

MINUTES

DORSET LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP SKILLS ADVISORY PANEL AND BOARD

7 March 2022, 2 – 4 pm
Virtual meeting

Board Attendees:

- Luke Rake, Kingston Maurward College, Chair (LR)
- Adrian Trevett, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (AT)
- David Matthews, Upton Beach Consulting (DM)
- Heidi Cooper-Hind, Arts University Bournemouth (HCH)
- Jim Andrews, Bournemouth University (JA)
- Jon Bird, Dorset Council (JB)
- Julia Howe, Weymouth College (JH)
- Lesley Haig –AECC (LH)
- Nicola Newman, Ansbury Guidance (NN)
- Phil Sayles, Bournemouth and Poole College
- Rebecca Davies, Dorset LEP Head Of Enterprise, Skills And Industry (RD)
- Rod Davis, Dorset and Somerset Training Providers (RoD)

Also Present:

- Sarah Rice, Skills and Adult Community Education (SR)- representing Lesley Spain
- Mira Koseva, Dorset LEP Skills Analyst (MK)

Apologies:

- Hugh Joseph, Air Bearing Solutions (HJ)
- Lesley Spain, Skills and Adult Community Education (LS)
- Richard Renaut, University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust (RR)
- Steph Simpson, Department for Work and Pensions (SS)
- Tim Ford, Independent Director (TF)
- Zannah Chisholm, Pavilion Dance South West (ZC)

| Item | Welcome, introductions and apologies | Action |
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| 1 | LR opened the SAP Board proceedings with a round of introductions and noting apologies. | |
| 2 | Minutes, Actions and Matters Arising | |
| | The 10 January 2022 meeting minutes were agreed as accurate reflection of the proceedings and advised to be published as final with minor corrections. There were no matters arising. | MK: Publish minutes |
| 3 | Place | |
| 3.1 | Local Skills Report (LSR) publishing update | |
| | MK reminded that LSR is a condition of DfE funding. The first report was released in March 2021 and an updated version was published within the 28th of January 2022 deadline. MK reflected on the process starting in | |

