

## Skills East Sussex, Members Meeting

### Members Attending:

AC	Ana Christie	Sussex Chambers of Commerce
CE	Christina Ewbank	Alliance of Chambers East Sussex
ClIr RS	ClIr Rupert Simmons	East Sussex County Council
CT	Catherine Tipton	East Sussex Highways
CWT	Clare Westbrey Tong	Sussex Downs College
DS	Dan Shelley	Sussex Coast College Hastings
GC	Gill Cahill	CXK
GP	Graham Peters	Team East Sussex
JH	James Harris	East Sussex County Council
JS	Jessica Stubbings	East Sussex County Council
LA	Louise Aitken	South East LEP
PM	Paul Mitchell	Sussex Council of Training Providers
PS	Penny Shimmin	Speak Up Representative / SCDA
LJ	Lucy Jenks	Sussex Learning Network
VC	Victoria Conheady	Hastings Borough Council
WE	Wayne Edmunds	Job Centre Plus DWP

### Apologies:

BS	Becky Shaw	East Sussex County Council
ClIr BS	ClIr Bob Standley	East Sussex County Council
ClIr DT	ClIr David Tutt	Eastbourne Borough Council
ClIr KF	ClIr Kim Forward	Hastings Borough Council
JT	Jo Taylor	Heathfield Community College (Schools Representative)
KH	Karen Hucker	Bexhill College
ME	Martin Ellis	Recruitment South East (Chair)
NL	Nick Ludford	Plumpton College
RF	Richard Freeman	Always Possible (SES Task Groups)
SW	Sarah Williams	Sussex Learning Network

### Secretariat:

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

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## 1. Welcome and election of chair and minutes of last meeting

**1.1. JH** introduced himself and advised the meeting that he was standing in for **BS** who was unable to attend. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that since the last meeting we have had a chair election.

**1.2. JH** advised that the election had been very close, and that **CT** had been elected as the new chair of Skills East Sussex (SES). **JH** praised the passion, energy and enthusiasm that **ME** had brought to the role of chair. He noted that while **ME** was unable to be here today, he wanted to place on record his thanks to **ME** for all his work in establishing SES. All Board members asked to note their thanks to **ME** for the two years that he has spent as Chair of the Board, and noted that they hoped that he would continue to bring

his experience to SES as a board member. **Cllr RS** stated that he wanted to thank **ME** for the work undertaken to get SES to where it is today. **JH** handed over to **CT**, who introduced herself to new members. **CT** works for CH2M, an engineering and construction company that delivers East Sussex Highways in a joint venture with Costain and ESCC. **CT** emphasised her commitment to the East Sussex skills agenda. **CT** is based in the Ringmer Depot office from Tuesday to Thursday each week.

## 2. Minutes of the last meeting

2.1. **CT** asked the meeting if they agreed that the minutes of the last meeting were a correct record.

2.2. **Cllr RS** noted that in 9.2 he did not say that Hailsham had agreed to take part in Heathfield works.

### **ACTION – KT to amend and remove reference to Hailsham in 9.2**

2.3. **CT** took the meeting through the actions of the last meeting.

- Regarding **Cllr RS's** request that a head teacher is identified to sit on SES, **HA** updated the meeting that SLES has been looking into this. **Cllr RS** noted that this was especially important, as a head teacher had the ability to influence other head teachers in a way others cannot.
- **GP** noted **ME's** point in 2.1 where he called for greater business representation on the SES Board. **CE** suggested we could have EA's attend on a rotational basis, or a pool of businesses to be invited. **DS** advised that he wouldn't be in favour of this idea as he saw consistency as important, so that members are up to date with developments.
- **HA** noted that the TOR does allow for four business representatives, and although we have **AC** and **CE** as representatives of membership organisations, we could have an additional business representative. **GP** stressed the need to avoid employer fatigue and noted that it was more important that employers attended the task groups.

