

Skills East Sussex, Members Meeting

Members:

AP	Ann Potterton	Sussex Council of Training Providers
AW	Angela Wooller	Sussex Downs College
BS	Becky Shaw	Chief Executive, East Sussex County Council
RS	Cllr Rupert Simmons	East Sussex County Council
DS	Dan Shelley	Sussex Coast College
GP	Graham Peters	Team East Sussex
JS	Jessica Stubbings	East Sussex County Council
KH	Karen Hucker	Bexhill College
LA	Louise Aitken	South East LEP
ME	Martin Ellis (Chair)	Recruitment South East
NL	Nick Luxford	Plumpton College
PM	Paul Mitchell	Sussex Council of Training Providers
PS	Penny Shimmin	Sussex Community Development Association

Guests:

RF	Richard Freeman	Always Possible (SES Task Groups)
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Apologies:

CE	Christina Ewbank	Alliance of Chambers East Sussex
CMK	Caroline McKiddie	East Sussex County Council
DT	Cllr David Tutt	Eastbourne Borough Council
GC	Gill Cahill	CXK
JT	Jo Taylor	Heathfield Community College (Schools Rep)
KF	Cllr Kim Forward	Hastings Borough Council
NB	Cllr Nick Bennett	East Sussex County Council
SW	Sarah Williams	Sussex Learning Network

Secretariat:

HA	Holly Aquilina	East Sussex County Council
KT	Kane Tudor	East Sussex County Council

1. Welcome and minutes of last meeting

1.1. ME welcomed everyone to the meeting. **PS** advised that Tracey Rose has left her position at Horizons and there is not currently a community sector representative. **PS** will attend to represent the VCS (voluntary and community sector) until Speak Up has nominated representatives. **ME** will share nominations with the Board to select a representative.

1.2. ME reviewed the minutes of the last meeting 27.01.2017. All actions had been undertaken.

HA noted that there is another SELEP Skills Area Group meeting on the 25th April. If any members have questions or issues they would like to raise with SELEP then please send them to **HA** by the 23rd April.

DS advised that he has had a meeting with APM, but has not heard from any of the other new contractors in East Sussex about the SCCH offer to use their Adult Education Budget (AEB) to support the ESF funded initiatives. **HA** noted that SCDA had met with Adult Social Care (ASC) from ESCC to look at referral routes and that STUK and APM were in discussion with other local providers about subcontracting options but that arrangements were not yet finalised.

ACTION: HA to update the group at the next meeting about any progress made that is in the public domain.

HA advised that following the last meeting she contacted all five primes for the DWP Work and Health programme and had negotiated with some to reopen their subcontracting EOI portals for East Sussex providers. Links to these portals alongside details from the providers were shared widely by SCTP, to enable all to have the opportunity to apply. By April 3rd three providers will be shortlisted for the programme and the Employment and Skills Team will make sure that providers have another to feed into the plans for the second stage admissions.

ACTION – HA to work with ASC at ESCC to hold open meeting for shortlisted primes and those interested in working with them.

2. SELEP Update

2.1. LA presented to the meeting.

2.2. LA noted that the SELEP skills strategy will be short, concise and backed up by a firm evidence base. This will then be useful when lobbying government. **LA** explained that as SELEP is the largest LEP outside of London the strategy needs to reflect this.

2.3. LA noted that basic skills in the SELEP region are still below the national average. Not enough young people are moving into apprenticeships. We have 500,000 16-24 year olds and only 32,000 apprenticeship starts. We have the highest number of employees in construction, and health and social care outside London. This makes us nationally significant for these sectors.

2.4. LA is hoping to produce LMI and skills information for the SELEP evidence base down to the district and borough level, and presented an example on Hastings. **LA** noted that they will be including information on vacancies advertised in local areas within the evidence base.

2.5. The skills survey to inform the development of the skills strategy is still live. The deadline for the strategy has been delayed in order to reflect aspects of the final industrial strategy and the SELEP local economic plan.

2.6. ME asked **LA** if there were plans to review the strategy and evidence base moving forward. **LA** agreed, and noted that reviewing these annually would be important due to the pace of change.

