

Name	Role	Attendance
Mike Ashworth (MA)	DfE	Apologies
Paddy Bradley (PB)	Chief Executive Officer, SWLEP	✓
Sally Burnett (SB)	Swindon Borough Council Skills Lead	Apologies
Doug Gale (DG)	SWLEP Board Director, QinetiQ	✓
Iain Hatt (IH)	Wiltshire College & University Centre	✓
Mike Holliday (MH)	Gloucester and Wiltshire Partnership of Training Providers	Apologies
Helean Hughes (HH)	Director, Education & Skills, Wiltshire Council	✓
Georgina Keily-Theobald OR Ian Tucker	representing Wiltshire Association of Secondary School Heads (WASSH)	Apologies (IT)
Guy Keith-Miller (GK-M)	representing HEI Pathways & Provisions Group	✓
Carole Kitching (CK)	SWLEP Board Director and Principal, New College Swindon	✓
Anwen Jones (AJ)	SWLEP's BEIS Representative	Apologies
Mandy Paterson (MP)	Inspire by Wessex Chamber and Chair of Wiltshire skills, education, and employment skills board	Apologies
Andrew Steele (AS)	representing Swindon Association of Secondary Heads (SASH)	✓
Karen Taylor (KT)	DWP	
Mandy Timbrell (MT)	Wiltshire Council, Acting Head Employment and Skills and SWLEP Skills Lead	Apologies
Employers		
Name yet to be advised	Representative from Gooding Accounts	
Howard Deighton (HD)	Siemens	Apologies
Rick Kavanagh (RK)	Representative from MoD	✓
Andrew Lord (AL)	Alabaré	Apologies

Name	Role	Attendance
Ruth Lambert (RL)	FSB, representing the SWLEP Business Intelligence & Network Group (BING)	✓ Left meeting at 10.45am
Matt Leach (ML)	Beards Construction	
Ash Nandurkar (AN)	Wavin	
Jean Scrase (JS)	NHS Salisbury	Apologies
Phil Townsend (PT)	Littelfuse	✓
Guests		
Chris Baish (CB)	MD, Institute of Technology	Apologies
Dragana Houston (DH)	SWLEP	✓
Amanda Peach (AP)	SWLEP	✓ arrived 11.10am
Debby Skellern (DS)	SWLEP	✓ - left at 11.30am
Morag Sullivan (MS)	Swindon Borough Council, representing Sally Burnett	✓
Shona Taylor (ST)	Swindon & Wiltshire Careers Hub Lead	✓
Daniel Rhind-Tutt (DR-T) and Peter Thompson (PT)	Salisbury & District Chamber	✓✓
Chair:	Carole Kitching (CK)	
Minutes:	Deborah House (DKH)	
Venue	Via video / telephone conference	
Start time	10am	
Finish time	12 noon	

Item	Topic	Deadline
1.0	Welcome and introductions	
	CK welcomed attendees to the meeting and apologies were noted. PB advised that Daniel Rhind-Tutt and Peter Thompson were from Salisbury & District Chamber and were attending as guests.	
2.0	Minutes, matters arising and Conflicts of Interest	
	Minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2021 were read and approved. Matters arising:	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KT and DOL to establish contact to harness Denise's enthusiasm to pass on to DWP's work coaches. KT was absent from the meeting. DKH to check prior to the next meeting. Email sent 26 May. As yet no response. Bring forward. <p>All other Matters arising had been completed.</p> <p>Conflicts of Interest SWLEP had a standing Conflict as an intermediary in the Kickstart Scheme and CK as the Principal for the Institute of Technology. No further Conflicts were declared.</p>	
3.0	Skills Plan White Paper and update on Skills Accelerator programme	
	<p>CK updated the meeting on the status of the Skills Plan White Paper. Education leaders and employers had put forward amendments to the draft to make it properly inclusive and it was currently in the committee stage in the House of Lords.</p> <p>Local Skills Plans would feed into the national picture overall. There was however debate about the role of employer representative bodies, for example, Chambers of Commerce in the Local Skills Plans. The concern was that Chambers in the UK did not play the same role as those in Germany, on which this Plan was based, where membership was mandatory. The Autumn would see royal assent at which point the findings would then become legally binding.</p> <p>There were a number of bids submitted across the region for Trailblazer projects for Local Skills Improvement and Development Plans. These Trailblazers would go live in September 2021 and be finished by March 2022. The outcome of these submissions was imminent.</p> <p>The meeting was advised that the brief for organisations working on these Plans was not aligned to the LEPs' Local Industrial Strategies. In SWLEP's case this would have been towards a broad range of strategic priorities such as cyber skills, but in fact, the bid had to be submitted around a single sector with employment demand, in this case health and social care.</p> <p>An announcement had been made about the withdrawal of BTEC Level 3 qualifications and the Government was currently in consultation. The focus on 'A'-levels, 'T'-levels and apprenticeships had marginalised other qualifications like BTEC diplomas. The education sector was lobbying for these qualifications as they were an important option within the 16+ arena. T levels were as yet untried and without BTECs we would be scrapping an established route to education and employment. The Government was still wedded to the idea that most BTEC qualifications should be discontinued,</p>	