### **ACTION – CT and HA to discuss an additional business representative**

- **HA** had been asked to circulate an ESF bid from Hastings Works for the board to endorse. **HA** advised that Hastings Works decided against bidding, hence no bid was circulated.

## 3. SES Project Update Paper

### Enterprise Adviser Network

3.1. **CT** noted that we need more Enterprise Advisers (EA's) from the Creative and Digital, and Health and Social Care Sectors. She asked the meeting for suggestions.

3.2. **DS** advised that Skills for Care may be a good place to start for Health and Social Care. **AC** and **CE** advised that they would reach out to their members to see who would like to

be involved. **CWT** suggested that Tech Resort may be a good option for a Creative and Digital EA.

**ACTION – HA to ask Debbie Martin and Sarah Freeman to pick this up before next meeting**

## Progress

**3.3. KT** advised that Progress has now reached over 8500 young people in East Sussex. Most activities have already surpassed targets and in some cases have greatly overachieved. Those that are still under target will continue to deliver in the final quarter of the project until the end of September 2017.

## 4. SES Sector Task Groups Update

**4.1. HA** advised that only the Land Based Task Group had met since the last SES meeting. The group wants to promote the breadth of careers in the sector and is exploring areas such as automation and the use of technology in land based careers. They are keen to promote land based learning and careers to young people but also to adults so are keen to forge links with careers service providers.

**4.2.** There are misperception issues (that land based jobs are largely animal husbandry) and Brexit is already seeing shifting labour patterns for this sector. The group wants to focus on the changing skills needs for the sector and feel employers need more platforms to showcase the range of opportunities available in the sector in order to stimulate uptake in learning.

The task group is looking to develop a portal for employers and educators in the sector to promote careers and learning and wants to get involved in schools as industry champions and intends to work with other task groups on shared areas of interest such as STEM and Digital.

**4.3. JH** asked **HA** if she would define land based for the group. **HA** advised that broadly the Land Based Task Group includes employers from Agriculture, horticulture, farming, land management, forestry and landscape gardening. **VC** noted that she is meeting with IFCA (Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities) next week and suggested they could be involved from a fisheries point of view.

**ACTION – VC to ask IFCA about attending Land Based Task Groups and pass contact details to HA**

**4.4. DS** noted that frustratingly land based businesses in East Sussex were generally small, although West Sussex contains some very large land based companies. **HA** advised that Viticress, a large land based company, sits on our Task Group despite being in West Sussex.

**4.5. CE** asked about microbreweries and viticulture businesses being represented. **HA** noted that viticulture was and **CIlr RS** noted that ESCC has invested in some microbreweries through our Grants and Loans programmes that could be involved. **CE** and **AC** suggested Longman and Harvey's could be involved as they are larger companies.

## **ACTION: HA to ask RF to pursue leads**

- 4.6. HA** advised the meeting that all task groups would be developing career pathway infographics, all will be looking at T-Levels and all will be looking at the ESF (European Social Fund) underspend and coming up with ideas from projects.
- 4.7. JH** asked the meeting if everyone was happy with the Task Groups as they were. **DS** noted that it was early days since the refresh, although the task groups do have more employer leadership and engagement.
- 4.8. JS** asked if we should have success criteria for each task group. **HA** noted that there were some targets in the SES Activity Plan, and suggested that as the Task Groups were employer led they need to set their own criteria and direction.
- 4.9. AC** asked why there was not a tourism task group, and **HA** advised that while Land Based and Visitor Economy were grouped in our priority sectors, they are so diverse that we have decided to run them as two separate groups. She advised that a Visitor Economy group is to be set up in the autumn as per the forward plan.
- 4.10. JH** explained the origin of the East Sussex priority growth sectors, how they were developed and the evidence base behind them. **Cllr RS** added that this work also anticipated which sectors would be important in the future and where potential growth could come from.
- 4.11. PM** noted that the Open University has published research on the cost of skills shortages to UK businesses (£2.2bn). He noted to address this we need to keep the activities of SES and its sector groups focused on the task of meeting the skills needs of employers.