- 2.7. BS** noted that we have already produced LMI data for East Sussex, and **LA** assured her that this would be incorporated into the SELEP evidence base.
- 2.8. HA** advised that the LMI sector skill reports will be updated in the summer, ready for September. We are waiting for the end of the academic year so that learner numbers and results can be included in the update.
- 2.9. LA** explained that the SELEP AGM and a SELEP Skills and Social Inclusion Awards will take place on 7th July. This will be attended by Robert Halfon MP who is the new Skills Minister. This will be an opportunity to show off Skills Capital projects, EA Networks, ESF projects to the minister. There will be input from each Skills Board into this event.
- 2.10.** The “Funded Projects in East Sussex” document put together by the SES secretariat has been used as a template by the other SELEP skills boards. **LA** noted that if there are any issues with any of the contractors please let her know, the DWP expect SELEP to have an oversight role of the projects.
- 2.11.** To prevent future confusion and duplication, **LA** has requested to the Skills Funding Agency that evidence of support from skills boards (a letter of support) is appended by applicants to future bids.
- 2.12.** **LA** added that skills pages will soon be added to the SELEP website. These will contain a map of local provision. **GP** noted that sometimes Lewes is missed off of SELEP maps due to it also being in Coast to Capital LEP, and that we need to be aware of the importance of Gatwick to the economy of East Sussex.

ACTION – LA to share Essex diagram of skills policies and delivery vehicles

- 2.13.** **JS** highlighted the ‘Funded Projects in East Sussex’ document and noted that this will be added to and updated regularly on the [SES web page](#) as new projects are announced.

3. SES Task Groups update

- 3.1. RF** explained that **HA** has commissioned him to run the task groups focused on Construction, Land Based Industries, Creative and Digital and Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing initially.
- 3.2. RF** noted that all groups have shown huge energy for this work, a will for collaboration and a desire to challenge the status quo. He noted that each group has identified different issues and work, although some common themes have emerged. Overall 40 plus employers are engaged and each group has now met once this year.
- 3.3. Cllr RS** noted that the Land Based group does not mention the visitor economy. **HA** advised that at the Landbased and Visitor Economy SES meeting, it was felt that Land Based had some distinct issues and warranted a separate task group to Visitor Economy. Cllr RS noted the importance of setting up a group for the visitor economy to address the potential for the visitor economy in East Sussex and supporting our restaurants and Hotels.

- 3.4. GP** asked about the culture sector, and if it was incorporated in the Creative and Digital group. **RF** confirmed that culture is represented in the Creative and Digital group, this group has a very broad remit, and is twice the size of other groups. **BS** noted that we have a cultural leaders group, and that they can discuss workforce issues during their meetings on other matters. **RF** committed to ensuring linkage between the two.
- 3.5. DS** noted that he attended the Engineering group and challenged the employers to help shape the curriculum. They have responded very quickly have since had meetings about curriculum planning.
- 3.6. PM** noted that it was great to have so many employers involved in the groups, and expressed a hope this work could be sustained.
- 3.7. Cllr RS** asked that given the University of Brighton's new engineering facility if the universities could be involved. **DS** noted that Professor Andrew Lloyd from Brighton attended the engineering group and is also speaking to employers about their curriculum as part of a review of their engineering offer.
- 3.8. HA** noted that the new T-Levels will need to be developed ahead of 2019, and that these groups could be invaluable in helping local employers to shape these qualifications. She noted that SMEs are not involved in the development of T Levels thus far but that they could input collectively in terms of identifying specific niche qualifications via the task groups.
- 3.9. HA** noted that further to discussions in the last meeting, we will not be setting up a distinct Health and Social Care group. Instead, a delegation from SES will attend the East Sussex Better Together Workforce Strategy meeting on 19th April to discuss skills challenges in the sector and to identify how SES can best support this work.
- 3.10. GP** noted the importance of teaching employability skills to young people, and hoped that some of the task group's work would focus on this.

4. SES Project updates

EA Network and Progress

- 4.1. ME** brought the meetings attention to the updates on the EA Network and Progress, and noted that projects were exceeding targets. He commended Debbie Martin, Sarah Freeman and Kane Tudor for their work delivering and overseeing the projects.

Devolution

- 4.2. BS** informed the group that many SES members had attended a positive devolution meeting that morning. She explained that devolution was not at the top of the Government's agenda currently but that discussion between neighbouring authorities was welcome.

