

**South East LEP Skills Advisory Group Meeting**

**11th September 2018**

**Park Crescent conference Centre, London**

**Minutes and Actions**

**Attending**

Louise Aitken (LA), South East LEP

Jaki Bradley (JB), Thurrock Adult Community College

Allan Baille (AB), Kent County Council

Sue Baxter (SB), University of Brighton

Caroline Betts (CB), Essex County Council

Caroline Bragg (CBr), East Sussex County Council

Tiffany Bright (TB) Thurrock Council

Tristan Easy (TE), Community 360

Viki Faulkner (VK) University of Brighton

Richard Freeman (RB), Sussex Council of Training Providers (GUEST)

Hyla Grimwade (HG), Southend Council (for Chris Burr)

Tony Inglis (TI), University of Kent

Paul Mitchell (PM), Sussex Council of Training Providers

Angela O’Donoghue (AoD), South Essex College

Daniel Ratcliffe (DR), Medway Council

Michael Ratcliffe (MR) Kent Association of Training Organisations

Graham Razey (GR), Canterbury and East Kent College **(CHAIR)**

Tony Witton (TW), Kent County Council (GUEST)

**Apologies**

Carol Anson-Higgs, Essex Provider Network

Clive Cooke, East Sussex College Group

Simon Cook, Mid Kent College

Debbie Leach, HM Prison Service

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| **AGENDA ITEM / NOTES** | **ACTION/ PAPER** |
| **Minutes of last meeting (10th July 2018)** |  |
| Minutes were agreed by members.  All actions from the last meeting were to be discussed through the meeting agenda.  Additional actions from July’s meeting were discussed:   * **SELEP Chairman meeting with Keith Smith, Director of Apprenticeships, ESFA**   As per the actions from the previous meeting above, further to the letter from the Skills Minister a meeting had been arranged for 24th July with Keith Smith, Director of Apprenticeships at the ESFA. LA noted that she would produce a briefing ahead of the meeting to share with members in case of any comments (actioned). *LA provided an overview of the meeting to members as per the attached email.*  Discussing this action in September, PM noted that there were ongoing problems with delay of the introduction of the Apprenticeship Service for non-levy paying employers. This meant that non-levy providers who were not successful in the procurement round this year would not be able to deliver and sub-contracting arrangements were also more challenging. Colleagues agreed that a follow up letter should be sent to Keith Smith outlining these challenges.  **Post meeting note:** This was actioned as per the attached letter | **ACTION:** PM and LA to draft a letter to go to Keith Smith from SELEP’s chair and SAG |
| **Skills Strategy Launch** |  |
| LA noted that the skills strategy and evidence base was now complete in its designed format and available to view with the evidence base at <https://www.southeastlep.com/our-strategy/skills/>  LA outlined that the strategy launch was taking place on Friday 21st September and reminded colleagues to sign up. The agenda included an introduction to the strategy from LA and GR and presentations from local construction company Jenner and DP World (show-casing their virtual reality software). The day was to be chaired by Christian Brodie, SELEP’s Chairman. The launch was being held at EKC Group’s Folkestone Campus to also officially open the new construction facility which SELEP has supported.  ***Post meeting note****: the launch was well attended with over 100 delegates and local press. The construction facility was opened by Damian Collins MP. Further information is available at* [*https://www.southeastlep.com/selep-launches-plans-to-build-skills-for-future-growth/*](https://www.southeastlep.com/selep-launches-plans-to-build-skills-for-future-growth/)  *Strategy Action Plan and proposed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)*  LA shared proposed KPIs which were based on what could be collected through areas of work SELEP collects data on including skills capital investments and ESF. These would be regularly collected along with a dashboard to look at areas such as skills levels and earnings. LA shared the following proposed KPIs and dashboard:  KPIs   * Number of people supported into work * Numbers of apprenticeships * Numbers of adults upskilled * Numbers of people in work supported to upskill * New tutors / teachers recruited * Schools and Employers in Enterprise Advisor Network * Activity undertaken to raise awareness   Dashboard   * Skills levels (all levels) against national average * Out of work benefits * Workless households * Workplace earnings * Apprenticeship numbers   AoD noted that the Essex ESB had also looked at measurable and had looked at areas such as Adult Education Budget Spend aligned to sectors. AoD suggested that perhaps this could be gathered across the LEP area.  ***Post meeting note*** *– AoD provided a copy of this data as attached.*  Colleagues noted that this would also help to highlight the adult learning decline due to funding (and as highlighted in the skills strategy). | **ACTION**: All to feed back to LA on proposed KPIs and dashboard and any additional data / measures to be captured  **ACTION:** LA to produce example of KPI and dashboard information to be shared at next SAG |
| **LEP Sector Support Funding** |  |
