

 Swindon & Wiltshire LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP	Minutes Skills & Talent Subgroup Meeting Thursday, 20 May 2021
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Name	Role	Attendance
Mike Ashworth (MA)	DfE	✓
Paddy Bradley (PB)	Chief Executive Officer, SWLEP	✓
Sally Burnett (SB)	Swindon Borough Council Skills Lead	✓
Amanda Burnside (AB)	Chair of Subgroup, SWLEP Board Director and Principal of Wiltshire College & University Centre	✓
Iain Hatt (IH)	Wiltshire College & University Centre	✓
Mike Holliday (MH)	Gloucester and Wiltshire Partnership of Training Providers	✓
Helean Hughes (HH)	Director, Education & Skills, Wiltshire Council	
Georgina Keily-Theobald OR Ian Tucker	representing Wiltshire Association of Secondary School Heads (WASSH)	GKT - left meeting at 11.20am
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	✓
Mandy Paterson (MP)	Inspire by Wessex Chamber and Chair of Wiltshire skills, education, and employment skills board	✓
Andrew Steele (AS)	representing Swindon Association of Secondary Heads (SASH)	Apologies
Karen Taylor (KT)	DWP	Apologies
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	
Rick Kavanagh (RK)	Representative from MoD	✓
Andrew Lord (AL)	Alabaré	

Name	Role	Attendance
Ruth Lambert (RL)	FSB, representing the SWLEP Business Intelligence & Network Group (BING)	Apologies
Matt Leach (ML)	Beards Construction	
Ash Nandurkar (AN)	Wavin	
Jean Scrase (JS)	NHS Salisbury	✓
Phil Townsend (PT)	Littelfuse	Apologies
Guests		
Chris Baish (CB)	MD, Institute of Technology	✓
Vicki Harrison (VH)	Representing DWP in Karen Taylor's absence	Apologies
Dragana Houston (DH)	SWLEP	✓
Courtney Sweet (CS)	SWLEP	✓
Shona Taylor (ST)	Swindon & Wiltshire Careers Hub Lead	✓
Chair:	Amanda Burnside (AB)	
Minutes:	Deborah House (DKH)	
Venue	Via video / telephone conference	
Start time	10am	
Finish time	12 noon	

Item	Topic	Deadline
1.0	Welcome and introductions	
	AB welcomed attendees and apologies were noted. Particular welcome was extended to Anwen Jones, BEIS representative, and Georgina Keily-Theobald, WASSH representative, to their first meeting of the Subgroup, and to Courtney Sweet, SWLEP Kickstarter who was attending as an observer.	
2.0	Minutes, matters arising and Conflicts of Interest	
	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2021 were read and approved.</p> <p>Matters arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> JS to make the link between the apprenticeship lead and the ASK programme in case this had not yet been established. Subsequent to the meeting, MH updated via email that the action was COMPLETE. ST made the introduction to Nicola Summerill and they had a very productive meeting and had 	

	<p>a plan for Salisbury NHS's future involvement in the ASK Programme.</p> <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. • owing to MT's absence, the Chair requested the results of Wiltshire Council's National Apprenticeship Week for the next meeting. MT is away from work until the early summer. Carry forward. <p>All other Matters arising had been completed or were on the agenda.</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	
	<p>Skills Plan White Paper and update on Skills Accelerator initiatives and FE Collaboration project</p> <p>PB outlined the background to the item. There had been good coverage in the Queen's speech about the skills agenda. DfE was keen on the benefits for a lifetime skills guarantee; constantly building the link between employer-led, demand-led provider offering. The overall aim was to increase productivity as the UK productivity levels were lower than those of key competitors.</p> <p>Discussions with potential bidders for local skills improvement plans (LSIPs) covering all or part of our area and associated Strategic Development Fund bids</p> <p>The Government had opened a competition for employer representative bodies (not LEPs) to bid to be trailblazers by developing Local Skills Improvement Plans in defined areas of the country.</p> <p>The LSIPs could have a narrower focus than the LEPs' Skills Plans which relate to the people priorities of local industrial strategies. LSIP applications would require use of skills and employment data from Local Skills Reports. The challenge with the LSIPs was having a defined geography. The meeting was advised that SWLEP had held initial conversations with Thames Valley Chamber, which was considering its geographical area as Swindon, Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. As this had split the SWLEP area and did not include Wiltshire, the Chamber had been informed that SWLEP would not be supportive of its bid.</p>	