	although creative arts and media BTECs may remain because there was no equivalent at 'T'-level. This would have significant negative impact on young people in deprived areas with a narrowing choice at 16 and reducing social mobility.	
4.0	Careers Hub update	
	<p>ST updated the meeting on the status of the Careers Hub.</p> <p>Current performance The presentation can be accessed via the following link.</p> <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/skills-talent/skills-and-talent-careers-hub-update-july-2021.pdf?sfvrsn=946f95b2_4</p> <p>Key points made were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schools and colleges were submitting their current data and the Careers Hub would receive all by 1 August; • the Hub was above the national average performance on five out of the eight Benchmarks; • the Hub was slightly under the national average for three of the Benchmarks, but this was based on an interim set of data and an updated set was due; • performance against Benchmark 5, <i>Encounters with employers and employees</i> and Benchmark 6, <i>Experiences of workplaces</i>, had reduced since the start of the academic year. Industry had not been able to provide the same level of support and colleges were unable to engage either. Virtual experience had been provided to counter this situation; • the Hub had still managed to deliver significant numbers of activities over the last year via virtual conferences and it was proposed to continue virtually next year; • the Hub had been successful in its bid for funding from Ahead of the Game Transitions Fund with £20,000 allocated to provide up to 1,000 personal guidance interviews for up to 250 young people RoN/NEET. This would be delivered by Adviza between July and December; • the Hub had also been successful in bidding for £70,000 from the Hub Incubation Project to deliver a maths-based careers programme to Year 7s in ten schools to prevent maths anxiety in female students; but • unfortunately, the Hub had not been successful in the bid from the Effective Transitions Fund which was to support 100 Year 10s in 	



	<p>a two-year programme to a positive destination in Year 12. A feedback meeting was taking place that afternoon to discuss the reasons.</p> <p>The provision of virtual work experience was of interest and DG would pick this up with QinetiQ. Two Enterprise Advisors (EAs) from QinetiQ already worked with the Hub and ST would provide him with the names to establish contact.</p> <p>Action: ST to provide names of QinetiQ EAs to DG.</p> <p>Getting engagement with businesses was very important; if this were not possible on a face-to-face basis, then work placements could be carried out in the virtual world. This was also true of the experiences with FE and HE. Good examples existed of companies leading digital work experience and showed the art of the possible. The digital world opened this opportunity to many students, and it was not just a postcode lottery. A member of the Careers Hub Steering Group, working with Wiltshire College & University Centre, had developed a platform, YourPlacement, to facilitate the work placement process between employers and students. Further stages of the development work was being considered.</p> <p>Congratulations were offered to the Careers Hub on its success this year under very difficult circumstances.</p> <p>The meeting was advised of the launch on 20 July of a Salisbury Education and Business Partnership led by Salisbury & District Chamber. The Chamber had been working with Salisbury schools over the past five years and had links with nine local schools at the moment. Its purpose was to encourage the business community to link up with students; the Chamber was simply offering an introduction. The Chamber should like a closer allegiance with the work of the Careers Hub, and it would be a good opportunity to link up to build a really strong partnership for the benefit of students.</p>	July 2021
5.0	Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) - jobs growth in areas of demand	
	<p>DH updated the meeting on Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) for the Swindon and Wiltshire area and the presentation can be accessed via the link below.</p> <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/skills-talent/skills-and-talent---15-july-2021-lmi.pdf?sfvrsn=ed033d18_4</p> <p>The presentation showed that transport was now a struggling sector with shops with empty shelves as fewer drivers were available to make deliveries.</p>	

