**The Economy and Health Equity in Lancashire and Cumbria**

**9.00 – 10.00 Wednesday 3rd of November 2021**

**In attendance:**

* Andy Walker, Head of Business Growth and innovation · Lancashire County Council
* Stjohn Crean, Pro Vice-Chancellor, University of Central Lancashire (UCLan)
* Dominic Harrison, Director of Public Health & Wellbeing, BwD Borough Council
* Sakthi Karunanithi, Director of Public Health, Lancashire County Council
* Phil Green, Director of Growth, Environment and Planning, Lancashire County Council
* Iona Lyell, Public Health Registrar at Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
* Gifford Kerr, Consultant in Public Health at NHS Blackburn with Darwen
* Jessica Allen, Tammy Boyce & Howerd Booth

**Key points:**

* Need to map out what is already going on and some of the overlap (e.g. ideas from Greater Lancashire Plan; the Health Sector Board group; and ideas and work from the HEC)
* Ask of the HEC:
  + Help retell the story of investment in health and equity as an economic asset and not a liability
  + Link recommendations to ongoing work around the economy e.g. work around housing – the HEC can reinforce the health angle of this agenda
  + Discuss how regional partners can best address 3 opportunities (levelling up, NHS 1.25% inc. & budget settlement)

**Points from participants:**

***Sakthi Karunanithi:***

* Overarching vision of the Health Sector Board (Chaired by StJohn Crean for the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership) is to increase economic prosperity through the lens of health equity
* Thinking about this in three ways:
  + How to reduce sickness and worklessness and improve workplace productivity through a range of workplace schemes (may link to the Legal and General work) (e.g. https://www.vitality.co.uk/business/healthiest-workplace/, best employer of the year)
  + How can we promote the health sector as a *growing* economic opportunity in Lancashire (e.g. new roles, workforce building, tech, community assets/social prescribing) – **all needs to be seen as an economic opportunity working towards attracting new investment**
  + How can we promote the role of all sectors in the economy to be ‘net health-enhancing’ (e.g. social value, corporate social responsibility, anchor institutions, apprenticeships, procurement)
* One of the main things the **HEC** could help with is **retelling the story** away from the typical narrative where health and health equity is seen as a liability and a cost, and towards health being an investment and an asset building endeavour
* Examples contributed via the chat: Key examples of good practice that is worth searching for are: how do we scale up workplace based health promoting programmes; how do we get more people who are off from work due to ill health and connect them with local jobs; how do well performing areas provide a pipeline of incubators of economic opportunities in health sector (tech, bio tech, skills and retention; research, self help economy); what policies could we promote amongst all sectors in our economy (parental leave, social value, apprenticeship, procurement, net zero, investment in communities).

***Dominic Harrison:***

* The Northern Health Science Alliance have done some work which can feed into this objective of retelling the story around health, not as liability but as an important investment for local economies – it showed how the ‘biggest drag’ on labour market activity in the North was poor health; now compounded by the pandemic
* Unhelpful cycle of less work, lower wages, less demand – so an alternative view on health and the economy could be reframed as a win-win
* Three things coming down the line that we need to think about:
  + Levelling-up white paper within the next 6 months - levelling up economic opportunity and life chances between North and South and between rich and poor areas
  + NHS getting a 1.25% new income stream, as yet undedicated – potential to look at how this could be used to raise economic, social, and health opportunities
  + Some funds announced in the recent budget – need joint collaborations across health sector and economic sector to work out the business case
* Dominic also shared in the chat guidance on levelling-up evidence based priorities to grow both economic and social welfare: https://www.levellingupgoals.org/

***Phil Green:***

* As part of the recent **Independent Economic Review**, there was a deep dive on health, wealth and wellbeing which should be considered
  + One of the main priorities in Lancashire is the housing stock, age, and condition which needs addressing – plans for major retrofitting/replacement which brings significant economic opportunities in terms of employment, skills development, low carbon benefits – if the **HEC** could promote the health angle on housing it would be helpful to this agenda
  + As part of the Redefining Lancashire work, there was a focus on how local business can diversity to support the NHS itself and use the business base to meet local procurement needs
  + There are so many assets and opportunities around health innovation (the 3Ds – digital, diagnostics, and devices) – need to hone on this and where exactly are the opportunities (e.g. research, manufactory, business)
* Lancashire as a county is very different from the city regions – there are opportunities but the usual urban investment policies means that rural economies do miss out which has an impact on health equity – need to embrace what is unique about the region and explore place-based initiatives
* A further point in the chat: need to fight hard to push 'Net Health Equity' up there as major opportunity with investable propositions that whilst not without its challenges perhaps has real life impacts

***Stjohn Crean:***

* Attracting companies into the region is a challenge – while investors are keen to invest, they want to see contributions from partners – currently looking at how to create a ‘honey pot’ to attract business
* There are a number of projects going on which do over (? at times repeat) – there is a need to create a solid ‘eco-system’ that knows what’s going on throughout the region – business want to deal with the region, not just a single sector or part
* Need to move beyond just inviting businesses in, but prioritising those who can actually contribute to or provide some tailored solutions for the health and health equity challenges in the region
* Final point was a question about local support for the policies and ideas – do people make the link and can they inform different approaches?

***Andy Walker:***

* Re: engagement:
  + Chambers
  + Can offer services of the growth hub
  + Lancashire Business View
* Point on the structure of the economy – SME based economy with small workforces so limited in terms of being an active lever on some of the issues discussed
* Just undergoing a massive exercise on called Local Strategic Investment Plan – trying to identify skills needs – so a lot going on in the business engagement world at the minute
* Would be worth gathering existing initiatives, particularly now with changing models of work
* Value in the procurement side of the ‘anchor model’ in terms of bang for buck and social value but need to be really clear and prioritise what is of most value in terms of asks of businesses