Opportunity Area

- 4.3. BS** noted that the government will be providing funding to six new 'Opportunity areas' with a goal to improving social mobility. The new announcement means that Hastings as an Opportunity area will receive approximately £6.5m but that there is currently a lack of clarity about how this will be allocated. A meeting is taking place in Hastings this month and the outcomes will be shared with SES. **DS** suggested that some of the funding is used to deliver English and Maths at all levels, to support teacher recruitment, attendance at school / college which is still below the national average.
- 4.4. HA** advised that The Careers and Enterprise Company (C&EC) have funded an additional Enterprise Coordinator for the opportunity area for 18 months who will sit in her team. They will support Sarah Freeman and Debbie Martin and will coordinate careers and employer led interventions in the opportunity area schools. The C&EC has also said that it will give funding to schools (apportioned by pupil) and schools will be able to purchase C&EC approved/funded programmes with this funding. **DS** advised that it is likely a proportion of the funding will have to be used in this way. The C&EC has suggested that if we wish to see schools accessing locally approved projects, we need to ensure that these projects apply to the C&EC for Opportunity Area investment funding in June/July.

AW advised that a digital badges scheme which gives students the opportunity to present their extra-curricular achievements to employers could be useful in the opportunity area and in the wider county. **HA** noted that we will also look at other ways of supporting this scheme.

5. Industrial Strategy

- 5.1. ME** explained that there is a consultation running through TES on the Industrial Strategy. **HA** advised that SES can feed into this response and will need to answer 38 questions in the consultation document in relation to skills. Responses will need to be submitted to TES secretariat by next Tuesday 28th March. **BS** suggested that the ESCC response was also circulated if helpful. **GP** noted that while TES is responding independently they will also be feeding into the SELEP response.

ACTION - KT to circulate consultation to SES members

- 5.2. HA** advised that she will prepare a briefing for SES when full details of the Skills White Paper are released. As a 'heads up' this will include new T-Levels (technical qualifications) running alongside apprenticeships and traditional academic pathways. There will be a big push to move adults to being skilled to Level 4, and there will be a strong focus on those already in employment.

6. Skills East Sussex – Two Year Review

- 6.1. ME** noted that this meeting marks the second anniversary of Skills East Sussex which **ME** has been chairing for nearly one and a half years. He noted the achievements of SES to date as outlined in the Two Year Review paper, and how it could continue to be

effective in the future. **ME** noted that he is particularly pleased that the Task Groups have regained momentum, the EA Network has grown well and been successful, the colleges have been working with employers to develop new curriculum, and he also noted that we seem to have made more progress and been a lot more active in terms of outcomes and delivery in comparison to other skills boards.

ME thinks the group needs to continue its direction of travel, as it is delivering against its stated objectives and targets well, but needs to concentrate on improving its communication as messages don't always get out past the Board. He also feels that it is important to work with other Skills Boards to lobby on key messages and identified a range of issues in his paper where collaborative lobbying should be pursued.

ME finished by thanking members and the secretariat for their work and noted that there would be an election for the chair at one of the next meetings.

6.2. BS noted that SES has strengthened the links between the public sector and education and has ensured we are more joined up and working together.

6.3. DS agreed with **BS** but noted that SES only has so much capacity. He urged the meeting to focus on things that can have the biggest impact, to ensure we get more 'bang for our buck'. **ME** also noted that the work of the Secretariat to support SES was significant and that we were fortunate to have support from the Employability and Skills Team at the Council.

7. Skills East Sussex – Review of Terms of Reference

7.1. **ME** noted that we need to make sure that the SES Terms of Reference is linked up with Team East Sussex and SELEP. **ME** asked the group if they would prefer to move meetings to being quarterly rather than every two months. **GP** noted that the agenda is always full, and members agreed that the meeting should remain every two months.

7.2. DS said that the pace of change in the sector is very fast and that according to the Institute of Government, since the early 1980's FE has had 28 pieces of major legislation, 48 different ministers across six different government departments overseeing FE and no organisation has lasted for more than a decade. [Institute for Government, "All Change - Why Britain is so prone to policy reinvention and what can be done about it"](#)

7.3. ME recommended that we review the membership of SES, and noted that we need more employers and someone who can represent adults. **DS** noted that Job Centre Plus are a major player and have not been at SES, Wayne Edmunds from Job Centre Plus should be invited to join SES. This was agreed.

