LEP Meeting Agenda

20 August 2025

Apologies: Nicola Graham, SDS; Chris Smillie, ACHSCP

Aberdeen Youth Movement – Brian Webb

Note of last meeting

Transition Training Fund – Jane Gibson

ETPF Update – Anne Kain

Support for Economically Inactive People - ask from ACC/bp Hydrogen Hub JV

Consortium Building Activity

Jobs Fair - update

2025/26 Conference

AOCB

SSEN FUND

OE

Future Agenda Items

Other Funding Streams
LEP reporting line within CPA
SES - SUSE report – on agenda
Health Determinants Data
Delivery Plan Refresh
LEP report to Aberdeen Prospers
Developer Obligations
Consortium Building
Child Poverty Accelerator
Lived Experience
Paid Work Experience
25-28 Strategy
Action Plan Timelines

LEP Meeting Note

20 August 2025

Apologies: Nicola Graham, SDS; Chris Smillie, ACHSCP; Kirstie McLaughlin, Business Gateway

Present: Jane Gibson, SDS; Angela Taylor, Aberdeen City Council; Maggie Hepburn, ACVO; Anne Kain, ETPF; Iain Cocker, NESCol

Aberdeen Youth Movement – Brian Webb of AYM came to speak to the LEP about what AYM is, its evolution to its current form, how it operates and engages with young people to be youth led.

Brian confirmed a willingness to work with the LEP and to carry out activities in schools during lunchtimes, if the LEP required input from pupils.

Brian also confirmed a willingness to become a member of the Young People LEP Sub-group.

ACTION: Aimee to link with Brian about collaboration opportunities between DYW-NE and AYM. ADD TO ACTION LIST

ACTION: Jane to link with Brian about collaboration opportunities between SDS and AYM.

Note of last meeting - agreed

Transition Training Fund – Jane provided an overview of the Transition Training Fund which is being delivered by SDS on behalf of UK Government. A £900k pot designed to support up to 200 oil and gas workers, or former workers who meet set criteria and who live in Scotland and work for an employer with an Aberdeen or Aberdeenshire postcode. The pilot project launched on 23 July and SDS has been very busy with applications and eligibility checking. Indications are that the fund will likely be used up quickly.

Iain commented that the college has secured no training requests from people accessing the fund, which raised questions as to the local visibility of it and benefits to North-east residents as opposed to those travelling into the region for work.

ACTION: Jane to share information about the fund and LEP members to share and promote via their channels.

NB The Fund has been paused and so this action is accordingly on hold.

ETPF Update – Anne Kain

ETPF members have expressed an interest in being involved in the LEP sub-groups which are in development.

Angela confirmed the intention to invite representation from across a range of areas and that the ToRs were not yet complete and further work was required by the LEP.

Service manager Stuart Bews has agreed to attend the next ETPF meeting following the Improvement Service review, when he will talk to the Action Plan (attached) which has been developed.

The ETPF has played an active role in the development of the new Local Outcome Improvement Plan. Anne attended the Aberdeen Prospers session on behalf of the ETPF, which is particularly interested in the discussion about hubs.

The LEP agreed during this point that rather than having specific employability hubs it would be better to have multi-service hubs based in communities.

The Community Learning and Development Plan development has seen contributions from members of the ETPF, and concern raised about the inclusion of employability activities within that.

The LEP agreed during this point that employability activities should not form part of CLD activity, but that CLD should be preparing people to engage in employability activities and referring them on, in effect creating a pipeline of activity to support people towards positive destinations and using the expertise of employability professionals. Concern was also raised about the emphasis on the new library model being put forward as it was felt by several LEP members that this was not the right approach and did not have broad support.

ACTION: Angela to raise concerns about employability being included in the CLD Plan on behalf of the LEP with the chief education officer.

ACTION: Maggie to consider how to address the library model issue, via the LEP.

PLAN TO COMMITTEE WITH MINIMAL REF TOP THE LIBRARY MODEL - COMPLETE

The ETPF continues to discuss a case conferencing model and is looking at a subgroup for that. The operational forum is likely to take that forward, probably through a series of lunch and learns.

The ETPF plans to create a sub-group to create a consortium approach but currently has more questions than answers. Pegs Bailey and Susie Donkin from the Improvement Service have been asked to help look at the process.

Support for Economically Inactive People - ask from ACC/bp Hydrogen Hub JV

Angela explained that because the JV is a small operation, it cannot offer work experience placements, and the number of jobs created as a direct result of the JV will be low. She has however asked the bp rep to ask wider bp for placements and other employability activities, in response to an earlier discussion with the LEP attended by the bp rep.

The LEP agreed that the initial ask should be for a financial contribution to enable the LEP to take forward activities, failing which the bp rep from the JV should be asked to attend the LEP to discuss potential opportunities.

