

Coast to Capital – Skills 360 Board Meeting 6

Wednesday 04 March 4.00pm – 6.00pm

Thakeham House, Summers Place, Stane Street, Billingshurst, RH14 9GN

Meeting Minutes

Board Members:

Frances Rutter (FR) - Chair; Andy Brown (AB); Andrew Currie (AC); Christina Dennis (CD); Jenny Andersson (JA); Jonathan Sharrock (JS); Kevin Delf (KD); Liane Richardson (LR); Nick Juba (NJ); Robert Pye (RP); Simon Pringle (SP); Tim Walder (TW)

Attendees:

Claire Witz (CW) – Coast to Capital; Kirsten Trussell (KT) – Coast to Capital; Millie Bew (MB) – Coast to Capital

1. Introduction

a) Welcome, apologies and introductions

FR introduced the sixth meeting of the Skills 360 Board, the Skills Advisory Panel for the Coast to Capital area.

Apologies were noted from Winston Mahaffy from Thales and Dena Read from the ESFA.

FR informed the board AC was now the formal representative for Gatwick Airport going forward, and also that Debra Humphris would be stepping down and her colleague Ruth Whittaker would be joining the Board from the next meeting as the representative for the University of Brighton for the remainder of the term.

FR thanked LR for hosting the meeting, and members and attendees introduced themselves.

b) Minutes from last meeting and Matters Arising

FR gave a recap of the minutes from the last meeting, the minutes were confirmed as accurate.

There were no outstanding actions from the last meeting.

c) Conflict of interest

MB read out the standard Conflicts of Interest statement. There were no conflicts arising from agenda items.

2. Local Industrial Strategy update

FR introduced the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) update agenda item.

JS gave an update on the recent activities relating to the LIS including:

- Feedback from Government on the evidence base submitted
- What Coast to Capital offers to the UK
- Identified areas for intervention that will be taken forward in the LIS
- Project ideas that are nationally relevant
- An update on the LIS timeline

JS answered questions on the LIS and discussions followed including:

- What the process will be to identify skills projects that could be included as LIS interventions. This will come through in the skills action plan
- The need for a common thread around sustainability and carbon footprint to run across all projects, especially as a region with an airport central to its economy and growth

KT gave an overview of the interventions emerging in the LIS that are relevant to skills. The proposed LIS skills interventions are:

- **Innovation and Skills Centre** – the LIS evidence base establishes that the lack of a higher education institute within the Gatwick Diamond limits the research potential of the area, as there is no central innovation hub to draw from. An institution that could attract people and businesses into the region, enabling new ideas to be brought to market, would reinvigorate innovation within the Gatwick Diamond. A research specific institute, whether a catapult, university or innovation centre would anchor the area as a centre of innovation, complementing the existing research being undertaken by companies in places like Manor Royal. The goal is to establish a key innovation asset within the Gatwick Diamond, which would bring large companies, start-ups and skills together to enrich the entire Coast to Capital innovation ecosystem.
- **Digital Apprenticeship Levy Pilot** – exploring the potential for a pilot with the DfE that supports digital SMEs to take on apprentices. Levy payers can transfer a certain amount of their levy through an agreed 'levy transfer' to SMEs, but the levy can only be spent on the training element of an apprenticeship. A consortium of digital businesses in Brighton would like to test the potential to broaden out what the apprenticeship levy can be spent on to support things like recruitment, increasing diversity, topping up the training, dealing with the administrative requirements and providing additional support where necessary.
- **Labour Market Interventions** –undertaking work to develop projects that will address the significant labour market challenges identified in the LIS evidence base.

3. Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) Update

FR introduced CW to present this agenda item.

CW gave an update on SAPs following the workshop in London in February. This included:

- The Skills and Productivity Board (SPB); it's structure, role, proposed activity and relationship with SAPs
- The government Further Education (FE) manifesto commitments

There was a discussion about the SPB and the manifesto commitments including:

- The lack of data at a level lower than local authority level, and the importance of anecdotal evidence and narrative to tell the story of the area. This is something that we will be undertaking going forward to gain more qualitative insight in certain areas and sectors, which are yet to be decided
- The National Skills Fund and the lack of information around this at the moment, and a wider discussion around the need for funding for adult education, for which the current system is not meeting the need

Action: MB to clarify with DfE what is meant by “Strengthening of universities and colleges’ civic role” within the FE manifesto commitments

CW continued the presentation, covering:

- Information and guidance for SAPs on Skills Action Plans from the Department for Education (DfE) and how this fits with the work we are currently doing
- The announcement of the additional funding for SAPs in the next financial year, and the requirements around the Local Skills Report, which are to be produced by March 2021.

Action: JS to invite Gillian Keegan MP to a future Skills 360 Board meeting.

KT stated going forward it would be good for Skills 360 Board members to sit on national boards and forums to raise their profile and influence.

There was a discussion around the role of the SPB and its effectiveness in addressing local and national skills issues, especially around the responsiveness of the education system to local business skills needs.

4. Skills 360 Board Action Plan (Part B)

KT provided an update on the progress of the Skills Action Plan, including an overview of the aims of the document and a preview of the suggested structure.

KT took the Board through four suggested priorities to take forward. Members discussed each priority and gave feedback.

Action: KT and CW to redraft the priorities in light of the discussion and send round for Board feedback.

5. Institutes of Technology (IoTs)

FR invited KT to present the item. KT gave an overview of IoTs as well as:

- The outcome of the Wave 1 bids, and the announcement of the Wave 2 bids
- Proposal criteria, next steps and a suggested approach for the Skills 360 Board to take a lead in supporting a collaborative FE, HE and business partnership application for an IoT in Coast to Capital

KT asked for feedback and whether the Board agreed with the approach suggested.

NJ suggested that a collaborative proposal covering Coast to Capital and including all HE and FE institutions would be a good approach for the area. This is based on feedback from other areas

where a regional approach was successful in the Wave 1 bid, and this should be encouraged to allow anyone with an interest to get involved where possible.

The consensus was that the Skills 360 Board should lead a collaborative process to develop an innovative and stand out proposal for the Coast to Capital area. The Board will approach businesses, further education colleges and universities in the near future to develop an approach.

The Board accepted that local partners may submit an Expression of Interest independently to the DfE.

6. Skills Programmes Update

FR Introduced the Coast to Capital Skills Programmes agenda item and invited CW to talk through the papers.

CW gave an overview of the papers which gave information on the Enterprise Adviser Network and the European Social Fund programmes operating in Coast to Capital.

7. Close

There were no further items raised for discussion

Footnote: Unconfirmed minutes – subject to approval/amendment as necessary at the next meeting of the Committee.