

**Reference:** Skills 360 Board Meeting  
**Date:** Wednesday 9 September 2020  
**Report Title:** Skills Projects Update Report  
**Report by:** Kirsten Trussell  
**Item No:** 5  
**Part:** A

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## Recommendation:

The Board is asked to:

- Note the Skills Projects Update Report
- Consider the opportunities for involvement outlined

## 1. Context

This report is the first of regular reports to be presented to the Skills 360 Board on the progress against the skills projects outlined in the Skills Action Plan.

The report will provide information on activities undertaken in the last quarter with any case studies and data dashboards provided as annexes.

For the future, we will develop a tracker which shows an 'at a glance' progress update against each of the activities against an 18 month project plan.

## 2. Enterprise Adviser Network (EAN) and Careers Hub Programme

We are pleased to confirm that the wider EAN programme has been awarded funding to continue delivery for a further academic year through to August 2022 which includes the establishment of a Careers Hub. The new targets for the EAN and Careers Hub can be found at **Annex 1**.

### EAN Programme

As expected the programme has seen a reduction in progress towards contractual targets due to the impact of Covid-19 - closure of education centres in March 2020 and cancellation of all planned careers activities. The EAN Dashboard at **Annex 2** details the programme's progress to July 2020.

As you might expect, the world of careers has quickly moved online and we have adapted well to this, keeping in touch with schools and businesses and running training sessions through video conferencing.

In response to the overwhelming number of online resources being developed for careers guidance and virtual work experience, we have created a [Coast to Capital EAN Careers Resources Board](#) using the online platform Padlet as a one-stop-shop for Careers Leaders. This has been well received and reduced the amount of communications being sent directly to schools.

Following the success of our Open Doors event in January run in partnership with the Manor Royal Business Group, we are planning a virtual event next year. We have also worked with our Enterprise Advisers (EA) to create several ['high five' employer videos](#) to share with our education centres which give virtual insights into their career paths.

We are mindful of the difficulties that our EAs may be facing at this time and have adapted our engagement appropriately. To fill any vacancies we have been actively recruiting and have successfully matched 16 new EAs to education centres and delivered remote training. We continue to recruit for remaining vacancies and are keen to ensure that we are reaching a diverse mix of candidates that best represent the young people in our education centres.

### Careers Hub

We are pleased to let you know that Coast to Capital was successful in its bid to establish a [Careers Hub](#) for the Gatwick, Mid Sussex and East Surrey area of Coast to Capital with the potential to extend the Hub geography at a later date. The Careers Hub forms a part of the wider Coast to Capital EAN.

We are well underway in our preparations to launch the Hub in September. We have promoted our Enterprise Coordinator Team Leader, Lisa Mobbs, to the role of Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hub Lead and she started in post on 1 August. Lisa will lead on the set up and management of the Hub as well as the overarching EAN. She manages two Enterprise Coordinators for the Careers Hub area and the two Enterprise Coordinators working across the remainder of the EAN programme geography. The EAN team organogram can be found at **Annex 3**.

All schools and colleges within the EAN programme have been contacted to let them know about the Careers Hub and its benefits and the 35 schools and colleges within the Hub geography have been invited to join. To date 20 have confirmed their desire to be included within the Careers Hub and we fully expect the remaining schools and colleges to send their confirmation once they have returned from summer leave.

The Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hub Lead and Skills Manager are now finalising the Careers Hub implementation plan for the first term of 2020/21. The plan includes the set-up and inaugural meeting of a steering group, set up of the

Cornerstone Employers Group, initial meetings with schools and colleges and the collaboration with other initiatives in the areas, as well as the neighbouring Careers Hub in East Sussex.

### Opportunities for Skills 360 Board members

We have an opportunity for a Board member to take a strategic role in the governance of the Careers Hub as Chair of the Steering Group. Some existing involvement with the EAN would be advantageous.

The Steering Group will have strategic oversight of the work of the Hub and will enable the local careers landscape to be linked up, allowing interested parties to influence the direction and work of the Hub, which in turn influences careers provision in schools and colleges.

