



Skills 360 Board Meeting 14

Wednesday 12 January 2022 - 4.00pm – 6.00pm

Virtual Meeting held via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Board Members:

Frances Rutter (FR) - Chair; Alison Addy (AA); Ana Christie (AC); Anthony Middleton (AM); Dawn Redpath (DR); Kevin Delf (KD); Liane Richardson (LR); Nick Hibberd (NH); Ruth Whittaker (RW); Simon Bland (SB); Steve Benwell (SBW); Tim Walder (TW)

Officers:

Kirsten Trussell (KT) – Coast to Capital; Lisa Mobbs (LM) - Coast to Capital

Guests:

Marsha Robert (MR) – Coast to Capital; Nicholas Darwin (ND) – Coast to Capital

1. Introduction

a) Welcome, apologies and introductions

FR introduced the fourteenth meeting of the Skills 360 Board.

FR introduced ND to the Board. ND would be taking over secretariat duties for the Skills 360 Board.

Apologies were noted from:

- Louise Punter.
- Simon Bland, who would be leaving the meeting early.
- Mark Powers

FR noted that the meeting was to be recorded for the purpose of taking minutes with the recording deleted after those minutes have been produced.

b) Minutes from last meeting and Matters Arising

There were no outstanding actions or matters were arising from the last meeting.

The minutes of the 30 September 2021 Skills Board meeting were approved.

c) Conflict of interest

FR read out the standard Conflicts of Interest statement.

There were no conflicts arising from agenda items.

d) Vice-chair election

The Board unanimously agreed to elect Liane Richardson as the Vice-Chair of the Board. No other nominations were made for the position.

e) Board training

The Board discussed the upcoming training for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion scheduled on the 2nd February. As the Board were uncertain if this could be delivered in person on this date, the decision was taken to postpone the training rather than holding it virtually.

f) Inclusion Moment

TW presented to the Board on Equality, Diversity and inclusion and focused on the management of wellbeing. TW noted the importance of monitoring staff and personal wellbeing during the winter months.

2. Coast to Capital Update

AM updated the committee that Jonathan Sharrock has left the company and that he was now an active and registered Coast to Capital Board member as the Acting CEO. AM noted the delays in the publication of the Levelling up White paper and how this was adversely affecting the business.

AM then highlighted the work on the Value Proposition and business planning undertaken by the team and how this would help the business develop. This proposition was to be taken to the January Board meeting for scrutiny and then would be shared with the Skills 360 Board. AM illustrated how the Value Proposition would allow the LEP to continue to operate during the current uncertainty over the LEP review. In addition, the Skills 360 Board would play an important role in developing the offer, through their skills work. AM thanked FR for her contribution to this offer and FR commended the team on their work in developing this proposition.

NH entered the meeting and was welcomed to his first meeting.

3. Coast to Capital Economy

MR highlighted the work in her current role, noting the development with PowerBI in producing economic impact dashboards to assess Coast to Capital economic area. MR then presented key facts and data from this dashboard:

- MR noted that unemployment for the area was lower than both the national average and the average across the South East. Crawley was the most impacted area in the region, with a higher unemployment claimant rate than the national average.
- Coast to Capital's area had a higher take up of furlough than the national average. Crawley had the highest uptake rate in the Coast to Capital area and higher than average figures in the South East.
- MR noted that the Transport industry has had the highest number of furlough claims.
- Coast to Capital's uptake rate of the national income support scheme was in-line with the national average, with Crawley having a higher rate of take up than any other area in the Coast to Capital region.
- Job postings had remained stable for the area and MR illustrated to the Board that nurses, care workers, sales and business managers, programmers and software developers and then Chefs were the most popular roles advertised.
- MR also stated that the local employers with the highest current recruitment are NHS, a Healthcare company, Surrey County Council, Brighton and Hove County Council and a cleaning service company.
- MR noted a significant increase in company insolvencies, but this was balanced with a

higher number of new company registrations.

MR noted her work on Business Intelligence reports to BEIS. This report highlights key challenges businesses face such as lack of income, a stalling economy and lack of staff (through isolation with COVID cases). There was some evidence of positive economic growth in the business community and the ICAW had recently stated high business confidence in the South-East.