## **5. SELEP Skills Update**

### **SELEP Skills Showcase**

- 5.1. HA** shared that **LA** could not attend today, as she is preparing for the SELEP Skills Showcase event on Friday. She advised that a briefing paper for the day has been shared and includes favourable mentions of East Sussex businesses.
- 5.2. HA** advised the meeting that the following East Sussex businesses have been nominated for the following awards:
- The regional employer award for large employers who are working above and beyond to support people of all ages into employment – [East Sussex Highways](#)
  - The regional employer award for small employers who are working above and beyond to support people of all ages into employment – [Marshall Tufflex](#)
  - The local award for examples of best practice and impact in East Sussex – [East Sussex Highways](#), [Marshall Tufflex](#), [Bowles Learning and Development Centre](#)

## European Social Fund

- 5.3. **HA** advised that there is a £20 million underspend on ESF, and there is a workshop on 12<sup>th</sup> September to brainstorm projects that could be delivered in the short time frame that is left.
- 5.4. **VC** asked if this would be one project or many, **HA** replied that it could be multiple projects, although money has to be matched. **DS** noted that rules around match funding were a problem, and meant that no one from Kent and Essex bid in the last round.
- 5.5. **HA** stated that she would like SES to input ideas prior to her attending the meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> September and that she would also ask Task Groups to input thoughts as the funding could have a sector based focus.
- 5.6. **GP** asked **HA** if she could distribute guidance on this funding opportunity.

**ACTION – HA to circulate information on ESF when she has received it**

## SELEP Skills Strategy

- 5.7. **HA** advised that there have not been many responses to the SELEP Skills Strategy consultation from East Sussex businesses. She asked if **AC** and **CE** would distribute this to their members.

**ACTION – KT to redistribute the link to the Skills Strategy Consultation**

**ACTION – AC and CE to distribute to their members and prompt responses from them**

- 5.8. **JH** asked the purpose of the development of a SELEP Skills Strategy, given that there is very little LEP funding for skills. **DS** noted that the strategy focused on what we are doing LEP wide, although it would include district level summaries. **PM** noted that we would want to see some proposals about activity in it.

## 6. Policy and Funding Items

- 6.1. **NCOP. LJ** advised that she was standing in for Sarah Williams to update the group on NCOP. She noted that NCOP is targeted at year 9 to 13, and projects need to be delivered by September 2018. She said that several programmes have been awarded funding included the digital badges (colleges) and transition support (ESCC).
- 6.2. **LJ** suggested that she could present a full project report at the next SES meeting in September

**ACTION – SLN to present on NCOP at next SES meeting**

- 6.3. **ESF DWP. CWT** shared that they have submitted a SES partnership bid for £1.53m million, but have little idea on when they will hear. She thanked **HA** for her input into the development of this proposal. Partners include SCTP, SCDA, SCCH, DV8 and Plumpton College. It is not known when the outcome of the application will be heard.

**6.4. TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS PLAN.** HA said that she would like to spend a proper amount of time in September looking at the new Bill as there are issues for SES to discuss on how T-Levels will work after they are launched in 2019. There will be 15 technical pathways developed by 2022, and it is expected that providers will specialise in a few pathways. The requirement for three months of work experience is potentially problematic and will require huge support from employers. HA noted that we will need to discuss how we can influence the implementation of T levels locally, and what we can do to do to prepare employers.

**6.5. LOCAL GROWTH FUND:** JH shared that the replacement for the Local Growth Fund (LGF) is in development.

**6.6. CURRENT ESF DELIVERY.** HA noted that there is significant under delivery and underspend on the current co-financed ESF programmes and questioned whether any underspend could be used as match for the new £20mn. DS noted that the worst case scenario was that the current contract holders had their contracts extended.

**6.7.** HA noted that BBO ESF funding specifically for carers was not awarded last time, and that we have asked SELEP for this funding to be ring-fenced for East Sussex.