| LA had shared a draft proposal for sector support funding which focused around an awareness raising campaign and video of working in the sector and tutor recruitment challenges along with a bursary to support people from industry to undertake a teaching qualification (which has been fed back as one of the main barriers).  Members endorsed the proposal and LA noted that she would be developing this further and will circulate before submitting. One of the requirements for the funding is to have match funding of 30%. Currently there is up to £20,000 match funding available from the Essex Employment and Skills Board. GR noted that it would be important to seek match from other partners and that this would strengthen the bid and show commitment across the LEP.  LA will need to submit the bid by 2nd November, to meet the deadline for the December Strategic Board (which will consider the proposal following independent evaluation).  *Existing East Sussex project – Teach Too*  RF joined the meeting to talk about Teach Too which has been running in East Sussex and which aligns with the ambitions of the proposal being developed.  RF noted that the programme was in response to shortages in engineering which were significant. A toolkit is being developed for partners and covering different aspects such as mentoring, awareness raising, staff shadowing, tackling the ageing workforce. A conference is planned in March 2019 which will include best practice sharing. RF’s slides are attached with further information.  Colleagues agreed that this aligned really well and that the two should be co-ordinated if the proposal is successful. RF confirmed that the bursaries would form a really positive element of the Teach Too ambitions.  **Post meeting note:** There is also a pilot nationally to attract over 100 industry experts into teaching (£5 million). <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/5million-to-attract-over-100-industry-experts-into-teaching> | **ACTION:** Colleagues to inform LA regarding match for sector support bid    **ACTION:** LA to share final version ofSSF bid |
| **European Social Funding (ESF) calls and next steps** |  |
| *ESFA Matched calls* - LA noted that the calls had been launched in August and an event had been held in London on 30th August. The calls will be LEP wide, although SELEP and local authority colleagues had worked with the ESFA on the basis of calls for the federated areas.  The calls are for   * 1.1. Skills Support for unemployed * 1.2. NEET (15-24) * 1.4. Community Grants * 2.1. Skills Support for the workforce / redundancy   All evaluation and management of the process will be undertaken by the ESFA but at contract award stage, there will be close working with the LEP and local authorities to ensure local fit. Delivery will start from April 2019 and will complete by July 2021, pending potential extensions.  To facilitate joint working given that bids had to be LEP wide, SELEP set up an online facility for bidders to get in touch with each other. This is available at <https://trello.com/invite/b/V9MeDToI/1711e3161905e79de17787bad6fc0005/selep-esf-calls-area>  *DWP direct calls* - In addition, direct calls are still due to go out with DWP (requiring 50% match). These are likely to go out from autumn pending confirmation from DWP. Themes included are virtual reality and online learning (imminent), internships and returnships for key sectors, industry work placements and wheels to work.  **Post meeting note:** the virtual reality call is now live and available to view at <https://www.gov.uk/european-structural-investment-funds/using-virtual-reality-and-online-learning-to-support-employment-and-growth-in-south-east-lep-oc30s18p1166>  LA noted that there was additional funding (approximately £8m) due to the exchange rate so there is a large pot available. Some of this may be utilised for extension of current contracts (DWP, ESFA and Big Lottery).  Colleagues spoke about the potential for rolling out the skills portal ‘Opportunity South East’ and LA noted that ESF could still be used for this which would address a commonly raised barrier; the complexity of the landscape. Thurrock Council have funded a pilot of this which could be rolled out across the LEP area. Some colleagues expressed concern with the capacity that would need to be built in and how much uptake there would be. TB outlined that employers locally were already starting to use the tool and this now features all apprenticeship opportunities.  AB noted that this would still be of interest in Kent and particularly for the adult agenda. LA confirmed that the call could go out but wouldn’t have to be LEP wide, so it could be developed on the basis of a geography within the LEP area.  CB noted that apprenticeship support to assist particularly small employers to understand the landscape including the levy and reforms would be useful. LA confirmed that this should be a possibility. | **ACTION:** LA to inform colleagues as and when direct ESF calls go live |
| **South East Creative Economy Network** |  |
| TW joined the group to update on the South East Creative Economy network ‘Talent Accelerator model’ (presentation attached). TW explained that this was based on supporting young people into the creative sector and raising the profile of creative jobs and pathways through work experience, careers and learning support. The creative sector particularly has a lot of micro companies and freelancers so can struggle to engage with education in the traditional ways.  This fits with the Creative Economy Network prospectus for the creative economy which is available at <https://www.southeastlep.com/app/uploads/SE_Prospectus_Low_Res_(1).pdf>  As this outlines, creative is the biggest growth sector in the UK economy and has skills shortages and gaps. Some are generic such as communication and basics in areas like accounting. The model would offer live briefs so that students would work with practitioners and artists to allow them to see ‘behind the curtain’. There would also be workshops and a live vocational element exploring leadership and other hands on skills, backed up by advice and guidance. The idea is a ‘creative elevator’ offering different levels and age groups opportunities and individuals would be able to start at any stage on the elevator – from early years through to adults. Initially there are pilots in Colchester, Thurrock and Southend. Resource is required to build digital resources and the Arts Council is a potential partner. The group are working with partners such as the Royal Opera House and multi-agency partnerships working with young people.  Colleagues agreed that this sounded like a much needed area of support and that creative and arts subject take up had fallen. CBr noted that the Essex Employment and Skills Board could link in and had a focus on the creative sector. AoD said that South Essex College would be happy to support with the live brief aspect. HG said that science students locally had worked to live briefs also which had proven really successful. |  |
