



Solent Skills Advisory Panel

To be held on: Wednesday 17 November 2021

At: 09:00 - 10:30

Via Zoom:

Item	Title	Time	
1.	Welcome and Introductions	09:00 - 09:05	Chair - Rachael Randall
2.	Minutes of the last meeting and Matters Arising	09:05 - 09:10	Chair - Rachael Randall
3	Local Skills Report Refresh	09:10- 09:55	Lucie Bailey - Lichfields
4.	Solent LEP Careers and Enterprise Company programme, performance and Strategic Hub Plan	09:55 - 10:20	Siobhan Flynn - Solent LEP
5.	Skills Advisory Panel Budget & Forward Plan	10:20 - 10:25	Siobhan Flynn - Solent LEP
6.	Any other business Date of Next Meeting Wednesday 19 January 2022	10:25 - 10:30	Chair Rachael Randall

Item 3 Local Skills Report Refresh

A presentation will be received at the meeting



Meeting: Skills Advisory Panel
Date: 17 November 2021
Item 3: LEP Executive Background Paper - Local Skills Report

Introduction

The skills agenda has received a significant amount of attention from Government in recent months. The purpose of this paper is to provide a high-level overview of the key policy, regulatory and funding developments that are working their way through the skills ecosystem at present and is intended to provide the some supporting context for the discussion on the Local Skills Refresh.

1. National Policy Context and policy Update

The [FE White Paper](#) published in January 2021 aims to increase momentum in the delivery of skills by increasing employer involvement on skills courses, better tailoring of provision to local needs, improving higher technical qualifications, introducing a lifelong loan entitlement, reforming accountability and funding systems and supporting FE teachers.

[Skills and Post-16 Education Bill](#) introduced in May 2021 puts in place the legislation to take forward the landmark reforms set out in the FE White paper to transform post-16 education and training, boost jobs and get more people into work. The main elements of the bill are:

- To put employers at the heart of the post-16 skills system through the [Skills Accelerator](#), which saw the opportunity for local employer representative bodies, such as Chambers of Commerce to apply to develop Local Skills Improvement Plan trailblazers¹ and for colleges to seeking additional funding via Development Fund Pilots. Fareham College was successful in leading a proposal in partnership with all 11 Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges in the Solent to work collaboratively on a range of projects designed to support the upskilling and reskilling of local people and provide businesses with the skilled workforce they need to be successful in a post-COVID-19 economy.
- To introduce the Lifelong Loan Entitlement from 2025, as part of its Lifetime Skills Guarantee, which will give individuals access to the equivalent of up to four years' worth of student loans for levels 4–6 qualifications that they can use flexibly across their lifetime, at colleges as well as universities.

¹ LSIP Guidance is currently in draft form

- To extend existing powers for the Secretary of State for Education to intervene where colleges fail to meet local needs, to direct structural change where required to secure improvement, and by amending the regulation of post-16 education and training providers to ensure quality.
- More powers to the Office for Students to determine minimum requirements for quality.

The government launched a [consultation](#) seeking views on the reform of FE funding and accountability systems on 15th July, which closed on the 7th October. The consultation set out proposals to reform the:

- Adult skills funding system so it is simpler, outcome focused and more effective.
- Accountability system so it is focused on outcomes, taking a strategic approach to support and intervention

The Skills for Job White Paper also made proposals to improve careers for young people. In recent years, the Government has tried to improve the provision of careers education, most notably in the [2018-20 Careers Strategy](#) and requirements on Ofsted to comment on careers guidance in its inspection reports. Following this, the Government issued updated [Statutory Guidance](#) in July 2021 to schools and colleges strengthening the 'Baker Clause' which is a legal duty to ensure that schools must provide opportunities for a range of education and training providers to access all Year 8 to 13 pupils to inform them about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. It also strengthened the role of the [Careers and Enterprise Company](#) aligning it with the [National Careers Service](#), including developing shared terminology, a common approach to labour market information and supporting a seamless transition for young people from school and college into further education, training or work. A Private Member's Bill also going through parliament will extend the duty for schools to provide careers guidance from Year 7.

