

Skills East Sussex

Thursday 21st June 2018, 14:00 – 16:00

Plumpton College



Skills East Sussex

Members:

AC	Ana Christie	Sussex Chamber of Commerce
BL	Bronagh Liddicoat	STEMsussex
CB	Caroline Bragg	East Sussex County Council
CBS	Councillor Bob Standley	East Sussex County Council
CE	Christina Ewbank	Alliance of Chambers in East Sussex
CM	Caroline McKiddie	East Sussex County Council
CRS	Councillor Rupert Simmons	East Sussex County Council
DB	Dave Brown	Bexhill College
DSH	Dan Shelley	East Sussex College Group
DSt	David Stokes	Plumpton College
GPd	Dr Graeme Pedlingham	University of Sussex
GPT	Graham Peters	Team East Sussex and SELEP
JH	James Harris	East Sussex County Council
LA	Louise Aitken	South East Local Enterprise Partnership
LM	Lucy Mitchell	Brighton and Hove Council
MK	Martin Kelly	East Sussex County Council
PM	Paul Mitchell	Sussex Council Training Providers
RB	Richard Beales	Artswork
RF	Richard Freeman	Always Possible
SM	Scott Monk	G M Monk
WE	Wayne Edmunds	Department for Work and Pensions

Apologies:

BS	Becky Shaw	East Sussex County Council
CT	Catherine Tipton	Costain-CH2M (East Sussex Highways)
CKF	Cllr Kim Forward	Hastings Borough Council
VC	Victoria Conheady	Hastings Borough Council
ME	Martin Ellis	RSE group
CJM	Councillor Jim Murray	East Sussex County Council
PS	Peter Sharp	Lewes District Council
PS	Penny Shimmin	Sussex Community D A

Secretariat:

KB	Kimberley Bulgin	East Sussex County Council
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1. Welcome and Minutes of Last Meeting

1.1 **JH** opened the meeting and thanked **DSt** for hosting the group at Plumpton College. The last SES meeting was focused on the Health and Social Care sector; progress is being made with the creating of an infographic and mapping of careers within the sector so all actions are underway.

2. Welcome to Plumpton College

2.1 **DSt** gave the group an introduction to Plumpton College. From creation in 1926, the college makes an £18 to £19 million turnover annually. With their land-based specialism they host courses from level 3 up to masters degrees, with some of the only courses taught in English available only at Plumpton. They need an average of 600 new entrants a year for their level 3 and 4 courses. The college seeks to raise aspirations and ambitions with better qualified young people who can promote the vast range of high level roles, good pay, and fulfilling careers available in the sector. There is a need for better promotion to parents to understand the number of managerial roles available. The college is currently working on the ambitions of both students and staff with targeted occupations, reflected in their specific courses on occupations such as butchery and those which need technical development.

2.2 **DSt** stated that Plumpton is lobbying at a national level, with Jeremy Kerswell leading parliamentary groups in horticulture. They are seeking flexibility in their adult education offer, specifically within eligibility, and are encouraging Local Enterprise Partnerships to commission work.

2.2.2 **JH** asked **DSt** about the impacts of Brexit on labour and if Plumpton have noticed shifting patterns with businesses. **DSt** stated that within the horticulture business they work closely with the Sussex horticulture salad business, who have 2,500 to 3,000 seasonal employers for 10 or 11 months of the year. They have concerns about whether those workers will now come to the UK or not, considering the decreasing value of the pound in comparison to the euro. Due to this, the trend of Eastern Europeans coming in for seasonal work is decreasing. As an example of how this will affect UK employees, Job Centre Chichester held an opening for hundreds of farm workers. Five people applied, three turned up to interview, and all had left by three weeks in. The effect this will have for us is that the need for better home grown workers will cause an increase in the price of our food.

3. SELEP Update

3.1.1 **LA** updated the group on the Skills Strategy. East Sussex has been engaged through the County Council's involvement, who have been working closely on the different versions to protect local needs. The Skills Advisory Group is composed of many SES members and the strategy has also had input from Team East Sussex and workshops with sector members. The LEP board will meet next Friday (29/06) to approve the strategy, and finalise the look with more white space and photos, before publication next month. **LA's** full update will be sent with the minutes.

ACTION: Everyone to send LA photos on local skills events

3.2.1 **LA** also spoke of projects in the pipeline: SELEP met with DCMS to discuss a digital skills partnership, with a briefing next week to detail more. **LA** will update.

