Everyone was keen from a business side to support SEND etc and our ability to put together material to engage with schools. Help was needed to steer that. Businesses talk about their own interests so maybe a request from schools needs to be broader than that. There is an incorrect perception when we go into a school we should be doing something physical and hands on. We should perhaps come in with laptops to help students.

KM: That is where we have to see that industry works with us on the digital agenda. Students are nervous of meeting new employers and reluctant to engage with an employer online. Parental engagement is important. For example, many students from non-academic households are now undertaking degrees at UoD because parents have attended the information session and did not perceive it as scary.

• Question for JH – how do we make this fit for purpose?
• Are there opportunities in communities where this approach would work?

KM: A small framework needs to be created for members to feedback.

JB: Has put details in chat. Happy to work on this from a Bassetlaw perspective. Would like to engage more to coordinate and align that work.

KM: The Asks need to be looked at and answers coordinated. Feedback to RQ what you are doing and what could be implemented and RQ will put a framework around that.

RQ: Needs to follow up with individuals from the group to work up the Asks from the presentation.

KM: For next time people have looked at the Asks and everyone on the board has replied as to how they can contribute to the Asks.

**ACTION:**
19. Everyone to respond to the Asks and determine how they are currently or planning to contribute to them and where.

7. People and Skills Report

RQ referred to the report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

She advised that there was also some work across D2 focusing on SEND learners and careers direction of travel. Careers Hub in N Derbyshire had received an agreement to extend but this is embargoed until 23rd June.

There is a continuation funding for SAP support. A requisite of the funding was the need to produce a skills report by the end of this financial year. Institutes of Technology were being proposed for next meeting and for this Board to build relationship with the Investment Board.
with D2N2. Efforts were being made to investigate how to put in place stronger procurement
guidelines for anyone applying for funding in D2N2.

8. Any Other Business

MF was to articulate work with the DfE.
RQ was to send the information to MF

9. Next Steps

10. Dates of future meetings

KM advised the next meeting date was 26th August. This was the last meeting for both her
and JH as both were stepping down from the Board. However, both would be attending the
SAP meeting on 3 July 2020. Thanks were extended to both Kath and Jane for their
valuable work in steering the People & Skills Board.