

## South East LEP Skills Advisory Group Meeting

22<sup>nd</sup> August 2017

Park Crescent conference Centre, London

# Minutes and Actions

### Attending

Louise Aitken (LA), South East LEP  
 Holly Aquilina (HA), East Sussex CC  
 Carol Anson-Higgs (CAH), Essex Provider Network  
 Allan Baille (AB), Kent County Council  
 Caroline Betts (CB), Essex County Council (*attending for Peter Cook*)  
 Lindsay Collins (LC), Kent Association of Training Organisations  
 Lucy Dresne (LD), University of Kent (*new HE member*)  
 Viki Faulkner (VF), University of Brighton (*new HE member, attending for Sue Baxter*)  
 Martin Hall (MH), Medway Council  
 Debbie Leach (DL), HM Prison Service  
 Brin Martin (BM), Southend Council  
 Paul Mitchell (PM) Sussex Council of Training Providers  
 Angela O'Donoghue (AoD), South Essex College  
 Graham Razey (GR), Canterbury and East Kent College (**CHAIR**)

### Guest speaker

David Knox (DK), Kent County Council  
 Jim Sims (JS), The Service Design Company

### Apologies

Simon Cook, Mid Kent College  
 Michele Lucas, Thurrock Council  
 Tracy Rudling, Community 360 (*new CVS member*)  
 Dan Shelly, Sussex Coast College

AGENDA ITEM / NOTES	ACTION/ PAPER
<b>Welcome and introductions</b>	
GR welcomed members and noted that Debbie Leach (HM Prison Service) had joined the group to set out the work with offenders and opportunities to do more.	
<b>Minutes of last meeting (20<sup>th</sup> June 2017)</b>	
Minutes were agreed by members ( <b>attached</b> ).	
All outstanding actions picked up through the meeting agenda with the exception of:  LA noted that the Opportunity South East pilot site is now live and feedback is sought	<b>ACTION:</b> All members to provide feedback on the

<p>from colleagues. <a href="https://my.opportunitiesoutheast.co.uk/">https://my.opportunitiesoutheast.co.uk/</a>.</p> <p>With regard to the Adult Education Budget (AEB) recent procurement, colleagues expressed some concern with the process and flagged that some providers have been unduly impacted whilst offering good delivery responding to unemployment and skills shortages. It was agreed that clarification should be sought from the ESFA regarding how bids had been prioritised (the Index for Multiple Deprivation has been used which looks at ward and Super output level whilst allocations have been made on a local authority basis). Members also agreed that clarification should be sought on how much has been allocated to each LEP area given the numbers of unemployed, benefit claimants and workless households across the SELEP area. Colleagues also agreed that it would be useful to get confirmation on the process for future allocations.</p> <p><b>POST MEETING NOTE</b></p> <p><i>LA has written to the ESFA to request clarification on priority areas and how these were determined, given the large numbers of unemployed people across the area (including some with high levels who by the ESFA's criteria are not eligible). Although the ESFA have responded and confirmed IMD / local authority areas have been used, a definitive list has been requested as there are several 'top 20' lists. The ESFA have also been asked how much funding has been allocated to each local authority area of the national pot and why some bidders with very high scores were not successful. Pending the response to these queries, it has been agreed that a formal letter will be sent to the ESFA.</i></p>	<p>Opportunities South East pilot site</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> LA to contact ESFA for further information on distribution and prioritisation of AEB budget.</p>
<p>Welcome to Debbie Leach, HM Prison Regional Head of Learning and Skills</p>	
<p>DL shared an overview of prisons in the LEP area (attached) and noted that SELEP had the largest number of prisons nationally outside London. There has been a reconfiguration of prison populations so offenders are now released near their home to assist with resettlement.</p> <p>Prison education has been through a national ESFA contract with Manchester College, now in its sixth year. Moving forward, the contract will be with the Ministry of Justice who will have a say in delivery. There will be just under £8 million annual investment and training opportunities will be publicised via the Bravo portal. The Prison Service is keen to work with local providers and colleges as part of this new arrangement to provide greater continuity from being in prison to release. Governors are keen to have a range of providers on the system in order to be able to provide a variety of offers, such as numeracy and literacy, digital, construction skills.</p> <p>A successful model is already established in Kent, working with Canterbury College and Mainstream and supporting foreign nationals.</p> <p>DL is also keen to provide training for where the jobs and skills needs are to best prepare prisoners on release. Therefore she is working with employers to understand their requirements and explore what training needs to be put in place.</p> <p>Not all the prison population are work ready, so a balanced approach is required.</p> <p>Colleagues said they would share the procurement opportunity with their networks.</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>PrisonsinSELEParea.pdf</p> </div>



