

South East LEP Skills Advisory Group Meeting
9th January 2018
Park Crescent conference Centre, London

Minutes and Actions

Attending

Louise Aitken (LA), South East LEP
 Holly Aquilina (HA), East Sussex CC
 Allan Baille (AB), Kent County Council
 Caroline Betts (CB), Essex County Council
 Simon Cook (SC), Mid Kent College
 Lucy Dresne (LD), University of Kent (*new HE member*)
 Viki Faulkner (VF), University of Brighton
 Debbie Leach, (DL) HM Prison Service
 Paul Mitchell (PM) Sussex Council of Training Providers
 Angela O'Donoghue (AoD), South Essex College
 Michael Ratcliffe (MR) Kent Association of Training Organisations
 Graham Razey (GR), Canterbury and East Kent College (**CHAIR**)

Guests

Nicola Faulkner (NF), Essex Employment and Skills Board Secretariat (logistics lead)
 Trevor Hutchison (TH), DP World London Gateway

Apologies

Carol Anson-Higgs, Essex Provider Network
 Martin Hall, Medway Council
 Brin Martin, Southend Council
 Sarah Nurden, Kent and Medway Economic Partnership
 Dan Shelly, Sussex Coast College

AGENDA ITEM / NOTES	ACTION/ PAPER
Welcome and introductions	
<p>GR welcomed Trevor and Nicola to the meeting, who were attending to give a demonstration of virtual reality software. This item was covered ahead of the minutes of the last meeting on the day itself.</p> <p>GR welcomed Michael Ratcliffe of KATO to the meeting and Michael confirmed that following the sad news regarding Lindsay Collins passing away he would be covering her meetings. GR and colleagues expressed their sincere condolences to Michael's team and Lindsay's family and noted significant contribution she made to the skills landscape across the LEP. Members agreed that it would be positive to explore what could be taken forward as a legacy to Lindsay.</p>	

Minutes of last meeting (31st October 2017)

Minutes were agreed by members (**attached**).

Outstanding actions were discussed:

ACTION: All members to provide feedback on the Opportunities South East pilot site

LA noted that minimal feedback had been received from members to date so GR asked members to look at the site. There was a general discussion and members expressed concern regarding the site being regularly updated and promoted to make it viable. LA noted that it was due for launch imminently in the Thurrock area which should enable some intelligence as to how it's being used. This could be included within the future ESF calls.

Post meeting note: LA attended the January LEP Growth Hub meeting to better understand existing Growth Hub sites and explore how the Opportunity South East portal can link in. This will assist with its viability.

ACTION: Update on apprenticeship levy local authority proposal

LA noted that some LA colleagues had a recent tele-call and agreed to put forward a case for the utilisation of their apprenticeship levy. Currently 10% can be used for supporting sectors and colleagues agreed that it would be positive to make the case for a greater amount. Martin Hall had already confirmed that Medway Council would be using their 10% and HA and CB confirmed that Essex and East Sussex have similar plans for their growth sectors. To this end, it was agreed that once the 10% utilisation has been proven, it would be positive to make the case for a greater percentage. Local authority colleagues will provide updates on how this is working in their areas.

ACTION: LA to work with Suzanne Bennett (LEP team) on skills training day for Growth Hub colleagues early 2018

LA is currently drawing up an agenda for the training days (one north and one south of the river) and will circulate this for any comments.

ACTION: LA to set up working group for LEP Sector Support Fund proposal around training of professionals (volunteers sought)

LA confirmed she'd not yet sought volunteers. VF, SC and CB volunteered to be part of this group and LA will arrange a meeting to take this forward.



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ACTION: LA to provide an update on Opportunity South East launch in Thurrock

ACTION: Local authority colleagues to provide updates on the apprenticeship levy utilisation in their area

ACTION: LA to share programme for Growth Hub training day

ACTION: LA to arrange meeting of working group to explore training of professionals

Virtual reality project proposal idea for LEP Sector Support Fund

TH explained that he worked for DP World London Gateway, one of the world's biggest ports. TH also chairs the Essex ESB logistics sector group. One of the main barriers to recruitment in logistics is perception and awareness of the sector. To this end, DP World has already created software to bring the port to life and to showcase the different aspects of jobs there.

With funding already secured through the Essex ESB, a package is being put together to showcase the logistics sector in Essex. This could be rolled out across the LEP and to cover other key sectors. Costs are mainly for the development of the experience and the current model also includes some purchase of kit such as headsets and lap-tops.

Colleagues tried out the software which TH had brought with him and agreed that it

was a good way of showcasing the sector. A paper had been circulated outlining the different options (i.e. logistics first, then other sectors, purchase of hardware and software).

DL asked whether it could be used within a prison service and TH confirmed that it could as it wouldn't need to be connected to any external networks.

Members noted that any Apps developed could be loaded onto careers websites for users to access. The Opportunity South East portal could also potentially host this kind of content along with the apprenticeship videos and similar. As with the portal, members expressed concern that it would need to be promoted effectively in order to be used.

Members spoke about how this would be used and the intended outputs. TH noted that the primary intention was to raise awareness and improve perception of the sector. TH noted that it had been really well received already in schools where the opportunity is presented as experiencing virtual reality as opposed to a sector, which is compelling to students.

