

Reference: Skills 360 Board Meeting
Date: Tuesday 23 February 2021
Report Title: Action Plan Delivery
Report by: Claire Witz
Item No: 6
Part: A

Recommendation:

The Board is asked to:

- note the update on resourcing and approach to delivery of the action plan
- note the progress on existing skills projects

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. This report will replace the previous standing agenda item and report on Skills Project Updates.

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 in the last quarter.

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, and these will include ambitions for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I). Each of these projects will be reviewed in light of those outcomes.

All European Social Fund projects have set equality and diversity criteria for each project as a part of the funding requirements, therefore these have been incorporated into the specifications launched in January. The Building Better Opportunities projects target individuals in the community who are furthest from the

labour market, and promote social inclusion. These projects are generally delivered by third sector organisations that are specialised and well placed to engage with and support individuals who are hardest to reach (see section 7 for detail).

3. Action Plan Delivery

Resourcing update

We are pleased to announce the Millie Bew has been promoted to the role of Skills Project Manager from 1 January 2021. This is a well-deserved promotion which will see Millie playing a key role in the delivery of our Skills Strategy and Action Plan and continuing her close working with the Board.

In addition, Millie will take on responsibility for the line management of a Skills Project Coordinator, who we intend to recruit in the coming months. The Coast to Capital Growth Hub has a significant role to play in the delivery of this action plan, in particular supporting businesses to develop and implement workforce development and retention plans. Therefore, the new Skills Coordinator will work across the Skills and Growth Hub teams to coordinate activity around the delivery of our Skills Strategy and Action Plan.

Information regarding funding for this role can be found later in this report under section 12, the Financial Statement.

Planning and milestones

We are developing a timeline to map out key delivery milestones for to assist with planning and it will be available to share shortly.

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

EAN Programme

The Enterprise Adviser Network continues to strengthen despite the challenges of Covid-19. The team is working hard to engage effectively with employers and education centres and to maximise the impact of their contributions at a time when priorities are understandably focused elsewhere.

Since the start of the academic year in September, the team has focused on delivering virtual and easy to access interventions which support institutions to deliver on their careers commitments, including the following:

We led on the **My Choices transition events** which enabled encounters with further and higher education for Year 11 pupils across the region. Partnership working with East Sussex Careers Hub and delivery partners the Sussex Learning Network and Surrey SATRO enabled us to deliver two local, virtual events. These events provided meaningful encounters for pupils with FE Colleges, Sixth Form Colleges, Secondary School Sixth Forms, Apprenticeship delivery partners and employer representatives

from key sectors. We recorded an excellent number of school registrations, high levels of engagement from both pupils and parents/carers with really positive feedback.

We supported and part funded **Crawley STEMfest** which enabled pupils and teaching staff to learn from labour market information and for pupils to have encounters with employers and employees. This partnership working with Sussex STEM Ambassadors enabled all pupils of secondary school age from across the Coast to Capital region to engage in live STEM employer encounters with safeguarded 2-way interaction via chat facility and to hear about STEM sector opportunities.

Other careers related activities the team have enabled include professional **LinkedIn training** for Careers Leaders, **Careers Link Governor training** and a series of **special educational needs master classes** for school Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCO) and local businesses.

Planned events for the remainder of the academic year include the development of resources to help schools to embed careers into the curriculum during National Careers Week, as well as **virtual careers fair** in June for all of our schools to access.

We expect the challenge for schools to work towards the benchmarks will continue for the remainder of the academic year, not least whilst education centres are closed and we will continue to listen to feedback and work closely with our Careers Leaders to offer a sustainable, blended approach to careers activity delivery.

Careers Hub

The Careers Hub was officially **launched** in December to stakeholders across the region.

The Careers Hub is now fully established with a Steering Group in place and a group of eight corporate businesses forming our Cornerstone Employers group - Arcadis, Fidelity International, Gatwick Airport, Sussex Health & Care Partnership, Wates, Thakeham Homes, Govia Thameslink Railways and Surrey Wildlife Trust.

We are working closely with the 35 education centres in the Careers Hub to identify where the gaps are in careers provision, particularly in light of COVID and the subsequent temporary closure of schools and colleges. All events and careers activities have been adapted to virtual opportunities for pupils.