**6.8. PS** noted that she was worried about the mesh of ESF and Big Lottery, and noted concern that projects would be undeliverable because of overly arduous audit and reporting arrangements. GP asked if he should ask Chris Brodie (SELEP Chair) to feed this back at a higher level. PS agreed to send GP a summary of the issue over email to share with Chris Brodie.

**ACTION – PS to send summary of issue to GP, for him to raise with Chris Brodie**

## **7. College Curriculum Plans**

**7.1. CWT** presented the curriculum plan of Sussex Downs College for 2018-19 and noted that the college felt it was important that SES supported the plan. Cllr RS asked about Hairdressing being categorised in the Visitor Economy section and asked whether hairdressers were in demand locally. DS advised that Hair and Beauty were a very important part of the Visitor Economy; CE added that because you can't get these services on the internet they were increasingly important in bringing visitors to town centres and highstreets.

**7.2. AC** emphasised the changing nature of jobs in engineering as a result of AI and automation, and noted that these new roles would be about maintaining systems rather than building or maintaining them directly. She asked that the curriculum reflected this.

**7.3. PM** asked if the plan included sub-contracted courses. CWT advised that it did not, because Sussex Downs College has relatively few subcontractors now.

**7.4. DS** presented the curriculum plan of Sussex Coast College for 2018-19, he noted that his plan also didn't include sub-contracted arrangements. DS noted they have been encouraged to grow higher level qualifications both apprenticeships and other. In

construction they are good at trades, but need to develop higher skills training such as surveying. **DS** noted however, that colleges struggle to deliver learning in technical areas, as it is hard to recruit teachers with the right technical skills from the industry, where they can earn far more.

**7.5. GP** asked about the low volume of courses in the low carbon sector. **DS** advised that this is mainly embedded in their construction training, but there are no discrete low carbon courses. **CWT** added that the colleges would welcome further guidance on what they could do around the low carbon sector. **HA** noted that Rampion Offshore Wind joining the SES Engineering Task Group could help with this.

**7.6. AC** noted that construction is increasingly using Business Information System (BIS) and that this should be embedded in training. **DS** agreed to explore training options but noted that this was more relevant for higher level qualifications and not appropriate for trades.

**7.7. VC** shared that Hastings is now a “Music City” as part of the “opportunity area” and asked whether this could be reflected in the college provision

**7.8. HA** shared that Plumpton and Bexhill College will be sharing their curriculum plans in September.

**7.9. JH** asked if the colleges would share these plans with the task groups before signing them off by SES. **DS** and **CWT** agreed.

#### **ACTION – KT to ask RF to share curriculum plans with SES Task Groups**

**7.10. Cllr RS** noted that Quantitative Surveyors were a large skill gap in the county, and would like to see courses for these developed, he is hoping the UTC will help here. **DS** noted that the colleges are meeting UTC to discuss using some of their facilities to run more advanced technical courses.

**7.11. PM** welcomed the fact that the colleges were bringing their curriculum plans to SES, but emphasised that in order to get a true picture of local skills supply, the provision offered by many other providers would need to be taken into account, although this would be difficult to achieve.

**7.12. CT** asked the meeting if they were happy to sign off and approve the curriculum plans, subject to the task groups seeing them. The meeting agreed.

## **8. SES Activity Plan**

**8.1. CT** advised that the Activity Plan has been updated in line with the comments at the last meeting, and asked if the group were happy to sign this off for the final time. The meeting agreed.

