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**EMPLOYERS’ SKILLS AND EDUCATION BOARD**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**OVERVIEW**

As a sub-committee of Cheshire and Warrington’s Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the Employers’ Skills and Education Board focuses on the skills and education aspects of the Local Industrial Strategy and Strategic Economic Plan. The overall objective is to make Cheshire and Warrington a £50 billion a year economy by 2040.

**OUR OBJECTIVES**

**1. Connected**

We bring our region, learners and employers together to signpost the future direction of skills.

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Through extensive and regular engagement with our stakeholders, (a map of key stakeholders is at Annex B and includes employers, local authorities, universities, colleges, schools and other training and education providers) we work together to ensure that businesses in Cheshire and Warrington have the skills they need to grow and become more productive and that all our residents have the skills they need to progress and play a full part in the economy.

**2. Stretching**

We take people on a different path to push boundaries and break with tradition to deal with the unknown.

The Board champions investment in skills and education and communicates effectively with the business community to advise on new developments and local opportunities.

**3. Seamless**

We understand how it all works and guide people on the skills journey to make it accessible and easy.

Members of the Board bring their own experience to the Board and represent the wider views of their business networks and key stakeholders by regularly engaging with them, so that the Board offers a comprehensive view of the sub-region’s skills and education needs.

The Board, supported by the LEP Executive, makes decisions on investment decisions on skills and education of up to £1 million ensuring proper scrutiny to provide value for money and strategic fit with local priorities. Members investigate key issues and challenges and share good practice to inform development of local strategies, interventions and investments.

The Board takes on the functions of a Skills Advisory Panel as set out in Department for Education’s guidance document <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-advisory-panels-saps-role-and-governance>.

Our road map (Annex A) summarises our challenges, and how we are going to address them. It also identifies key stakeholders and the enablers that we need to align to maximise impact and effectiveness.

Our more detailed skills and education plan was published in 2017 - [www.871candwep.co.uk/resources/skills-education-plan/](http://www.871candwep.co.uk/resources/skills-education-plan/).

All our work is informed by engagement with stakeholders and development of data and labour market information that builds on the data and analysis that has informed our Economic Strategy and Local Industrial Strategy and the data and analysis that is collected by our local authorities and training and education providers.

A map of key stakeholders is attached (Annex B).

**OUR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. **Work together with our stakeholders to understand and address key local challenges and**

**opportunities and set the strategic direction of the skills and education agenda across Cheshire and Warrington.**

* Monitor and review our Skills and Education Plan to ensure that it continues to reflect the needs of businesses and residents across Cheshire and Warrington and that we work with our stakeholders to ruthlessly prioritise our actions and investments in a coherent programme of work that provides businesses with the skills they need to grow and become more productive and our residents with the they need to progress in work and play a full part in the economy.
* Support the development and delivery of our Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and ensure that our Skills and Education Plan addresses the opportunities and challenges identified by the LIS.
* Work together with our stakeholders to develop data and labour market information about the skills and education required to meet the needs of jobs being created in Cheshire and Warrington, as well as the need to reskill and upskill the existing workforce. This will help colleges, universities and other providers deliver the skills and education required by employers now and in the future. A Steering Group comprising representatives from the colleges, local authorities, university and LEP works together on skills and education related data and labour market intelligence, to share good practice and to oversee the investment in data and labour market intelligence (see Governance paragraph below).
* Make decisions on investments funded through the £5m skills capital fund to 2019, ensuring proper scrutiny to give value for money and strategic fit with skills and education priorities as well as ensuring that the investments have appropriate governance and assurances in place to mitigate, manage and control risk and risk exposure (for the LEP) so far as is reasonably practicable.
* Make recommendations to the main LEP Board on investments funded through the £29m European Social Fund to 2021, ensuring proper scrutiny to give value for money and strategic fit with local priorities and provide an overview of the projects.

1. **Ensure everyone in Cheshire and Warrington is fully informed about the career and progression opportunities open to them by putting employers at the heart of inspiring and communicating to young people, parents and teachers and individuals seeking work or seeking to progress in work.**

* Build on the good practice of the existing Crewe and Macclesfield Pledges and develop a network of ‘Pledges’ that acts as a ‘glue’ to bring employers together with the plethora of careers advice and guidance initiatives across Cheshire and Warrington. A Pledge Management Board with at least one representative from the Employers’ Skills and Education Board and over 50% membership being employers, oversees the operation of the Pledge network with 7 Local Pledge Partnerships overseeing day to day operation at the local level (see Governance paragraph below). The Local Pledge Partnerships are employer led and include representatives of local schools, colleges and other stakeholders. They work together to develop coherent programmes of activities designed to inspire and inform about new technologies and career opportunities. Intelligence and key issues raised at local level are reported through to the Employers’ Skills and Education Board. Data and labour market intelligence from the Employers’ Skills and Education Board will also be communicated with local partners.