Consortium Building Activity

An invitation to attend a consortium building networking event on 25 August has been shared. The event follows a webinar hosted by the Supplier Development Programme (SDP). Some concern about the presentation about how to build a consortium was expressed, with Anne sharing that the ETPF had been particularly concerned about elements of it. Angela agreed with those concerns and stressed that the Council would not expect nor require the level of detail and technicality described by the SDP. That had been partially addressed in the Q&A section of the webinar, and Angela asked for that message to be shared with the ETPF. It will also be addressed at the networking event, which is being hosted by the Council on behalf of the LEP.

Speakers are: Angela as LEP chair and accountable body for NOLB; a member of the shared procurement service; and Iain MacDonald from the external funding team. The focus will not only be on consortia building for NOLB-funded activities, but also encouraging organisations to work together to secure funding from other sources and increase the employability monies coming into the city, and associated activity levels.

Jobs Fair – 30 September at the Beach Ballroom. Free spaces available to employers which have live vacancies.

2025/26 Conference

Limited activity has been undertaken to date on a conference.

ACTION: Angela will share a draft agenda, in confidence and not for onward sharing, for the Renfrewshire LEP Conference, which includes items such as the DWP White Paper.

AOCB

SSEN FUND

Angela touched briefly on the opening of the SSEN Regional Fund and committed to set up a special LEP meeting with the Council's External Funding team leader.

OE

Angela asked Aimee for information on the Offshore Europe Skills Week and if there was scope for employability services to attend with participants to benefit from any of the activities or information provided for school pupils. ABZWorks will be visiting, but if possible would like an opportunity to access the additional support. Anne also expressed an interest in this on behalf of the ETPF.

Aimee explained that Skills Week was being led by TechFest and supported by DYW-NE, with 10-15 school pupils attending on each day of the event which runs from September 2-5. A careers area has been set up as part of that.

ACTION: Aimee to check and report back as to whether employability services can also access the careers area.

Conversations to be ongoing for future OE events and AIMEE to include in lessons learns

Date of Next Meeting

17 September, at NESCol

Future Agenda Items

Conference	Developer Obligations
Other Funding Streams	
LEP reporting line within CPA	Action Plan Timelines
SES - SUSE report	Child Poverty Accelerator
Health Determinants Data	Lived Experience
Delivery Plan Refresh	Paid Work Experience
LEP report to Aberdeen Prospers	25-28 Strategy

Improvement Service Review and ACC Action Plan.

To support continuous improvement of the employability offering in the City, the Improvement Service were commission to undertake a review of current activity and provide recommendations on how improvements could be made.

The Improvement Service provided 13 recommendations which are laid out below, along with a management response endorsed by Aberdeen City Council strategy board. The next steps lay out the actions which Council officers will undertake in order to progress all recommendations towards implementation.

While the improvement service report outlined recommendations, these were not specific in regards to how the recommendations would be implemented and ACC officers are currently engaging with many other Local authorities to compare practice and identify what improvement would look like and how to implement improvements.

Next steps also outline where it is anticipated that endorsement/approvals will be required, however regular updates will be provided to stakeholders (e.g LEP) on a regular basis to ensure there is transparency and clear communication on progress made across all recommendations.

SERVICE DELIVERY

Recommendation One Aberdeen City Council should undertake a fresh review of the wider employability landscape within Aberdeen City to ensure that activity is consistent with local need, data and evidence and that all stages of the employability pipeline are adequately resourced.
Management response
Agree. To ensure that the wider employability landscape in considered, this will include all activity, not just that funded through ACC as accountable body.
Next steps
Engage with at least three other Local Authorities to review their approach, including scope, of employability landscape reviews. To draft a scope to evidence local need based on data. This will include data from the LEP, ACC economists and the Employability Training Providers Forum. To review commissioned activity against evidence of local need, and identify where additional resource may be required. Bring report to LEP outlining where additional investment should be targeted based on evidence/data

Recommendation Two Aberdeen City Council, in partnership with the LEP, should develop a shared performance management framework and then assess all service delivery, including ABZWorks activities and commissioned services, against the framework. This should include review against a set of agreed criteria to ensure that all services meet the needs of prospective participants and employer opportunities.
Management response
Agreeing a framework with Partners for the performance management will give greater transparency to the principles to be applied by the accountable body. An agreed framework will ensure consistency and a documented process.
Next steps
- Review and present performance framework from at least 3 other Local Authorities for consideration. These should be compared to existing ACC process - Assess and present other frameworks to Leadership Team to consider and agree, based on assessment, the most effective framework - Consult with the employability and skills team, and any other relevant stakeholder, on the proposed new structure - Present recommended framework to LEP for endorsement