The Government extended its [Plan for Jobs](#) measures in the 2021 Autumn Budget and Spending Review. The [Kickstart Scheme](#), which provides funding to employers who create new jobs for young people aged 16-24 who are on Universal Credit and who are at risk of long-term unemployment, was extended until March 2022².

The [Restart](#) scheme, which is a three-year programme which provides up to 12 months intensive and tailored support to Universal Credit claimants who have been out of work for at least a year, went live in July 2021. The intention is to get them back into work as "quickly and efficiently as possible". Work coaches may also give early access to the scheme to some claimants, if this is felt to be the most appropriate route for them. The Solent LEP is working closely with Fedcap, the prime delivery organisation for Restart, and its sub-contractors.

The Lifetime Skills Guarantee, which has been available since April 2021, supports adults without an A-level or equivalent qualification, (level 3) to access around 400 fully funded colleges courses that employers consider to be valuable. The Lifetime Skills Guarantee is part of a £2.5bn [National Skills Fund](#) government has made available to take forward a raft of skills initiatives. The budget/ spending review saw increased funding for [Skills Bootcamps](#), which offer free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks for adults aged 19 or over and who are either in work, self-employed, recently unemployed or returning to work after a break. They give people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer. Bootcamps focus on key sectors experiencing recruitment and skill-gap issues and currently include Construction, Digital Engineering and

² The jobs created must provide a minimum of 25 hours per week, for 6 months. It will also provide £1,500 per job placement to cover setup costs and to support the jobholder to develop their employability skills.

Manufacturing, Green Skills and Rail. An HGV driver Skills bootcamp round is due to be announced later this month. The Isle of Wight College was successful with a proposal to create a [digital marketing bootcamp](#). Measures to improve numeracy skills through a new Multiply Programme were also unveiled in the Chancellor's speech.

[Apprenticeships](#) remain a central plank to the Government's skills reform. Government extended the £3,000 Apprenticeship Incentive for employers until 31st January 2022 in the budget. Government plans to roll-out an enhanced recruitment service next year to SMEs, helping them hire new apprentices alongside a return-on-investment tool for employers.

Earlier in the year Government announced a £7m [flexible-apprenticeship fund](#) to establish a small number of agencies that will set up new flexi-job apprenticeships so an apprentice can work across a range of projects and with different employers to gain the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to be occupationally competent. Apprenticeships are at least 12 months long, so some sectors with flexible employment patterns and short-term roles, such as digital, adult social care, transport and manufacturing have found it challenging to benefit from the current opportunities available.

The Spending Review saw a continuing commitment for Higher Technical Qualifications with budget announcements to increase funding for T levels, Institutes of Technology, and capital funding to upgrade FE college estate. In relation to the Solent IoT proposal, Government have advised that they will be calling prospective bidders at the beginning of December.

The Autumn Budget and Spending Review did not provide significant further details on the Levelling up White Paper, the LEP Review or further information on local growth funding. The Levelling Up White Paper and further details on some of the local growth funds will be published by the end of the year. It did confirm that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will set aside £560 million to support skills in the period to 2024. Several local projects were awarded funding from a range of government departments details of which were made available via [regional factsheets](#). These included:

- Levelling up funding for projects on the Isle of Wight and Portsmouth
- Community ownership funding for projects in the New Forest and Portsmouth
- £7 Million to restore passenger rail links between Totton and Fawley
- £63 million investment in Southampton through the Transforming Cities Fund and a local road upgrade for the Redbridge Causeway.

