

Skills East Sussex

Thursday 25th January 2018, 14:00 – 16:00

East Sussex County Council



Skills East Sussex

Members:

AA	Angela Aspin	HM Prison Lewes
AC	Ana Christie	Sussex Chamber of Commerce
CaM	Caroline McKiddie	East Sussex County Council
CE	Christina Ewbank	Alliance of Chambers East Sussex
CBS	Cllr Bob Standley	East Sussex County Council
CJM	Cllr Jim Murray	Eastbourne Borough Council
CRS	Cllr Rupert Simmons	East Sussex County Council
CH	Colleen Hart	East Sussex Better Together
DS	Dan Shelley	Sussex Coast College
GP	Graham Peters	Team East Sussex and SELEP
HD	Helen Dessent	HM Prison Lewes
JT	Jo Taylor	Heathfield Community College
ME	Martin Ellis	RSE Group
PSn	Penny Shimmin	Sussex Community Development Association
PSp	Peter Sharp	Lewes District Council
RC	Rupert Clubb	East Sussex County Council
SW	Sarah Williams	Sussex Learning Network
VO	Vicki Orbell	Plumpton College
VC	Victoria Conheady	Hastings Borough Council
WG	Wendy Gorham	East Sussex County Council

Apologies:

BS	Becky Shaw	East Sussex County Council
CT	Catherine Tipton	Costain-CH2M (East Sussex Highways)
CWT	Clare Westbrey-Tong	Sussex Downs College
CDT	Cllr David Tutt	Eastbourne Borough Council
CKF	Cllr Kim Forward	East Sussex County Council
CRS	Cllr Rupert Simmons	East Sussex County Council
DL	Deborah Lloyd	CXK
JH	James Harris	East Sussex County Council
KH	Karen Hucker	
LA	Louise Aitken	South East Local Enterprise Partnership
MH	Mike Hopkins	
PM	Paul Mitchell	Sussex Council of Training Providers

Secretariat:

MH	Megan Hector	East Sussex County Council
HA	Holly Aquilina	East Sussex County Council

1. Welcome

1.1. GP opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. Minutes and actions from the previous meeting were agreed. **PSn** highlighted that she had attended the previous meeting and this was not recorded.

2. SELEP Update

2.1. LA sent her apologies, **HA** covered. The government's careers strategy and industrial strategy will be added to the SELEP skills strategy, and a CITB document on the construction workforce will be appended. There will be an action plan for the SELEP region, drawing on action plans from the federated areas. SELEP will be sending a letter to the ESFA and Skills Minister regarding procurement of non-levy apprenticeships, similar to a letter sent by GP. SELEP have funding to purchase data alongside the data cube to identify which companies do and don't have apprentices. SELEP will be running an event to mark the Year of Engineering and would be keen to support any local activities. **LA's** full SELEP update will be sent out with the minutes.

2.2. HA updated on European Social Funding, with projects to run until 2023, and the bulk of delivery in years one and two, decreasing from 2020 onwards. **CBS** asked whether the process will be bidding project by project. **HA** confirmed that it will be based on tenders, due out soon, although there have been delays. **CRS** noted that delays to funding can render planning for a scheme to become irrelevant.

ACTION – CM to feed this information back to SELEP on behalf of GP while he is away

2.2.1. VC noted that some expenditure for Hastings' CLLD project has been done via match, and asked whether it would be possible with this. **DS** stated that the only skills-related funding available to most providers right now is ESFA, but we need to keep asking the question. **DS** noted that East Sussex County Council could potentially use their levy as match funding. **HA** noted that the Council are looking at strategies for this.

2.2.2. PSn highlighted two issues around the delay of funding: engaging with the relevant people about match funding; to be ready with a range of projects now, even if funding is delayed until 2021. **HA** added that **LA** has previously done a consultation about what projects SES would like to see and collated a list of ideas as a starting point. **GP** suggested a workshop to make sure projects are prepared. **HA** stated that we will have a month for bid preparation, so when it's released there should be a quick funding meeting. The danger of doing it now is the tenders don't come out for six months, by which time plans may be irrelevant. **CE** requested a copy of **LA's** presentation.