	<p>Business West was considering its geographical area as Swindon & Wiltshire and to include parts of south east and south west Gloucestershire, the difficulty was envisaged to be the breaking down of the Gloucestershire data.</p> <p>The Strategic Development Fund targeted at training providers was linked to Local Skills Improvement Plans. CK spoke to the meeting. FE colleges were leading the bids for the Strategic Development Fund to support skills shortages. Employers were to have a statutory role in planning public-funded training programmes through colleges and private skills providers. New College Swindon and Wiltshire College & University Centre were working together to develop a proposal to train people working in Health, Social Care and Lifesciences through high level technology to be ready for the workplace in the SWLEP area to drive forward skills development. They were receiving support from partners and employers were engaged. The funding would be awarded in September for a March start.</p> <p>Alongside that, New College Swindon was also working with Business West on its LSIPs trailblazer. The Strategic Development Fund bid would also underpin that and focus on the health and social care and life sciences sectors. The Government was looking for 6/8 trailblazer pilot areas with double that number for Strategic Development Fund bids.</p>	
5.0	Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) update	
	<p>Taken out of order.</p> <p>MA updated the meeting on the various recent skills announcements from Government. Below is a list of links to the appropriate papers.</p> <p>The Queen's Speech</p> <p>DfE announcement of Skills and Post-16 Education Bill</p> <p>Skills and Post-16 Education Bill</p> <p>There was a new outlook for post-16 education, responding to the needs of the economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A post-16 capacity fund of £83m would be made available to support 16 to 18-year-olds with increased classroom space and teaching facilities to take into account the demographic increase. • Embedding employers at the heart of the local skills improvement plan would be crucial and the Government was looking to make this a statutory duty. 	



- Transformation of the student loan system with proposed legislation to extend the concept of the student loan scheme into a lifetime opportunity so that every adult could make use of it throughout their lives.
- This represented four years of post-18 education to be used throughout life and would come into effect from 2025.
- People needed to have up to Level 3 qualification and be working towards higher technical and degree levels.
- Intervention of colleges when their outcomes were unsatisfactory.
- Consultation on the proposal was being carried out this year.

Questions were raised about -

The student loan scheme

- Some sectors were depressed as a result of COVID-19 with people moving into different sectors that were not so badly affected. People would be able to access loans that had lower interest rates than that provided by the student loan scheme.
- Communicating the benefits of the loan could be a challenge.
- The onus would be on the sector to communicate that to potential or existing employees.
- Employers would also need to see the value.
- Was there any scope for incentivisation?

MA added that incentivisation would be one of the main points in the consultation.

Statutory duty of employers to be involved

- It was queried how this would function logistically and who would be responsible for checking the process. Would that be the provider or the employers themselves?
- This may be possible for the bigger employers who had that additional capacity, and some SMEs may commit to take on students and apprentices, but the level of engagement could be onerous for most SMEs.
- Employer engagement existed though the development of new qualifications and approvals. Providers needed to evidence consultation with employers for T-levels, BTech and technical qualifications. There were mechanisms within the system for this, but they were not statutory or fixed.

What would be the role of LEPs in these new plans?

- LEPs had worked hard towards establishing Skills Advisory Panels (SWLEP's Skills & Talent Subgroup) when required and currently there was funding through to 2022 but no certainty beyond that date of their role in planning for improvement in skills provision.

	<p>Action: MA to take comments regarding practicalities to DfE for further clarification.</p> <p>Flexibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colleges at the moment were able to offer 2–3-year programmes with funding available. But employers' needs move on quickly so there needed to be flexibility in the approach. Having flexibility in the levy system, would also allow employers to use for upskilling existing employees. The meeting was advised that one awarding organisation was focused on flexibility particularly at Levels 3, 4 and 5. <p>In addition, the meeting was advised of the collaboration between New College Swindon and Wiltshire College & University Centre which were looking at the HE offer and carrying out some mapping work. IH and CK would be reporting back to the meeting on that in the future.</p>	May 2021
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/data-summary-may-2021b6495b94199245a49bad8956763f8d07.pdf?sfvrsn=26db1e37_4</p> <p>There was improvement in a number of areas of performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swindon and Wiltshire Careers Hub schools and colleges were performing above the national average for seven out of the eight Gatsby Benchmarks; The 63 school and colleges the Hub worked with were achieving an overall rating of 4.42 Benchmarks; again, above the national average; the Careers Hub was now above where it was at the start of the pandemic, although progress had been slow; it was anticipated that the Hub would probably not reach the target for Benchmark 1, a stable careers programme, even though a bursary of £1,000 was on offer; it was believed that the Hub would reach the targets for Benchmark 5, encounters with employers and employees, and Benchmark 6, experiences of workplaces. <p>Future activity</p>	



- Running a collective Meet the Training Provider event on 26 May for Year 10s to explore their next options.
- In June staging virtual events with Learn Live to engage with young people.
- On 10 June, the Careers Hub would be staging an LMI webinar for parents, carers and young people with SWLEP's Dragana Houston on how to take their next steps.
- On 7 July there would be a Year 9+ careers fair and the Hub was in the process of recruiting employers to take part.

Project involving the Transform Society organisation

The Careers Hub would be working with the Transform Society organisation. The CEO, James Darley, had set up Teach First for graduate recruitment and had instigated the same approach for the Police, prison service and children and adults social care for the overall benefit of society. The organisation was now looking to move into the school environment and introduce young people to public sector roles at an earlier stage using the Swindon and Wiltshire Careers Hub as a pilot scheme. Transform Society was making videos for FE to showcase Public Service as a sector. If successful, the Hub would also operate Q&A webinars. The organisation would also be giving inspirational talks in schools from September.

