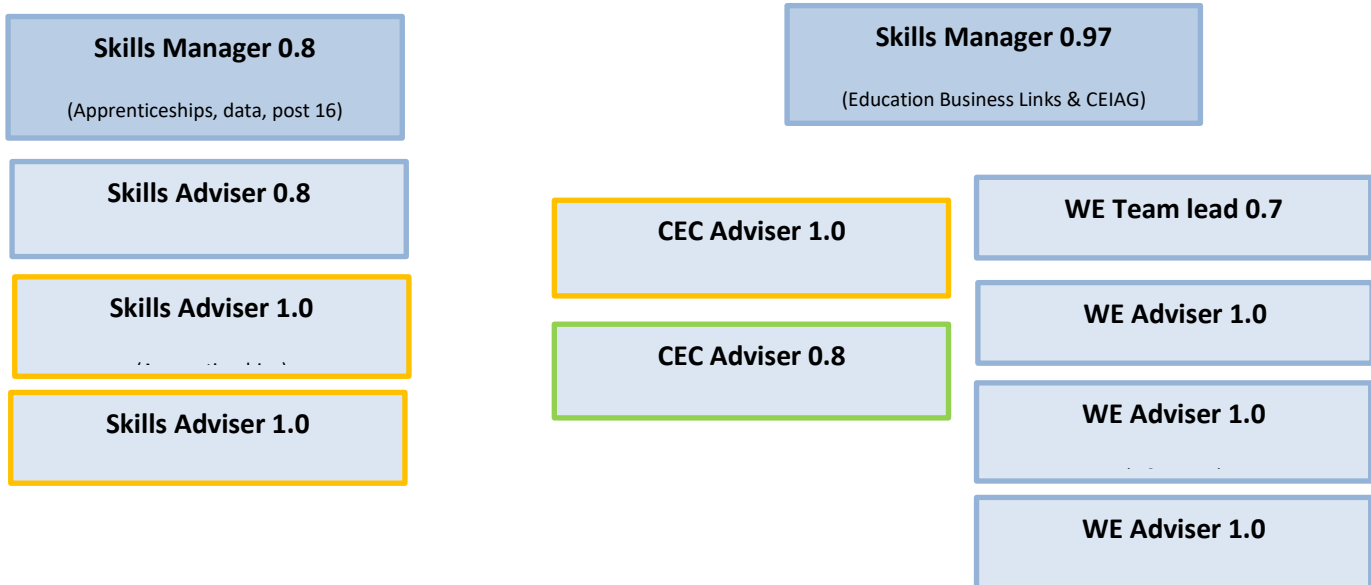




Subject: Oxfordshire Skills Board update	
Author: Richard Byard Tel: 07584 909508 Email: richard.byard@oxfordshireLEP.com	BOARD MEETING No: 14 Date of Board meeting: 6 March 2018 Agenda Item no: 8a
Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership: Jericho Building, City of Oxford College, Oxford, OX1 1SA	

1. This paper provides an update on the work of the Oxfordshire Skills Board and will be accompanied by a verbal update provided by the OSB chair following its meeting 5 March.
2. The organogram below shows the OxLEP skills team across its various remits of work experience (WE), apprenticeships, post 16 and Careers Enterprise Company activities. Of the 11 staff members 10 are seconded from Oxfordshire County Council.



3. The narrative below provides an operational update of activities set against the strategic priorities of the 'Oxfordshire Skills Strategy; Building a 21st century skills ecosystem'.

Skills Strategy Strategic Priority (SP)	March 2018 Update
<p>SP1: To meet the needs of local employers through a more integrated and responsive approach to education and training: developed in partnership with our provider network, to encourage more training provision in identified priority sectors - both current and projected.</p>	<p>i) Housing and Growth Deal (HGD) 'Productivity strand' meeting arranged for 08/03 with Department of Education per HGD narrative below; <i>As part of Oxfordshire's work to develop its local industrial strategy, DfE and Oxfordshire will work together to identify the specific skills needs that Oxfordshire faces, and encourage local providers to align their provision to address these needs.</i></p> <p>ii) Skills board met 23 January to review opportunity and guide scope of negotiations</p> <p>iii) OxLEP 'People' themed employer round table at British Bakels 22 January – c45 employers. Key messages were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better engagement between schools and businesses to help shape awareness of local employment opportunities • Work experience seen as a key route to employment • Focus on increasing apprenticeships to help 'grow our own' workforce <p>iv) A new suite of Labour Market information reports have recently been published:</p> <p>https://www.oxfordshireapprenticeships.co.uk/content/oxfordshire-labour-market-information-2018</p> <p>v) We have supported/co-invested in a number of skills capital projects (c£28m in total) to better align provision to employer demand and to create the infrastructure required to drive improved skills. These include;</p> <p>Activate Learning; Care Suite and Oxfordshire Centre for Technology and Innovation, both complete and operational</p> <p>Abingdon & Witney College: Advanced Engineering and Technology Skills Centre – due for completion in April</p> <p>Culham Advanced Skills Centre – phase one operational</p> <p>And the following LGF 3 schemes which are at various stages of contracting;</p> <p>The Henley College; Advanced Digital and Science Centre</p> <p>Abingdon & Witney College; Agri-Tech Skills Innovation Centre</p> <p>Activate Learning; City Centre Conferencing and Hospitality Training</p> <p>Earth Trust; Skills Centre Development</p> <p>Oxford University; Oxford Centre for Plant Health and Resilience (OPHR)</p>
<p>SP2: To ensure that young people are prepared for the world of work through</p>	<p>i) Careers fest took place 6th & 7th Feb at the Mini Plant Oxford with over 1,200 students attending from 25 schools and colleges.</p>

