

Reference: Skills 360 Board Meeting
Date: 20 April 2021
Report Title: Action Plan Delivery
Report by: Claire Witz
Item No: 6
Part: A

Recommendation:

The Board is asked to:

- note the progress on existing skills projects
- agree a Board Sponsor for the Home Decarbonisation Project

1. Context

This report will provide Skills 360 Board members with a detailed quarterly update on steps taken to achieve the activities and outcomes identified in the Skills Strategy and Action Plan.

The report will provide operational updates in relation to delivery of the Skills Action Plan, including resourcing, key milestones and budgetary information where appropriate.

In addition, the report provides information on activities undertaken on existing skills projects since the last Board meeting in February.

Additional information is provided as annexes where appropriate.

2. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

We are developing a series of delivery outcomes that sit alongside the skills strategy, as detailed in section 3, which include Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) focused outcomes.

The National Careers Week resources detailed in section 4 were for learners of all ages across all subjects, including PSHE. Through the V-fair platform we are looking to explore construction roles and how to attract a more diverse workforce to the sector. The Speakers for Schools Virtual Insight Day will be targeted towards disadvantaged pupils.

All European Social Fund projects have set equality and diversity criteria for each project as a part of the funding requirements, therefore DWP will ensure these are incorporated into each of the three new project applications detailed in section 8 during their appraisal process.

3. Action Plan Delivery

Resourcing Update

At the February 2021 Skills 360 Board meeting we reported our intention to recruit a Skills Project Coordinator who would work across the Skills and Growth Hub teams to coordinate activity around the delivery of our Skills Strategy and Action Plan. This role is pending until the Coast to Capital Business Plan 2021/22 has been finalised.

Outcomes

We are working on a set of measurable outcomes for each of the priorities in the action plan by 2025. These include both general outcomes and outcomes with an equality, diversity, and inclusion focus. These outcomes will be included alongside the action plan in the next iteration of the Local Skills Report in November 2021.

4. Enterprise Adviser Network (EAN) and Careers Hub Programme

EAN Programme

Education centres have been closed since December due to the spike in Covid-19 cases and young people have again been accessing learning from home. The Enterprise Coordinator team have continued to listen to feedback and work closely with our Careers Leaders to agree the most impactful ways to deliver careers activity.

To help Careers Leaders to prepare for National Careers Week in March, the team developed a series of [subject](#) and [tutor time](#) careers resources for each key stage that could be easily embedded into the curriculum. The resources were well-received at a time when teachers had little time to create their own lesson plans.

In collaboration with East Sussex Careers Hub and Uni Connect, [Career Share](#) has been launched. We have put together a suite of materials to support schools to engage with their parents and carers so students across Sussex can benefit from the knowledge, experience and networks parents and carers offer. These new materials have been shared with all education centres.

Planned events for the remainder of the academic year include the development of Hello Future – a collaborative careers event designed with partners American Express, Albion in the Community and Laing O'Rourke. Hello Future will be offered to Years 11-13 students in schools and colleges across Sussex in July. A panel of young and inspirational employer speakers will help to raise aspirations, develop employability skills and give hope to young people in two 'careers lounge' style talks.

Careers Hub

Following careful analysis of where the gaps are this year in careers provision, the Careers Hub EC team presented three new projects to the Hub Steering Group and Cornerstone Employers Group to be delivered in Summer term.

The Coast to Capital Virtual Careers Fair will be live for all Careers Hub schools on 16th June. Pupils will be able to access the Vfairs platform to explore virtual employer and college/university booths and ask live questions via a group chat facility. A series of pre-recorded videos will be available to view in the Auditorium. The Careers Fair will be accessible to all schools across the network for 1 month after the live event.

Our Open Doors talks in May and June will enable Sixth Form students in Year 12 to hear from recent Apprentices and Graduates about what employers look for and their experiences post education. As we can offer the talks virtually, Open Doors 2021 has been extended to all schools in the network.

Speakers for Schools are helping us to develop a Virtual Insight Day targeted towards disadvantaged pupils within Careers Hub schools who will otherwise find it difficult to access work experience this year. The Virtual Insight Day will introduce pupils to a well-known organisation through Q&A sessions with key employees, a virtual tour and participating in a small project or activity whereby feedback will be received.

Our Cornerstone Employers have been incredibly generous in their offers of support for the projects outlined above.

5. Innovation Centre ('The FUSION Innovation Centre')

Due to the size and complexity of the project, the timeline for the business case development has been extended with a target date for approval at the July Coast to Capital Board meeting.

The three partners, Coast to Capital, Thales UK Ltd and Crawley Borough Council, are working together to deliver the Fusion Innovation Centre in the heart of the Manor Royal Business District in Crawley. The Centre will 'fuse' the advanced engineering expertise within the global cluster of companies in and around Crawley with the digital innovation expertise of individuals and small businesses across the Coast to Capital area to drive increased innovation activity.

With their consultants, and in consultation with local stakeholders, the project Steering Group has established and agreed four strategic objectives for the Centre, subject to business case approval:

- **Objective 1:** To provide a physical environment in which small businesses operate alongside larger organisations in activities linking to *digitisation and cyber security; transportation and mobility; and clean energy and power.*

- **Objective 2:** To seed a new business environment within Manor Royal that will help transform a large but incoherent industrial area into a genuine industrial INNOVATION district.
- **Objective 3:** To build a learning environment in which technical skills and knowhow are nurtured and deployed.
- **Objective 4:** To forge stronger links across the wider innovation ecosystem across and beyond Coast to Capital.