### **3. Innovation Centre ('The FUSION Centre')**

We are pleased to let you know that funding has been secured to deliver this project through Coast to Capital's allocation of the [Getting Building Fund](#) (August 2020) for delivery by March 2022. Coast to Capital is working in partnership with Crawley Borough Council and Thales UK (Crawley) on this potentially transformational project.

This project follows recent analysis that we carried out as part of the development of the economic profile for the Local Industrial Strategy which revealed that in terms of innovation output the Coast to Capital area is increasingly lagging behind other LEP areas elsewhere in the country. A proposed response was the establishment of an innovation centre that will attract high-technology innovators and entrepreneurs and enable them to grow, combine and scale their ideas and create a powerhouse to stimulate regional growth, regeneration and high-quality employment.

This need has been further exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 crisis, and Crawley's exposure to the downturn in the civil aviation market in particular and all partners recognise the regeneration, growth and employment potential that such a facility would bring to a stalling local economy.

The overarching aim of the project is to establish and oversee the operations of Gatwick Diamond's first Digital High Technology Innovation and Exploitation Centre, 'The FUSION centre'.

The Centre's innovation output will be characterised by the fusion of high technology expertise between companies that ordinarily would not have reason to cooperate, notably large established high-technology players, start-up SMEs and others. It will bring together the innovation and creative excellence of the smaller digital technology enterprises, with the cutting edge technological and product development aspirations and routes to market of the larger advanced engineering companies to enable the rapid development, testing and scaling of innovation

generating new employment and growth opportunities.

The project team are currently working towards submitting a planning application for a site in Manor Royal, and looking to commission a consultant to write the business case which will help determine the operating model. In the near future the project will seek to procure an operator and academic partner/s.

Governance for the project will be provided by a Steering Group which is yet to be established.

#### **4. Institute of Technology**

Through our extensive research as part of the development of the economic profile for the Local Industrial Strategy we have identified a lack of higher level technical provision in key science, engineering and technology occupations, specifically for advanced engineering. Also from our research and anecdotally from businesses we know that there are significant numbers of hard to fill vacancies for engineering and technology roles across different disciplines, particularly in the area in and around Crawley.

The Skills Action Plan sets out a commitment by the Skills 360 Board 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.

A competition for capital funding for Institutes of Technology is due to launch in the autumn and Coast to Capital is working strategically with Higher and Further Education partners to support the development of an ambitious proposal for the area. We have conducted initial research into the demand for STEM skills in the Gatwick Diamond through data analysis and employer engagement, and will continue to support the team developing the bid with employer introductions where appropriate.

#### **5. European Social Fund (ESF)**

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 21 projects contracted in the area to date, with 15 currently delivering and 8 in the pipeline with Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Managing Authority. The appraisal process for pipeline projects has been delayed by COVID but has now resumed, we hope to see some of the 8 pipeline projects contracted soon. Detail on the live contracted projects can be found in **Annex 4**.

Coast to Capital received ESF funding for a technical assistance project 'Maximising the benefit of ESF in Coast to Capital' to support the area's ESF allocation, which

successfully concluded in December 2019. The LEP retains a strategic role monitoring the impact of the ESF allocation in the area.

Unspent ESF from across all LEPs has now been moved into a central reserve fund by DWP. LEPs will need to 'bid' into this central fund to release funds for particular calls. We submitted a bid for a call from the reserve fund in April 2020 however, due to COVID, all call applications are currently on hold with the Managing Authority.

## **6. Diversity Statement**

There are no diversity implications for consideration regarding the recommendations set out in this paper.

## **7. Legal Statement**

There are no legal implications for consideration regarding the recommendations set out in this paper.

## **8. Finance Statement**

There are no financial implications for consideration regarding the recommendations set out in this paper.

### **Annexes:**

- Annex 1 - Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) – Grant Offer Letter 2020/21 targets
- Annex 2 - EAN Dashboard
- Annex 3 – EAN Team Organogram
- Annex 4 - ESF Current Projects