The initiatives and project plans outlined in our EAN programme are extended to all education centres within the Careers Hub.

See Annex 1 for the EAN and Careers Hub Dashboard – February 2021.

5. Innovation Centre ('The FUSION Centre')

Our consultants, SQW and Oxford Innovation, are making good progress on the full business case. A first draft of the strategic case was presented to the steering group in January, and we aim to have the full business case ready for approval at the Coast

to Capital Board meeting in April.

The recommendations set out in the full business case will inform a number of decisions for the project moving forward, including the form and function of the Innovation Centre, location and property options, the operating model and approach to stakeholder engagement.

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 in the Spring of 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

Coast to Capital is working with the [Energy Systems Catapult](#), local authorities and education providers on Skills for Net Zero. This is part of a national effort to create a model for the widespread skills infrastructure needed to meet demand for clean and energy efficient homes. Coast to Capital is one of six regional centres of excellence involved as pilots for the programme.

The Energy Systems Catapult has hosted two national Consortium meetings with the pilot areas across the country and industry representatives in order to develop practical solutions and identify funding streams. They are also planning a focused skills workshop for early February 2021.

Coast to Capital is in the planning stages of the pilot and will be holding an inaugural Partners Meeting on 16 February 2021. Liane Richardson and Tim Walder, as the Board Champions for the Construction sector will be in attendance. The meeting will be to consider partner working locally to deliver on four distinct areas of work - skills provision, learning factories, Innovation hubs and housing stock. We will then begin work on the proposal to Energy Systems Catapult that is due to be submitted by end of March 2021.

This is a substantial, national programme of work to be developed and delivered over an anticipated 5-year timeframe, with the pilot for our area initially focussed on two local-authority areas within the region, Brighton & Hove and Crawley, both with significant social housing stock.

8. 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 three in the pipeline with Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Managing Authority.

Eight of the live projects are co-funded by the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) through their [Building Better Opportunities](#) programme. These projects target the hardest to reach individuals in the community, and aim to tackle the root causes of poverty, promoting social inclusion and driving local jobs and growth. These projects are generally delivered by community and third sector organisations that are specialised and well placed to engage with the target participant groups. We have recently received news from NLCF that they intend to extend the majority of these projects to mid-2023. Detail of individual project extensions should be confirmed by the end of March this year. This will provide a continued provision for those furthest from the labour market to support them to move towards and into employment at this time of great need.

We have recently been successful in securing two Calls from the ESF reserve fund for new projects which opened for applications on 18 January. One of these Calls will be for projects supporting people into employment, and the other will support employees to upskill and/or retrain. The deadline for applications is 15 March.

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

9. Local Skills Report

The Department for Education (DfE) has agreed that a brief update to our existing Skills Strategy and Action Plan including three additional chapters - Progress, Case Studies and Forward Look - is the most appropriate approach.

An inception meeting with the consultants appointed to develop the Core Indicators data annex (Annex A) was held mid-January, and the consultants are on track to deliver a draft of the Annex within the agreed timeline.

The first full draft of the Local Skills Report will be sent to the SAP team at DfE for feedback in mid-February, and a subsequent draft will be sent to Skills 360 Board members in early March for comment by written procedure. Once approved by the Skills 360 Board Chair the report will be published on the website by the end of March.

10. 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 have provided a variety of current labour market information and college course completion data for the Surrey area local to the college. This intelligence will support NESCOL's initial curriculum planning discussions.

During the next stage we will join the college's planning meetings where the Curriculum Managers will present plans for the academic year 2021/22 delivery. As

members of the panel we will provide additional insights and question managers on their rationale for the delivery plans. We will provide input into the Work Experience and Professional Development, Business and Computing, Construction and Plumbing and Gas curriculum meetings.

The intention is to use this pilot project as a template for rolling out future Curriculum Support projects to other colleges across the area.

11. Legal Statement

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

12. Finance Statement

The role of Skills Project Coordinator mentioned under Resourcing Update will be funded through an allocation from the European Regional Development Fund South East Sustainability Loan Fund Legacy Fund from the 2007-13 programme (received by Coast to Capital in 2020).

Annexes:

- Annex 1 – EAN and Careers Hub Dashboard February 2021