

<b>Report Title:</b>	Skills Priorities
<b>Date:</b>	15 April 2019
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## **Introduction**

This paper provides an overview of the skills priorities that have emerged from early research and consultation work undertaken by Coast to Capital and are detailed in the Strategic Economic Plan, Gatwick 360°, as well as priorities that have emerged from discussion with the Skills 360° Board.

The intention of this paper is to enable the Skills 360° Board to focus its activity on the principal priorities of the region and to make informed decisions on how to take forward work to associated with the priorities.

Further testing and review will be undertaken on the priorities with other expert groups and stakeholders, as well as through the detailed evaluation and analysis to be undertaken through the Skills Advisory Panel.

## **Skills priorities:**

### 1. Places

A challenge has been identified around the need to prepare for future disruption, particularly where there is are various shortages of relevant skills across the geographical area of Coast to Capital, such as in Crawley, Arun and Adur, and where the skills of the existing workforce are out of date.

The Skills 360 Board recognise the product areas that Coast to Capital have identified:

- Gatwick to London growth corridor
- towns around Gatwick airport
- our coastal communities
- our rural areas

### 2. Industry Sectors

There is a need to carry out more work with to understand what the specific skills needs are in each of the 13 sub-sectors and other priority areas identified in Gatwick 360° and through the skills research and work of the Skills Board:.

The sub-sectors with significant strengths, as identified in Gatwick 360°:

- Med Tech
- Pharmaceuticals
- Computer Software Programming and Publishing
- Data Processing & Hosting
- Insurance and Financial Services

- Telecommunications
- Visitor Economy and Support Services
- Air Transport
- Horticulture and Food Manufacturing
- Computer & Consumer Electronic Manufacturing
- Communications & Navigation Equipment Manufacturing
- Electric Power Generation and Transmission
- Automotive Manufacturing

The Skills 360° Board have recommended that a piece of work is undertaken to identify and analyse the skills requirements of these sub-sectors along with any others identified by the Skills Board, or through the research activity undertaken through the work of the Skills Advisory Panel. This will need to include looking at sector specific skills, as well as generic skills that are wider than STEM subjects, for which there is currently considerable provision.

### 3. Adults: Workforce development, training and up-skilling

In order to up-skill and re-skill the adult workforce there is a need to seek national revenue investment as a way of subsidising investment in training made by employers and individuals across the Coast to Capital area.

To ensure that the Board gain a full understanding of this priority, there will need to be research and analysis undertaken as part of the SAP process, including LMI data trend analysis and anecdotal evidence from local employers across the patch.

### 4. Employability skills

Pre-employment, attitudes and characteristics of good employees are the basics required to operate effectively in the workplace.

### 5. Future skills

Jobs of tomorrow aren't going to be the same as they are today. What do people need in the future? What are the generic skill requirements that aren't sector specific and are likely to be relevant to future jobs rather than current employer demands given automation etc? E.g. creativity, design thinking, digital fluency.

The Skills 360° Board are mindful that as a priority there needs to be consideration and an understanding gained of the characteristics of the job roles that will be required by employers in the future, and what skills people will need to undertake these roles.

### 6. Higher-level technical/vocational skills (Level 3 and above)

Gatwick 360° identifies that the Coast to Capital area boasts one of the most highly skilled populations in the UK, with 44.6% of people holding a degree-level qualification, 6% higher than the national average.

However, there is a need to work with areas that have pockets of low skills, such as along the coast in areas such as Shoreham and in Crawley and Croydon.

The need for high level skills is in part due to the types of sectors operating in the area, for example the financial services sector, which includes more high level roles and staff progression into management. There is also a rising need for high level skilled jobs due to changing technologies and automation in many sectors.

In addition, members of the Skills 360° Board have reported the need to ensure that those who have higher learning support needs and those furthest from the labour market are not excluded when considering future high level skills provision.

The Board needs to ensure that the diversity and wellbeing of the workforce is considered.

As the current skills levels are not generic across the patch, there is a requirement to identify and understand the high level skills needs across the geographic area. These would be priority tasks that would need to be undertaken as part of the Skills Advisory Panel work on the skills analysis for the Coast to Capital area.

## 7. Digital skills

It has been identified that our area's economy will evolve significantly in the next few years, shaped by new technology, the growth of new businesses, and an ageing working population.

Our challenge is to prepare for this future disruption, particularly where there is a shortage of relevant skills, such as in Crawley, Arun and Adur, and where the digital skills of the existing workforce are out of date.

To help our ambitious digital and creative businesses to commercialise new technologies we need to provide access to a highly-skilled workforce.

The Skills 360° Board feel that a priority challenge is to address the high demand for digital skills provision. There is a need for reactive provision to be available that supports organisations and sectors to deal with the fast changes in technology. To enable this to happen it will be necessary for research and analysis to be undertaken into the current demands from employers and what is needed by local providers to be able to support and provide appropriate and timely provision.

At present DCMS and DWP are developing a data tool to enable searches into the digital skills market and skills demands by area. It will be necessary for Coast to Capital to remain engaged with DCMS and DWP regarding the progress of this project in order to utilise the tool when it becomes available.

## 8. Careers information, advice and guidance

A need to take a greater role in coordinating all age careers advice and raising the aspirations of young people has been identified. This includes a particular need to undertake robust careers guidance around technical education including Apprenticeships and T Levels, as well as supporting the development of the adult workforce and retention of the older workforce.

Following on from a recent internal review of the Enterprise Advise Network (EAN) service the Coast to Capital Board have tasked the Skills 360° Board to oversee the governance of the Enterprise Advisor Network.

At present the EAN service is undergoing a restructuring exercise to ensure its strategic fit with Gatwick 360°, that it is delivering value for money and that it is making a local impact. As part of the restructure a full EAN work plan is to be developed.

## 9. Apprenticeships

The Skills 360° Board recognises that there is a need to support Apprenticeship Levy paying businesses in the area to understand how they can utilise their Levy funds effectively, as well as inform them of how they may direct Levy funds to SME businesses through the Levy Transfer system.

To enable this to happen it is essential that further investigation is undertaken into the support that is available to Levy paying employers. Coast to Capital have a dedicated liaison from the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Intermediaries Team. It will be important to work closely with the ESFA representative to ensure that information and support materials are accessed and passed through to the Coast to Capital Growth Hub.

The ESFA representative will be invited to the Board meetings as appropriate.

There is a need to undertake further research into how the Coast to Capital area may gain better access to Apprenticeship funding and Levy funds, especially regarding those organisations that have a Levy Transfer system, such as Local Authorities.

## 10. Qualifications and Education Reforms

There is a need to recognise and influence the changes to qualifications and education with are likely to affect the skills provision in the area, as well as the need for employers to be involved in delivery of provision and qualifications.

The development of T-Levels and need for extended industry placements will have a significant impact employers in the area. At present local education colleges are receiving approximately £1.2m in Capacity & Delivery Funds from Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to support their engagement with employers for these industry placements.

## 11. Skills for all

The Skills 360° Board has identified various challenges that need to be addressed to ensure that every person and employer in the Coast to Capital area has the opportunity to gain the appropriate skills for their needs. These include:

- Incentivising providers to offer different learning routes to different groups of the population and workforce, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and older learners.
- Social mobility of the Coast to Capital population in relation to work and learning should be considered in addition to factors such as the productivity of the region.
- There is a need to be inclusive of the skills requirements for women returners.