New funding opportunities

Funding was available from the Careers Enterprise Company for two new potential projects which the Careers Hub was about to bid for:

- a research and development opportunity (Hub Incubation Fund); and
- improving prospects for those not in education, employment, or training (Effectiveness Fund).

Hub Incubation Project (HIP)

- Funding pot of £675,000
- Average project costs £70,000 with a cap at £100,000
- Deadline for submission of 18 June 2021
- Period from September 2021 to August 2022

A high-level of engagement with businesses and schools would be required for this project. The Hub had already held informal conversations with some to ascertain their commitment to working with us, but this would be investigated further if we were successful and through to the next round.

A proposal was being worked up.



	<p>Effectiveness Fund Long-term careers support for disadvantaged young people starting September 2021 until February 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding pot of £2m. • Maximum level of funding available per Hub is £200,000. • Maximum of ten projects would be funded. • £5,000 of seed funding to support short-listed Hubs on developing their proposals. • Deadline for submission was 26 May 2021. <p>A proposal was being worked up.</p> <p>Work to develop a comprehensive package of work experience, both virtual and face to face</p> <p>The presentation can be accessed via the link below.</p> <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/skills-talent/virtual-work-experience-update-130521.pdf?sfvrsn=37e5a2c0_4</p> <p>Virtual work experience activities with organisations were run / would be run by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class of Your Own – STEM careers in construction, engineering and architecture; • Springpod – with a focus on engineering; • Swindon's Great Western Hospital would be running several activities for us in health care work, for example, nursing and medicine as well as non-clinical roles, for example, entry-level clerical; and • Speakers for Schools <p>Wiltshire College & University Centre had been working with Daniel Busson of Capita WFM, one of the Careers Hub's Cornerstone Employers, on an online student placement booking platform. The Careers Hub was hoping to have this rolled out at the end of June and then to New College Swindon and Cirencester College by the end of the year. The Hub had calculated that 15,000 work placements were needed to accommodate Years 9 and 10 and Year 12s during the academic year.</p>	
6.0	Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) - jobs growth in areas of demand	
	DH updated the meeting on LMI and the presentation can be accessed via the link below.	

	<p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/skills-talent/20-may'21-lmi---s-t-meeting-v0-3.pdf?sfvrsn=f520cf90_4</p> <p>The presentation showed alternations in the employment landscape over the past 12 months, highlighting that the job mix had changed. Although the situation was improving, the Kickstart scheme itself would not be able to solve everything. We needed to create other opportunities for young people.</p> <p>It was recognised that the overall Kickstart system was quite challenging. Engaging with businesses had worked well, but the overall numbers were still very small. DH advised that the government was looking for 300,000 Kickstart placements in total. By February 150,000 had been created, with 30,000 places open but only 4,000 young people had started their placements. There was a severe bottleneck in the system.</p> <p>CB advised that Digital Bootcamps were not yet in the region. A fund for upskilling employees already in work was being worked on. Credited and non-accredited provision could be used. There was a four-week turn around for the bid. The IoT was submitting the bid exclusively, but it was open to working with other providers. The deadline for spending this money was March 2022.</p> <p>Action: PB to ensure that all Growth Hub Business Navigators had knowledge about free skills provision available.</p> <p>IH advised the meeting that Wiltshire College & University Centre was involved in a bid for the Institute of Coding mainly around agriculture and agri-tech.</p> <p>Action: CB and IH to have conversation to avoid duplication.</p>	May 2021
7.0	Update on Institute of Technology (IoT)	
	<p>CB updated the meeting on progress for the Institute of Technology and the presentation can be accessed using the link below.</p> <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/skills-talent/iot-swlep-update.pdf?sfvrsn=bc5d707a_4</p> <p>The question was raised on whether the IoT had been in contact with Salisbury hospital to look at education and training across the whole system, not just in health and science jobs. It makes sense to link in with system discussions rather than individual organisations, and CB had already made contact with the West of England Academic Health Science Network to</p>	



	address this collectively but acknowledged that the IoT did need to look at its geographical spread.	
8.0	Handover of Chairing of the Group	
	The meeting bade farewell to Amanda Burnside as she stepped down from chairing the Skills & Talent Subgroup and welcomed Carole Kitching to the role. Amanda was thanked for her extensive contribution to the work of the Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership with regard to the skills agenda.	
9.0	AOB	
	<p>Date of next meeting Thursday, 15 July – 10am -12 noon Via video / teleconference call</p> <p>Future meetings: Monday, 13 September – 10am – 12 noon Thursday, 11 November – 9.30am – 11.30am</p> <p>All meetings will take place via video / teleconference call until further notice.</p> <p>AB thanked those present for attending and for their contributions.</p>	
	Meeting closed at 11.50am	

Carole Kitching. 19/07/2021