The partners agree that these objectives will lead to the following outcomes (not exhaustive) which meet each of their individual motivations:

- To address the innovation and workforce capacity shortcomings we have identified in the local and regional economy
- To increase R&D activity within the local and regional economy
- To accelerate the growth of micro, small and larger businesses creating jobs for local people and attracting talent to the area
- To develop a thriving eco-system of businesses, stimulating investment and a diversification of sectors and supporting high value employment growth

A more detailed list of outcomes and measures will be set out in the full business case.

Work on the business case to date has established that the Centre is a viable proposition and work is currently underway to develop the USP and the commercial offer that comes from that.

6. Institute of Technology

The consortia, led by Chichester College Group, submitted an application in December 2020 and await the outcome. A decision is expected at the end of April 2021. If successful, the consortia will be invited to submit a Stage Two application, providing a detailed case including financial viability, feasibility and value for money of the capital project and legal structure/delivery model.

7. Home Decarbonisation Academy

Initial work and meetings are continuing for the development of the Home Decarbonisation Academy Pilot business case.

The Energy Systems Catapult has hosted another national pilot consortium meeting with industry representatives to develop practical solutions and identify funding streams. We are working closely with New Anglia LEP who are also developing plans for the Home Decarbonisation Academy pilot.

On 16 February we held an inaugural meeting of our project partners to explore four distinct areas of work - skills provision, learning factories, Innovation hubs and

housing stock. Tim Walder and Liane Richardson attended this meeting in their capacity as Construction Board Champions and were able to provide useful sector insight and leadership.

Moving the project forward, we held a local Skills and Learning Factories workshop on 11 March 2021. The focus of discussion was existing provision and facilities available across the partners, the gaps in provision and what may need to be developed, tutor shortages and knowledge gaps, as well as how to work together to make the most of available facilities and resources.

We are now working closely with the Greater South East Energy Hub and pilot project partners to develop an initial draft of a business case for the pilot project.

We are looking for a Skills 360 Board Sponsor for this project to provide leadership and expert guidance.

8. Construction Spotlight Project

Following on from the Construction Sector Spotlight presentation at the February Skills 360 Board meeting, the Construction Board Champions have convened a working group to deliver on a series of activities to make the most of the employment opportunities in the construction sector now and into the future.

The project will look to raise the profile of the sector and of sector specific initiatives which support economic recovery; highlight career opportunities in the sector and ensure that the relevant training is available for young people and adults to meet project demands, including skills for regeneration and net-zero.

As part of the project, we are procuring external resource to undertake a research and mapping exercise to build and share a picture of the planned infrastructure construction programme in the Coast to Capital area over the next 10 years. This will help us to understand the type and quantity of skills needed with a particular focus on opportunities for young people, local people and people from disadvantaged groups.

Information regarding funding for this procurement can be found later in this report under section 13, the Financial Statement.

9. 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 25 projects contracted in the area to date, with 19 currently delivering and six in the pipeline with Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Managing Authority (including the three projects mentioned below).

The two Calls from the ESF reserve fund for new projects closed for applications on

15 March. Three applications were received in total - two for the Call to support people into employment (ESF investment priority 1.1), and one to support employees to upskill and/or retrain (ESF investment priority 2.1). The total value of the applications for investment priority 1.1 exceeds the value of the Call therefore it is likely that only one of them can be funded however, Coast to Capital will explore options for both to be funded with DWP and emphasise the importance of these projects for recovery.

In addition to the extension of most of the Building Better Opportunities projects that was detailed in the last report, DWP issued a letter in January stating that all existing ESF projects that are performing well would be offered the opportunity to apply for additional funds from the reserve fund. Extension requests will be limited to a maximum 50% increase against the project's original value. These extensions will ensure that projects that are performing well, and that are able to, can continue delivery and provide much needed support through this critical time and through the upcoming period of recovery. More information on eligibility for these extensions is expected to be released from DWP shortly, and it will be down to the individual eligible projects to decide if they will apply for additional funding.

More information on ESF in Coast to Capital, including detail of projects currently delivering in the area, can be found on our website [here](#).

10. Local Skills Report

The Local Skills Report has been published and can be found on the Coast to Capital website [here](#).

The next Local Skills Report will be published in November 2021, and from there the report will be published annually.

11. Curriculum Support Pilot

We are working with NESCOL to pilot a Curriculum Support project. Along with our Skills and Labour Market Impact Assessment report we provided a variety of current labour market information and college course completion data for the Surrey area local to the college to support initial curriculum planning discussions.

In March, Claire joined four of the college's planning meetings - Work Experience and Professional Development, Business and Computing, Construction and Plumbing and Gas. The Curriculum Managers presented plans for the academic year 2021/22 delivery. Claire was able to provide local insights and question managers on their rationale for the delivery plans. Lisa, as the EAN and Careers Hub lead, also joined the Personal Development and Work Experience planning meeting.

The intention is to use this pilot project as a template for rolling out future Curriculum Support projects to other colleges across the area. We have detailed this as an 'upon request' service in the Local Skills Report.

12. Legal Statement

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

13. Finance Statement

The commissioning of the Construction Spotlight Project research and mapping will be funded through the Skills Advisory Panel budget 2020/2021.