STAFFING AND SYSTEMS

Recommendation Three The activities needed to properly support the expected ACC strategic and operational employability management roles at Team Leader level -are too much for a single post holder. It would be beneficial to consider two separate posts of equivalent status, each with a clearly defined remit – one having responsibility for operational activities and the other for strategic issues. This would improve relationships with the third sector and would create a structure in which there was a clear separation of powers and responsibilities. It would also improve the capacity of the operational lead to support internal delivery.
Management response
Agree - It is recognised that due to the growth of the team it is necessary to consider structural changes in how the team operates. Service redesign may be required and to ensure minimal disruption to ongoing service further work needs to be undertaken to: review the structures within other Local Authorities, detail the structures which they have in place, provide analysis on those structures to identify the most appropriate structure and then to implement, with a justification as to why that is considered most appropriate. The presentation of any revised structure must be visually clear, and link directly to priority areas for employability and skills – e.g pipeline stages or groups. The next steps below will also support implementation of recommendation 9.

Next steps

- Review and present structures of at least 3 other Local Authorities for consideration. Consider reviewing ACC team structures also. These should be compared to existing ACC model
- Assess and present alternative structures to Leadership Team to consider and agree, based on assessment, the most effective model
- Consult with the employability and skills team on the proposed new structure
- Present recommended structure to Strategy Board
- *****Draft/Amend any Job Profiles and recruit where required to implement new structure.

Recommendation Four

ACC should look to restructure the employability team to better align remits with employability pipeline stages or groups. Consideration should also be given to separation of responsibility in relation to ABZWorks delivery and contract management of wider commissioned services.

Management response

Agreed It is considered that the steps outlined in regards to Recommendation 3 include any required restructure of the team.

In considering the separation of responsibility of ABZ Works in relation to delivery and contact management further work is required to understand existing practice elsewhere and what models exist, and how these manage the role of the council as the accountable body and also the necessity for service delivery in the most effective way.

Next steps

- Review and present the relationship in at least 3 other Local Authorities as Accountable bodies and delivery partners. These should be compared to existing ACC model.
- Assess and present alternative model to Leadership Team to consider and agree, based on assessment, the most effective model.
- Consult with the employability and skills team on any proposed change(s) to the existing model.
- Present findings to LEP in terms of preferred model of accountable body.

Recommendation Five

A full review of all administrative processes carried out by the ABZWorks team such as referral, registration, customer journey and tracking should be carried out. In tandem to this process, effort should be made to ensure that the team are clear on wider employability policy, KPIs, service standards, customer charter etc and the importance of partnership working to support sustainable outcomes for participants.

Management response

Agree – Work has started on developing a quality improvement action plan to set standards and KPI's. A keyworker handbook exists, and this should be updated to ensure it reflects all polices, procedures and standards that have been developed and agreed by Leadership Team.
- **Next steps** Review and present policies and procedures of at least 3 other Local Authorities for consideration. These should be compared to existing ACC policy and procedure - Present revised and any new policy and procedures to Leadership Team to consider and agree - Consult with the employability and skills team on any proposed change(s)to existing practice, and any new measures proposed to be introduced
*****Outcome should be a set of policies and procedures with review periods.

REFERRAL PROCESSES

Recommendation Six All stages of the referral process should be reviewed to ensure timely engagement with prospective participants and feedback to the referral source. Minimum standards for response times should be defined and shared with referral partners and effective information sharing protocols agreed. This should include consideration of the administrative requirements placed on providers to reduce duplication and facilitate reporting.
Management response
Agreed
Next steps
- Review and present policy and procedures of at least 3 other Local Authorities for consideration. These should be compared to existing ACC policy and procedures - Assess and present overview of policies and procedures to Leadership Team to consider and agree, based on assessment, the most effective way forward - Consult and engage with the other relevant stakeholders on revised/new policy/procedures - Finalise and present revised policies and procedures and present to LEP for endorsement.
*****Outcome should be a set of policies and procedures with review periods.

Recommendation Seven

Linked to Recommendation Five, there should be further investigation of Hanlon or another MIS system to support more integrated administrative processes and to allow providers to access and contribute to the recording and reporting process.
Management response
Agreed that the current system was not suitable for the increased level of data that required to be processed and required excessive staff resource to operate. Officers agreed prior to finalisation of this report to move away from current system. Procurement of Hanlon is completed and will align us with 22 other Scottish Local Authorities. Training will be provided by Hanlon on use of the system and licences included to enable providers to input data.
Next steps
ACC and Hanlon to enter into operational phase of the system which will include demonstrations and training for the team.