These projects will require LEP Strategic Board sign off through a paper and endorsement. GR would outline this to the board as LEP Board member and Board Champion for the Skills Advisory Group. The criteria to include with the board paper is as below and the following rules should be applied:

- SSF should be used for project related spend, not business as usual or operational costs
- Bids should adhere to a minimum threshold of £5,000 and a maximum of £40% of the total in-year pot (i.e. £200k or £200k pa)
- Initiatives should be focused and time-limited and progress updates re spend and deliverables should be reported at LEP Board meetings on a biannual basis until the project initiative is complete

Criteria to include with board paper seeking SSF:

The project/initiative is **pan-SELEP in scope** and will have an impact across all federal areas.

The project/initiative can demonstrate that it will contribute to SELEP's mission to create the conditions for increased numbers of **jobs and homes**, safeguard existing jobs and raise skills levels across the area.

The project/initiative is consistent with SELEP's priorities as defined in the **Strategic Economic Plan** and can demonstrate a positive impact on other parts of the SELEP agenda.

The project/initiative is also supported by at least a 30% local funding contribution, which will be available to spend alongside the GPF revenue investment \*\*

The project/initiative provides high **Value for Money** and will stand up to the monitoring and evaluation requirements of the SELEP Assurance Framework when presented to Strategic Board.

The project/initiative can be delivered **following the legal requirements for investment of public funds**.

The project/initiative is supported by a lead County Council/ Unitary Authority. This authority will be required to provide **S151 or equivalent sign off**.

GR asked members to give some thought to potential projects ahead of the next meeting and if possible, send these to LA in advance.

It was noted that it may be possible to attract other funding through this, such as through Employment and Skills Boards to create a greater pot.

GoD noted that recruitment of tutors to skills shortage areas is an ongoing issue and so may be an area to explore. The Essex ESB had set up schemes such as a 'Golden Hello' to support but there is more to do. CAH said Essex partners were exploring a pilot with two or three employers to identify areas of curriculum there is not expertise for. This may provide some initial investment also with a view to creating a bigger pot / programme through the SSF.

