

## **An Institute of Technology for the Coast to Capital area**

### **National context**

Government introduced the concept of Institutes of Technology (IoT) in the Industrial Strategy in 2017. They offer a collaborative approach to innovative higher level technical education to help address skills gaps, particularly in STEM areas. Delivery is at levels 4 and 5 with a focus on specific local technical skills needs, to ensure that learners emerge with the appropriate skills to meet employer demands, setting out a clear pathway for learners into technical employment. The expectation is that employers, further education colleges and universities will work together to develop and deliver on this initiative.

The first wave of successful IoTs were announced in 2019. There are 12 and the closest geographically to the Coast to Capital area is Queen Mary University of London, which specialises in transport, engineering, infrastructure, energy and digital. Information on the other Wave 1 IoTs can be found [here](#).

The Department for Education (DfE) recently announced that a second wave of applications will be launched later in 2020, with an aim to establish eight more IoTs in LEP areas without one in development. The prospectus for Wave 2 can be found [here](#).

### **A local approach**

The Skills 360 Board, the Skills Advisory Panel for Coast to Capital, is keen to support a strong and innovative proposal for an Institute of Technology in the area around Gatwick which addresses the skills needs of the advanced engineering sector and its supply chain.

The [Skills and Labour Market Research](#) study recently published by the Skills 360 Board sets out the key challenges and opportunities for the Coast to Capital area. It identifies a current lack of higher level vocational provision in key STEM sectors, specifically 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 around Gatwick.

Conclusions from our wider LIS research has identified that the Coast to Capital area has significant labour market issues, compounded by the high cost of housing, a missing population of 20-40 year olds and a decline in the prosperity and attractiveness of our towns.

## Next steps

In preparation for the launch of the second wave of applications, the Skills 360 Board would like to invite local employers, further education colleges and universities to come together to develop a proposal which responds to the criteria as set out above under '*A local approach*'.

The Skills 360 Board is keen to support the development of a collaborative proposal so that the area is in a position to submit the strongest possible application for an Institute of Technology to the DfE for the provision of higher level vocational education provision in Coast to Capital.

In the first instance the Skills 360 Board would like to understand what interest there is already from local partners. We have spoken to the DfE to let them know of our local interest and set out our plans to work with partners to develop a proposal.

The DfE has asked for Expressions of Interest (EOI) by 16 March to help them understand the potential level of interest – however this is only indicative and not essential for potential applicants wishing to submit an application when the call is launched.

## The process

We understand that partners may already have plans to submit an EOI to DfE by 16 March. If that is the case we'd be grateful if you could let us know and share your EOI with us via [Millie.Bew@coast2capital.org.uk](mailto:Millie.Bew@coast2capital.org.uk).

If you haven't submitted an EOI to DfE but are interested in being part of a collaborative approach, then please let the Skills 360 Board know by completing the accompanying EOI setting out what and who you could bring to a partnership by **17 April**.