ACTION – HA to invite Wayne Edmunds to join SES

7.4. ME stated that he was delighted that we have a new schools representative, **Jo Taylor** from Heathfield College.

7.5. BS noted that we lost a business representative when Amanda Meneham stopped attending. HA suggested that a representative from Costain-CH2M who run East Sussex Highways could be invited to attend as a large local employer with an engineering and construction expertise. All to recommend business nominations to ME.

ACTION – All to send nominations to HA who will liaise with ME re appointing two business representatives.

8. PM further noted that the chambers have not attending recent meetings. ME noted that he will speak to Christina Ewbank about attending meetings more regularly or we will consider inviting Sussex Chambers instead of/as well as.

ACTION – ME to speak to Christina Ewbank about attendance at SES

8.1. JS asked about VCS representation. PS noted that there is a nomination process through Speak Up for Tracey Rose to be replaced, and this should be complete before the next meeting.

8.2. KH noted that Bexhill College was not on the members list, HA agreed to update this.

ACTION – KTU to update TOR to include Bexhill College

8.3. ME asked the meeting to consider the forward plan for SES meetings.

Cllr RS suggested that the Visitor Economy Task group is the next to be delivered instead of Financial Services. DS noted that Brexit is likely to cause a workforce drain due to the amount of EU nationals working in the industry. The meeting agreed a Visitor Economy Task Group should be established.

ACTION – Visitor Economy Task Group to be set up

8.4. The group discussed the meeting on the 5th July and ME suggested that this was a wider stakeholder meeting – a SES skills summit, to look at the SES Action Plan and to discuss wider issues and communicate SES messages. This was agreed.

ACTION – Secretariat to organise wider skills event

9. Draft SES Action Plan

9.1. JS thanked members for feeding into the KPIs, and asked the meeting to review the KPIs in the draft action plan and asked members if they felt that these were the right KPI's to monitor.

CEIAG

9.2. DS asked why there were no KPI's to cover young people over the age of 18. HA advised that although not ideal we can only include KPI's where we have data available to measure. DS noted that DfE may have data on job outcomes.

9.3. DS noted that in 1.b. increasing the percentage of 16-18 year olds in learning even by 1% equates to a very large number of young people. We need to have actual number as well as percentages in the baselines so we can judge whether these targets are realistic.

Helping young people become ready for the world of employment

9.4. GP asked if WEX was really the best way of ensuring you people were work ready and have the required employability skills. **BS** explained that this was the best proxy measure that we have currently. We would explore whether we could find an additional measure.

Addressing gender imbalance in employment and study in key industries/sectors

9.5. DS asked if 12 women moving into construction or engineering apprenticeships were enough. **JS** noted that we could double the target if the meeting felt that 12 was unambitious but that the current benchmark is zero. **BS** noted that this is an issue for the Construction Task Group to address.

Making sure that the curriculum is shaped by employers wherever there is scope for this to be done

9.6. DS noted that it is not just Sussex Skills Solutions who should be working with employers to develop curriculum offers.

Helping to stimulate the uptake of Apprenticeships and higher level skills and learning

9.7. DS noted that the Sussex Learning Network NCOP programme has targets which could be incorporated into this section.

9.8. PS advised that we could monitor the amount of students achieving A* - C grades at GCSE. **LA** suggested that we could look at achievement at A levels of qualification using the data cube.

9.9. DS advised that the suggested increase in people attaining at L4 would equate to 12,000, and that this was too ambitious and suggested that we should be measuring the amount of people who hold L4 qualifications, rather than the amount of people who do not.

9.10. JS suggested that we remove the reference to 'no qualifications' and replace with Level 2.

9.11. HA suggested that we review these KPI's annually. **PM** noted that the important part of the plan is what is in the activity section underneath the targets.

9.12. HA explained that she would amend the KPIs and would then circulate the Action Plan to Board Members to review and to populate with their targets and activities in the tables.

ACTION: All to add actions to the action plan and ensure that partners do likewise

10.AOB and DONM

10.1. DS commented that we need to lobby/complain to the SFA about the deadlines for the procurement of organisations to deliver apprenticeships to non-Levy papers. ME noted that he would be happy to put his name to any correspondence. LA advised that she would draft a LEP letter for the three skills board's chairs to sign.

ACTION: LA to draft letter to SFA

10.2. LA advised that after the LEP meeting on the 7th July there will be an awards ceremony for businesses that have supported the LEP skills agenda. HA will work with her on the categories and will share these with SES.

The next meeting is on 30th May 2017, 14:00 to 16:00 at County Hall, Lewes.