3.2.2 **LA** announced a current plan for a LEP & Essex wide workshop for procurement practices with apprentices after CITB findings. Date is tbc. There is also a call for proposals for national retraining, aimed at adults, new entrants, and other retraining individuals. The idea of modular housing, currently in the development stage, could be bought forward as a LEP wide bid which **LA** is interested in.

3.2.3 **LA** also received invite to be an inclusive growth hub, and met with a hub from Crawley and HEE, who have an inclusive growth focus. On the 27th September there will be a meeting to kick start this and more around the LEP area.

3.2.4 **LA** has bought extra data on apprenticeships to identify which employers and sectors have apprentices. They will share with ESCC to show the gaps in apprenticeship take up, and can draw upon larger headlines, which will come out in the following weeks.

3.3.1 The sector support finding identified barriers, one of which is a shortage of good tutors. Currently looking at how to address this, possibility of a campaign, and could use ESF to build industry experts to train.

3.4 **LA** updated the group on a general basis: **LA** and the LEPs went to the DfE 18+ review, with agreements on more local commissioning and the importance of involving more young people to influence. The team wrote to the skills minister about apprenticeships and are to meet ESFA, and are looking for a SES rep. The DfE are invited to the next national meeting. Anyone currently doing apprenticeships with the DfE will be moved to ESFA, there is a meeting next month to discuss a proposal.

4. Brief Discussion of local facilitation of forthcoming ESF rounds

4.1.1 **LA** told the group that SELEP are currently going to call for bidders to put in funding as ESF are now offering match funding. This means less control and will no longer have any part in the evaluation, but it doubles the money and no matched required. There is a meeting next week to feed back on priorities. Some money will be kept back for calls to go out for DWP direct calls November 2018-March 2019 under 2.2 'Improvements of labour market relevance of skills provision and training systems'

4.1.2 **DSh** let the group know that ESCG are planning their own bid with SES, East Sussex, and other boroughs. Hastings has CLLD funding which is being used to put in a mobile construction course, and asked if we can match that money. This creation of this course will go round bid developments and create what is required to deliver training there and then. The college is one of 54 that are piloting T levels with one route into construction. Want an expression of interest from the LEP but worry a SELEP and Essex bid won't meet our needs. **LA** agrees we do not need a SELEP wide bid but if the government is seeking that then she will let the group know and advise them. **JH** suggested this is bought up at the Skills Advisory Group. **DSh** stated there is no deadline for the expressions of interest but the sooner the better. **SM** wants the bid to include SMEs as larger companies will move out of the area and result in a drain of talent. These points are also useful to the bid.

ACTION: DSh to take construction retraining project to construction task group

4.2.1. **CRS** spoke about the large amounts of subcontracting in East Sussex, and the benefits of a bid being modular or being across county. As part of the Building Better Opportunities programme, which ends in 2020 with ESF funding, will the Big Lottery take this on and what involvement will the LEPs have? **LA** explained that the Big Lottery opt in and match fund until 2020 when BBO2 may take place, this happens with small projects and organisations, LEP will be involved. Currently unsure of ESIF committees' involvement, but they do want to see a linking up with the Social Inclusion project. **CRS** asked if this could later be shared with SES.

4.3.1 **DSh** expressed concern that with the plethora of current teaching provision, such as Teach Too and Now Teach, that it may be too much to create another teaching programme. **RF** repeated this, stating that this is also the message in the task groups; Sussex is seen as a far more innovative area. This has been reflected with conversations had with CITB and C2C LEP, who have a wide response from key stakeholders with new tutors. **LA** agreed that we should take stock of what we already have and signpost more. **JH** suggested that there could be a special meeting of SES where representatives of sectors could attend to discuss, which the group agreed with. **LA** would be happy to brief the beforehand but the group should be aware there may be conflicts of interest.

4. SES Task Group activity, discussion, and Q&A

4.1.1 **BL** updated the group on the engineering task group, which is comprised of education providers and 8 employers. A major resource is the Engineering UK Skills report, which stated that just in the South East, 29,000 new engineers are needed every year until 2022. This would mean 1/3 of a year group annually leaving school to go into engineering. The challenges for the group are the decrease in engineering manufacturing turnover. The group is trying to combat these pressures by involving engineering employers in the curriculum, and increasing apprenticeships. The group has given CPD to local Enterprise Advisers and Careers Leads, and large events such as the Big Bang and STEAMfest have been well attended by young people. These events create role models, keep students in touch with the workforce, and allow for follow ups between schools and companies. For the future, they are looking at influences and how to raise the engineering profile through publicity, such as social media.