AC raised the effect a rise in the cost of living and inflation would have on employers and employees respectively. SB highlighted concerns as to how the Kickstart programme ending would affect claimant rates and youth unemployment, to which MR confirmed she would review. However, SBW noted difficulties in finding those figures. SBW gave an update on local initiatives via Jobcentre Plus to support young people. AC and FR built on this and both stated the difficulty in retaining young staff that have been employed through the Kickstart programme.

4. Board Member Updates

Board members then gave updates on different sectors or topics as follows:

Ana Christie – Local Skills Improvement Plan

AC updated the Committee on the ongoing work to develop the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). AC stated the plan's objectives to improve communication between employers and the education sector and to identify skills needs. In-depth research has been carried out through workshops, surveys and conversations with different businesses over four months. AC noted that Coast to Capital was analysing the data collected and this was to be discussed at the Case for Change sub-groups shortly.

These findings would then form a report which, after being further analysed, would inform the development of a final LSIP by March. Further details of the findings and progress of the LSIP can be found on the Sussex Chamber of Commerce website.

AC thanked Coast to Capital for their work on this project.

Ruth Whittaker - Higher Education

RW gave an update on the formation of the Regional Higher Education Institute (HEI) Collective which is enabling the HEIs in the region work closely together and share information. RW noted their participation in the LSIP workshops to ensure full representation of HEI's in the final report. Ongoing work was noted on the Pan-Sussex health forum, for healthcare systems in the area, and the creative and digital task force led by East Sussex County Council.

RW advised that the Coast to Capital Institute of Technology bid was successful which provides an excellent opportunity for the HEIs to participate in the delivery of technical education in the region. RW also mentioned the group's collaborative work on the Credit Transfer Framework.

AC raised concerns on the University of Brighton campus closures in Eastbourne and Hastings and the impact that this might have on student engagement locally. RW noted that the outcome of the prospectus for change consultation had not yet concluded and that the University is engaging with various partners and stakeholders to ensure pathways to university provision..

Alison Addy – Gatwick

AA began by noting Wizz aircraft were stationing 5 additional aircraft in Gatwick. AA also shared the various schedules of other airlines with the Board to give a picture of the developments at the Airport.

AA suggested cautious optimism for this year, with passenger numbers expected to rise over the next few months after a relatively successful December and January period. AA noted they are awaiting government slot rules, which can influence the volume of traffic in travel and present opportunities for the airport to expand. In addition, the question of when to open the South Terminal was another key factor to the airport's recovery. AA closed by mentioning the potential recruitment drive of 4,500 people would be needed to open the South Terminal and this process was underway. AA highlighted the work undertaken internally to complete this process.

LR noted that 4,500 was a large number of people to be recruited and questioned if there were enough people available locally. Whilst recruitment had not begun fully, AA noted early attempts to recruit had been successful. AA noted the focus on local employment to which AM wondered what agencies they would be working with to achieve this. AA noted the relationships they are building with recruitment agencies and how they would help achieve local employment.

TW noted difficulties in recruitment experienced at other airports and the need for more apprenticeships. SBW answered this by illustrating the work of DWP and the potential need to recruit from further afield. SWB highlighted how this might be an opportunity for young people, particularly those graduating from the Kickstart scheme. KT queried if the roles would differ from Pre-Covid to which AA note that this was not the case. AM noted if the recruitment would venture into Surrey and SWB confirmed this was part of their recruitment strategy.

Kevin Delf – Youth Hubs

KD presented on the two Youth Hubs in Surrey funded by the DWP. The Epsom Youth Hub, supported by partnerships of local stakeholders, has been running for over a month. KD noted that out of twenty-eight people, nine had been matched to jobs, four to the Kickstart programme and one to an Apprenticeship. KD noted the lack of awareness around opportunities in different sectors as a challenge for the Hub, with an example being Epsom Racecourse struggling to find hospitality staff. The Youth Hub in Leatherhead had been operating since July and had engaged with over 328 people leading to seventy jobs, three Kickstart placements and fourteen qualifications.

