

# Coast to Capital



**Coast to Capital  
Local Skills Report  
2020 - 2021**

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# 1. Foreword

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I am honoured to be the Chair of the Skills 360 Board, the Skills Advisory Panel for the Coast to Capital region. I am supported in my role by Vice Chair, Winston Mahaffy of Thales, and a range of very talented individuals from across private and public sector businesses large and small, the further and higher education sector and the community and voluntary sector.

We are proud to represent an incredibly vibrant and varied region – from the towns of East Surrey and West Sussex to Britain’s leading coastal city of Brighton. The area is home to some outstanding natural landscapes, including the beautiful South Downs National Park, and Gatwick Airport, our gateway to the world in Crawley.

A year ago, following a period of extended research and analysis, we had come to understand the

very specific challenges facing the employment and skills landscape of our region. We were fortunate to have high levels of employment, a highly skilled and entrepreneurial workforce and a broad based sector mix. However, we were surprised to discover that many of our businesses were being held back by recruitment challenges caused by a significant gap in our 20-40 year old population, skills gaps in particular occupations, most specifically those related to science, engineering and technology, and persistent pockets of lower skills particularly along the coast and in Crawley.

Working closely with our local partners, the Board had begun to identify the opportunities and interventions that would address our specific labour market constraints along with those global phenomena such as automation which will impact on the availability of lower level jobs in particular.

Then we were hit by a global pandemic which has changed everything. Despite our obvious strengths, Covid-19 will have a profound impact on the Coast to Capital economy. It is estimated that regional economic output in Coast to Capital could have dropped between 12% and 22% in 2020 compared to the national average drop of 9.9%.

As of December 2020, 25% of the economically active population in the Coast to Capital area were in receipt of work related benefits.

When support schemes are brought to a close the unemployment rate is predicted to rise significantly.

A year on year comparison of job postings shows that in November and December 2020 the number of vacancies was equal to those in the previous year, however It is likely that the 2021 winter lockdown will have a similar impact to summer 2020, reducing job vacancies by up to one third.

Our commitment to recovery from the impact of Covid-19 remains strong. More than ever we see the importance of working collaboratively with our partners across the area to ensure we are meeting the different needs and opportunities of each place, leveraging local knowledge, business partnerships and existing resources.

As Chair of the Coast to Capital Skills 360 Board I am pleased to share with you our Local Skills Report, an important output from our work as a Skills Advisory Panel. We have incorporated our Skills Strategy and Action Plan into this report which is the culmination of a comprehensive study into the employment and skills market pre and post Covid-19.

## **Fran Rutter**

*Chair, Skills 360 Board  
Further Education representative,  
Coast to Capital Board  
CEO and Principal, NESCOL*

# 2. Skills Advisory Panels

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## 2.1 Skills Advisory Panels: The national context

Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs) bring together employers, skills providers and key local stakeholders to better understand and resolve skills mismatches at a local level. There are 36 SAPs across England as part of Mayoral Combined Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships.

The Department for Education (DfE) supports SAPs with grant funding primarily to produce high quality analysis of local labour markets and **Local Skills Reports**. The Reports set out the local strengths and skills needs and how the SAP proposes its area addresses its key priorities. The Reports aim to influence local partners and feed intelligence to central government, including the national-level **Skills and Productivity Board** (SPB).

In January 2021, DfE published its White Paper “**Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth**”, which set out a number of reforms aimed at putting employers more firmly at the heart of the skills system. The White Paper outlined plans to test in 2021-22, in a small number of areas, “Local Skills Improvement Plans” created by business representative organisations.

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## 2.2 The Skills 360 Board

The Skills 360 Board acts as the Skills Advisory Panel for the Coast to Capital area, and has an important part to play in the wider skills landscape.

The Skills 360 Board was formed in January 2019, at which time there were 13 senior representatives from private and public sector businesses, further and high education, as well as the independent training sector and the voluntary and community sector. These Board members act as the main conduit between the Coast to Capital Skills 360 Board and those that they represent. Members engage with their sector colleagues and attend Skills 360 Board meetings with valuable feedback from their networks.

The membership and role of the Board has evolved over the last two years, particularly since the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact this has had on economy of the Coast to Capital area.

To enhance the leadership role of the Board and support Covid-19 recovery across the area we have recently reviewed the Skills 360 Board Terms of Reference and membership to ensure greater collaboration with partners and stakeholders. This has included the recent recruitment of a Board member from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to ensure that the Board has access to and awareness of DWP intelligence and activity. The revised Terms of Reference increases the number of places for local authority representatives from one to four to ensure collaboration and alignment of recovery activities across the area.

Further information on the Skills 360 Board and its membership can be found [here](#).

In September 2020 the Skills 360 Board published its original Skills Strategy and Action Plan which has been adapted to become this Local Skills Report.

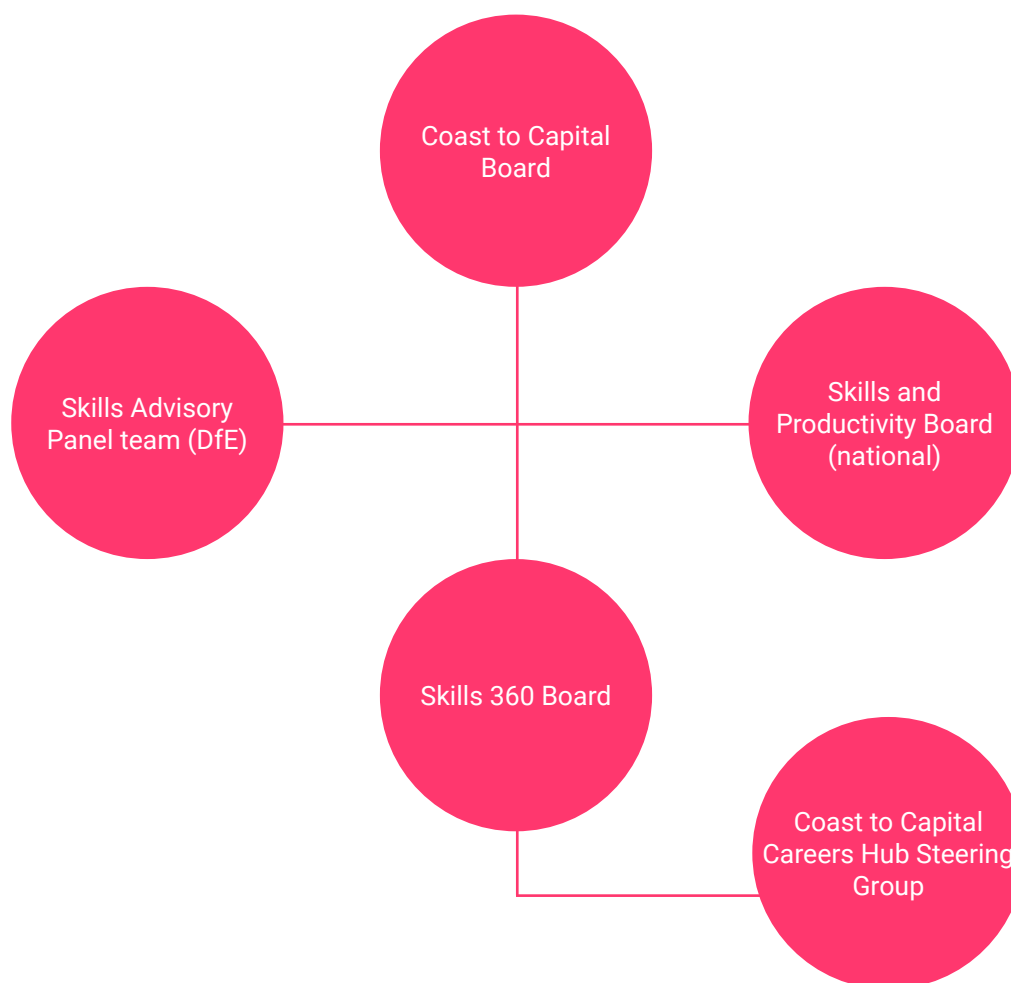
If you wish to find out more about the work of the Skills 360 Board or get engaged in the local skills agenda please e-mail [contact@coast2capital.org.uk](mailto:contact@coast2capital.org.uk)

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Figure 1 shows the Governance structure of the Skills 360 Board. The Skills 360 Board is a subcommittee of the Coast to Capital Board, as well as having regular interaction with the SAP team at the Department for Education (DfE) and reporting to the Skills and Productivity Board through these Local Skills Reports.