Local Delivery

Solent Apprenticeship and Skills Hub, (SASH) went live on 1 November 2021. Businesses across the Solent are able to receive an enhanced service offering free and impartial support to improve skills and offer apprenticeships. Southampton City Council, as the lead partner will build on the success of the [Solent Apprenticeship Hub](#), to extend the existing service into a broader skills support offer. Initiatives including Transfer to Transform and Kickstart Aftercare, and the “100 in 100”, which focused on getting 100 local young people into employment and skills programmes within 100 days will continue as part of this comprehensive offer. In addition, the SASH is providing a business support service for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to help them access grants to implement low carbon solutions for their businesses. Businesses can apply up to £10k for investment in low carbon/eco-innovation solutions as part of a wider drive to achieve Net Zero emission targets. Crucially, the pairing of the Solent Apprenticeship & Skills Hub with the Solent LEP [Solent Growth Hub](#) will see an integrated suite of services offered to the region’s business community; resulting in better signposting to support, improved account management and B2B networking opportunities, and extensive businesses

engagement by a team of advisers dedicated to help employers in achieving their growth ambitions. Allied to this is the recent contract award by the Education and Skills Funding Agency to Serco which draws in an additional £1.7m of skills funding for businesses in the Solent.

Solent 2050

The Solent LEP will be publishing its new economic strategy in the New Year - Solent 2050. This will set out the following seven strategic priorities, which we have already spotlighted within our [Economic Recovery Plan](#):

1. A world-leading marine and maritime economy, building on our existing assets and global competitive advantages to strengthen the UK's international trading relationships.
2. Pioneering approaches to climate change adaptation and decarbonisation, linked to our coastal setting, and establishing real expertise which other regions – nationally and globally – can learn from.
3. The UK's capital of coastal renaissance, harnessing new technologies and approaches to revitalise and level up economic opportunity across all our coastal communities.
4. A thriving visitor, creative and cultural economy, capitalising on the Solent's superb natural beauty and rich maritime history.
5. **Developing a world-class talent base, helping people at all stages of their career build the skills they need to respond to new technology and drive an innovative knowledge-based economy.**
6. An outstanding business environment that encourages innovation, fosters collaboration, and enables businesses of all sizes and sectors to thrive.
7. Health and wellbeing at the heart of economic success, through a focus on building strong, healthy, and resilient communities that can prosper in a fast-changing world.

Whilst all of these priorities will help frame the re-refresh of the Local Skills Report, strategic priority five is particularly pertinent.

In addition, the LEP has recently published its framework for a [ten-point plan for a green industrial revolution of the Solent](#). The first "Point" is "A world class green business and talent base", whereby the ambition is to develop the business base and skills we need to drive a green industrial revolution in the Solent, recognising that these will be critical enablers to delivering the transition to Net Zero.

Item 4 Solent LEP Careers and Enterprise Company Programme, performance and Strategic Hub Plan

A presentation will be received at the meeting

Item 5 Skills Advisory Panel Forward Plan

Meeting	Activity	Outputs and Milestones
15 January 2021 9:00-10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAP to provide advice on the production of the LSR and Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solent Skills Advisory Panel to consider priorities for the LSR Draft version to be shared with DfE February 2021 Publish a Solent Local Report - March 2021
Wednesday 30 June 9:00-10:30	SAP to provide advice on the range of skills investments have oversight and provide advice on strategically important employment and skills initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel to agree a refresh of the Local Skills Report AECOM report - Local Growth Deal Programme - Skills Investments An update on the Solent Local Skills Improvement Plan Presentation on the work of the TUC during Covid
Additional meeting 14 July 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead on the Skills work stream for the Solent Freeport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide advice on skills as part of the development of the outline business case to Government for the Freeport Development
Wednesday 17 November 9:00-10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresh of the Local Skills Report SAP to monitor the targets of the Careers and Enterprise Company contract, and have oversight of the broader careers programme of work SAP to have oversight and provide advice on strategically important employment and skills initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAP to consider priorities for the Local Skills Report refresh. An update on the CEC programme. Consider the draft Careers Hub Strategic Plan, performance against targets to date & resourcing. An update on the Solent Apprenticeship and Skills Hub and its integration with the Solent Growth Hub. An update on the progress of the Institute of Technology submission An update on the employment support initiatives such as kickstart.
Wednesday 19 January 2022 9:00-10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresh of Local Skills Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree final draft for publication An update on T level implementation across the Solent