Colleagues agreed that ideally this would need to be part of a wider package and should be linked in with work ongoing with partners such as the CITB who may be able to contribute funding. TH also confirmed that other employers such as Stansted Airport would also be interested in being involved. LA confirmed that Highways England had also said they had some content for the Lower Thames Crossing and were exploring more.

NF confirmed that the Essex work would include outputs and targets which would serve as a good basis for further roll out.

Members agreed that this would be a positive project to support and roll out but would be more effective for ESF than the Sector Support fund, in representing a greater pot. Contributions from employers and sector bodies could potentially form match for such a project.

ACTION: LA to explore the potential for an ESF call around virtual reality and to get feedback on the Essex ESF project


Apprenticeships – Non levy Allocation

LA noted that various partners had fed back issues regarding providers not being awarded contracts for non-levy provision even if they scored highly due to thresholds. This has meant that some established, quality provision is not available to employers. Skills East Sussex has written to the Skills Minister and ESFA on this issue and members agreed that a LEP letter would be valuable also. It was agreed that this should emphasise the negative impact for employers and removes choice.

GR suggested that the Skills Boards locally should provide employer examples to include in the letter and how key sectors will be affected. The letter should also illustrate how this will impede rather than support the delivery of the skills strategy whereby there will be a lack of provision for higher level skills in sectors such as construction and health.

The group discussed some of the broader issues surrounding the levy such as employers being able to make an informed decision on quality provision and how reduced funding to prime providers might affect the supply chain.

ACTION: LA to draft letter to ESFA and Skills Minister re non-levy allocations with input from colleagues on employer examples

SELEP Skills Strategy, Evidence Base and consultation updated information	
<p>LA noted that she had spoken to most of the federated business and skills boards regarding the strategy and received general endorsement. Feedback is being utilised and will be reflected in the final version. The final draft has been circulated to partners and comments will be incorporated. The Industrial Strategy and Careers Strategy have also now been published so will be incorporated into the final version.</p> <p>LA is drafting the sector reports and district reports alongside the main strategy and will release these as soon as they are ready (several for Kent are now complete).</p> <p>LA noted that a productive workshop had been held at Mid Kent College with the Construction and Industry Training Board (CITB) which has informed the construction sector report being produced for Kent, Medway and East Sussex. This is being informed by input from planning colleagues in district councils also and a revised version will be shared soon.</p> <p>It was agreed that the strategy should now move to the action plan stage and this should incorporate shared actions of the federated boards, who will endorse the action plan with the LEP Board. LA will produce a more detailed action plan for sign off by the Skills Advisory Group and federated boards.</p>	<p>ACTION: LA to share updated strategy by end January / February incorporating feedback</p> <p>ACTION: LA to share district and sector reports when available</p> <p>ACTION: LA to produce an action plan for delivery of the strategy</p>
ESF Update (slides attached, not for circulation as preliminary only)	
<p>LA noted that there is approximately £17m remaining and gave an overview of the priority areas this sits within along with emerging themes from the skills strategy and ESF Workshop last September. These have yet to be verified by the DWP.</p> <p>SELEP are awaiting DWP advice as to when calls can go out with the aim being for the first to go out in the first half of 2018.</p> <p>For existing contracts, LA noted that regular contract meetings were held with the ESFA and their ESF project leads. Local authority colleagues attend these meetings also. These contracts are currently in the process of re-profiling which will mean reductions or growth and feedback from partners has been taken into consideration when giving LEP input to these.</p> <p>For the DWP contract, a contract meeting is planned soon and as yet no performance information is available. For Big Lottery contracts, some preliminary performance information has been released in the form of a dashboard which is currently confidential though should be available to share in the longer term.</p> <p>Colleagues agreed it would be useful to see how these contracts are performing on a regular basis so LA suggested that she could update the table as per slide 2 as it becomes available.</p>	<p> ESF update January 2018 (preliminary only)</p> <p>ACTION: LA to produce a regular headline update of ESF contract performance</p>
Skills Advisory Panels and future formation of SAG	
<p>GR and LA noted the inclusion of Skills Advisory Panels in the Industrial Strategy. LA confirmed that she was due to hear an update from some pilot Advisory Panels later that month so could update the group.</p>	<p>ACTION: LA to update on Skills Advisory Panels</p>
AOB	
<p>Year of Engineering – LA noted that given the importance and size of the engineering</p>	<p>ACTION: LA to look</p>

sector across SELEP, it would be positive to do something for this. This would also link well with high profile projects such as the Lower Thames Crossing. Colleagues agreed that this would be positive so LA will look at the campaign pack.

Flexible Learning Fund – LA noted that a few requests for supports to bid had been submitted. The group agreed that it would be difficult to provide support to any one bid.

Institutes of Technology – LA noted that the prospectus asks that bidders demonstrate consultation with the LEP. LEP's don't have any role in evaluating or prioritising bids though. Colleagues agreed that local skills board endorsements would also be positive.

GR asked that information was added to the SELEP website outlining that bidders seeking LEP support should set out how they align to LEP priorities.

POST MEETING NOTE: *This has been added to the SELEP website at <http://www.southeastlep.com/skills/institutes-of-technology>*

at opportunities linked to the Year of Engineering

Date of next meeting: 6th March 2018 , 1.30 (venue TBC)