The Coast to Capital Careers Hub Steering Group reports directly into the Skills 360 Board, via the Board project sponsor who also chairs the Steering Group.

Figure 1



# 3. Skills Strengths and Needs




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## 3.1 Our Area

The Coast to Capital area does not fit a template. Rather than a single, identifiable city region, it is a network of functional economic hubs around Gatwick Airport which is an asset of global importance and our gateway to the world.

The economic hubs of Greater Brighton, West Sussex and East Surrey each have their own distinct sense of identity, offering a powerful draw for businesses, entrepreneurs and visitors from London, the UK and the rest of the world.



 Coast to Capital LEP

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## 3.2 Our Economy

Our regional economy reached £50 billion in 2017

Before the Covid-19 crisis, it was already clear that our regional economy was falling behind the levels of output and productivity seen in London and most parts of the South East; our labour productivity peaked in 1999. We have lost 15% of our business space since 2013 and local house prices command the highest multiple of local salaries in England – with increasing numbers of people having to commute to London for higher wages.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of this, the region's innovative and resilient economy continued to support notable business successes in a diverse range of sectors: including aviation, advanced manufacturing, tourism and leisure, viticulture and horticulture. Our regional economy reached £50 billion in 2017, providing very high levels of employment and excellent connectivity with global markets both for exports and inward investment. The region's competitive advantage came from our range of high quality service businesses in all sectors, excellent international connectivity and strong cultural and leisure offer.



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## 3.3 The Impact of COVID-19...

Unfortunately, the impact of Covid-19 has proven to be particularly targeted on these areas of economic strength in particular, meaning that our economy appears to be among the worst affected in the country.

### ...on our sectors

Restrictions on **air travel** and the long-term restructuring of the aviation sector will profoundly impact our area. Gatwick Airport is our largest economic site, indirectly supporting up to 60,000 jobs and generating £5bn in the wider UK economy.<sup>1</sup> The airport's own capital investment programme has delivered more than £200m each year into the regional economy over the last decade, and the connectivity that the airport brings has driven inward investment into the region.

Restrictions on international travel have severely impacted Gatwick Airport and its supply chain, with only 10.1 million passengers passing through in 2020 compared to nearly 47 million the previous year. Crawley is expected to see a 42 per cent drop in overall economic output<sup>2</sup> as a result of the Covid-19 crisis, which would represent a loss of over £2.5 billion per annum, making it one of the worst affected towns in the country.<sup>2</sup> The newly released Centre for Cities 2021 Outlook assessed Crawley to be in the top ten of towns and cities in the England in need of levelling up (compared to 43rd out of 63 towns prior to the pandemic).<sup>3</sup>

Restrictions on movement, social distancing and enforced closures are also dramatically affecting the **leisure, retail, hospitality and tourism sectors** which drive the economy across the region - particularly in Brighton, and in towns across Surrey and Sussex. In all of these sectors, businesses are looking for support so that they can adapt to the new operating environment. Our area's specialisation in arts, culture and events means that we are likely to bear a large part of the forecast £29bn national economic hit on that sector (£4.7bn in the South East) and the 400,000 jobs which are expected to be lost across the country.<sup>4</sup>

The **education** sector which contributes 6% of regional GVA is also in a perilous state with the Institute of Fiscal Studies estimating Higher Education providers could lose up to half of yearly income over the next four years.<sup>5</sup> More locally, it is estimated that the education sector in Coast to Capital could have lost £1.6 billion in 2020, a decline in GVA of 38% between 2019 and 2020.







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## ...on our employment

When uptake of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS) is considered alongside the claimant count, by December 2020, 25% of the economically active population in Coast to Capital were on furlough, claiming SEISS or in receipt of jobseekers-related benefits. Whilst the Budget 21/22 extended these schemes until September 2021, the unemployment rate is predicted to rise once these schemes close.<sup>6</sup>

In Crawley, as of December 2020, 32% of the economically active population were being paid directly by the Government through CJRS, SEISS or benefits.<sup>6</sup> This is a direct result of the collapse in passenger air travel at Gatwick Airport and the knock-on effect on direct and

indirect jobs. Flight volumes are not forecast to recover for another four to 10 years.

We must also question whether commuting to London will return to previous levels and the impact that this will have on incomes and employment levels in towns such as Horsham, Haywards Heath, Reigate and Dorking where equivalent local employment opportunities can be very limited.

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## ...on our businesses

As we move further into the Covid-19 crisis, it is becoming clear that the economic damage wrought will be greater than was first predicted. The number of corporate insolvencies has increased month on month and reached 102 in December 2020, up from 39 in May 2020, with Brighton & Hove having the highest percentage (35%) of insolvencies in the Coast to Capital area.<sup>6</sup>



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## 3.4 References

1. **Gatwick 360 Strategic Economic Plan**, July 2018
2. **Centre for Progressive Policy**, 2020
3. **Centre for Cities**, January 2021
4. **Oxford Economics**, July 2020
5. **Institute of Fiscal Studies**, July 2020
6. **Coast to Capital Coronavirus (COVID-19) Economic Impact Assessment**, March 2021

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## 3.5 Further Information

A more in depth analysis of the Coast to Capital economy and its people can be found via the following links and under the Strategy section of our website:

- **Gatwick 360 Strategic Economic Plan**, July 2018
- **Coast to Capital Economic Profile**, February 2020
- **Coast to Capital Coronavirus (COVID-19) Economic Impact Assessment**
- Coast to Capital Skills and Labour Market Study Baseline Report & Baseline Appendix, September 2019 \*
- Coast to Capital Skills and Labour Market Impact Assessments \*

\* These documents are available on our website, in the related resources section of **this page**.

