1. Meeting Notes

Project:	Stronger Town Deal
Subject:	Education and skills discussion group

Date and time:	10 June 2020 at 09:30	Minutes by:	Phoebe Annett

Present:

Nichola Newton (chair), Warrington & Co LEP
Stephen Fitzsimons, Warrington & Co LEP
Kathryn Green, Warrington & Co LEP
Pat Jackson, Cheshire and Warrington LEP
Steve Park, Warrington Borough Council
Nigel Schofield, Warrington Chamber of Commerce & Industry
Mark Duffy, Sellafield
Susan Scurlock, Primary Engineer
Fayyaz Qadir, Atkins
Lisa Knowles, Atkins
Phoebe Annett, Atkins

ITEM	COMMENT
1.	<u>Introduction</u> - We were preparing for the investment plan to be submitted this month however immediate resources have been re-directed to assist with Covid-19 which has caused a delay of 6 – 8 weeks. - The Town Deal remains important and now is the time to re-engage and reflect on how we drive it forward. - The government would like the bid to be submitted by the end of July, resources allowing. - A blended approach will resonate as they are aiming to leverage funds from other sources (private sector etc), therefore the different workstreams should be interdependent. - Though the short- and medium-term objectives will need to be adjusted to consider the impact of COVID-19, the long-term objectives are still valid.

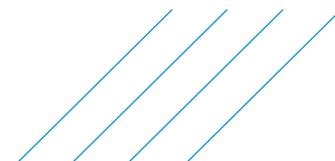|	
Next meeting:	w/c 22nd June
Distribution:	

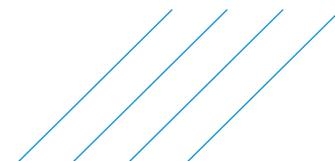|			
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NOTE TO RECIPIENTS:
These meeting notes record Atkins understanding of the meeting and intended actions arising therefrom.
Your agreement that the notes form a true record of the discussion will be assumed unless adverse comments are received in writing within five days of receipt.

ITEM	COMMENT
2.	**Changes to the baseline**
	We should reconsider the baseline and which businesses; sectors and geographies have fared better/worse in the crisis.
	- What will be the impact on transport, increase in private car use and logistics related traffic, increase in walking and cycling, decrease in public transport?
	- 18 – 24s are likely to be one of the hardest hit groups (NN)
	- Recruitment into the care sector is at its highest ever level (SP)
	- We are expecting job losses in engineering, Airbus, Jaguar Land Rover, etc
	- Increased unemployment will lead to demand for upskilling/reskilling (SF)
	- Employment will become a buyers' market, which will not benefit graduates and apprentices. (SF)
	- A significant number of people who are furloughed work in start-ups or are self-employed (PJ)
	- Need strong linkage with digital workstream to enable employment and skills and training (NN).
3.	**Risks and opportunities resulting from COVID-19**
	- Digital infrastructure
	- A key barrier to driving the STEM agenda has been that young people don't have the infrastructure at home to support the projects (access to internet and devices). Post COVID-19 we are likely to be doing more work like this and so need to address this issue to ensure people without these tools can benefit. (MD).
	- Drax have invested in hardware for young people and have engaged internet providers to provide free internet. They have successful delivery models that we could draw on. (MD)
	- The level of digital training that being delivered has reduced by a significant proportion. Overall, the number of apprentices has dropped by about 28% over the past year or two, but apprenticeships that include digital training have dropped by around 35%. Training taken by women has dropped significantly. (PJ)
	- COVID-19 has led us to shift our support online which has resulted in a significant increase in engagement. This is a key opportunity. We need to plan how to utilise online/live broadcast tools to make sure our inputs are shared as widely as possible. (PJ)
	- Digitisation of business. The trend for employer and employee in the same locality is changing, employers are now not limited to hiring in their local area. This will increase competition for jobs in and around Warrington but should also increase opportunities for people in Warrington to find jobs in companies based elsewhere. Therefore, the digital agenda should lead this workstream. The health and social care sectors are particularly in need of support in digitising themselves. (SP)
	- Digital skills are an opportunity to accelerate the progression of young people within a company (NS)
	- Though schools have had to put some programmes on hold, they are now moving forwards. Pledge are now engaging with schools, businesses, universities and libraries: 14 projects in the past 6 months. See also TCAT events. (PJ)
	- Employer advocacy: Accellerate is a £30m programme to help businesses reskill/upskill their current workforce. Will benefit those who are already employed or furloughed. (PJ)

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	- Adversity breeds invention, therefore, we should aim to create the right environment to foster ideas, where innovators can come together and feed off each other. (SF) - Reluctance to travel has created local hubs away from the centre of town. Co-working spaces could be identified to embrace the opportunities associated with remote working (SS) - Industry sectors: - We should be conscious of sectors that the government are investing in and ask whether people have the right skills to move into these areas, for example, investment in walking and cycling infrastructure. (Walking and cycling will be focussed on in another workstream). (FQ) - COVID-19 has accelerated a shift towards online retail which is likely to last and provide employment opportunities which will require new skills (FQ) - Hospitality is likely to change logistically but demand will remain so how we can upskill people working in these sectors (FQ) - Manufacturing has been subject to sustained pressure for several decades now. Rather than rely on a growth in production we should expect a growth in manufacturing consulting. (SP) - Post COVID-19 we should expect growth in Environmental sciences and consulting. (SP) - We should be wary of trying to 'pick winners' and should therefore think about themes that cut across sectors such as 'greening', employer advocacy, health and social care. (PJ)
4.	<u>Summary</u> - 5 workstreams: o Social care and health o Construction related to housing o Manufacturing consultancy o Environmental science consultancy o Digitalisation is sectors and skills - 3 overarching themes across all workstreams: o 'Greening' and sustainability (including carbon) o Employer advocacy o Enterprise and innovation/digitalisation including training to reskill to access the wider job (beyond Warrington)
5.	<u>Next Steps (SP)</u> - Chair of this group should meet with the chairs of other workstreams before the next meeting to ensure interdependency - Another 90-minute meeting will be booked for w/c 22nd June