

Reference: Skills 360 Board Meeting
Date: Wednesday 25 November 2020
Report Title: Skills Projects Update Report
Report by: Claire Witz
Item No: 7
Part: A

Recommendation:

The Board is asked to:

- note the progress set out in the Skills Projects Update Report

1. Context

This is the regular report presented to the Skills 360 Board on the progress against the skills projects outlined in the Skills Action Plan.

The report provides information on activities undertaken in the last quarter with additional information provided as annexes, where appropriate.

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

The programme continues to see disruption due to the impact of Covid-19, with many education centres experiencing year group or whole school closures due to infection. In addition, schools and colleges current priorities are to focus on the core curriculum. All these factors are likely to have an adverse effect on the progress towards contractual targets for 2020-2021.

To best assess the progress towards the targets for both the EAN programme and the Careers Hub, we're in the process of creating a new reporting dashboard. This will cover all 8 Gatsby Benchmarks, provide trend data and help identify the more challenging areas that require prioritisation. The new dashboard will be ready for the next Skills 360 Board meeting.

EAN Programme

The key focus for the EAN this year will be working with employers to increase opportunities for virtual, meaningful employer encounters and workplace

experiences whilst ensuring that all education centres have a stable careers plan in place for 2020/21.

These virtual activities have been kicked off with an extremely successful online event for young people transitioning into further education and higher education. The What Next Sussex event was a collaboration between Coast to Capital, the East Sussex Careers Hub, Sussex Learning Network and the Careers and Enterprise Company. The online event took place on 4 November and reached an audience of over 10,000 individuals and school/college classes in Brighton and Hove and East & West Sussex, providing information and advice to learners and parents/carers about their choices for next steps in education and training. A further event, Next Steps Surrey, will be taking place on 24 November.

This has been an opportune time for our Enterprise Coordinators to support the development of our Enterprise Advisers and school Careers Leaders to participate in development training. In partnership with the Careers and Enterprise Company, we have developed and delivered virtual regional networking events and training to ensure that careers remains high on the agenda for education centres during this challenging time.

In addition, the team are currently developing further training programmes which will be delivered over the year, which will include special needs education (SEND) training and training for schools Governors around careers and Ofsted requirements.

Careers Hub

The Careers Hub is now up and running and there will be an official launch event held online on 8 December 2020.

The first Steering Group meeting was held on 20 October 2020, where the members elected Liane Richardson of Thakeham Homes as the Chair and agreed the Terms of Reference, which can be found in **Annex 1**

35 schools and colleges from within the Hub area have now confirmed their participation in the Hub. The full list can be found in **Annex 2**.

Each Careers Hub appoints a lead education institution for their area to advocate for the work of the Careers Hub, contribute to support and resources, as well as disseminate good practice on how they're meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks. We're pleased to confirm that NESCOL College and Howard of Effingham School in Surrey have agreed to be our Lead College and Lead School.

Work has been continuing to set up a Cornerstone Employer group for the Careers Hub. The small group will be made up of employers of varying sizes and sectors who will work strategically and collaboratively with the Careers Hub to drive the impact of the Hub's priorities. To date there are four employers confirmed: Health Education England; Thakeham Homes; Wates Group and Arcadis. We are also in

discussions with Surrey Wildlife Trust, Govia Thameslink Railway and Pfizer. The first meeting of the Cornerstone Employers will take place on 2 December 2020.

The team have now commenced their programme of work for the academic year, with some activities already having taken place as detailed above. Future activities will include Crawley STEMfest, which will be taking place in late November 2020. This opportunity has been made available to all secondary schools across the Coast to Capital region.

In addition, work has commenced on this year's Open Doors project, in partnership with Manor Royal Business District, which will provide a two day virtual work experience opportunity for pupils in the Hub area. Providing we are able to engage employers from Manor Royal Business District at this challenging time, the event will take place in the new year.