1. **Encourage groups of employers to work together with training and education providers to ensure there is a clear understanding of the evolving skills and education needs of Cheshire and Warrington and to ensure the curriculum offer is coherent and high quality.**

* Groups of employers, initially in the key sectors identified by the Strategic Economic Plan and LIS, working together to agree skills and education needs with training and education providers and to shape the curriculum offer. Working together to pool expertise and resources, establish a critical mass of learners and develop coherent packages of training and education with a focus on STEM and digital skills. This collaborative work will be delivered through ‘Accelerate Cheshire and Warrington’ (a ‘Virtual ‘Institute of Technology’) to secure a step change in the way businesses work with training providers to develop training and education packages that they need to grow and be more productive and provide learners with access to outstanding learning and teaching that enables them to access jobs and progress in work. The University of Chester will be the accountable body for Accelerate Cheshire and Warrington which will also have a Management Board which will include some representatives from the Employers’ Skills and Education Board as well as employers, training providers and other key stakeholders who will oversee the operation of Accelerate Cheshire and Warrington and report issues and challenges through to the Employers’ Skills and Education Board (see Governance paragraph below).

1. **Establish a Digital Skills Partnership to focus on digital skills aspects of the Skills and Education Plan**

* The Digital Skills Partnership (DSP) brings together employers and other key stakeholders who recognise the growing importance of digital skills to all the businesses and residents of Cheshire and Warrington.
* Working through the Pledge Partnerships and Accelerate the DSP will ensure a strong digital focus to the delivery of these programmes across Cheshire and Warrington. It will also have strong links back to DCMS and other Government Departments to ensure alignment with national policies.

1. **Establish a communications hub embedded in the Growth Hub to provide coherent messages about job and progression opportunities across Cheshire and Warrington**

* Identify key customer journeys and the points in time where individuals or businesses in Cheshire and Warrington might need information and/or support on training and education issues.
* Develop a ‘communications’ hub that will provide coherent messages about skills and education in Cheshire and Warrington. Ensure the hub is embedded/linked effectively to the other key communication routes to businesses and to individuals seeking employment or seeking to progress in work including the Growth Hub.

1. **Receive regular progress and monitoring reports from the Digital Skills Partnership Board, the Pledge Management Board and the Management Board of Accelerate Cheshire and Warrington and projects receiving investment to identify lessons learnt, best practice, risks, issues and blockages to inform future investment decisions.**

**GOVERNANCE**

The following diagram illustrates the relationship between:

* the LEP Board,
* the Employers’ Skills and Education Board,
* the Digital Skills Partnership,
* the Pledge Management Board and the Local Pledge Boards
* the Management Board of Accelerate Cheshire and Warrington
* the Data and Labour Market Intelligence Steering Group.

**Main LEP Board**

**Employers’ Skills and Education Board**

Accelerate   
Cheshire and Warrington

Management Board

Digital Skills Partnership Board

Pledge Management Board

10 Local Pledge Partnership Boards

Themed Task and Finish Groups

Stakeholders

All Boards informed by Data and Labour Market Intelligence Steering Group

Local Growth Fund

**MEMBERSHIP OF EMPLOYERS’ SKILLS AND EDUCATION BOARD**

Representatives are drawn from a wide a range of sectors and business organisations to reflect views from small, medium and large businesses as well as the geography and diversity of Cheshire and Warrington.

The membership of the Board will consist of:

* A minimum of 12 employers and employer representative organisations including:
  + the Chair and Deputy Chair who are also members of the main LEP Board
  + representation aligned to, but not limited to the growth sectors identified in the Strategic Economic Plan with an initial strong focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) and digital skills:
    - Advanced Manufacturing and engineering including agrotechnology
    - Logistics/ Distribution
    - Life Science
    - Finance & Professional
    - Energy, Nuclear and Environment
    - Chemicals
    - Digital
* Representative from the Chambers of Commerce
* Representatives from each Local Authority
* Representative of Skills and Education Providers (non-voting member)
* Representative of the University of Chester

The Chair and Deputy Chair, an additional four employers and each local authority member of the Employers’ Skills and Education Board will have voting rights.

**Meetings**

Formal meetings that are open to the public take place on a bi-monthly basis with discussion forums, stakeholder meetings and task and finish groups operating between the formal meetings. The Chair will determine whether these need to occur more or less frequently as determined by business.

**ATTENDANCE**

Members will be expected to attend meetings wherever possible. Employer members and the representative of the further education training providers may nominate a named deputy but that deputy will not have voting rights and should only attend in exceptional circumstances. Local authorities will send a nominated representative to every meeting and that person will have voting rights.

**OPERATING PERIOD**

The Board has operated since November 2015 and will continue until determined otherwise by LEP Board.

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Board will be directly accountable to the LEP Board.

Members of the Board bring their own experience to the Board and represent the wider views of their business networks and key stakeholders by regularly engaging with them, so that the Board offers a comprehensive view of the sub-region’s skills and education needs.

Annex A of Terms of Reference – Employers’ Skills and Education - Road Map

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