delivery of high quality CEIAG, by well-informed careers leaders in schools supported by qualified careers advisers. This will include multiple encounters with employers and use of up to date local labour market information.

58 exhibitors supported including employers, colleges, local training providers and local universities. Excellent feedback from exhibitors and attendees. For the first time we ran an open twilight session aimed at parents and young people. We had 320 parents and students attend this session.

ii) **The Careers & Enterprise Company** (CEC) has been given additional responsibilities in the new Careers Strategy to cover all 8 Gatsby Benchmarks in schools & colleges, as well as working with primary schools. CEC are currently determining how they will do this but see working with LEPs through 20 proposed Careers Hubs pilots. A prospectus on how this may work is expected March.

Our Enterprise Adviser (EA) Network:

The current EA Network is working well with 33 Enterprise Advisers recruited, 30 of whom are matched to schools. 42 schools are currently engaged including special schools and colleges. The main focus currently is to find each school an Enterprise Adviser and support matched schools/EA to deliver enterprise activity.

CEC Funded programmes:

Science Oxford continues to deliver the 'World of Work' project on schedule.

Adviza are delivering the 'Mentoring Fund' programme; we need to develop better communications with externally funded providers to ensure better co-ordination across programmes – we are engaging with the CEC regional lead to address this.

iii) **OxLEP Skills** is committing to part fund (up to £1k) schools wishing to sign up to accreditation of their careers provision through the **Quality in Careers Standard**. The application process ran throughout February. Schools that were successful will commit to become part of a support network of schools working toward the award, as well as local career champions, to share best practice, and subsequently offer support to other schools undertaking this accreditation outside of this programme.

iv) The Government is offering a **Capacity Development Fund** for FE Colleges to provide additional resource for increasing their ability to source work placements for the new T levels when introduced. At the time of writing colleges were waiting confirmation on the amount and profile of funds.

T level work placements are;

- [on average 50 working days](#) in length within an acceptable range of 45 to 60 days, covering a minimum of 315 hours.
- occupationally specific and focussed on developing the practical and technical skills required for the profession or trade that the student is studying for

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking place with an external employer that is; on a site external to the student’s learning environment (not another training provider’s site), independent of their fellow students and teaching staff • delivered to a structured work plan and objectives agreed with the employer • adequately supervised by a named member of staff • monitored by actual site visits from the institutions at least once every 4 weeks <p>v) OxLEP Work Experience</p> <p>Income generation for FY17/18 from this traded service is on target to generate c£145k income. Delivery planning continues into academic year 17/18 and schools are signed up until December 2018.</p> <p>The team will need to be cognisant of the emergence of T level work experience placements as these could potentially impact on our traded work experience services. We are exploring how we can better collaborate across all partners seeking work experience placements to avoid multiple contacts with employers – there is a fine line between employer engagement and ‘employer enagement’.</p>
<p>SP3: To address Oxfordshire’s tight labour market and skills shortage areas by</p> <p>i) ensuring those marginalised/disadvantaged from work are moved closer to the labour market</p> <p>ii) supporting and encouraging older workers to consider vacancies in areas of skills shortage</p>	<p>i) We hosted a visit from Matt Hancock Secretary of State Minister for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on the 2 March to highlight some of the excellent work locally with a focus on the inclusive society agenda.</p> <p>ii) OxLEP has worked with FE colleges to put together a bid for £227,000 to the DfE’s Flexible Learning Fund. The proposal is to deliver English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) to adults not having basic skills they need to either enter the labour market or progress once they are working. The proposal is specifically aimed at those in the care sector where levels of spoken and written English are a particular issue.</p> <p>iii) Community Employment Plans (CEPs) Growth Board supported the inclusion of CEPs embedded in planning policy for major developments last year. Since then the team is supporting the delivery of CEPs across the following developments;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westgate • Barton Park • Bicester Eco-town • Botley West Way redevelopment • Crab Hill – Wantage <p>Via Laing O’Rourke the Westgate ‘construction’ CEP supported the delivery of;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 apprenticeships • 15% of on-site workers having an Oxfordshire postcode

- 40% of contracts awarded within local supply chains
- 12 site tours provided to schools and colleges
- 61 individuals (many of whom were economically excluded) supported through sector-based work academies, with 13 later employed by Laing O'Rourke or one of their sub-contractors
- Three local social enterprises supported in the supply chain

The 'End Use' CEP is currently being supported now the centre is open and will be delivered over the next 18 months.