Further activities are planned around challenging stereotypes and/or embedding equality and diversity in careers projects and the development of a LMI resource for teachers and parents to include COVID-19 impact on the Coast to Capital region. All activities within the programme of work will not only support the Careers Hub schools and colleges but the wider EAN programme network too.

3. Innovation Centre ('The FUSION Centre')

As the Board will know, funding has been secured to deliver this project through Coast to Capital's allocation of the [Getting Building Fund](#) (August 2020) for delivery by March 2022. Coast to Capital is working in partnership with Crawley Borough Council and Thales UK (Crawley) on this potentially transformational project.

A steering group for the project has now been established with monthly meetings to discuss progress, risk and key issues. Steering group membership comprises of senior colleagues from Coast to Capital, Crawley Borough Council and Thales, and Jane Longmore has been appointed as the Coast to Capital Board Champion for the project (as referenced in item 6).

SQW, working in partnership with Oxford Innovation, have been commissioned to develop the full business case for the project. SQW are working with all three project partners to ensure that a comprehensive and quality business case is produced, with an aim to gain sign off from the three project partners in Q1 2021. Funding will be released at this point.

In line with the funding requirements, the substantive build work for this project will need to be completed by March 2021.

SQW are developing a stakeholder engagement plan as a part of their contract, and in the meantime, to support the development of the business case, they are consulting with potential industry partners and the universities. As a part of the business case development, SQW are also considering a potential wider skills remit

for the innovation centre and it will be important to explore its links with a potential Institute of Technology.

4. Institute of Technology

Under agenda item 5 there will be a presentation setting out the emerging proposal for an Institute of Technology in the Coast to Capital area from Chichester College Group, the leader partner in a consortia of four education partners

This is an opportunity for the Board to understand the proposal and to ensure it has strategic fit with the Skills Strategy and Action Plan before it is submitted to the Department for Education in December. The consortia has asked for a letter of support from the Skills 360 Board which we will prepare following this presentation.

5. Decarbonisation Academy

Stronger, Smarter, Greener confirms the importance of decarbonisation toward reducing climate change impacts and simultaneously the opportunity arising from innovation in green technology and green job creation in our region.

Coast to Capital has been successful in joining a handful of other pilot LEP areas around the UK to work with the Energy Systems Catapult in a model for 'Home Decarbonisation Academies' that could be rolled out nationally. The principle is to create skilled, local supply chains for the installation of clean energy products in homes and other settings. The pilot links to our green construction priority within the Skills Action Plan. Initially our pilot area is focussed on Brighton and Crawley, with involvement of the universities and further education colleges.

6. 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 24 projects contracted in the area to date, with 18 currently delivering and four in the pipeline with Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Managing Authority.

The appraisal process for pipeline projects was delayed by COVID-19 but has now resumed, and since the last Skills 360 Board meeting three projects have been contracted and are due to start delivery imminently. Other pipeline projects have also seen some progress through the appraisal process towards being contracted.

Unspent ESF from across all LEPs has been moved into a central reserve fund by DWP. LEPs need to 'bid' into this central fund to release funds for particular Calls. We submitted a bid for a call from the reserve fund in April 2020 however, due to COVID, all Call applications were put on hold. This process has now re-opened and we have re-submitted our original application, as well as an additional application for

a Call to support unemployed people in the area. We are currently awaiting the outcome of those submissions.

Annex 3 provides more detail on the live ESF projects in the area.

7. Diversity Statement

We will work to embed a focus on equality and diversity across all skills projects, working with the newly appointed Equality and Diversity champion.

All ESF projects have set equality and diversity criteria for each project as a part of the funding requirements.

8. Legal Statement

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

9. Finance Statement

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

Annexes:

- **Annex 1 – Careers Hub Steering Group Meeting Notes and Actions**
- **Annex 2 – Careers Hub Schools and Colleges**
- **Annex 3 – ESF Current Projects Listing**