

Skills Strategy and Action Plan Launch Event Q&A

This document answers any questions submitted before or during the Coast to Capital Skills Strategy and Action Plan Launch event in December 2020 that were not addressed during the session.

Similar questions have been grouped and answered under theme headings.

Answers make reference to the following documents which should be referred to for more detail:

- Coast to Capital Skills Strategy and Action Plan
- COVID-19 Skills and Labour Market Impact Assessment

Both documents can be found on our website, in the related resources section, [here](#).

1. Collaboration with partners to deliver the Skills Strategy and Action Plan (grouped)

The Skills Action plan contains various interventions and projects that have opportunities for partner and stakeholder involvement and collaboration.

As we work up the Action Plan timeline (mentioned below) we will explore opportunities for collaboration and stakeholder engagement working. This is likely to be in the form of working and/or focus groups, partners taking on particular activities that contribute to the overall interventions and projects and consultation or feedback activities.

An example of this is the Sector Spotlight on Construction project we are currently scoping which will ensure we are making the most of the employment opportunities in the construction sector now and into the future.

In addition, we're working closely with our Skills 360 Board members who will be taking on Board Champion roles. These roles are based on the sectors identified within the Skills Strategy and Action Plan and additional roles which will support the delivery of the plan including a Stakeholder Conversations Champion. This role will support the Coast to Capital skills team with engagement with partners and stakeholders regarding our work and collaboration opportunities.

2. Next steps and implementation of the Skills Strategy and Action Plan (grouped)

We are currently working on an Action Plan timeline for activities during 2021. The plan will include work to take place on the three Transformational Interventions, as well as other projects such as the development of an Employment and Skills Portal to support business, a Home Decarbonisation Academy pilot, a Construction Sector Spotlight Project and working with DWP Managing Authority for European Social Fund (ESF) to publish two new ESF Calls.

We are already making progress on the several projects mentioned in the action plan:

- Institute of Technology - a Phase 1 bid for the area has been submitted to Department for Education by a consortia of local partners, supported by Coast to Capital as a strategic partner.
- Crawley Innovation Centre – Coast to Capital are working in partnership with Crawley Borough Council and Thales UK to deliver this project, with funding awarded through the Getting Building Fund. We are currently developing the full business case for this project, and further detail will be available once this has been approved.
- The Careers Hub has now been established and is working with 35 schools and colleges in the area. The Cornerstone Employer group has been set up with 5 employers from a range of growth business sectors including healthcare, construction, engineering and the green economy and are in discussion with another four to complete the group. This group will actively support our careers education work across the Hub area and we will use the learning and resources produced to also support the wider Enterprise Adviser Network.
- We will be undertaking a series of Sector Spotlight Projects, this will start with a Construction Sector project as mentioned above.
- Home Decarbonisation Academy - please see information provided further down.
- Two ESF Direct calls have now been published to support people to gain skills to help them enter or re-enter work, and to support SMEs in the area to upskill and reskill their workforce. Details can be found [here](#).

3. How much money have you identified for commissioning providers locally

Two Calls for European Social Fund worth £2 million were launched on Monday 18 January. One call is to support employed people to upskill or retrain, and the other is to support unemployed individuals into jobs. More information, including how to apply, can be found on our website [here](#). Calls will close for applications at midnight on 15 March.

4. There is a strong focus on Crawley in the Strategy and Action Plan. How will you ensure that all areas of Coast to Capital benefit?

For all our intended activities and interventions that have a particular focus, for example on geography, age group, sector specific or curriculum area, we will ensure that learning from the activities and any products developed will be made available for use and/or adaption for other areas.

5. What are the new workforce skills for a zero carbon economy?

We are working with our Green Skills Champion to explore this very subject. Early thoughts are that we should have a focus on the skills needed for decarbonisation, to address the impact of climate change and to rebuild biodiversity. We should explore if there are particular opportunities or strengths in the Coast to Capital area that we should pursue and find opportunities to lead the way in skills development, such as the Home Decarbonisation pilot.

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 have convened discussions with industry representatives and between regional centres of excellence, in order to develop practical solutions and identify funding streams. Coast to Capital are in the planning stages of the pilot and will be working with partners locally to deliver on four distinct areas of work, skills provision, learning factories, Innovation hubs and housing stock.