# 3.6 SWOT analysis: Coast to Capital in 2019

(pre COVID-19)



## Strengths

- Highly skilled workforce
- High levels of employment
- Low levels of unemployment
- Broad based sectoral mix with significant sectoral strengths and opportunities in air transport; hi-tech industries; tourism; viticulture and horticulture
- Plentiful graduate employment pool
- Entrepreneurial workforce (old and young)
- Low number of benefit claimants compared to nationally



## Weaknesses

- Missing working age population of 20-40 year olds
- Pockets of unemployment along the coast and in Crawley
- Predominance of lower level/ lower paid service industry jobs along the coast
- Pockets of lower skills levels along the coast and in Crawley and lower levels of participation in further and higher education
- Reliance on commuting to London and Brighton
- Significant recruitment challenges at associate professional and professional level, particularly in science, engineering and technology roles
- Over reliance on SMEs in providing jobs and often these businesses are less good at providing CPD, apprenticeships and graduate jobs than we might expect. Worsened by the lack of agglomeration in the economy



## Opportunities

- Encouraging collaboration to support the development of attractive and well paid career pathways for sectors with significant skills and workforce gaps (eg AME/health and care/ agriculture)
- Up-skilling residents to access local well paid jobs
- Retaining and learning from the skilled older workforce
- Tapping into the willingness of local businesses to collaborate to address recruitment challenges and skills gaps



## Threats

- Impact of automation (particularly in many of the key roles associated with the airport e.g. baggage handlers; security; etc)
- Ageing workforce combined with missing 20-40 year olds
- High cost of living
- Our towns are not attractive to young people

# 3.7 SWOT analysis: Coast to Capital in 2020

(since COVID-19 lockdown)

## Strengths

- Workforce remains highly skilled
- Broad based sector mix means that there is potential opportunity for employment and economic growth to mitigate the impact on our worst affected sectors
- Plentiful graduate employment pool
- Entrepreneurial workforce (old and young) has proven invaluable during lockdown

## Weaknesses

As above plus:

- Severely weakened aviation, tourism, events and hospitality sectors
- Benefit claimant numbers saw a greater increase (+184%) than nationally (+123%) between December 2019 and December 2020
- Crawley likely to be the place most exposed to the crisis in the country with as many as 53,000 jobs there classified as vulnerable because of dependency on sectors related to Gatwick Airport

## Opportunities

As above plus:

- Closely track and trace young people from age 16 and work collaboratively across business and education to develop employment/employability opportunities
- Talent transfers between vulnerable and growth/high employing sectors that have the capacity to absorb a large number of workers (but not easy if the jobs are seemingly less appealing)
- Appropriate skills support for sectors identified as having potential for future economic growth to meet demand and ensure highly skilled workforce
- A local collaborative response, reducing competition and safeguarding the quality provision of education, at all stages
- Ensuring the Adult Education Budget stays in the area and benefits local residents and employers

## Threats

As above plus:

- Accelerated impact of automation
- Significant risk of high levels of youth unemployment from the 'class of 2020' and for several years to come
- Reduced access to public transport meaning that more people will be looking for jobs locally
- Potential shrinking of London commuter jobs increases labour pool in the area – those with lower level skills will be at a disadvantage
- The cliff edge for currently furloughed staff when government support schemes come to an end and the impact of mass redundancies



# 4. Skills Strategy

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## 4.1 Introduction

As previously highlighted, our area is unique, made up of a network of functional economic hubs around Gatwick Airport each with its own identity, challenges and opportunities. For this reason we have not developed a one size fits all approach. Our strategy sets out skills priorities determined through extensive research, analysis and consultation, and which are tailored to the diversity of our area.

Our skills strategy is firmly linked to wider objectives for our economy to build back stronger, smarter and greener, connecting people to high quality local employment and giving businesses the skills needed to adapt and grow.

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## 4.2 The importance of collaboration

Now, more than ever, we need to take a collaborative approach to addressing the skills and labour market challenges faced by the Coast to Capital area. The Skills 360 Board encourages and supports an approach which sees the various public and education sectors working in partnership with each other and with industry to provide clear pathways into employment. In the same way, we encourage and support businesses large and small to collaborate where they haven't before to develop innovative solutions to their recruitment challenges and identified skills gaps.

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## 4.3 Understanding the skills and employment picture

To help stakeholders understand the skills and employment landscape locally and inform planning and decision making the Skills 360 Board will publish the following resources as set out below:

Resource	Purpose	Frequency
Local Skills Report	Sets out local data, skills strategy and action plan and updates on progress and good practice	Annual (extraordinary review in November 2021)
Covid-19 Skills and Labour Market Impact Assessments	Provides an analysis of the impact of Covid-19 on the labour market	Quarterly throughout 2021 at which point it will be reviewed
Local level curriculum, skills and labour market data and analysis	Supports education providers with curriculum planning	Upon reasonable request to the Coast to Capital Skills Manager

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## 4.4 Our Priorities

The Skills 360 Board has identified two overarching priorities:

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### Priority 1: PEOPLE



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### Priority 2: BUSINESS





# Priority 1: PEOPLE

## A focus on recovery

People will need to be trained in the skills to deliver what the economy needs and where businesses are recruiting. Training should be targeted at those who will be hardest hit. We need to give those without work the ability to maintain their work readiness and gain new skills to get a better job, and help to deliver a workforce for the future high-skilled economy.

### At-risk groups who are more likely to require support to develop their skills are:

- **Education leavers.** They have less work experience and will enter a jobs market with high unemployment and few vacancies. Leaving education during a recession can have a large and long-lasting effect on employment and earnings. Those with low qualification levels are worst affected, but graduates suffer too.
- **Young people in the jobs market.** Even in normal times, youth unemployment has long-term effects on earnings and wellbeing. Young people experience greater, more persistent increases in unemployment from recessions.
- **Lower-skilled adults.** They become less employable during recessions and employers are less willing to hold onto them, resulting in increased unemployment.
- **Older workers.** Along with young people, older workers are at risk of remaining unemployed for longer and of experiencing greater impact on future earnings, health and wellbeing.
- **Those made redundant since March or who are at work/furloughed within 'at risk' sectors.** Some sectors may be more likely to see job losses, with the crisis accelerating trends creating shifting skills needs in the economy.
- **Those in the worst affected places.** Some of our local areas may feel the economic impact of the crisis more acutely than others.

The unemployed cohort may well look different to how it did pre-crisis, with a much higher number who have medium and high skills and a track record of employment in sectors which may have shrunk significantly.

Adults of all ages will need support to retrain and up-skill to get high skill jobs in line with the sectors and occupations most likely to thrive into the future. This is particularly true of those slightly further from the labour market, who are least likely to find work straightaway even if the recovery is swift.

Skills support will be needed for young people to help them 'wait out' the worst of the labour market crisis and so avoid the scarring effects of being NEET (not in employment, education or training).

Digital skills training at all levels will be essential for everyone to keep pace with the change in the use of digital technologies since the start of the first lockdown.



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# Priority 1: PEOPLE

## A focus on resilience and prosperity

In the medium to longer term we must focus on addressing some of the more established structural challenges in our economy. Our research has led us to realise that many of our businesses were being held back by recruitment challenges caused by a significant gap in our 20-40 year old population, skills gaps in particular occupations, most specifically those related to science, engineering and technology and persistent pockets of lower skills particularly along the coast and in Crawley.

Whilst broader activity is needed to address the issues of place that are causing our young workforce to relocate or commute to find work, we believe that there are specific interventions related to skills that will address some of these more ingrained challenges.

It is also important to ensure that we are training people to establish the skills that will support us to develop a clean and green economy – one where we are significantly reducing, as well as offsetting, our carbon emissions and at the same time increasing the biodiversity of our area and addressing the impact of climate change.



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# Priority 1: PEOPLE

To support the short to medium term recovery and future resilience of our people, places and economy we have set four sub-priorities as follows:

## 1a. Finding out about Work

Supporting young people to find out about and gain more experience of the world of work to improve their future career outcomes.

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## 1b. Starting out in Work

A renewed focus on getting young people in the class of 2020 and beyond into work to avoid a generation of high youth unemployment.

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## 1c. Staying in Work

Helping people to remain in high quality well-paid work and to progress their careers, with a particular short-term focus on those at risk of redundancy as a result of COVID-19.

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## 1d. Getting Back into Work

Supporting people back into work, specifically those who have lost their jobs as a result of COVID-19, with a focus on those who may face a particular disadvantage such as younger and older workers, those with low level skills or in places significantly affected by the crisis.