4.1.2 **CRS** asked what progress had been made with the University of Brighton's engineering faculty, and how much the engineering task group had been involved. **BL** announced that the facility was now open and the intention was to reflect the needs of the industry. The full engineering task group will be visiting on 11th September with four academics.

4.1.3. **CBS** commented that a problem with engineering was the viewpoint of the parents, and asked how the task group planned on overcoming this problem. **BL** answered that there had been many positive outcomes this past year which parents had been involved with. Events such as STEAMfest allowed a showcasing of innovations which could be extended until the evening to allow parents in. There will possibly be a Big Bang as part of the Hastings Opportunity Area to get more young people and their parents to attend. **CBS** advised that the group tries to involve rural areas to ensure all students are able to access these events.

4.1.4 **RF** added that feedback has been very positive, but they want a larger campaign to tackle myths of the sector, to bring more women in, and how it is necessary to add a national and local level. **DSh** commented that with the changing standards of apprenticeships more off the job training is needed, which ESCG are currently trying to get up and running, negotiations are currently happening with employers.

4.2.1 **SM** spoke about the construction task group and how they are trying to change the culture of the industry, as well as combat the views of parents who believe employees have low education. The group are going into schools and meeting with careers leads, explaining to young people the vast variety of roles within the sector, including managerial roles. They are aiming for next year to get into more colleges and secure more employers for the task group. **MK** noted that the timing for getting into schools is difficult; employers are typically let in during the beginning of the academic year, when exams and decisions are not made until March and May. **SM** replied that he, as an Enterprise Adviser for Hailsham Community College, has found full support from the head and senior leadership team. **CB** added that they are seeing more involvement from head teachers since the national strategy, and that **SM** delivered great training for Careers Leads which filters down to young people. **RF** gave extra credit to the sector task groups for having small and big companies on board, with individuals from planning, procurement, as well as schools and colleges.

4.2.2 **CE** commented that she had seen an infographic which highlighted the different jobs, indicative salaries, and thought it was a good idea but could have been executed better. There needed to be more roles with better salaries included. **CB** suggested a joint campaign to show where the jobs are more specifically. **GP** said the LEPs can lobby the issues, if **SM** could send over information. **AC** added that they have links with construction in the British Chambers.

ACTION: AC to let RF know dates of next Chambers meeting

4.3.1 **RB** updated the group on the creative and digital task group, which works with the Cultural Education Partnership, led by Culture East Sussex. Employers, ranging from small digital companies to the larger Arts Council England-funded enterprises, sit on the same group. The group are working on raising awareness, engagement, and how to change views of parents. Data shows this sector is an emerging success, backed up by the South East Creative, Cultural and Digital Support (SECCADS) network, which will be launching soon. The group are also looking at the idea of a shared language, as different employers use varying forms. Also looking to tackle the over demand in vacancies, and how the large number of HE routes and unpaid internships need to be systematically addressed. In schools the task group has been running the Creative Boost project which involves funding Artsmark accreditation to schools, giving hundreds of students the chance to gain an Arts Award, and for school groups to attend Creative Cafés with professionals in the sector. **RF** added that the group have also created an apprenticeship survey, which unlike others is employer led. **RB** spoke of the LEP-wide conversation that has been happening around the creative economy and the Talent Accelerator, which is being created with Kent County Council and two other bridges. This focuses on pathways into the industry, at an earlier than usual level. The characteristic of SMEs and portfolio-based careers needs to change. **RF** also mentioned that the group is looking at apprenticeships in a sector that is comprised of a lot of self-employed individuals. **JH** asked if it was needed to break

down perceptions. **RF** replied that it is a historical narrative more so seen in the digital sector that they are combatting in schools.

5. Plumpton College curriculum offer

5.1.1 **DSt** told the group about Plumpton's offer, with its core curriculum and general refresh. They offer bespoke courses for skill development and entry to master's degrees. There is currently a trailblazer group for a brewing course as there are 85 microbreweries in Sussex. They are also teaming up with the Royal Agricultural Society to share skills, scope for economies of scale and labour market information. (See college presentation for more details.)

