

Meeting: Skills 360 Board Meeting
Date: 25 November 2020
Report Title: Local Skills Report
Report by: Millie Bew
Item No: Item 3
Part: A

Recommendation:

The Board is asked to:

- note our approach to developing the Local Skills Report as required by the Skills Advisory Panel team at the Department for Education

1. Context

Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs) are local partnerships, introduced by the Department for Education (DfE), that strengthen the link between public and private sector employers, local authorities, colleges and universities. The [Skills 360 Board](#) acts as the SAP for the Coast to Capital LEP area.

SAPs adopt a local leadership role on skills in their area and are expected to identify skills priorities for the area based on analysis, and advise on and help implement funding and investment decisions for local skills provision.

By identifying the current and future skills needs in their area, SAPs work to ensure local provision matches local employment opportunities and local employers' needs. SAPs have developed, and continue to develop their skills evidence bases, so that local skills strategies and action plans align to the specific skills needs of their area.

Now, having created robust evidence bases, DfE have asked SAPs to accelerate their collaboration efforts with local partners by clearly articulating the area's skills needs in a single, accessible document, the 'Local Skills Report'

Local Skills Reports will provide a clear and consistent view of local skills needs across areas in a relevant and engaging format for local partners. The reports will be a key source of local skills information that enable cross-area comparison and feed local intelligence to the national [Skills and Productivity Board \(SPB\)](#) and central government, and will help to grow the influence of SAPs locally by:

- **Acting as an engagement tool** - a vehicle through which SAPs can directly engage, influence and rally employers and providers in their areas to support the local skills agenda
- **Being a 'go-to' document for everything local-skills related** - bringing together existing and new skills information into one consistent document common to all SAPs.
- **Clearly setting out key skills needs** – ensuring local skills needs are visible to local partners who can then engage with them.
- **Feeding intelligence to the national SPB and central government** - a consistent output common to all SAPs that the SPB can use to understand the needs and priorities of local areas and build a national picture of the supply and demand for skills.
- **Offering valuable insight and evaluation** – detailing the progress made on current local skills initiatives and outline future skills plans to plug key skills gaps.

Each SAP is required to produce a Local Skills Report by DfE, the first of which is due March 2021. The Local Skills Report will be updated annually, with a fuller update every two years.

2. Developing the Local Skills Report

DfE issued draft guidance on the structure and content of Local Skills Reports in September 2020. The guidance is prescriptive as one of the main purposes of these reports is to provide a consistent reporting mechanism across all SAPs to feed local intelligence up to the SPB.

Annex 1 shows the structure and content of the report, as per the draft guidance issued by DfE.

A significant amount of background research and information gathering was done during the development of the recently published Skills Strategy and Action Plan. For the chapters highlighted in bold in Annex 1, we are proposing a simple summary drawing out key points in the body of the Local Skills Report, with a hyperlink to the full Skills Strategy and Action Plan document.

The full guidance issued by DfE sets out specific questions to be answered for each section, so we may need to draw out specific points and re-word or expand on them to ensure we are reporting in the format required.

The final guidance is due to be issued imminently, and at that point we plan to discuss with colleagues at DfE how we can best integrate our Skills Strategy and Action Plan to avoid duplication, while still producing a quality report for the SPB that fully satisfies DfE requirements.

3. Annex A – Core Indicators

The Local Skills Reports should include an Annex of specified skills data indicators. This is to ensure readers can obtain a quick quantitative overview of the area's skills landscape without reviewing SAPs' evidence base in its entirety. This annex will facilitate comparative analysis locally and nationally by presenting the same data in the consistent format across all SAP Local Skills Reports.

The SAPs programme team have provided all SAPs with the data and graphs for the Annex but expect areas to add local intelligence or supporting analysis to each core indicator. The accompanying 'Core Indicators Guidance' includes a template for the Annex, including prompts for where SAPs are expected to add narrative and bring in local intelligence.

In addition to adding narrative to the Annex, the guidance states that other local data needs to be reviewed and analysed within that narrative, which will require considerable time and effort. We have permission from DfE to use part of the SAP budget to procure an external agency to draft Annex A due to resource constraints within the skills team at Coast to Capital. We have allocated £10,000 for this within the SAP budget.

4. Next Steps

- Begin commissioning of external agency to draft Annex A by Mid-November
- First draft of Local Skills Report to DfE by the end of January 2021
- Finalise Local Skills Report by March 2021

5. Diversity Statement

In developing the local skills report, we will ensure we embed a focus on equality and diversity in the delivery of the Skills Strategy and Action Plan, working with the newly appointed Equality and Diversity Board Champion.

6. Legal Statement

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

7. Financial Statement

There is currently £10,000 allocated in the SAP budget to commission a consultant to develop Annex A: Core Indicators.

Annexes:

- **Annex 1 – Structure of the Local Skills Report**