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.

In addition, we are undertaking a Sector Spotlight project for the Construction sector during 2021. This will include a look into the skills and roles required for new greener construction methods.

6. What provision is there in the strategy for post 16 learners still working at Entry levels and Level 1?

The People priority of our Skills Strategy includes detail of the areas we will focus on for economic recovery in the area. This includes support for those that are in at-risk groups who are more likely to require support to develop their skills, including lower-skilled adults.

The action plan covers:

- How we will support training providers to undertake Traineeship provision in the area by providing relevant labour market intelligence (LMI), lobbying for further support for SMEs to engage in work based training through our Skills 360 Board and also work with our Growth Hub colleagues to promote and help businesses to engage with Traineeships.
- For those currently in employment and requiring employability skills, upskilling and/or retraining we will again share our LMI information with partners, look to gain funding for projects through ESF reserve funds/UKSPF and promote to and engage businesses to develop their workforce. In addition, the Growth Hub will support businesses to assess and analyse business skills needs in relation to wider business planning with a view to supporting and developing and upskilling their staff.

To reinforce the importance of increasing young people's skill levels, we are currently working collaboratively with the Youth Hubs in the Coast to Capital area, with providers regarding DWP initiatives such as JETS, and the forthcoming Restart programme and with the Sussex Learning Network on their Covid Class of 2020/21 project.

There are 18 ESF projects delivering across the area supporting people to access training to increase their skill levels and to improve their chances of gaining employment and DWP has just published two further ESF Direct project calls to support people upskill, gain employment and also support those that have recently been made redundant.

7. Is there a way that businesses can still support students on T Level courses if they cannot have them on site in the work place?

Business can still support students by offering virtual industry insights, which might include:

- Virtual guest speaker – Topic Ideas - How did you get to where you are? / The life cycle of the product/ what do you look for in employees? / Q&A session
- Virtual tour of their industry – tour of a studio/site or work placement setting
- Apprentices in your workplace – advice and guidance T Level students

Offering future Industry Placement:

Work with your chosen T-Level provider to identify placements for when it is safe to do so, this could be for this year or future years, it's never too soon to start the process.

Provide your chosen T-Level Provider with feedback- what stops you from proceeding? Receive support to solve the barriers you potentially envisage. Be open to have a no obligation conversation with them and explore the possibilities for the future.

8. How can the Skills Strategy and Action Plan be used to ensure that curriculum development work across West Sussex County Council is aligned?

The Skills Strategy and Action Plan identifies the skills challenges brought about by Covid-19 (page 9), the SWOT analysis (pages 18 and 19), the sub-priorities mentioned under each high level priority (pages 23 and 31) and the sectors discussed (page 32), which providers might want to consider when undertaking curriculum development and planning.

In addition, the Skills and Labour Market Assessment reports contain valuable LMI regarding job postings and opportunities in the area and sort after common or transferable skills.

As a part of our role as the Skills Advisory Panel for the Coast to Capital area, we will be publishing a Local Skills Report in March, which moving forward will be published annually in November. This will incorporate our Skills Strategy and Action Plan, but will also provide an Annex setting out the key employment and skills data for the area. This has been designed by the Department for Education to support education and skills providers with their curriculum planning.

9. In Brighton and Hove we have Future Creators, which is a partnership organisation chaired by Alex Bailey who is CEO of Adur and Worthing. We have been the pilot city for Cities of Learning, delivering digital badges for informal learning and skills development. Which

Board member could we ask to engage with our programme to help support all age residents to be able to showcase their key skills to meet skills gaps across the region?

We will be introducing Board Champion roles to tap into our Board members specific areas of expertise. We are currently working on the scope of these Champion roles, so in the meantime it would be best to contact our Skills Manager, [Claire Witz](#), to discuss collaboration and engagement.

10. Great to hear that the plan includes support for young people and Lower Skills sectors especially since CV19. How can we look to align delivery models with 'Plans for Jobs' and 'Restart' programmes recently announced by the Chancellor that are being developed as we speak, an opportunity to support the recovery in short terms and prepare for build for medium and Longer Term.? Who would be best contact and which panel member to start this conversation?

