
Leeds City Region Employment and Skills Board

Terms of Reference

Statement of purpose

To bring together employers of key sectors, along with Local Authorities and commissioners of employment and skills provision, to give collective local leadership to setting the strategic priorities for public sector investment in adult skills and employability programmes that drive the economic growth of the City Region and raises the demand for skills.

The Employment and Skills Board will seek to act as the designated body to set strategy for skills in Leeds City Region as per Section 24 (A) of the Learning and Skills Act 2000, with the addition of devolved commissioning responsibilities as set out in “Raising Expectations and Increasing Support: Reforming Welfare for the Future” (White Paper, Department for Work and Pensions, 2008). It will seek to influence and ensure coherence with 14-19 strategies and policies.

Remit and responsibilities

The Employment and Skills Board will:

- Promote a shared understanding of skills and employment demand in the City Region economy, now and in the future, the related challenges and opportunities, and share this with partners as appropriate.
- Formulate, publish and programme manage an overarching Strategy for employment and adult skills in the City Region, which is co-produced by employers, adds value to local work and skills plans and Employment and Skills Boards and is aligned with the proposed Regional Skills Strategy and Integrated Regional Strategy.
- Set priorities for employment and skills provision which respond to existing and future needs of the Leeds City Region economy and City Region work streams.
- Inform the development of priorities for other work streams of the City Region, including Transport, Innovation and Housing.
- Provide challenge and transparency to the commissioning of skills and employability programmes in the City Region.
- Seek to influence and ensure coherence with 14-19 strategies and policies for the future workforce needs of the City Region.
- Review the Employment and Skills Strategy and publish an Annual Report setting out distance travelled and the future challenges and opportunities for the Board.
- ensure the widest possible consultation with employers across the City Region and promote best practice in recruitment, retention and staff development.
- Make recommendations to the City Region Leaders Board, the Regional Minister, the appropriate Secretaries of State, Yorkshire Forward the Regional Development Agency, the Skills Funding Agency, Jobcentre Plus and other relevant bodies and organisations on issues related to its responsibilities.

Key Outcomes

- Improved employment, skills, progression and productivity outcomes for the City Region.

Key Outputs

- Long range (5 year) Employment and Skills Strategy
- An Annual Report setting out progress on implementation

Performance framework

The ESB will consider appropriate measures for Performance Management, with any proposed framework having due regard to: Multi Area Agreement indicators; Local Area Agreement indicators and Regional targets (such as RES/Regional Skills Strategy).

Appendix 2

Leeds City Region Employment and Skills Board Operating Principles

Membership

Membership of the ESB shall have tripartite representation covering:

- 6-9 private sector employers to ensure coverage of the key economic sectors driving growth in the City Region and 1 non-LA public sector employer representative,
- 5 Local Authority Representatives – as representatives of ‘place’ and as key City Region employers;
- Non-voting commissioning partners, to consist of 1 representative each from the Skills Funding Agency, Jobcentre Plus, Yorkshire Forward.

The ESB retains the right to co-opt other non-voting partners (such as Young People’s Learning Agency) to the Board when the agenda is relevant.

Membership will be of senior level (Chief Executive, Leader or Senior Management level) with executive decision making responsibility and the ability to represent their geographic area and/or sector.

Membership of the Board will be for three years, reviewed annually.

All members of the ESB will be expected to adhere to the codes of conduct identified by the seven principles of standards in public life established by the Nolan Committee.

(<http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/parlment/nolan/seven.htm>)

Chair/Deputy Chair

The Employment and Skills Board will be chaired by a publicly recruited employer. Details of this process will be publicised via the city region website. The Chair of the ESB will be appointed for a period of up to three years, subject to formal review after two years.

The nomination to Chair will require endorsement from the City Region Leaders Board.

The Deputy Chair will be selected by the ESB through a nomination and voting process.

Changes to Structure

The ESB may identify the need to develop relevant task and finish groups to pursue specific issues. These task groups will report directly to the ESB and be chaired by an identified member of the ESB.

The Board must agree all changes to its structure, although the Chair is delegated to make temporary changes if deemed necessary.