	SWLEP was investigating this situation and would contact WTTL, a driver training company, and logistics companies to verify this information.	
6.0	The launch of the Institute of Technology (IoT)	
	<p>In Chris Baish's absence, CK updated the meeting on the Institute of Technology's progress. The launch information video was played, and the presentation given can be accessed using the link below.</p> <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/skills-talent/skills-and-talent-iot---15-july-2021.pdf?sfvrsn=35e26a76_4</p> <p>Questions were raised regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the number of learners starting the IoT in September and how far away that was from the Government's KPI; and when would modular courses with funding start? <p>The KPIs for the IoT were set over a five-year period as Government had taken a longer-term view, but apprenticeships were at 50% of where they needed to be. This was a challenging landscape, and the IoT was not seeing the uptake in IT, software and cyber, that is, digital skills. Engineering and manufacturing had been slow initially, but the college was now seeing an upturn in the last few weeks and was at 80% of target. The IoT was also involved in Clearing this year and 'A'- level results would be announced slightly earlier than usual.</p> <p>A bid had been submitted for short courses to provide in-skills work, but the outcome was not yet known. This course would provide bite-sized modules of learning which would be free of charge to employers and allow them to upskill existing employees to higher levels. It was hoped the results would come through in the next couple of weeks. Swindon Borough Council intended to put some of its Kickstart Trainees on this type of course were it available.</p> <p>The external communications piece should be strong on television or radio stations for a September start date. Promotion could also be made via (Wiltshire Association of Secondary School Heads) WASSH. Swindon was perceived as being too far for students to travel for most of the county, but there was work to do around how accessible this could be if digital. And communications needed to reach out to Wiltshire employers, because otherwise it appeared as the IoT was Swindon centric.</p>	

	The IoT was seen as an alternative to university as it was post-18, so was not competing with the UTC. Its positioning in the education marketplace was as a complimentary part of the landscape and not in competition.	
8.0	Skills Plan 2021-22	
	<p>The next two items were taken out of order.</p> <p>DfE had funded the activity around skills development in the SWLEP area using the Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) mechanism and the funding remained in place until the end of March 2022. After that date it was uncertain what formal role the SWLEP would have in the skills landscape, although the organisation would still be active in the skills arena, as this was fundamental to overall productivity.</p> <p>The presentation given can be accessed via the link below, slides 1-3:</p> <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/skills-talent/skills-and-talent-role-of-saps---15-july-2021.pdf?sfvrsn=1d649763_4</p> <p>The SWLEP would continue with its current work. With the result of the Trailblazer applications known by the next meeting, SWLEP would have a more solid idea of its plans of work. March 2022 would force a refocus depending on the changing conditions. So, evidence stays live and relevant.</p>	
9.0	Apprenticeship Strategy	
	<p>Slide 4 can be accessed from the presentation link above at 8.0.</p> <p>SWLEP was in the process of refreshing its Apprenticeship Strategy and a Working Group of employers, providers and the Unitary Authorities had already met. Efforts were being made to increase awareness of employers to apprenticeships, thereby increasing the numbers of students back to providers.</p> <p>It was declared that apprenticeships still had a traditional oily rags perception and needed to be made more relevant to today's world across a range of disciplines and at a range of levels. There was still a stigma around apprenticeships and parents were not on board. Although, conversely, there had been a six-fold increase in higher and degree apprenticeships in the Swindon and Wiltshire area.</p> <p>If BTECs were to be superseded, employers would need a lot of support to know the way forward as this had been a standard progression route through</p>	

	<p>many companies. A webinar was taking place next week for employers to work through that landscape. All training provision was in one place at the Learning Hub and people should be encouraged to view. It was thought that the promotion of apprenticeships was too old-fashioned which did not help their cause. The SWLEP should find more exciting ways of promoting these; make it more engaging with a drip feed campaign throughout the year, not just once a year in February as was now the case.</p> <p>PB advised that part of the refreshed Apprenticeship Strategy would be a concerted campaign run throughout the year.</p>	
7.0	Kickstart	
	<p>AP updated the meeting on the Kickstart Scheme. The following points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the scheme would close in December; • DWP had placed 43,000 young people, but this was far away from the target of 250,000; • SWLEP was a Gateway organisation and many local employers had come forward to use the service; • 51 young people were on placement in the area; four of which were placed at SWLEP; • employers received £1,500 grant for set up costs and the full cost of the salary was reimbursed from Government; • the Kickstart webinar that morning had been warmly received by employers; and • another Kickstart event coordinated by Michelle Donelan MP would be held in Chippenham at the end of July. <p>The Kickstart Forum had asked Government to extend the scheme past its current end date of December given that there had been a slow start and it was only now picking up pace. As yet there were no answers. It was anticipated that the Government was awaiting the decisions regarding the comprehensive Spending Review to make a bid to Treasury for DWP funding.</p> <p>It was proposed to contact Justin Tomlinson MP to stress this request.</p> <p>Action: PB to draft letter to Justin Tomlinson under CK's signature.</p>	Aug 2021
10.0	AOB	
	<p>Date of next meeting Monday, 13 September – 10am – 12 noon Via video / teleconference call</p> <p>Future meetings:</p>	



	Thursday, 11 November – 9.30am – 11.30am	
	All meetings will take place via video / teleconference call until further notice.	
	CK thanked those present for attending and for their contributions.	
	Meeting closed at 11.56am	

Signed:

**Carole Kitching
Chair
16 September 2021**