## **9. SES Partner Updates**

**9.1. CT** asked the meeting to update on the work they have been doing, and any news relevant to SES.

- 9.2. DS** advised that the colleges are to co-commission £400,000 of the Adult Education Budget with ESCC. In 17/18 there will be a focus on family learning, including parents, and health and wellbeing. He noted that EOI's close today and that they would soon be tendering for September delivery. Next year they plan to engage earlier with ESCC and SES to target funding.
- 9.3. DS** updated the meeting on the University Centre in Hastings. Building work has started and is on schedule. An opening event on Sunday has generated 10 enrolments so far, and there will be a launch event which SES members will be invited to.
- 9.4. DS** advised that there will be a decision made tomorrow, on a full merger between Sussex Downs College and Sussex Coast College and that he would notify SES prior to the official announcement being made next week.
- 9.5. WE** noted that the recovery centre in Brighton and Hove was doing well and is oversubscribed. He was pleased to see that this was being considered in East Sussex.
- 9.6. VC** advised that Hastings has submitted an ESIF (European Structural Investment Fund) bid for a community led local development project (CLLD) and will hear by the end of the month. There have been some delays but are hoping to start this by the end of the year.
- 9.7. VC** noted that they are supporting the Department for Education with the Hastings Opportunity Area (£6 million investment). They are looking at partnership boards and large stakeholder events, as well as the creation of a 'research school'. They are looking for larger long term projects and are considering if this can be used as ESF match.
- 9.8. AC** advised that there is a British Chambers event tomorrow on Business and Education in London.
- 9.9.** Sussex Chambers have funding to run careers fairs, and although hosted in Hove they are hoping East Sussex schools will attend.  
<http://www.sussexchamberofcommerce.co.uk/events/member-events/your-future-careers-fair-hove>
- 9.10. AC** advised that they have received SELEP funding to run skills development training in leadership and management for businesses. This is fully funded so will be free of charge. <https://ixionholdings.lpages.co/selep-employer/>

**ACTION – AC to share details with KT re training for circulation to task groups**

- 9.11. CWT** advised that they are advertising for a project coordinator to deliver the NCOP funded "go forward" project as the Sussex Downs "innovation team" have won funding to further develop digital badges.
- 9.12. PM** thanked the meeting for their lobbying efforts on the problems with Apprenticeship funding raised last time. **PM** noted that the new skills minister has made positive noises, but that we need to keep lobbying. **Clr RS** advised that he will mention this again in communication with the new skills minister Ann Milton.

**9.13.** CE advised that ACES (Alliance of Chambers East Sussex) have been awarded a small amount of funding to coach the unemployed. The aim is to develop their skills on a market stall, before introducing them to the Arndale Centre who will be recruiting 6-700 new staff.

**9.14.** CE shared that ACES have also been looking into what they can do about street drinking and rough sleeping in Eastbourne Town Centre. They would like to help people before they reach the streets and have been looking at debt support. CE noted that they had been impressed with the work of the Colchester CAP Debt Centre in Essex, and were looking at developing something similar here.

**9.15.** PS advised that she is part of the East Sussex Advice Partnership, and they have been working on these issues and work with people with debt problems. She suggested that to avoid duplication, CE come and speak about this at one of their meetings. WE noted that there is a rough sleeper programme run by Hastings Borough Council, which may be of interest.

**ACTION – CE and PS to discuss coordinating work on debt**

**ACTION – WE to send information for KT to distribute**

## **10.SES Forward Plan**

**10.1.** The meeting agreed to add a discussion on an East Sussex Skills Summit to the agenda in September.

**ACTION – KT to add to Forward Plan**

## **11. AOB and DONM**

**11.1.** WE added that Universal Credit is being rolled out, and he will be able to explain more about the impact of this at the next meeting. Agreed to add this to the forward plan.

**ACTION – KT to add to Forward Plan**

**11.2.** KT advised that ESCC will be running Open Doors again in November 2017, and asked members if they knew any businesses who could be involved.

**ACTION – CE and AC to send out request to members**

**11.3.** KT advised that he is currently updating the Skills Sector Reports which he hopes to have completed by the end of September. AC requested the link to these current reports to be circulated. VC said that she had found them very useful for bid writing and asked that if abridged updated versions are to be created, that the original documents remain on ESIF.

*The next meeting will take place on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2017, from 14:00 to 16:00 at the Eastbourne Campus of Sussex Downs College.*