ACTION – HA to arrange funding meeting once tenders are released

ACTION – MH to send out a copy of LA's presentation along with the minutes

3. SES Developments and Delivery

3.1 HA stated that the SES task groups are all going well with good employer engagement. Engineering task group at UTC well attended by local employers. Aim to come up with a coherent joined up careers strategy campaign to encourage young people to move into engineering, especially young women. Employers are very interested in being involved in those campaigns, talking about how they'd be able to take on apprentices and 50 day work placements.

3.1.1. CB stated that the construction task group is really active, engaged with apprenticeship roadshows, supporting the university to apply for degree apprenticeships in that sector, and training school staff. **HA** noted that the creative and digital task group are currently delivering a project in schools encouraging young people to move into creative jobs. The task groups are taking on a lot of activity. **GP** noted that we're lucky to have seriously good employer engagement and involvement.

3.2. RC explained the Year of Engineering to the group and stated that he has signed Skills East Sussex up. The following video was part of the presentation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bipTWWHya8A>

3.2.1. CBS noted that engineering has got a negative connotation, and that we need to change that. **RC** added that this is a cultural problem which needs to be addressed and offered to come and talk about the Year of Engineering.

ACTION – CB to follow up with RC re. Industry Champion

3.2.2. PSn suggested that we need to contact the Institutes of Civil Engineers and Structural Engineers, as they're all doing their own programmes and promotional materials which could be used. Someone needs to pool all of that together. **HA** suggested that we could get these Institutes involved in the summer Skills East Sussex meeting. **DS** noted that there's lots of crossover with the construction meeting, for example with members of Sussex Young Chartered Surveyors. **CB** suggested that SES should collate the names of local ambassadors for the chartered institutes of engineers and make this list available to schools. **CBS** stated that this should be made as simple as possible for schools. **CRS** noted that our engineering businesses are flourishing in the county, so the prospects for students within the county are brilliant.

ACTION – CB/HA to follow up with the various Engineering Institutes to ensure promotional materials are shared with schools

3.3. WG explained that there are three Enterprise Coordinators covering East Sussex. 100% of secondary schools and FE colleges engaged in the network across the county, with four special schools left to engage, way ahead nationally of the other enterprise areas. Four schools are awaiting a match with an enterprise advisor (EA), and four are due to meet their new EA. There are 39 EAs from a variety of sectors across, including the priority sectors for East Sussex. We now have some from the third sector, e.g. St Wilfred's Hospice and the National Trust, and other companies new to the enterprise network include Barkweb, Ashdown Hurrey, Focus SB, Hydro Hotel. We recently had a CPD day linking our school staff and EAs together which was very well received. As part of the Hastings Opportunity Area (OA) we've been asked to identify cornerstone employers for the

Hastings OA, employers who are already working with schools and young people, and are committed to be an ambassador, promote social mobility, and to make individual commitments tailored to their business. We have nine cornerstone employers signed up: Marshall Tufflex; East Sussex County Council; Jerwood Gallery; Hastings Borough Council; Talkative on line; Astec Computing; Hastings Direct; Love Local Jobs/Be the change; Let's Do Business Group.

3.3.1. CB noted that the engineering task group are delivering CPD to our schools at the March CPD event, which will be tied in with the Year of Engineering. **CE** asked whether the enterprise co-ordinators are still looking for advisors to go into four schools to link up, and if so which ones. **WG** detailed: Eastbourne Academy, who may partner with Costain; St Mary's School Horam special school and Peacehaven Community School, both have not specified a particular sector or type of employer; and College Central are looking for a strategic thinker to work across multiple sites and understanding of working with young people who have had difficulties with mainstream education. **GP** suggested that **AC** and **CE** meet with **WG** after SES to discuss. **AC** noted that the Sussex Chamber of Commerce are holding an event with a presentation from **WG** and Marshall Tufflex on the 26th March at Cooden Beach Hotel.

ACTION – WG to follow up with AC and CE to secure more Enterprise Advisors for remaining schools

3.4. WG updated the group on the Industry Champions scheme. Over 30 Industry Champions (ICs) have been recruited to promote their industry to schools and young people, some are also EAs. The team are developing an Industry Champion badge to recognise their commitment, with the criteria that they have undertake a minimum of three skills-related activities in an academic year. New ICs include: the RSPCA, Teva Pharmaceuticals and some individual entrepreneurs, a wide range. The badge will be launched at an event on the 28th March at County Hall. Please help us promote the Industry Champion scheme by mentioning it at chamber events or via social media. **GP** asked if there is a flyer to be sent out about this.