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# Priority 2: BUSINESS

## A focus on recovery

With a higher than national average number of SMEs in the area, a predominance of micro businesses and an over-reliance on the aviation and tourism sectors, Coast to Capital's businesses have been hard hit by the Covid-19 lockdown. However, the entrepreneurial spirit of our people and our businesses has led to many stories of diversification and a surprising number of business births during the last few months.

If businesses are to survive and recover, they will need to consider change. They will need to plan, potentially for future lockdowns, and they will need to review their workforce requirements. More than ever, businesses should be considering the skills that they need now and in the future and comparing that with the people and skills that they have.

Government launched a **Plan for Jobs** in 2020 with specific schemes to incentivise businesses to retain staff that they have furloughed, to offer a 6 month work placement to 16-24 year olds and to take on an Apprentice. These schemes will work for some and not for others, but it will be important to raise awareness of these schemes amongst our businesses so that they are fully informed and making decisions which help their business to recover.

Whilst there are businesses that are shrinking, there are also those that are growing and recruiting. In and around Crawley there will be people in the labour market who have spent most of their adult working lives employed in jobs related to Gatwick Airport. Businesses (and people) will need to focus on the importance of transferable skills and less on experience of a particular sector if we are to match people to business need.



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## Priority 2: BUSINESS

### A focus on resilience and prosperity

Whilst we focus on recovery, we should not ignore the more structural challenges that the area faces. Medium to longer term plans should focus on addressing skills and the accelerating pace of change brought about by automation. In order to do this we will need to strengthen the culture of collaboration between businesses themselves and between industry and education providers that was beginning to emerge before Covid-19.

Businesses, small and large, should be and will be considering the need for and impact of digital transformation. There is potential for a support ecosystem across the area in the form of a **Digital Skills Partnership** (DSP) which would bring together public, private and charity sector organisations to help increase the digital capability of individuals and organisations. DSPs extend from a commitment within the **UK Digital Strategy** which sets out government's ambition to create a world-leading digital economy that works for everyone.





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# Priority 2: BUSINESS

To support the short to medium term recovery and future resilience of our businesses, places and economy we have set three sub-priorities as follows:

## 2a. Growing, Retaining and Training the Workforce

Helping businesses understand their current and future skills and workforce needs and to build engagement with their existing workforce to ensure the business has the skills it needs to recover, build resilience and grow.

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## 2b. Working Together

Bringing businesses and education providers together to build a better understanding of current and future skills needs and to develop collaborative approaches.

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## 2c. Making the Most of Digital

Helping business owners and owner managers to understand the role that digital technology can have in the success of their business, particularly in the recovery from COVID-19.

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## 4.5 Transformational Interventions

The Skills 360 Board has identified **three transformational interventions** which take a longer term approach to addressing our skills challenges. Each of these interventions has an immediate geographic focus on the towns around Gatwick Airport, in particular Crawley.

The rationale is two-fold: to address the impact of Covid-19 on the civil aviation sector and the need to diversify the economy away from air transport; but also to drive up skills levels to meet the recruitment challenges of the advanced engineering and other advanced technology businesses in the area.



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# Action Plan Priority 1: PEOPLE

## Transformational Interventions

### 1. Careers Hub

A **Careers Hub** which brings together 35 schools and colleges in the Crawley, Mid Sussex and East Surrey area. Hub schools and colleges develop a shared strategic vision and work closely with businesses and other stakeholders to improve careers outcomes for young people in the area across each of the eight Gatsby Benchmarks set out in the Government's Careers Strategy.

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The Coast to Capital Careers Hub forms a part of the Coast to Capital Enterprise Adviser Network, which is in itself a part of the Careers and Enterprise Company's wider network. We successfully bid to Careers and Enterprise Company for match funding for this Hub, which launched in September 2020 and is the first of its kind in the area.



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# Action Plan Priority 2: BUSINESS

## Transformational Interventions

### 2. Institute of Technology

An **Institute of Technology** which offers a collaborative and innovative approach to higher level technical education to help address skills gaps, particularly in science, engineering and technology areas. Further and Higher Education providers and businesses would work together with a focus on specific local technical skills needs, to ensure that local people can access the appropriate skills to meet employer demands, setting out a clear pathway into technical employment.

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Through our research we have identified a lack of higher level technical provision in key science, engineering and technology sectors, specifically for advanced engineering. Anecdotally from businesses we know that there are significant numbers of hard to fill vacancies for engineering roles across different disciplines, particularly in the area in and around Crawley.

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The Skills 360 Board strongly encourages and supports the development of an ambitious bid for the area.



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# Action Plan Priority 2: BUSINESS

## Transformational Interventions

### 3. Innovation Centre

An **Innovation Centre** in the heart of Crawley which brings together the advanced engineering cluster in the surrounding area with the digital innovation expertise of the many micro businesses across Coast to Capital to address the innovation and workforce capacity shortcomings we have identified in the regional economy.

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Once established, the Innovation Centre will be a dynamic cluster of hi-tech digital and advanced engineering entrepreneurs and businesses driving R&D and leading to spin off enterprises. This will create a thriving eco-system of businesses supporting high value employment growth through the Coast to Capital area and accelerate the growth of micro, small and larger businesses both creating jobs for local people and attracting talent to the area.

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Funding has been secured to deliver this project through the **Getting Building Fund** (August 2020).

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## 4.5 Sectors

Through extensive research into our economy carried out over the last three years, and the most recent analysis of the impact of Covid-19, we have learned that we have a broad sector base. That broad sector base is formed of sectors that employ high numbers of people and those where we see opportunity for significant impact on the prosperity of the area. The distinction is more important than ever as we move through recovery into building resilience and increasing prosperity.

### **Sectors where we see opportunity for significant impact on the prosperity of the area:**

- Horticulture
- Viticulture (wine growing)
- Tourism
- Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering
- Creative, digital and IT

### **Sectors that have the capacity to absorb a large number of workers:**

- Health and Social Care
- Construction (including skills for decarbonisation e.g. retrofitting homes)
- Financial and Professional Services

# 5. Skills Action Plan

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# 5. Skills Action Plan

This chapter sets out a locally tailored skills action plan which will support the recovery and future resilience of our people, businesses, places and economy.

**It leverages local knowledge, business partnerships and existing resources to:**

- Support young people, provide options for education leavers and support for the most vulnerable;
- Minimise redundancies;
- Get people back into work quickly;
- Support the development of higher-level skills, including in-work progression and graduate support;
- Create new jobs; and
- Help business and the economy adapt and take advantage of new opportunities.

The activities identified in the Skills Action Plan are owned by the Coast to Capital LEP, Growth Hub and Skills 360 Board. They do not set out each and every potential activity that partners and stakeholders in the region could undertake to address our skills challenges and opportunities.



# Priority 1a: PEOPLE

## - Finding out about Work

Supporting young people to find out about and gain more experience of the world of work to improve their future career outcomes.

Target Groups	Objectives	Activities	Timescales			Roles			Target Sectors/Places
			Short term (0-1 year)	Medium term (1-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)	LEP	Growth Hub	Skills 360 Board	
School and college students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve career outcomes</li> <li>Build an understanding of the world of work</li> <li>Offer (virtual) experience of the world of work</li> </ul>	Continue to grow the Enterprise Adviser Network across Coast to Capital	●	○	○	DELIVER and FUND	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	GOVERN	High employing sectors and those identified as having potential for future economic growth  ALL Places with an immediate focus on those places worst hit by COVID-19
		Establish a Careers Hub covering East Surrey, Crawley and Mid Sussex	●	○	○	DELIVER and FUND	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	GOVERN	
		Form a Cornerstone Employers Group to support the Careers Hub	●	○	○	DELIVER and FUND	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	GOVERN	
College students	Offer (virtual) experience of the world of work	T Level industry placements	●	●	●	SHARE LMI	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	LOBBY for financial stimulus for SMEs	
University students		Under graduate work placements	●	●	●	PRIORITISE for funding and SHARE LMI	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PRIORITISE for funding	
Young people not in education, employment or training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve career outcomes</li> <li>Build an understanding of the world of work</li> <li>Offer (virtual) experience of the world of work</li> </ul>	Traineeships	●	●	●	SHARE LMI	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	LOBBY for further financial stimulus for SMEs	
		Employability programmes	●	●	●	PRIORITISE for funding	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PRIORITISE for funding	

# Priority 1b: PEOPLE

## - Starting out in Work

A renewed focus on getting young people in the class of 2020 and beyond into work to avoid a generation of high youth unemployment.