KD noted that the Youth Hubs also run alongside various other support programmes such as money management courses and an Apprenticeship hub. KD noted that the outreach at the centre in Leatherhead also supports adults.

KD noted a key difficulty in engaging with large employers as it is difficult to find the best person to talk to. KT advised that Coast to Capital's Enterprise Coordinator may be able to help as they have a large network of employers including many of the large employers in the region.

KT noted how the LSIP work also suggested young people do not know the opportunities available to them in various sectors.

5. Construction Sector Spotlight

KT presented on the item.

KT outlined the process in developing this report and the engagement with stakeholders to obtain this data. The report aimed to identify the size of major infrastructure projects and the

labour market opportunity this provided; to raise awareness of construction as an economic sector; to further identify various economic, social and environmental drivers impacting the sector's skills demand and to encourage more collaboration between education providers and construction companies.

The report illustrated a demand for employment, which was forecasted to grow in the next 3-4 years. This was contrasted by an ageing workforce, limits of staff over Brexit changes and strong competition for labour which served to exasperate the problem. TW and LR noted this was prevalent in the South-East as the wages were no longer high enough to attract foreign workers, as had been the case previously. The report highlighted that Environmental requirements and technological changes in the industry would require further skills to be provided to the industry. TW noted that technological advancement would require people to change their perception of construction as a physical or dirty industry as new jobs would arise to combat this. LR also noted how this skills shortage went across all types of jobs in construction, not just at a lower or higher level.

The focus was then given to a lack of skills around meeting Net Zero trends. To meet targets set by the government there would need to be more specialist technical skills in addition to skilled trades. This was furthered by the Environmental Agency highlighting this new technological equipment and the unique skills that would be required to operate. Government's Environment Bill aims to increase biodiversity by 10% which would also require new skills, with the need for ecologists and town planners.

KT also highlighted how offsite manufacturing would form a part of the construction industry going forward. The report also highlighted how there is a demand for skills to encourage technological advancement and operate new ways of working in the construction industry. LR noted how she has seen the advantages of such operations like Drone work to improve efficiency.

LR also noted how the developments in the workforce shift to greater part-time work and how this affects the industry and recruitment. TW noted how recruitment is adjusting to meeting these challenges and looking for transferable skills. FR furthered this by highlighting the difficulties in training 16-18-year-olds into construction, but noted young adults are uptaking any courses offered in construction industries.

SBW noted the difficulties in recruitment for construction and DWP's experience in meeting this challenge, looking more towards the retainment of the ageing workforce in less physically demanding roles. SBW suggested a key challenge was providing enough training as this was difficult to source. FR reinforced this was a difficulty NESCOT has faced, with the discrepancy in pay between those teaching and those working meaning assessors were hard to find. KD queried if the awareness of the construction sector was high enough to attract potential candidates.

KT closed by highlighting the next steps identified in the report. The Board noted the report and approved the effort in producing this piece of work.

6. Enterprise Adviser Network (EAN) and Careers Hub Spotlight

LM gave a brief overview of the EAN team and the Careers Hub due to time concerns. LM noted the Coast to Capital team of Enterprise Coordinators supports 94 schools and colleges to ensure young people make informed choices for their next steps in education and training or into employment. The team works with senior leadership teams in schools and colleges and engage business partners to develop a diverse careers programme that can support all students.

LM noted that there are 112 state schools and colleges in the area and the plan for growth is to

reach full coverage by September 2022. LM noted that the programme is part funded by the Careers and Enterprise Company and that Coast to Capital is required to find match funding. AM built on this by mentioning that the Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hub will form part of the core offer of the Value Proposition.

FR thanked LM for her presentation.

7. AOB

The Board thanked Millie Bew in her absence for all her work on the Skills 360 Board since its inception.

FR reminded the group of RW's earlier announcement that the Institute of Technology bid by Chichester University group, NESOT and the Universities of Brighton and Sussex had been successful.

No comments were raised in response to the Action Plan Delivery paper.

KT suggested to the Board that the meetings should be brought forward to 3:00 pm to improve attendance. The Board agreed with this proposal.

Meeting ended