ACTION – MH to send out flyer about Enterprise Advisers and Industry Champions with the minutes

3.4.1. HA stated that in the longer term we want to try to roll out the Industry Champions scheme to help unemployed groups, adult returners, people leaving prisons, etc. Need to research into what kind of activities businesses could offer to support **PSn's** types of programmes.

3.4.2. ME noted that he has been concerned that schools don't keep up the momentum within a relationship with an EA and need to be encouraged and prompted. **WG** agreed and stated that it's part of the role of enterprise coordinators to do. Part of the problem is that business and education are often moving at different speeds, businesses want to get things done tomorrow but schools take longer, so part of the coordinator role is to manage these expectations. **ME** also noted his concerns that if the scheme is extended too far, schools will fall behind. **CB** explained that the EA scheme is starting to involve heads more from the beginning, which has more impact. The head's priorities can be carried forward by the EA, for example working towards increased take-up of STEM subjects. **WG** noted that it's also important to make clear to headteachers the longer term impact of having an EA.

4. Funding updates

4.1. DS stated that Sussex Coast are currently working on a bid for the Flexible Learning Fund to trial new ways of delivering learning to low skilled workers in particular sectors, then scaling this up nationally. Working with East Sussex Better Together, the NHS and other care providers to develop e-learning that can be done on mobiles for low skilled health and social care workers and long term unemployed people looking to get into the sector. Plan to use the Adult Education Budget to deliver the programme. The deadline for the bid is the 31st Jan.

4.2. HA stated that the Prison Training Contract is the DWP call for training in prisons. Plumpton was thinking of partnering, and a number of organisations are thinking of bidding together. The call is regional. Providers around the table were going to submit expressions of interest to the Shaw Trust who are submitting a bid. **HA** asked whether everyone has submitted their expression of interest, and to please do so ASAP if not. **VO** stated that Plumpton has. **DS** stated that Sussex Coast haven't yet, and noted that Milton Keynes college are also looking to tender, and they are one of the better providers of prison training, delivering training across the South East and Reading. **DS** noted that the contract has been badly advertised.

4.2.1. HD stated that the contract is changing as historically Manchester College has been the training provider. The core curriculum (English, maths, IT and ESOL) is likely to go to a provider that will deliver these subjects in all of the prisons in the sector. A lot of Lewes prison engagement is through other activities, behavioural programmes, arts, sport, customer service, which could all go to another provider. Lewes Prison's governor is very keen to involve local providers. **PSn** added that this is a really critical programme and there's lots of confusion around it. The SCDA are providing a lot of support for people from welfare to work, and want people coming out of prison to receive support into employment. **HD** stated that there is a new learning and skills manager at the prison, and it's not clear whether this will straddle more than one prison.

4.2.2. HA stated that there was a good partnership meeting previously at the prison, and we need to ensure ongoing communication with that group. **HD** stated that since this meeting, **AA** has been managing a huge expansion in industry training. At the end of March they're due to have a small engineering workshop in the prison on welding. It will be level 1 qualification as many residents are only there for less than 12 weeks. If someone is then transferred on to a training prison, they can pick up a level 2 or 3 and have progression. Lewes will have a dual role: mainly a reception prison, so people come from court, but it will also have those sentenced for under a year and due to be released locally, as part of the prison's resettlement role. We're not sure what proportion of the 600-700 these two categories will be.

4.2.3. CJM asked whether the Council could work with Sussex Downs on the prison training contract. **PSn** added that there needed to be greater clarity on whether the Shaw Trust was the only option for the contract. **GP** suggested that **HA** pull together an electronic sub-group. **HA** suggested that this may happen later in February when there's more clarity. **GP** asked to let him know if they need SES to contact people higher up in the government, e.g. write a letter to ministers.