Target Groups	Objectives	Activities	Timescales			Roles			Target Sectors/Places
			Short term (0-1 year)	Medium term (1-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)	LEP	Growth Hub	Skills 360 Board	
School and college leavers	Work with learning	Traineeships Apprenticeships	●	●	●	SHARE LMI	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	LOBBY for further financial stimulus for SMEs	
University graduates	Improving employability and developing a broad range of business skills, to include digital skills	UK Gap Year – a year of employment in one or more sectors	○	●	○	DEVELOP and PILOT	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	MONITOR and REVIEW	High employing sectors and those identified as having potential for future economic growth
		Graduate (virtual) internship programmes	●	●	●	PRIORITISE for funding and SHARE LMI	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PRIORITISE for funding	ALL Places with an immediate focus on those places worst hit by COVID-19
School and college leavers and university graduates	Developing entrepreneurial skills	Business start-up programmes	●	●	●	PRIORITISE for funding and SHARE LMI	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PRIORITISE for funding	

# Priority 1c: PEOPLE

## - Staying in Work

Helping people to remain in high quality well-paid work and to progress their careers, with a particular short-term focus on those at risk of redundancy as a result of COVID.

Target Groups	Objectives	Activities	Timescales			Roles			Target Sectors/Places
			Short term (0-1 year)	Medium term (1-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)	LEP	Growth Hub	Skills 360 Board	
Current workforce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in low skilled roles</li> <li>• at short or medium term risk of redundancy due to impact of COVID-19</li> <li>• in jobs vulnerable to longer term disruption (e.g. automation)</li> <li>• with a disability</li> <li>• who are older workers</li> </ul>	<b>Rethink</b> Information Advice and Guidance; financial advice; health considerations; ways of working  <b>Refresh</b> Improve skills, to include digital skills  <b>Reinvent</b> New skills, to include digital skills; new career; start own business	Career reviews	●	●	●	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PRIORITISE for funding	High employing sectors and those identified as having potential for future economic growth  ALL Places with an immediate focus on those places worst hit by COVID-19
		Skills training programmes (reskill/upskill)	●	●	●	PRIORITISE for funding and SHARE LMI	See Priority 2a	PRIORITISE for funding	
		Apprenticeships	●	●	●	SHARE LMI	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	LOBBY for further financial stimulus for SMEs	
		Olderpreneur programmes	●	●	●	PRIORITISE for funding and PROMOTE		PRIORITISE for funding	
		Roving learning and employment contracts	○	●	○	DEVELOP and PILOT	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	MONITOR and REVIEW	

# Priority 1d: PEOPLE

## - Getting Back into Work

Supporting people back into work, specifically those who have lost their jobs as a result of COVID, with a focus on those who may face a particular disadvantage such as younger and older workers, those with low level skills or in places significantly affected by the crisis.

Target Groups	Objectives	Activities	Timescales			Roles			Target Sectors/Places
			Short term (0-1 year)	Medium term (1-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)	LEP	Growth Hub	Skills 360 Board	
Short-term unemployed people actively seeking work  Longer-term unemployed people actively seeking work  Currently inactive people who are able and willing to return to work	<b>Rethink</b> Information Advice and Guidance, financial advice, health considerations, ways of working	Sector / industry academies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration between industry and education</li> <li>• Employability training</li> <li>• Guaranteed interviews / job matching</li> </ul>	●	●	○	PRIORITISE for funding and SHARE LMI	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PRIORITISE for funding	High employing sectors and those identified as having potential for future economic growth  ALL Places with an immediate focus on those places worst hit by COVID-19
	<b>Refresh</b> Improve skills (including digital skills)	Employability programmes	●	●	●	PRIORITISE for funding and SHARE LMI	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PRIORITISE for funding	
	<b>Reinvent</b> New skills (including digital skills), new career, start own business	Business start-up programmes	●	●	●	PRIORITISE for funding and SHARE LMI	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PRIORITISE for funding	
		Olderpreneur programmes	●	●	●	PROMOTE	PROMOTE	PRIORITISE FOR FUNDING	

# Priority 2a: BUSINESS

## - Retaining and Training the Workforce

Helping businesses better understand their current and future skills and workforce needs and to build engagement with their existing workforce to ensure the business has the skills it needs to recover, build resilience and grow.

Objectives	Activities	Timescales			Roles			Target Businesses/ Sectors/Places
		Short term (0-1 year)	Medium term (1-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)	LEP	Growth Hub	Skills 360 Board	
<b>Grow</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand your workforce according to your current and future business needs</li> </ul>	Assess and analyse business skills needs in relation to wider business planning	●	○	○		DELIVER and FUND		
	Peer to Peer support programmes with a focus on skills/workforce development	●	○	○		DELIVER and FUND	Businesses with high growth potential	
<b>Retain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with your workers</li> <li>Understand your current retention</li> <li>Engage your managers</li> <li>Promote &amp; redeploy</li> <li>Signpost staff to support</li> </ul>	121 clinics with a focus on skills/workforce development	●	○	○		DELIVER and FUND	High employing sectors and those identified as having potential for future economic growth	
	One to many webinars with a focus on skills/workforce development	●	○	○		DELIVER and FUND	ALL Places with an immediate focus on those places worst hit by COVID-19	
<b>Train &amp; Retrain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed a culture of workforce review &amp; development</li> <li>Ensure opportunities for all ages</li> <li>Retrain your staff</li> </ul>	Business support programmes that encourage workforce development	●	●	●	PRIORITISE for funding		PRIORITISE for funding	

# Priority 2b: BUSINESS

## - Working Together

Bringing businesses and education providers together to build a better understanding of current and future skills needs and to develop collaborative approaches to planning and delivery.

Objectives	Activities	Timescales			Roles			Target Businesses/ Sectors/Places
		Short term (0-1 year)	Medium term (1-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)	LEP	Growth Hub	Skills 360 Board	
Collaborative planning and delivery of higher level skills provision	Establish an Institute of Technology in Crawley with reach into East Surrey and Sussex	●	●	○	PRIORITISE for funding and PARTNER		PRIORITISE for funding	Science, Engineering and Technology in Crawley and surrounding towns
	Establish an Innovation Centre in Crawley	●	●	○	PRIORITISE for funding and PARTNER	CONNECT to other innovation activity	PRIORITISE for funding	Advanced Engineering / Digital Tech in Crawley and surrounding towns
A mutual exchange of support	Develop a 'work charter' that sets out an offer to and an ask of businesses	●	○	○	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	DEVELOP and HOST	Businesses with high growth potential
Accessing support and information	Create an Employment and Skills Portal	○	●	○	HOST and PROMOTE portal	HOST and PROMOTE portal	PRIORITISE for funding	High employing sectors and those identified as having potential for future economic growth
Professional development for the school, FE and HE sector	(Virtual) externships for teachers & lecturers	●	●	●	PRIORITISE for funding	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PRIORITISE for funding	ALL Places with an immediate focus on those places worst hit by COVID-19

# Priority 2c: BUSINESS

## - Making the Most of Digital

Helping business owners and owner managers to understand the role that digital technology can have in the success of their business, particularly in the recovery from COVID.