Our Skills Manager, [Claire Witz](#), is currently having conversations with a range of providers and partners including DWP around the delivery of recovery programmes in the area. We are providing potential providers of Restart programmes with strategic information on priorities for the area and also detailed LMI from our Skills and Labour Market Impact Assessment reports.

11. With the increase in unemployment has the board considered entrepreneurial skills for those who will be considering self-employment? If so, what is the current thinking around start up support? This would cover freelancers in CDIT and those serving the construction sector as well as outsourcing opportunities in many other sectors.

The action plan includes activities to support self-employment and entrepreneurship under both the People Priority and Business Priority.

Two ESF Direct calls have now been published to support people to gain skills to help them enter or re-enter work (including self-employment), and to support SMEs in the area to up skill and reskill their workforce. Details can be found [here](#).

12. Many secondary schools still don't seem to have good digital resources - both hardware and software, and still seem to prohibit the use of smartphones by students in class. Do you have a view on how those in leadership positions in education can be encouraged to loosen the reigns on student's access to their own tech during the school day, and how each classroom can be equipped with a more digital way of learning?

Many schools in the area would welcome the opportunity to improve the digital resources they have and offer a broader opportunity for digital learning. However, there are huge constraints in terms of budgets for state funded schools.

Many students do have access to Smart phones, but there are also large numbers of disadvantaged students who do not and this leads to issues of social mobility. In light of

COVID and schools being closed, the Department for Education are working with schools to ensure all students have access to digital device to enable learning at home.

13. What jobs are anticipated to be most in demand in the post Covid world of recovery?

Through extensive research into our economy carried out over the last three years, and the most recent analysis of the impact of COVID-19, we have learned that we have a broad sector base. That broad sector base is formed of sectors that employ high numbers of people and those where we see opportunity for growth. The distinction is more important than ever as we move through recovery into building resilience and growth.

Sectors identified as having potential for future economic growth:

- Horticulture
- Viticulture (wine growing)
- Tourism
- Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering

High employing sectors:

- Health and Care
- Construction (including skills for decarbonisation e.g. through retrofitting homes)
- Financial and Professional Services

We have also carried out two COVID-19 skills and labour market impact assessments which include analysis of local job postings data. Both can be found on our website [here](#).

14. How can we support services industries whilst they have the period of downturn?

The [Coast to Capital Growth Hub](#) team provides fully funded advice, support and strategic leadership to help small and medium sized enterprises drive sustainable business success. The work of the Growth Hub includes supporting businesses (including the service industry) with planning and focus for the future, for example developing potential plans and tactics and reviewing their finances and financial scenarios. Our Growth Relationship Managers work with businesses to help them to think outside of the box and explore alternative opportunities.

15. Do businesses struggle to generate the revenue they would like and if so do they ask for help in developing better sales skills?

Yes, through our Growth Hub businesses can access our Growth Champion programme. Amongst our Growth Champions we have some great sales consultants available to help.

As well as sales, the Growth Champion programme can support businesses many aspects, including purpose, focus, people and skills. There are many free sales webinars available during this time. Information on all of the support we can offer to businesses can be found on the [Growth Hub](#) website.

16. What key impact/ new activities are suggested for the role of the Enterprise Adviser?

In light of COVID and the subsequent temporary closure of schools, all careers activities and events offered to education centres are now virtual. There are lots of ways an Enterprise Adviser can be involved to include providing opportunities for virtual apprentice/graduate/employer talks to small groups of pupils and in working with us to offer a one day virtual experience of the workplace. We would love to hear from you to discuss this further. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with your [Enterprise Coordinator](#).

17. How can the workplace skills agenda be embedded in schools?

Through our delivery of the Enterprise Adviser Network, we are kept abreast of the workplace skills agenda both nationally and locally in our region from feedback that we receive from businesses via a number of different means. This agenda, together with labour market information is fed back into schools and it's our role to help ensure that careers is embedded into all aspects of the curriculum so that young people recognise the relevance of what they are learning and how this will help them to move successfully on to their next steps. Their next steps can be the world of work, apprenticeships or further or higher education.