ACTION – HA to arrange another meeting of prison provider group in February

4.3. HA updated on the HEFCE catalyst fund. The University of Chichester submitted a successful bid to develop career pathways into higher education and learning in health and social care. Romy Jones (University of Chichester) is lead, Universities of Sussex and Brighton and local colleges are involved and will link to the SES health and social care meeting on 20th March. If the Flexible Learning Fund comes through then that should tie in.

4.4. VC described the Hastings Community Led Local Development project, called CHART (Connecting Hastings and Rother Together). The main aims are to support 39,000 people across five areas of Hastings and Bexhill, linking deprived areas and communities to opportunities, upskilling individuals. The funding comes from two European funding streams, ESF and ERDF. There will be four main calls: £800k capital development on business use in the CHART area; £300k for business support; £300k supporting CBS in the third sector; £1.3 million for employability and skills. These all have to be matched by public sector investment. ESF funded work package. These calls should go out after the purdah period, May time. Expressions of interest and then full application, hope to start contracting in autumn this year. Activities can run until March 2022. VC to come back to SES with detailed update when grant funding agreed.

4.5. CB updated on Careers and Enterprise Company funding for Hastings. Part of this is funding for **WG's** role in Hastings, as well as Opportunity Area funding for projects that schools and colleges can access in the Hastings area. This will be a variety of projects engaging young people in employability-related activities. Update on successful projects will be sent out in the SES newsletter.

4.6. HA updated on the Coastal Communities fund: focus on supporting and encouraging economic development in coastal communities through creating sustainable economic growth and jobs. Districts and boroughs are looking at independent bids. **VC** noted that the Department of Communities and Local Government have said that they're running the fund as a lottery in Wales but not here, and that Hastings Borough Council are planning two bids.

4.6.1. HA stated that the consensus in the past seemed to be that it's better for the fund to be geographically focused. **VC** added that the funding has to be signed off by the Coastal Communities Team, and the projects being funded have to be linked to the visitor economy sector. **HA** stated that there might be appetite for coming up with a project initiated by or through SES about job creation in the coastal strip, and that this should be put to the visitor economy task group to discuss. **CB** will be meeting with the Visitor Economy task group in February and will raise, and will involve Sally Staples.

ACTION – CB to raise Coastal Communities Fund with visitor economy task group

4.6.2. PSp noted that there's usually a very short turnaround time. **VC** added that every project has to be complete by 2019 and payment wouldn't be until 2019. **CRS** noted that the visitor economy is one of our most important sectors and East Sussex is on the up in terms of this business, so such an opportunity might be worth proper examination. **PSp** and **CRS** agreed on the importance of organising something as soon as possible. **VC** suggested having a look at what's been funded in the past. It is the only funder for the visitor economy, and it's usually 100%.

4.6.3. HA noted that one of the things that came out of the visitor economy workshop was looking at the supply chain into visitor economy jobs, working with the DWP in prisons and with those with mental health issues. **CJM** added that members of Eastbourne Borough Council are looking to steer towards more IT in the town, developing the businesses in the town to be delivering more IT alongside the colleges, and that members would be supportive of anything SES can put together. **VC** suggested holding off on doing a lot of work until the Coastal Communities teams have had their webinar and have been asked these questions, as the funded projects have to be led by those teams in the area. Hastings Borough Council would be happy to join a county-wide bid but wouldn't be able to lead it as well as its own bid.

5. Newhaven Enterprise Zone

5.1. PSp gave a presentation on the Newhaven Enterprise Zone.

5.2. DS stated that Sussex Downs have a campus in Newhaven, and Sussex Skills Solutions have been commissioned by Coast 2 Capital LEP to broker employer engagement on behalf of the sub-group. This involves meeting with employers, assessing skills requirements, developing activities and working with providers who can come in and deliver. The next phase is to ensure that they have a pipeline of recruits for these activities. Brightwell's CEO said that previously they have recruited through Planned Personnel in Brighton who supplied them with Polish workers, but they are no longer available. **HA** noted that Surrey Nanosystems, Rampion, Veolia and Brightwell attended the most recent engineering task group, and are linked into ESCC's employability and skills campaigns.