All membership changes must meet with the criteria set out in the ‘Membership’ section

Resignations

Any member that resigns their seat on the Board will be replaced by an equivalent (i.e. an employer who resigns would be replaced by an employer) through an appropriate process.

Individuals who no longer meet the basic eligibility requirements of their position will be expected to resign from the Board.

Meetings

The Board will formally convene four times a year. Special meetings may be called with the agreement of the Chair. Where possible, members should be given a minimum of seven days notice.

Meetings will have an emphasis on open and constructive debate. Members are encouraged to contribute their views and will be given a reasonable opportunity to be heard. All comments should relate to issues and not to individuals.

Meetings will be closed to the press and public (to allow full and open debate between partners), however the Chair may invite observers to attend if appropriate.

The Chair conducts all meetings, or if they are absent the Deputy Chair does this. If neither the Chair nor Deputy Chair is present then the members will agree a Chair for that meeting.

Papers will be circulated to members not less than five working days before the publicised date of the meeting. Minutes will be uploaded to the Leeds City Region website no less than one month after the publicised date of the meeting.

Standing agenda items for meetings will include a declaration of interest for members. Any member declaring an interest in an agenda item will be expected to leave the meeting for the duration of that item.

Any declaration of interest will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Attendance

Members are encouraged to attend each meeting. A schedule of meetings will be issued yearly.

If a member is unable to attend a meeting they are encouraged to send a named alternative or to submit their views to be tabled. Provision will be made to appoint named alternates with appropriate executive decision making authority.

If a member has a continued reason for absence for 2 or more meetings then (with the prior agreement of the Chair) a designated 'interim replacement' can be appointed.

If a member does not attend for three meetings in a row then the Chair can review the situation. This could result in the Chair inviting the nominating body to consider whether its representative should be changed.

Ad-hoc substitutions will not normally be accepted at the Board. The Chair may permit it, in the interests of inclusivity, should a matter of major strategic importance to the Board be on the agenda.

Voting and Quorum

Collegiate decision making will be encouraged as the norm. Where a specific issue requires a vote, the Chair shall not be entitled to a second or casting vote and any tied resolution will therefore, be deemed to be defeated. The resolution however, may be deferred for further discussion at another meeting.

Voting is conducted by a show of hands by eligible members - and a simple majority carries the vote. Any member who has declared an interest in an item will not be eligible to vote.

There is no right of veto by any partner and once a decision is made then all members shall be bound by it.

The quorum for meetings should be at least comprised of 50% of the public sector and 50% of private sector members (or their named alternates).

If a meeting is not 'quorate' then members may continue to discuss items but cannot take decisions (unless there is an urgent matter which can then be covered by the urgent decisions arrangement outlined below).

Members of the Employment and Skills Board who declare an interest and/or leave a meeting shall not form part of the quorum.

Urgent decisions

If an urgent decision is required which cannot wait until the next meeting then a written resolution will be circulated to all board members or a special meeting may be convened.

If neither of the above are practical then the Chair may take a decision – in discussion and agreement with the Deputy Chair and at least one other board member. The decision must be reported at the next scheduled meeting.

Local accountability lines

The ESB will be the designated holder of devolved "Section 4" powers, a service level agreement with Jobcentre Plus and be responsible for developing and delivering an employment and skills strategy for the city region.

The Leaders Board will endorse the Employment and Skills Strategy.

The ESB will be responsible for developing and maintaining strong links to local and regional scrutiny arrangements to ensure transparency, alignment and value added.

Board review

Membership of the Board will be for up to three years, with a 'light touch' review conducted annually by the chair, at least two other members of the Board and the secretariat. Board members may choose to remain on the board or step down at this stage.

This will also be used to review the structure and functions of the Board to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

Support and secretariat arrangements

Arrangements will be established within the LCR secretariat to support the Employment and Skills Board and the overall City Region Employment and Skills agenda and to ensure linkages to City Region governance arrangements, for example: Leaders Board; Chief Executives; Business Leadership Group; and the Thematic Panels.

A support group of city region officers will provide policy support to the Board and promote links with local and regional arrangements.

Any task and finish groups established to progress individual technical work streams (such as performance management or funding) or support the strategic focus of the ESB, will be supported by the Secretariat.