European Social Fund programmes

- iv) We are supporting the delivery of c£8.5m ESF projects awarded via the 2014-2020 European Structural Investment Funds allocation. Following a number of project calls DWP commissioned the following activities;

- v) Activate Learning launched the £1.2m three year Building Better Opportunities programme in August 2016. The project aims to help Oxfordshire's long term unemployed residents access training and employment. This project has exceeded all targets (original plan was 350 participants throughout the project with 46 finding employment). As of January 2018, **471 participants have been engaged with 100 having moved into paid employment.** We believe this may be one of if not the best performing BBO project country wide. The project demographics so far as follows:

- vi) Back on Track is a £1m project run by Activate Learning and other delivery partners to help transform the lives of youngsters at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) or who have recently become NEET. There are 2 key workers in place and a project manager. Activate Learning have engaged with 26 secondary schools with 122 referrals from schools and 20 registered on the programme. The team are working closely with Oxfordshire County Council's EET team.

- vii) Unlocking Potential is part of the Building Better Opportunities scheme funded by the Big Lottery and European Social Fund. Oxford City Council is the Lead Organisation and is working with 9 partners to provide a comprehensive, intensive and integrated package of engagement activities, real work experience, accredited entry-level training, employability development, one-to-one holistic support and work readiness opportunities to 220 young people aged 17-19 NEET for 6 months or more in the county. Since launch we have seen a 56% decrease in NEETs which is impacting on the projects ability to engage clients in a rapidly declining cohort; there is a change request lodged seeking expansion of provision to 21year olds.

	<p>viii) There is c£4m ESF subject to DWP assessments following recent calls covering 'Skills opportunities for growth in Oxfordshire'; 'Training and employment for jobseekers and inactive people' and 'Skills for Business' – including a £570k OxLEP 'Skills Hub' bid.</p>
<p>SP4: To support the government's agenda to increase the number of apprenticeships offered, and apprenticeship uptake, particularly within small to medium sized businesses.</p>	<p>i) The 2nd Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards took place 1st March at Blenheim Palace. 125 guests attended with 10 categories of awards. We were successful in getting a wide range of sponsors for the event and had a really good spread of nominations. Two new employer awards have been included this year – small employer and large employer to take account of the fact that the Oxfordshire Business Awards and Cherwell Business Awards no longer have an 'Apprenticeship Employer' category.</p> <p>ii) We have been allocated a small amount of funds through the Learning and Work Institute and NAS which we will be using to purchase data so that we can analyse which employers deliver Apprenticeships and which are paying the levy. The funding will also support a coordinated employer engagement campaign to encourage more employers to take on apprentices, provide work experience and work with schools.</p> <p>iii) Latest provisional Apprenticeship figures up to the end of July 2017 shows declining numbers of starts locally and nationally. The decreases are partly due to the introduction of the Apprenticeship levy in April 2017 with some employers delaying recruiting apprentices so they can utilise levy – though that is a national phenomenon; locally it could well reflect our virtual full employment economy where more jobs exist than people of working age to fill them. The team will be reviewing data as it is confirmed.</p>
<p>SP5: To investigate how Oxfordshire as a place of employment is promoted to graduates in our HE organisations and how more graduates can be retained to meet the demand our businesses have for higher level skills.</p>	<p>i) We are currently in the top quartile for graduate retention with 26% retained locally (33% OBU) based on latest, albeit now dated data (HES 2015).</p> <p>ii) We are working to develop better linkages with OU Careers Service (initially) to develop greater opportunities to promote careers, jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities.</p> <p>iii) Through OxLEP Skills we support both Universities with LMI and support graduate retention activities where possible; OBU have a particular interest in LMI given its higher local retention rates.</p> <p>iv) Many external factors influence graduate retention – decent job availability, good quality of life and housing provision amongst many others. Our growing innovation ecosystem will further provide good quality employment opportunities</p>

	<p>and encourage retention – equally it should be recognised that our accessibility to London – a key factor in our economic success will also offer significant opportunities to graduates to relocate.</p>
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