COMMISSIONING AND FUNDING

Recommendation Eight A new commissioning strategy should be developed and published in consultation with the LEP. Key documents such as CPIB Fair Funding of the Voluntary Sector Guidance and TSI Scotland Fair Funding Charter should be acknowledged to ensure that any new strategy meets the guidance. The new commissioning strategy should also consider how funding is determined and allocated and whether ACC should introduce grant funding through Challenge Fund or similar processes.
Management response
The current Commissioning Framework expires in 2027. While agreeing with the recommendation, this is something that would have been required to be undertaken in a business as usual scenario. In response to feedback, the current commissioning framework was developed with partners, against the then strategic priorities. The co-design approach to developing the commissioning framework was recognised at the time by the Improvement Service as an exemplary model. Taking on board feedback from employability partners some changes were made recently to the existing commissioning framework and the impact of these changes will be considered when reviewing the framework. Opportunities to enhance grant funding over commissioning will also be considered.
Next steps
- Review and present commissioning strategy of at least 3 other Local Authorities for consideration. These should be compared to existing ACC model following recent changes made. - Consult and engage with the LEP, Leadership team and other relevant stakeholders on Commissioning strategy - Present key findings to Strategy Board (if required)

- Present key findings to LEP

Recommendation Nine As referenced in Recommendation 3, ACC should establish a separate strategic Team Leader post to support the further development and integration of third-party provision and to ensure more streamlined connectivity across the wider employability offer. This role could also have responsibility for supporting the ongoing overview of the wider employability landscape.
Management response
It is considered that this recommendation forms part of recommendation 3 and therefore there is no benefit in considering them separately.
Next steps
N/A

LOCAL EMPLOYABILITY PARTNERSHIP

Recommendation Ten ACC should support the review and action of the recommendations from the LEP Maturity Self-Assessment. As a way of encouraging and sustaining a more collaborative approach new chairing arrangements of the LEP should be considered.
Management response
The Local Employability Partnership Action Plan contains the recommendations from the LEP Maturity Self-Assessment. It is agreed that ACC should continue to support the review and implementation of those recommendations, through the LEP. While the chairing arrangements in Aberdeen are consistent with most other LEPs, Service Manager External Partnerships at Aberdeen City Council will invite the Vice-Chair to take on the Chair role as an immediate action.
Next steps
LEP Maturity Improvement Service survey LEP members on views of LEP effectiveness via LEP Maturity self-assessment LEP Chairing Arrangements and role of Accountable body - Invite SDS to chair, ACC vice Chair - At least 1 ACC Senior Project Officer attends each LEP meeting

Recommendation Eleven ACC should encourage the LEP to consider the establishment of a third sector capacity building post to support better engagement and strengthen third sector involvement in building the employability system. Examples of good practice, the benefits of such as post and job descriptions from other areas are available and can be shared.
Management response
ACVO are developing a Job Description in April 2025 and will present this to the LEP for further approval. Funding will then need to be agreed by the LEP for allocation to the post. ACC are already encouraging this, however it is ACVO who are taking forward the post. While ACC are comfortable in encouraging the activity, the implementation relies on partners taking decisions in a timely manner,
Next steps
- LEP to decide whether to allocate funding to ACVO for the post - ACC as accountable body to progress funding to ACVO (this may require F&R Committee approval if a grant) - ACC to be notified that ACVO have successfully recruited to the post and will draw down allocated funding

EMPLOYABILITY TRAINING PROVIDERS

Recommendation Twelve ACC should work more collaboratively with the ETPF to agree a joint approach and action plan to ensure that all partners contribute to an effective delivery offer, which reduces duplication, meets the needs of the City and ensures value for money. This could be supported by the third sector capacity building post suggested at Recommendation Eleven.
Management response
ACC are represented at each meeting of the ETPF by a Senior Project Officer to support collaborative working. The approach and action plan of the ETPF is owned and driven forward by the ETPF members, with support from ACC. ACC have committed to continued collaboration with the ETPF. It is not anticipated that any additional work is required at this time to increase the collaboration with the ETPF – there is a risk in doing so that the Council is seen as seeking to control the ETPF which is absolutely not the intention. The Council is able and willing to work closely with the ETPF where the ETPF indicates a desire to do so. The ETPF are represented on the LEP.

Next steps
ACC continue to provide support to the ETPF

VOICE OF LIVED EXPERIENCE

Recommendation Thirteen Establish a specific service user panel so that the voices of those with lived experience of employability services can influence and shape their future direction, to the benefit of existing and potential participants.
Management response
There are measures in place at present which seek to ensure that the voices of those with lived experience of employability services can influence and shape future service delivery. It is noted however that the recommendation is to establish a specific service user panel, which we do not currently have.
Next steps
- Review and present lived experience approach from at least 3 other Local Authorities for consideration. These should be compared to existing ACC approach - Assess and present other approaches to Leadership Team to consider and agree, based on assessment, the most effective approach - Consult with the employability and skills team on the proposed new approach - Present recommended approach to LEP for endorsement