Objectives	Activities	Timescales			Roles			Target Businesses/ Sectors/Places
		Short term (0-1 year)	Medium term (1-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)	LEP	Growth Hub	Skills 360 Board	
Raising awareness of the benefits of digital technology	Digital Week	○	●	○	FUND and PROMOTE to stakeholders	FUND, PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses and HOST	PROMOTE to networks	Businesses with high growth potential  High employing sectors and those identified as having potential for future economic growth  ALL Places with an immediate focus on those places worst hit by COVID-19
	Digital tech training for owners and managers through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer to Peer support programmes</li> <li>121 clinics</li> <li>One to many webinars</li> </ul>	●	●	●	PROMOTE to stakeholders	DELIVER and FUND	PROMOTE to networks	
Building expertise and collaboration	Establish Digital Skills Partnership	○	○	●	DEVELOP and DELIVER	DEVELOP and DELIVER	GOVERN	

# 6. Assessment of Progress



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## 6.1 Taking a local leadership role

The Skills 360 Board is now well established. With a clear direction and focus, now is the time for the Board to raise its profile and in doing so maintain strong engagement from employers, education providers, central and local government and the third sector, encouraging collaboration and bringing in the investment that the region needs to recover from the impact of Covid-19, our exit from the EU and 20 years of economic stagnation.

**Individual Board members have been active in their role as ambassadors for the Skills 360 Board:**

- Facilitating a discussion with colleges and universities to explore the impact of Covid-19 on the education sector
- Chairing the Careers Hub Steering Group
- Hosting, facilitating and debating key questions at our Skills Strategy and Action Plan and Careers Hub launches
- Engaging widely with partners and stakeholders at various meetings and events

**The Skills 360 Board and Skills team are making valuable links and working collaboratively with partner organisations and networks across the area, who are themselves working on Covid-19 recovery research and plans. This includes:**

- Greater Brighton Economic Board - **Covid-19 Sustainable Recovery Plan**
- West Sussex County Council - **Skills and Employment Report**
- Surrey County Council's - **Forward to 2030: Out Economic Strategy Statement**
- Coastal West Sussex Partnership - **Skills and Enterprise Group**
- Sussex Learning Network - **Covid Class of 2020**

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# Communications Strategy

We have recently published a Communications Strategy (in the related resources section [here](#)) which will enable the Skills 360 Board to engage, consult and collaborate with partners to deliver the Skills Action Plan, to identify and maximise the resources needed to do so and to identify any gaps that need to be filled. The objectives of the strategy are to share information and intelligence, deepen relationships and explore emerging issues with partners and stakeholders.

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# Board Champions

The Skills 360 Board has strong representation from businesses across the area and it is essential that we tap into the members particular areas of expertise in order to support the Board's learnership role and the delivery of the Skills Strategy and Action Plan.

To make the most of Board members' knowledge, expertise and links to sector networks we have introduced the role of Board Champions. These sector focused roles are based on our priority sectors and other areas of importance such as equality, diversity and inclusion and stakeholder conversations.

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# Sector Spotlights

A key element of the sector focused Board Champion roles is the introduction of Sector Spotlights, which start with a presentation to the Skills 360 Board giving an overview of the specific sector.

Last year we started a pilot project with the Construction Sector Champions who gave the first of these sector spotlight presentations at the November 2020 Skills 360 Board meeting ([presentation here](#)). This included an insight into the effects of Covid-19 on the sector, recovery opportunities, potential growth of the construction sector, employment opportunities and their recommended actions.

With the support of the Board Champion(s) we will carry out a deep dive into the employment and skills challenges and opportunities in that sector culminating in a set of recommendations for the Skills 360 Board.

The Construction Sector Spotlight project is underway and will explore how we can make the most of the employment opportunities in the sector now and into the future. The next sector spotlight to launch will be for the Digital sector with a presentation at the April 2021 meeting.



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## 6.2 Enhancing local knowledge

Since the formation of the Skills 360 Board we have come a long way in developing a clear understanding of the current and future skills needs of the Coast to Capital area.

In September 2019 we published our **Skills and Labour Market Research Baseline Report** for the area, which brought together valuable intelligence and analysis of the skills profile of the Coast to Capital LEP area and identified the skills challenges faced locally at that time.

However, in March 2020 we faced the first Covid-19 lockdown, and as the area faced additional challenges brought about by the exposure to the crisis the Skills 360 Board took the decision to undertake an additional Skills and Labour Market Impact Assessment study on a quarterly basis to gain a clear insight into the impact and effect of the pandemic on the people, jobs and skills needs in the area. The first **Skills and Labour Market Impact Study - September 2020** covers the period March 2020 to June 2020. An updated **Skills and Labour Market Impact Study - January 2021** followed and covers the period July 2020 to October 2020.

The evidence baseline information and impact assessment reports have been shared widely with partner organisations and stakeholders to enable them to utilise the data, findings and recommendations within their own planning for initiatives to overcome skills challenges in the area.

These reports mentioned above have provided a solid base for the development of our Skills Strategy and Action Plan, which we launched in December 2020 with a virtual **webinar** attended by over 100 partners and stakeholder organisations.

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## 6.3 Impact on local skills provision

Coast to Capital LEP does not directly commission or manage devolved budgets. However, we provide a supporting and influencing role in line with the remit of the Skills 360 Board as a Skills Advisory Panel.

The variety of reports and intelligence published by Coast to Capital provide valuable labour market insights which are available to the education organisations across the area to develop their provision and support them in better meeting the skills and labour market needs of the area.

The Skills 360 Board is fully supportive of the Skills for Jobs White Paper and its aim to strengthen links between local colleges and employers.

Below are examples of ways in which we are using our knowledge and intelligence to influence local provision.

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### Curriculum Support Pilot

Coast to Capital is working with North East Surrey College of Technology (NESCOT) to pilot a Curriculum Support project. Our Skills team have provided a variety of current labour market information and college course completion data for the local Surrey area to the college, along with our Skills and Labour Market Impact Assessment report. This intelligence supported NESCOT's initial curriculum planning to enable them to develop provision that meets the skills needs in the local area.

Members of the Coast to Capital Skills team then joined the college's planning meetings in February 2021, where Curriculum Managers presented plans for the academic year 2021/22 delivery. As members of the panel they provided local insight and questioned managers on their rationale for the delivery plans.

The intention is to use this pilot project as a template for rolling out future Curriculum Support projects to other colleges across the area.

### Provider Information Sessions

Regular information sessions with skills providers are held to share skills and labour market intelligence. This takes place on an ad hoc basis and can be particularly useful to those providers that are preparing proposals in a bidding process, for example the recent DWP Restart Programme tendering. It gives providers an opportunity to understand the local skills landscape and challenges so that they can ensure the provision they provide covers the skills needs of the area.

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## 6.4 Skills Action Plan Progress

### Transformational Interventions

This section outlines the progress made to date on the three transformational interventions identified in our Skills Action Plan.



# Action Plan Priority 1: PEOPLE

## 1a: Finding out about Work

### 1. Careers Hub

The Careers Hub is now fully established with a Steering Group in place and a group of nine businesses forming our Cornerstone Employers group. The Steering Group act as the strategic body for the Careers Hub and feed into the Coast to Capital Skills 360 Board, who act as the advisory group for the overall Enterprise Advisor Network programme.