| **Updates** |  |
| **New National Careers Service contracts and priorities**  LA noted that two contracts now covered the SELEP area. CXK would be covering Kent, Medway and East Sussex and an organisation called Futures. Both have offered shared KPIs which could be added to those being developed for SELEP. Examples are as follows:  ·         Number of adults engaged with the service  ·         Number of adults satisfied with the service  ·         Number of adults who have achieved a Job or Learning Outcome  o   By age group  o   By gender  o   By ethnicity  o   By education attainment level  o   By disability  o   By sector  **SOFT Outcomes**  ·         % of customers feeling more confident  ·         % of customers feeling more motivated  ·         % of customers clear on their next steps  Colleagues agreed that it would be useful to build on these to ensure sectors and jobs are being supported. GR asked colleagues to let LA know if there were additional measures colleagues felt should be added.  **Inclusive Growth event 27th September**  LA shared the agenda for the event, with speakers including Dame Carol Black and Robert Halfon MP. This was a joint event with Public Health England who are relocating their national premises to Harlow. The event was being held at Harlow College with the aim to raise awareness of existing support (including ESF programmes) and explore any gaps.  **Post meeting note:** The event was very well attended with really good engagement and feedback. Further information about the event (with video) is at <https://www.southeastlep.com/selep-and-partners-join-forces-to-bring-work-to-all/> . Presentations and workshop notes are available if colleagues would like copies.  **Digital Skills Innovation Fund and Local Digital Skills Partnerships**  LA noted that two opportunities had become available for LEPs to apply to. The Digital Skills Partnerships had been piloted in some parts of the country and offered LEPs the opportunity to work with government more closely. Both have deadlines of 28th October and key components are:  **Digital Skills Innovation Fund**   * £1m for underrepresented groups * £400k for older & disabled workers * Focus on women, disabled people, people from minority backgrounds and those living in lower socio economic areas to succeed in digital roles (analysts, programmers, cyber security specialists, software developers * Grants £200-500k to be claimed in financial year 18/19 * Collaboration between LEPs, local gov, VCS, training providers, employers and charities sought * LEPs invited to apply – developing a proposal focusing on raising awareness of jobs, tasters and video blogs of women and disabled people in the sector * Further information at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-digital-skills-partnership>   **Local Digital Skills Partnerships**   * Grant funding for a full time person to manage the partnership locally / link with Whitehall * Response to include: * Your current digital skills strategy for your region? * The governance to deliver this strategy? * How you are gathering data to identify digital skills gaps? * What are the priority sectors you are focusing digital skills provision on? * Current funding allocated to digital skills programmes? * What are the key challenges for your region in improving digital skills? * How would a Local Digital Skills Partnership add value to your region? * Details of any Vanguard digital skills project you would consider developing with Government or/and Industry partners?   Colleagues agreed that both were worth the Skills Advisory Group applying to. LA will prepare proposals for both and GR asked interested colleagues to work with LA. | **ACTION:** Colleagues to let LA know of suggestions for any additional measures  **ACTION:** LA to produce proposals for the Digital Skills Innovation Fund and Local Digital Skills Partnership to share with colleagues for comment |
| **Local Skills Board Headline Update** | |
| **Essex Employment and Skills Board (CB)**   * More at <https://www.essexesb.co.uk/> * CB noted that most areas of work had been picked up through the agenda, such as the virtual reality work and tutor shortages.   **Kent and Medway Skills Commission (AB)**   * AB noted that the Guilds in Kent and Medway required more support as some are not meeting as regularly as they did previously. GR, Paul Winter, AB and DR will meet soon to discuss further and see how activity can be taken forward. * Kent CC is also through to the final stages of an EU Interreg bid for engineering.   **Skills East Sussex (CBr)**   * CBr noted that East Sussex had been successful in a bid to become a Career Hub area – one of 20 pilot areas nationally. * The local East Sussex apprenticeship plan is being refreshed. * Skills East Sussex was due to meet on 27th and sector groups will share forward plans for the coming year. * Further information is available at <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/business/eastsussex/selep/ses/ses/>   GR noted that all Skills Board chairs had met that day to discuss issues on the Skills Advisory Group agenda. The chairs also endorsed the approach for the strategy launch, KPIs and dashboard. Having the employer voice across the SELEP on skills also ensures alignment with the government’s Skills Advisory Panel plans (which will align with Employment and Skills Boards). |  |
| **AOB** |  |
| PM noted that he is stepping down from his current role at the Sussex Council of Training Providers (SCTP) from November and there will be a new Executive Director, Vanessa Potter. Paul will continue with SCTP as Continuity Director. GR thanked PM for all his support and work with the group and hoped that he would continue working with the group.  AoD noted that the PROCAT and South Essex College merger was taking place and asked if a letter of support from the group would be possible. Colleagues confirmed their support for this. | **ACTION:**LA to prepare letter of support for SEC / PROCAT merger |
| **Date of next meeting: 13th November, Mary Sumner House (**<https://muenterprises.org/conference/location/>) |  |