**ACTION:** All members to send potential project ideas to LA for discussion at 31/10 meeting

<p><b>ESFA Response letter to SELEP regarding non Levy apprenticeship allocations</b></p>	
<p>LA confirmed that further to the issue being raised by members she had prepared a letter which was signed by LEP Boards and partners to the ESFA outlining concerns with the non-levy apprenticeship allocations (attached).</p> <p>A response had been received and circulated to members (attached) who were asked for their thoughts.</p> <p>Members agreed that there had not been as much concern expressed by providers further to the revised process being outlined. It was therefore agreed to keep a watching brief on this issue and review whether the revised process works. There are still potential issues for sub-contractors and the need to adapt. Members should advise LA regarding any issues provide specific examples where possible.</p>	 <p>South East LEP Letter to ESFA and SI</p>  <p>Response to the South East LEP.DOCX</p>
<p><b>SELEP Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)</b></p>	
<p>Before outlining the Skills Strategy and Evidence Base, LA introduced Jim Sims of the Service Design Company who is leading on the SELEP Economic Plan (SEP) and which will link to the Skills Strategy.</p> <p>Jim outlined that there was currently a great deal of consultation with local partners for the development of the SEP and the Skills Strategy and Evidence base is very useful in feeding into this. Skills has emerged as a key priority for the SEP also.</p> <p>From a Government perspective, LEPs are a key vehicle in delivering the Industrial Strategy and which includes <a href="#">ten 'pillars'</a> including skills. This is also covered in the Skills Strategy. The SEP will tie in with these and will provide a LEP wide view as opposed to spatial, setting out how to make the area globally competitive and ambitious. The vision for the SEP will be shared with the LEP Board at their 22<sup>nd</sup> September meeting and finalised late 2017/ early 2018.</p> <p>LA, JS and colleagues will ensure there is join up and alignment for the SEP and Skills Strategy.</p>	
<p><b>SELEP draft Skills Strategy and Evidence Base</b></p>	
<p>LA had circulated the draft Skills Strategy and Evidence base in advance which members had read. LA gave an overview of key messages and headlines emerging from this (attached). The Strategy and evidence base will be accompanied by district / sector profiles and special reports on Brexit and the digital revolution, which LA will share asap.</p> <p>Overall, members were very positive about the draft documents and agreed they read well, were accessible to people not familiar with the skills landscape and were not too long.</p> <p>GR asked members to divide into working groups to consider key questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there any data or evidence which is missing?</li> <li>• What are the priority issues emerging from the strategy?</li> </ul>	 <p>Skills Strategy Headlines.pdf</p>

Key areas of feedback to be incorporated into the Strategy:

- Prison data should be added to the evidence base
- Below age 16 data and issues should be reflected (the Careers Enterprise Adviser network works with secondary schools)
- Brexit and our response is a key area of priority as this may have greater impact on SELEP than other areas
- We need to increase skills levels at all levels, for those in and out of work. Moving up (from level 2 to 3) is particularly important for social mobility
- We need to increase productivity and business growth to be a competitive area and increase the earnings of our residents
- It would be useful to capture current subjects undertaken to ensure focus on those that need to increase in response to shortages
- It's important to capture the barriers to growth (i.e. employers bombarded with initiatives and can't navigate a complex landscape)
- General agreement with sector focus but possibly a focus on the need for higher, technical professional skills is important going forward, across sectors as opposed to treating them separately. A lot of skills relevant across sectors and can add value, such as creative in construction
- Recognise the challenges for sole traders and free-lancing which may not respond to traditional models like apprenticeships and therefore struggle to engage
- We need to illustrate the impact the difficulty of recruiting teachers and tutors to relevant subject areas is having
- Capture the changing nature of work, due to technology in areas such as robotics and self-driving cars (to be covered in the digital paper)
- Articulate the need for a cultural change and investment in this, such as Saturday coding clubs on every street corner
- Getting messages across in new ways such as YouTube
- Set out shared aspiration to address the polarised society and helping people up the 'skills escalator'
- Building a 'socially inclusive' economy
- Terminology is important; 'technical' can lead people to think of machines or engineering so something like 'enabling' or 'professional' may be better
- A list of priorities and vision should be produced to add to the document
- Agree two or three things we can influence across the LEP area

LA outlined that she would incorporate the above into the documents and re-circulate. Members are welcome to feed in additional comments also. This will be circulated more widely to LEP networks for comment.

LA will take a revised version to the October meeting and a final draft will be presented to the LEP Board in December (15<sup>th</sup>).

**ACTION:** LA to circulate revised strategy

**AOB**

**ESF Workshop, 12<sup>th</sup> September** - LA outlined that the ESF workshop would be taking place on 12<sup>th</sup> to get partner input to priorities for the remaining funding (approximately £20m). AB volunteered to speak on behalf of the group as GR was unable to attend.

**POST Meeting note:** *The workshop was attended by approximately 120 people and there has been a lot of positive feedback. Presentations and workshop notes have been circulated and these will form the basis for future calls for tender, likely to be issued early next year. A lot of useful discussions took place on priorities which will also be utilised for the Skills Strategy and evidence base.*

**Date of next meeting: 1.30pm, 31<sup>st</sup> October, Park Crescent Conference Centre**