Members of the Cornerstone Employers group are Arcadis, Fidelity International, Gatwick Airport, Sussex Health & Care Partnership, Wates Group, Thakeham Homes, Govia Thameslink Railway, Pfizer, and Surrey Wildlife Trust.

We have worked closely with the 35 education centres in the Careers Hub to identify where the gaps are in careers provision, particularly in light of COVID-19 and the subsequent temporary closure of schools and colleges. Our events and careers activities are now being offered as virtual opportunities for pupils.

In autumn 2020 the Careers Hub and Enterprise Adviser Network team supported the successful Crawley Virtual STEMfest, in partnership with STEM Sussex. Our support opened up the event to all schools across Coast to Capital. The event reached approximately 60,000 online users.

The Careers Hub also delivered two Transition Events in November 2020 targeted at Year 11 pupils, providing the opportunity for this year group to hear about their next potential steps. Both events were delivered on the Learn Live platform and gave over 14,000 online users access to engaging and inspiring videos from our delivery partners, colleges, universities and training providers.

Activities and events to further support education centres to work towards the Gatsby Benchmarks for the remainder of the academic year include resources for teaching staff to embed careers into the curriculum during National Careers Week in March 2021. We are working with employers to offer apprentice/graduate talks for small groups of pupils and are developing further opportunities for virtual work experience. Access to a virtual careers fair will be offered to all Year 10 pupils across the region in June 2021.

We continue to work closely in partnership with The Careers & Enterprise Company and local partners to ensure that our objectives and priorities are meeting the needs of young people in the area.



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# Action Plan Priority 2: BUSINESS

## 2b: Working Together

### 2. Institute of Technology

The Skills 360 Board is strategic partner to a consortia of education providers that are leading on a bid for an Institute of Technology in the Coast to Capital area.

In November 2020, Chichester College Group, the lead partner, presented an overview of the proposal at a Skills 360 Board meeting, providing an opportunity for the Board to understand the proposal and to ensure it had strategic fit with the Skills Strategy and Action Plan before it was submitted to the Department for Education in December. Following the meeting, the Skills 360 Board put forward a letter of support for the bid.





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# Action Plan Priority 2: BUSINESS

## 2b: Working Together

### 3. Innovation Centre

Coast to Capital LEP has been allocated £19.2m from the **Getting Building Fund** for the proposed establishment of an Innovation Centre in Crawley. Coast to Capital is working in partnership with Crawley Borough Council and Thales UK (Crawley) on this transformational project.

This project is at an early stage and is subject to full business case approval and relevant governance arrangements.

Consideration is being given to the synergies with the proposed Institute of Technology and to how it contributes to and complements the wider skills ecosystem in the area.

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## 6.5 Other project progress

In addition to the Transformational Interventions we have been making good progress on delivery of the following interventions which support our priorities.

### Home Decarbonisation Academy

(Action Plan Priority 1: 1c: Staying in Work, 1d: Getting Back into Work and Priority 2: 2a: Growing, Retaining and Training the Workforce)

Coast to Capital is working with the **Energy Systems Catapult**, local authorities and education providers on Skills for Net Zero. This is part of a national effort to create a model for the widespread skills infrastructure needed to meet demand for clean and energy efficient homes. Coast to Capital is one of six regional centres of excellence involved as pilots for the programme.

Widespread skills infrastructure is necessary to meet the large scale demand for clean and energy efficient homes. Coast to Capital, and each of the regional centres, are working with their partners locally to deliver on distinct areas of work: skills provision, learning factories, innovation hubs and housing stock.

The Coast to Capital pilot is initially focussed on two local-authority areas within the region, Brighton & Hove and Crawley. These are the two largest urban and economic centres within the region, both with significant social housing stock.

### Collaboration with the Coast to Capital Growth Hub

(Priority 2: 2a: Growing, Retaining and Training the Workforce)

The Skills Team and Growth Hub at Coast to Capital work in close collaboration on projects and activities that contribute to the delivery of the Skills Action Plan.

#### Growth Hub Skills Expertise

The Growth Hub has recruited a **Growth Champion** specialising in recruitment and HR to support with one to one clinics.

One of the Growth Relationship Managers has a skills focus as part of their role.

#### Skills Hub

In collaboration with the Growth Hub, we are developing a Business Employment and Skills Portal called the Skills Hub. It is designed to help businesses understand what skills opportunities and support are available to them to ensure that their workforce has the right skills for their company to build resilience and grow.

The portal, which is to be hosted on the Growth Hub website, will also provide opportunities for businesses to engage and collaborate with education providers to develop provision that will help ensure a quality talent pipeline and highly skilled future workforce.

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## European Social Fund (ESF) - Recovery Support

(Action Plan Priority 1: 1d: Getting Back into Work and Priority 2: 2a: Growing, Retaining and Training the Workforce)

The ESF allocation in Coast to Capital supports people in the area to gain employment, integrate into society and progress their careers by providing innovative skills and training opportunities. There have been 25 projects contracted in the area to date.

We have recently been successful in securing two Calls from the national ESF reserve fund for new projects which opened for applications on 18 January. One of these Calls will be for projects supporting people into employment, and the other will support employees to upskill and/or retrain.

More information on ESF in Coast to Capital can be found on our website [here](#), with a list of live projects in the related resource section.

## Digital Skills

(Priority 2: 2c: Making the Most of Digital)

The Coast to Capital Growth Hub is working in partnership with West Sussex County Council on a Digital Champions pilot. This will be an extension to the existing Growth Champions network - a collection of experts in their field who can provide specialist support for businesses to help unlock growth. Digital training will be provided to economic development officers at the council who will become the 'Digital Champions' with the skills and expertise to identify businesses who need digital support, and work with them to overcome digital challenges including identifying and addressing staff training needs.

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## 6.6 Actions yet to be addressed

As detailed above, good progress against the activities within the Skills Action Plan is taking place and going forward we aim to prioritise and progress activities within the timelines set out.

We will continue to review the actions and timelines within the plan to ensure they are still appropriate for the skills development and economic recovery within the Coast to Capital area.

At Coast to Capital we're keen to collaborate and explore pilot opportunities for activities and initiatives that are within the scope of the Skills Action Plan and to investigate how our activities can align with government policies and programmes being delivered in the area. We'd therefore welcome proposals that partners may have to take forward some of these activities.

# 7. Case Studies

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## 7.1 What Next Sussex Event

**Lead organisation:** Coast to Capital Careers Hub & East Sussex Careers Hub

**Partner/delivery organisations:** Get Career Confident (Sussex Learning Network) & Learn Live

**Geography:** East Sussex, West Sussex & Brighton and Hove

**Priority:** 1a Finding out about work

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What Next Sussex was a transitions event jointly funded by Coast to Capital Careers Hub, East Sussex Careers Hub and The Careers & Enterprise Company to help support schools to achieve Gatsby Benchmark 7 – Encounters with Further and Higher Education.

The collaborative leadership between the three partner organisations enabled a variety of training providers from across the area to come together and ensured the event had an expanded reach to pupils across all secondary schools in Sussex.

What Next Sussex was held in November 2020 and was our first ever virtual cross-county event which enabled an incredible 10,000 viewers to find out about their next steps in education, training or the world of work. Students, teachers and parents tuned in to find out about options available to them from across Sussex from over 50 education providers, employers, training and apprenticeship providers. The event gave learners an opportunity to explore all that Sussex has to offer to learners post GCSE's.

84 schools registered to take part in What Next Sussex and over 10,000 devices were logged on to the live broadcast on the day. The live stream videos and content is available on demand until November 2021 [here](#).