6. Presentation of Bexhill College curriculum offer

6.1.1 **DB** led a presentation on Bexhill College's curriculum. They build transferable skills and employability skills by not letting students into class if they are late, and by chasing up students when they don't attend. They also include time with employers to implement this message further. **CE** asked to clarify when they stopped letting students in to class when late, **DB** replied that teachers as a collective decided this three years ago to work on the continuation from school.

6.1.2 **CE** also asked if chambers members go into schools to talk to students. **DB** replied that they had not but that he has gone into chambers, and also the college does sponsor the Bexhill Careers Fair and use their Enterprise Adviser. **SM** agreed that embedding employability themes into colleges and education was a good idea for the future workforce to get them used to different conditions. (See college presentation for more details.)

7. Presentation of East Sussex College Group curriculum offer

7.1.1. **DSh** gave a presentation on the ESCG curriculum. ESCG are also one of 54 colleges piloting the T levels in Software Development, Design and Surveying, and Childcare and Education. **JH** asked if finding suitable teachers was easy, given the number of courses ESCG has. **DSh** stated that they have teachers, but are always looking for new and better ones, and by running their own PGCE course if people are interested then they can get them in front of a classroom quickly and qualify them. **BL** asked for clarification on the size of the T level groups. **DSh** replied that Design and Surveying will have one cohort in Hastings and Eastbourne of between 18 and 25 students, Software will have one cohort in all three sites, as will Childcare. **LM** asked how you choose a T level student; **DSh** stated that they will have come through level 2 programmes. Average FE work is 500 hours per year, whereas T levels are 900 hours a year with half that time in workplaces, so the students will need to be tested on their employability. (See college presentation for more details.)

8. ESCG and ESCC Adult Education Budget co-commissioning priorities for 2018/19

8.1.1 **DSh** told the group that the requirement for partners for the dynamic purchasing system closes on the 13th July. After this the tendering of £1.6 million will come out for the 2018/19 year delivery, with the focus on key sector priorities in East Sussex and to include employer focused training,

programmes for the unemployed, and community learning. **JH** asked if there were specific employability skills, to which **DSh** said that the money is difficult to spend in that manner, there are certainties to draw down this money, and would like to commission with East Sussex to get out to hard to reach areas.

9. Apprenticeship Levy –SES discussion of 10% ‘allocation allowance’

9.1.1 **MK** explained to the group that as East Sussex County Council are a levy payer, they can now pass 10% of the levy to an employer in their supply chain. Suggestion that we could use this money to support construction, but this is open to the group. **JH** asked for specifics on who we can give this money to and what we can and cannot do. **MK** clarified that the money currently has to go to one non-levy payer organisation. The DfE may (we hope) open this up in September to more than one employer. **MK** suggested a good use may be to pay for an ATA type approach to apprenticeship training with this money. **RF** suggested this may be a good idea to take to the task groups. The group then agreed they could hear specific items from the task groups in the next SES meeting. **LA** commented that she will flag other local authorities and look at this in the next Skills Advisory Group. **CB** also let the group know that the Coast 2 Capital LEP partners would like to help. **DSh** stated that the current Orbis DPS system used for apprenticeships means tendering is very laborious, with **PM** commenting that he too had had similar feedback from providers. **MK** replied that Orbis is part of three councils who all have a different approach, although he can feed this back to procurement services.

ACTION: MK to attend sector task groups

10. AOB and close

10.1.1 **CE** commented that Plumpton is a more suitable place for a meeting due to the larger amount of parking available.

10.2.1 **AC** let the group know that British Chambers work very closely with ministers on the apprenticeship levy, press, and meetings, and can share statistics with the team.

10.3.1 **RF** stated that the RSA is relaunching innovating education faculty on life readiness which he chairs. This is holistic for ages between 0 and 25. It is an online task group sharing best practices and trying to influence policy.

10.3.1 **DSh** updated the group on new adult education budget rules, with surprise information on eligibility, meaning that if you are employed and you earn under £15k a year you can take an adult education class for free, whereas before you had to pay 50% of the training cost.

10.4.1 **DB** offered to host the next SES meeting at Bexhill College.

10.5.1 **CMk** suggested that given SES meeting are now quarterly as opposed to bi-monthly and continually overrun, it may be of use to extend the length of them to 2.5 hours. Group agreed to keep at 2 hours but extend by pre-arrangement to 2.5 hours if priority items need to be added to agenda.

10.6.1 **PM** asked if other providers might be able to present their curriculum plan. **JH** confirmed they could and **CMk** could coordinate the arrangements with **PM**.