6. Hastings Opportunity Area update

6.1. GP gave an update on the Hastings Opportunity Area (OA). There are 12 OAs across the country, and Hastings is the only one in the South East. OAs get lots of focus from the Department for Education, and £6 million funding. The delivery plan is now published. The four priorities literacy, maths, mental health and resilience, and employability skills. The Careers and Enterprise Company are supporting with this priority, alongside local providers, and there are plans for an enrichment programme. Some of the aims include turning children into more well-rounded people, inspiring them, and giving them employability and life skills.

ACTION – MH to send out the Hastings Opportunity Area delivery plan along with the minutes

7. New Strategy and Policy

7.1. HA stated that the industrial strategy determines a lot of the work we're doing, particularly around innovation and productivity. There are lots of conversations going on in SES and TES about how we move forward with it. **CRS** emphasised that the government are aiming for a focus on productivity, and stated that Councillors presented skills as SES's representation to central government in their input in to the strategy. This group's endeavours have been represented in that context.

7.1.1. HA suggested looking at the industrial strategy in the summer meeting of SES, thinking about how SES priorities relate to it, what's happening in the county and how that ties in. **GP** noted that the industrial strategy will have developed and been fleshed out by the summer meeting. A shorter summary of the industrial strategy should be sent out if there is one.

ACTION – MH to ask **RD** for a short summary of the industrial strategy to be sent out with the minutes

7.2. CB explained that the government careers strategy published in December was shortly followed by statutory guidance for schools but not colleges, although colleges are mentioned in the careers strategy. Young people are expected to have seven meaningful encounters with employers from year 7 to 13. Schools have a legal obligation to invite FE and apprenticeship providers in and must publish their policies on their websites; lots of schools are already doing this. There's an opportunity to pilot activities in primary schools, via OAs. There is a recommendation that all schools and colleges work towards the Quality in Careers standard. All schools have to publish their careers programme and have contact details of their careers leader available on the website. There is another pilot looking at potential careers hubs in 20 areas across the country. There are suggestions for CPD around SEND and employers working to support students with special needs into work experience and support internships.

7.2.1. ME noted that this will only work with good quality provision on the ground. The quality of provision is not consistent. **CB** stated that it depends on the school, and some schools do have good provision. **CBS** asked what kinds of things are missing from schools' careers advice. **ME** detailed points including the sorts of jobs available, where they can get an apprenticeship from, how to market themselves to employers. **ME** added that he hasn't come across one student who has been told to get a LinkedIn profile. **CB** stated that ESCC is trying to address this by training teachers, and invited **ME** to do some CPD with teachers so that they can hear from a recruiter. **ME** stated that he would be happy to help.

ACTION – CB to follow up with **ME** re. LinkedIn CPD session for teachers

8. Non Apprenticeship Levy

8.1. GP stated that he wrote a letter to Anne Milton MP and a reply came in this morning and is fairly unsatisfactory. **CB** The point of the letter to Anne Milton was to highlight the difficulties that have come about as a result of the reduced allocation of training and contracts awarded for non-levy apprenticeships, in other words, for SMEs. An example is that Chichester and Brighton universities, who passed the tender process, allocation was pro-rated down and they then fell below the minimum contracting level and therefore lost their contracts. Brighton University has been very engaged with our construction sector task group, who supported an application for the university to develop degree apprenticeships in construction, key to filling skills gaps in the construction industry. Derek Godfrey also signed the letter of support as chair of Developers East Sussex, however SMEs and companies like his will now not be able to access the degree apprenticeships. This is a further barrier created by the reforms that will impact on apprenticeship take up, opportunities for young people who tend to work for SMEs, and social mobility. There has been a 25% drop in the first

quarter starts across East Sussex, and 26% nationally. We've had year on year growth of 9% over the past few years. The group needs to be aware of this and collectively lobby. **GP** stated that he and **CT** should note that the will of the meeting today is to strongly emphasise these points.

8.1.1. DS noted that the universities have a turnover of £22 million, they do have funding available to deliver these apprenticeships. Sussex Coast's contract was reduced by 48%. They've made the sub-contracting rules so difficult that Sussex Coast, as a main provider, will find it very difficult to subcontract to smaller training providers. The college has to deliver an element of the training, whereas previously they were able to quality assure smaller providers. **DS** highlighted that a number of key providers didn't get a contract at all. **SCCH** applied for £5 million to deliver apprenticeship training, but only received £1.5 million. If changes are made to the subcontracting rules, they may get the opportunities for the university to subcontract, which may unlock some of the issues that are now being faced.