As part of the planning process for next year, we intend to facilitate a focus group with a selection of young people to ensure we are delivering a virtual event that is stimulating and motivating. The providers involved in the event have pledged to take part again in 2021/22.



*"As a student, I learned a lot about how to get my dream job of becoming a teacher" - student*

*"I liked the parts about having hope especially during times of COVID and it boosted my motivation to work harder" - student*

*"Best engagement we have ever had, so thank you so much" - teacher*

*"Informative, easy to understand videos with local examples. Straightforward to access" - teacher*

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## 7.2 Brighton and Hove City Council Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Scheme

### Lead organisation:

Brighton and Hove City Council

### Partner/delivery organisations:

Local Training Providers, businesses and schools

### Geographical areas covered:

Brighton & Hove

### Priorities:

- 1b. Starting out in work;
- 1c. Staying in work;
- 1d. Getting back into work;
- 2a. Growing, retaining and training the workforce;
- 2b. Working together;
- 2c. Making the most of digital

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Following the apprenticeship reforms and introduction of the apprenticeship levy, Brighton & Hove City Council are able to transfer a proportion of their apprenticeship levy funds to local employers to fund apprenticeship training. They launched a levy transfer programme in January 2019 to support local businesses to overcome barriers to starting apprenticeships.

The council set up a system that required businesses to support the main priorities in the council's City Employment and Skills Plan: No-one Left Behind; Supporting Learn to Earn Transitions; Enabling Business and Workers to Benefit from Growth. The application form also promoted the disability confident scheme enabling referrals to our supported employment team to encourage positive activity.

To December 2020 the council supported 40 apprenticeships at schools, micro businesses, SME's and larger organisations totalling £373,000 in committed funding and including apprenticeships in civil engineering, care, electrical, digital, HR, business and management and leisure.

Brighton and Hove City Council are currently reviewing the criteria to include future additional priorities in response to the pandemic and Coast to Capital priorities.

The initiative will focus on apprentice opportunities where possible to help address the local unemployment issues and create as many opportunities for young people or those looking to reskill or get back into work following the pandemic.

The offer will also support businesses to continue to work with local providers to better understand how they can recover and grow, including workforce development and identifying future skills needs. Businesses can then work with providers to address skills gaps collaboratively.

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## 7.3 Thakeham Homes Development Programme

### Lead organisation:

Thakeham Group

### Geographical areas covered:

South East including Coast to Capital

### Priorities:

- 1b. Starting out in work;
- 1c. Staying in work;
- 1d. Getting back into work;
- 2a. Growing, retaining and training the workforce

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Thakeham's Development Programme is a structured role specific set of modules to develop individuals early in their career. Employees on the programme spend 2-3 years working through each module and then presenting their learning and understanding to a number of Directors before being signed off as competent in that module. The structured module approach ensures that an individual covers all aspects of the skills and competencies required in their future role. Individuals also spend time in other departments to gain a wider business understanding. Presentations are completed both face to face and online and they also have the opportunity to provide a lunch and learn session to the rest of the business by presenting a particular topic.

Thakeham has set itself a KPI to have at least 10% of the workforce on the development programme at any one time to ensure a constant flow of employees developing and becoming ready for promotion into more experienced

roles to support business growth. By having a structured programme in place it has enabled the recruitment of new employees from a range of backgrounds with transferrable skills. As well as graduates, trainees and apprentices Thakeham has also attracted military veterans and individuals from different sectors who have developed their careers within the business.

As Thakeham continues with its growth plans the Development Programme is key to support the skills gaps in the construction sector. It is vital for success of the business that there is a constant steady flow of experienced individuals to take key roles. Thakeham have committed to continue their 'out of the box' thinking to recruit and resource the business and have a substantial number of people early in their careers progressing through the programme.



# 8. Looking Forward

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## 8.1 Labour Market Intelligence (LMI)

To help stakeholders understand the skills and employment landscape locally and inform planning and decision making the Skills 360 Board will publish the resources as set out in section 4.3:

- We will be publishing updated COVID-19 Skills and Labour Market Impact Assessments quarterly, and continuing to disseminate them widely through our networks to ensure stakeholders have access to and understand local LMI and the changing local skills and employment picture. We intend to publish these reports until the end of 2021, at which point they will be reviewed.
- We are pleased to be able to provide additional local level data to education providers for curriculum planning and wider stakeholders for their recovery planning purposes on reasonable request.

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## 8.2 Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hub

Our Careers Hub and Enterprise Adviser Network are always looking for employers who would like to get involved with inspiring young people through early careers engagement activities. For more information on the opportunities available please visit our website [here](#).

Our Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hub team are in the planning stages for three key projects in the academic year 2020/21.

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### Open door apprentice and graduate talks

The Careers Hub team are working with employers to coordinate a series of 'Open door' apprentice and graduate talks, which will be an opportunity for sixth form (Year 12) students to hear from current or recent Apprentices and/or Graduates in a virtual Q&A session. Each of our Cornerstone Employers will be asked to nominate two to three Graduates/Apprentices from their organisation, and sign up at least one more employer to support. We are aiming to offer every school in the Careers Hub at least one employer talk with Apprentices/Graduates this academic year.

### Virtual careers fair

As in-person careers fairs will not be possible this year, a live virtual alternative will be offered to schools in the Careers Hub. The target group for this event will be Year 10 as the majority will be missing out on taking part in work experience and this would be beneficial to engage them more with their future options. All other schools within the wider Enterprise Adviser Network will be able to access the Careers Fair online for 30 days post event.

### Virtual work experience speaker for schools

Working with Speakers 4 Schools we plan to pilot a virtual insight program to schools within the Careers Hub, specifically targeted to pupils in Year 10 or Year 12 from disadvantaged backgrounds/entitled to free school meals. This is to address an identified social mobility gap when accessing other virtual work experience opportunities that are often application led, meaning disadvantaged pupils are unable to secure aspirational placements. The experience will be an employer led virtual Insight Day opportunity delivered to a maximum number of 30 pupils via Google Classrooms across a two week period in the Summer term. The experience will offer disadvantaged pupils an individual opportunity to engage with a business they are interested in, and activities could include virtual office tours, Q&A with employees and short work related projects or activities.

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## 8.3 Skills 360 Board Champions

Over the course of the year we will be working with our Board Champions to develop the roles, to enable Skills 360 Board members to become more visible and represent the Skills 360 Board, offering thought leadership in their areas of expertise and encouraging collaboration.

A key element of the sector focused Board Champion roles is the introduction of the Sector Spotlights, using the Construction sector spotlight as a pilot with the intention of running further Sector Spotlight projects with other Board Champions. The medium to longer term aim of these projects is to ensure a high quality and highly skilled talent pipeline for the relevant sector in the Coast to Capital area.

As the sector spotlight projects start to develop there will be opportunities for businesses and other stakeholders from the relevant sector to engage and influence through working groups and other project activities.

We will also be taking work forward with our 'non-sector' Board champions, and we have outlined a programme of work with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion champion to ensure that this is considered throughout the work of the Skills 360 Board, from governance and processes to behaviour and delivery of the action plan.

With the support of the Stakeholder Communications champion we will use the recently published Communications Strategy to share information with partners and stakeholders, including opportunities for collaboration.

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## 8.4 Future collaboration

As we move further along with the delivery of our action plan there will be opportunities for stakeholders, employers and providers to engage and collaborate.

If you would like to discuss opportunities for engagement with the work of the Skills 360 Board please **contact us**.

To stay informed of upcoming opportunities for involvement please **subscribe to our newsletter** or follow us on social media:

- **Twitter - @coast2capital**
- **LinkedIn - Coast to Capital LEP**

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