

Skills Strategy and Action Plan Comms Strategy

Key messages for Skills 360 Board members

1. Over-arching principles

The Skills 360 Board has three over-arching principles that should be considered when delivering our Comms Strategy.

- a. Our approach to delivering a successful Skills Strategy is to be open, inclusive and collaborative, to which end we invite continual feedback, creative ideas and suggestions from our stakeholders.
- b. Our aim within a diverse skills landscape is to provide an overarching framework and to lead on key regional initiatives whilst ensuring we support all stakeholders to contribute their expertise and develop the solutions which they have the expertise to deliver, avoiding duplication of effort and dissipation of impact.
- c. Our fundamental goal is to ensure that our region develops a skills base that is commensurate with a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous future so that the economy in our region has the capacity to flourish.

2. Over-arching narrative

The Skills Strategy and Action Plan has been designed to address three objectives for our region:

- a. **Respond to the immediate employment and skills crisis** which has been accelerated and exacerbated by Covid-19.
- b. **Develop a skilled workforce to support the transformation of the region** in the medium to long term in line with Coast to Capital's [Build back Stronger, Smarter and Stronger](#) strategy.
- c. **Design transitional pathways for inter-generational employment and skills** development that enable 2a and 2b.

Underpinning the strategy is a core focus on developing **inter-organisational collaboration** between the education and business sector. Coast to Capital will operate as a facilitator and convener of these collaborations.

3. Short-term priorities

In the **short term** our priorities are to support **recovery** which includes supporting the transition of most at-risk groups, such as:

- education leavers
- young people
- lower-skilled workers
- older workers
- redundant workers post furlough.

We are doing this by:

- delivering virtual careers fairs for 16–18-year-olds through our Enterprise Adviser Network and in partnership with neighbouring LEPs
- funding projects through our [European Social Fund](#) allocation to support:
 - workforce development for lower-skilled and older workers
 - people at risk of redundancy and those recently made redundant to improve their employability skills, build CVs and find employment
 - young people to improve their employability skills, build CVs and find employment
- supporting and promoting the development of [Youth Hubs](#) across the Coast to Capital area in partnership with local authorities and Jobcentre Plus

4. Medium to long-term priorities

In the **medium to long-term**, our goals are to address the structural challenges in our skills economy which include:

- a gap in 20–40-year-old population caused by the high cost of living and unattractiveness of most of our towns to younger professionals
- particularly hard to fill vacancies in particular professions including engineering, science, & technology

To **address these challenges**, we have prioritised three key initiatives:

- **Careers Hub** – supporting schools and colleges to better direct young people into professions where there will be future employment. This will be rolled out in phases, with the first phase covering schools and colleges in Mid Sussex, Crawley, Horsham and parts of East Sussex.

- **Institute of Technology** - to address skills gaps at technician level, particularly in science, engineering and technology areas. The proposal sets out a hub and spoke model, with the hub in Crawley and spokes throughout the Coast to Capital area.
- **Innovation Centre** – fusing the innovation expertise and capabilities of our large, advanced engineering companies with high-tech SMEs and entrepreneurs to grow, combine and scale ideas and create a unique offering to the UK innovation landscape to stimulate regional growth, regeneration and high-quality employment – based in Crawley but supporting the growth of an innovation ecosystem across Coast to Capital.

5. Supporting information

To help Skills 360 Board members field questions about skills in context, here are three position statements from Coast to Capital that define that context for our region:

Brexit, climate change & the green industrial strategy, and Covid-19

The Coast to Capital Skills Strategy and Action Plan sets out the challenges that we need to address as well as opportunities for growth – we have identified these through our extensive research into our skills and industrial expertise. The landscape is also dominated by three major issues - Brexit, the green industrial strategy that is backed by the current government to address climate change, and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Coast to Capital and Brexit

Coast to Capital is an international gateway:

- Home to Gatwick Airport, the second busiest airport in the UK. As a vital gateway for trade, Gatwick offers an opportunity to create a global centre for growth by developing the land around it and building on its existing potential.
- Clustering of UK headquarters of global businesses around Gatwick. Opportunity to grow local supply chains for these businesses.

Coast to Capital's key focus is to support the growth of businesses so that they can trade successfully domestically and internationally.

Climate change & green industrial strategy

The Greener aspect of Build back Stronger sets out our commitment to this agenda:

- Champion and support the zero carbon aspirations of Gatwick airport and the recovering aviation industry.

- Use the expertise of our leading businesses, local authorities and university innovation networks to drive new markets for clean energy production and application across transport, homes, commerce and industry.
- Deliver retrofit programmes for homes and buildings at scale, working with local authorities, academics and leading community sector providers in our area.
- Create a natural capital investment vehicle to develop a long-term pipeline of biodiversity and carbon offsetting investment opportunities.
- Use innovation specialisms within our economic centres to address the challenges to which our growing rural economy can respond. We will develop and apply automation, digital and low carbon technologies in our niche agriculture and viticulture sectors, as well as capitalising upon West Sussex's growing USP in solar energy and storage.

Covid-19

Coast to Capital's role is to ensure that the impact to the region is fully understood both locally and nationally and to ensure that we are working collaboratively with partners to secure the economic investment needed for short, medium and long-term recovery and growth.

Coast to Capital activity to support with the recovery includes:

- Skills activities and investments as mentioned on page 1.
- £2m Backing Business Grant to help businesses adapt, evolve and innovate during the first lock down – funded 160 businesses.
- £19.2m secured from the Government's Getting Building Fund for infrastructure projects in the Coast to Capital area to create jobs.
- £2.1m Business Recovery Grants launched in the autumn.
- Various fully funded business support initiatives delivered in collaboration with local partners. More info [here](#).

Please do not hesitate to contact Kirsten, Claire or Millie to discuss any aspect of this or to prepare for a specific event where you are able to represent the Skills 360 Board.

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