8.1.2. CB noted that Apprenticeships East Sussex have agreed that this is representative of apprenticeship allocation across all sectors, and that we look at the impact. It's not just about the universities. **DS** agreed that smaller firms are in the same boat as the universities, and it's probably more damaging to those training providers because their turnover is significantly smaller. **CB** added that the argument for employers in this county is the access they have to a variety of provision in different sectors. We're working collectively to address skills gaps, and SMEs can't access it all.

8.1.3. GP noted that this gives us an opportunity to make an argument back but with a better considered argument. **HA** suggested adding that we are rigorous around geographic coverage but we need to address sectoral provision, and this ought to be a criterion in the allocation process.

8.1.4. CBS asked whether something has changed, are the government or colleges interpreting the rules differently? What needs to change to make it work? **CB** clarified that the allocation of funding the government has put towards training has been reduced. **DS** added that providers needed to pass the tenders, which many did, but the funding allocation was pro-rated down by about 50%. This took some providers below the £200K minimum contract level and they lost their contract as a result.

8.1.5. CE stated on behalf of businesses that the whole process is shocking. The Alliance of Chambers East Sussex is keen to lobby and support everything that SES is doing, the letter that SELEP's writing, anything else they can do to help. **GP** asked that the meeting give some thought about asking ACES and Sussex Chamber to write something.

8.1.6. CRS stated that it's important to identify the importance of the rural economy in East Sussex in this context, training and apprenticeship provision is almost certainly coastal, and transport and costs like that are a concern.

9. Health and Social Care 20.03.18

9.1. HA stated that health and social care is the focus of the next SES meeting, on the 20th March. **HA** has been working with **CH**, who is leading workforce for ESBT, and Mike Bailey, who leads on career development for Health Education England.

9.1.1. CH thanked the group for the opportunity for the next meeting to be about health and social care. At the moment there are 36,000 vacancies for nurses nationally, and locally we have our own challenges including attracting people to work in the county. With regards to nursing, more staff are leaving than joining, and more than 50% of the leavers are under 40. We're not attracting or retaining our younger workforce, so there is a huge high retirement risk. Our workforce supply tends to be EU and outside of EU workers, but because of Brexit and tougher immigration laws, we no longer have that workforce supply for health or social care. In the future, we see our future supply of the workforce coming from locally. How can we get the local young population to see health and social care as a positive career? It's not just about qualifying as doctors and nurses, particularly in health, where there's a range of career opportunities. We're doing whatever we can to increase the workforce supply opportunities locally. We want to come along and explore that further with you, to see how SES can help us.

9.1.2. HA stated that we will dedicate all two hours of the next SES meeting to this. There will be initial presentations about the needs of the sector and priorities of local employers, and then a look at curriculum development. The universities will talk about the catalyst funding initiative, and hopefully Flexible Learning Fund. The third part of the session will look at what we're doing about careers advice and guidance to do with the sector for young people and adult returners, and how can we come up with a joined up strategic campaign. This is against the backdrop of East Sussex having a hugely ageing population, with future skills gaps and workforce needs. We've been compiling a list of people to attend, we're keen to have care homes attend. If anyone has additional suggestions for invitees that would be useful, care homes, providers, etc., please let us know. It's going to be a big event because we already have a lot of interest, so we're looking for an alternative venue to host up to 50 people. We're shaping the agenda, but are open to hear if anyone has something they'd like to be featured. It will be a workshop format, with ideas to take forward.

ACTION – everyone to let HA and/or MH know if they have suggestions for invitees for the health and social care meeting, or items to be featured on the agenda

9.1.3. VC stated that she has recently had a meeting with the University of Sussex and the medical school should be at that meeting, especially with the shortage of GPs in the area. That's affecting our mental health provision as well as other aspects.

ACTION – VC to send details of her contact at the University of Sussex to MH

9.1.4. CRS stated that he recently had a meeting with the board of the University of Sussex, and thinks they'll be far more helpful than they have in the past. **CJM** suggests inviting Councillor Barry Taylor to the meeting, as he owns a few care homes.

10. AOB

10.1. GP thanked everyone for coming. No other business.