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| <p>3.2</p> | <p>the end of 2021 with the SAP Board review of the evidence, discussion and agreement on the strategic priorities and support for the data collection effort. The publication remains the single go-to resource for Dorset local skills insights and initiatives and consists of the main report, annex of key indicators and plan of activities covering 2022.</p> <p>In terms of LSR launch and communication activities, the focus has been on readability with an interactive executive summary and a webinar highlighting some of the key skills and workforce challenges for local employers available on the website. The launch involved think pieces reflecting on the release of the Levelling up white paper, the views of our local councils and the challenges faced by specific groups, such as women. The report was picked up by local press where the focus was on Dorset's continued productivity challenge. Overall, the engagement and response has been very positive with significant social media interest. The webinar proved to be popular with 60 people booked, 50 attending on the day and 60 more watching the recording.</p> <p>This year, subject to funding and Local Skills Improvement Plans implementation developments, the plan of activities is due for review. The ideas emerging through SAPB discussions have been summarised in a skills wish list in readiness for that review to commence if and when funding becomes available enabling the work of the SAPB to continue.</p> <p><u>Comments</u></p> <p>LR commended the LSR quality of analysis and data, as well as the wider discussions generated through the webinar and other launch activities.</p> <p>Dorset and Somerset Training Providers Network (DSTPN) new resources</p> <p>RoD introduced two new resources recently released by DSTPN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your Future Sorted - directory <p>The need for this resource emerged through the work of the ASK project in schools and communities. The directory aims to help students, parents, and teachers to understand the routes available to them in an attractive and easily digestible format using consistent themes and colours to allow comparisons between different options.</p> <p>It covers apprenticeships, traineeships, T-Levels and other programmes and features key training providers locally. The resource has been very well-received as it facilitates Gatsby benchmarks work and CEIAG provision. The team is looking into an expanded 2023 version with summaries for each possible route. The directory is designed to be used online with a paper copy available for each school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills Elevator <p>These sector-based graphics are designed to illustrate routes into industries and progression pathways. They highlight potential job roles, skills, behaviours, as well as expected levels of study at different levels within a sector. They have been launched for 15 sectors initially with plans to expand and evolve to ensure wider community reach. DSTPN has funded this work and is welcoming feedback and looking for partners for future developments.</p> | |
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| <p>3.3</p> <p>3.3.1</p> <p>3.3.2</p> | <p><u>Comments</u></p> <p>A number of members praised the quality and usefulness of these materials and proposed using upcoming events and wider opportunities to promote further to parents. Developments into sectors that are emerging, such as green was also proposed as helpful.</p> <p>Local Government update</p> <p><i>The Skills Commission</i></p> <p>AT updated the SAP Board on the Skills Commission. Following its agreement by both BCP and Dorset Council, a tender has been published for a chair to lead on this work.</p> <p>A tender was out for an independent chair who understands the current and future skills and their relevance to Dorset, and can make sure that industry, education and the public sector are all involved, with strong links with the SAP Board and the two Councils' cabinets.</p> <p>The Skills Commission will look at Dorset's future skills landscape and ensure we have a world-class learning infrastructure. The work will involve reviewing the landscape, considering policy developments, and providing skills projections for the next 10, 20 and 30 years. Secondly, engaging stakeholders, the SAP Board and looking at the skills plan implementation.</p> <p>JB added that in the process of cabinet agreement, a section around short-term COVID recovery activities was added, which due to fast moving situation might become less relevant.</p> <p><u>Comments</u></p> <p>There was a query around the way industry sectors and education groups will be engaged. AT said this would likely be through round tables and meetings and JA suggested making sure that at this stage the right people are approached and possibly scheduled into events.</p> <p>LR noted that as one of the aims of the Skills Commission is to assess the optimum solution for 16+ delivery, he wanted to flag that Kingston Maurward College is entering a Structure and Prospects Appraisal (SPA) process, which will likely be concluded before the commission commences and welcomed thoughts on the best ways to align the future of the college with long term strategy for Dorset.</p> <p>Other colleagues shared their experience with the SPA process and the possible change and restructuring it could bring.</p> <p>AT said that the hope is the Skills Commission will have an oversight on such key developments and take them in consideration.</p> <p><i>Levelling up and SPF</i></p> <p>AT also noted that BCP is preparing for Levelling up and Shared Prosperity Funds. He noted guidance detailing next steps for local authorities was expected shortly to set out the investment prospectus and the process both from a community and business support angle.</p> <p>JB confirmed that similarly, Dorset Council was preparing for these major funds becoming available.</p> | |
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| | <p><u>Comments</u></p> <p>LR noted that the devolution agenda was central in the Levelling up white paper and asked whether councils were looking at such opportunities. Both councils said they are actively discussing options and as Dorset is not among those formally invited to develop a county deal, it allows some time to consider the best options and learn from others' experience.</p> <p>3.3.3 BCP Council initiatives</p> <p>AT also gave update on various other skills initiatives driven by BCP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skills Strategy <p>BCP Council was looking to develop a skills strategy and was in the process of commissioning Dorset LEP to deliver that.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skills attraction research <p>BCP is also working with BU to carry out research on the ways businesses recruit and job seekers apply for jobs and identify any barriers. The project will conclude with a recruitment fair utilising the research findings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BCP together – app and online directory <p>As part of its COVID response program, BCP has developed an online directory and app – BCP-together.co.uk - that pulls in one place all the provision, information and advice on mental health, employability and the workplace.</p> <p>3.4 College update</p> <p>The college leaders gave a brief round of updates.</p> <p>3.4.1 Bournemouth and Poole College update</p> <p>As a newly appointed leader in the College, PS gave a brief summary of his experience and background, before going on to announce that the College has had its full Ofsted inspection in his short time in office. PS was delighted to announce the outcome, which was a Good Ofsted rating across the board. PS credited colleagues and his predecessor Diane Grannell for their hard work and for this achievement, which is a real boost not only for the college, but for Dorset as a whole.</p> <p>3.4.2 Weymouth College skills accelerator update</p> <p>JH gave an update on the skills accelerator project, which was supported by Dorset LEP and developed by Weymouth College and BPC in partnership. The bid was focused on digital learning provision for businesses linked to the 5G rollout in Dorset and was awarded £50,000. Some underspend was projected however, mainly due to the lean college structure and inability to release resources to dedicate their time to the project. The project was to be completed by the end of March 2022 and the key outputs have been met overall, however numbers have been low, despite wide promotion and reach. Two learning events were in the process to being delivered for businesses.</p> | |
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| <p>3.4.3</p> <p>3.5</p> <p>3.5.1</p> <p>3.5.2</p> | <p>Kingston Maurward College update</p> <p>LR said the college has had a financial letter, primarily triggered by the pandemic impact on cashflow from commercial income across the Kingston Maurward estate.</p> <p>The SPA process, which involves a range of stakeholders, is looking at solutions that could mean significant transformation of the college, and there are opportunities to be explored ranging from independent college options to federated solutions, partnerships, and mergers.</p> <p>The process is moving quickly, and by the end of July the steering group will make a recommendation to the college board. LR reiterated that funding remains a continuous challenge for FE and as the last remaining land-based independent provider in the South-west and the nearest similar provider over 50 miles away, KMC has its core focus on protecting the provision that is best for its learners and the local area.</p> <p>Dorset LEP update</p> <p>RD said the key Dorset LEP updates have been included in the meeting paper so verbal update was focused on a couple of items.</p> <p><u>Restart scheme</u></p> <p>One of the 'Plan for Jobs' schemes, Restart supports unemployed people back into work and DWP has commissioned SEETEC+ to deliver the programme in Dorset over the past year. Unfortunately, there are no published statistics, but some rough figures shared suggest the programme has worked with a cohort of around 800 (from the 13,000 unemployed in the county) and has seen around 300 back into work. This will be reviewed going forwards and ways to better support employers struggling to fill vacancies will be sought with particular focus on rural and coastal community offers in Dorset.</p> <p>ESFA funding</p> <p>RD also said the ESFA funding that has been available for a variety of projects over the past 5 years is coming to an end in March 2023. Dorset LEP has made the final £347,000 allocation across third sector organisations in the BCP and Dorset council areas to fund around 15 programs helping people to get training and move towards the workforce. Among these are some great initiatives, many focused on the hospitality sector recovery and staffing.</p> | |
| <p>4</p> | <p>Recovery: Action plans</p> | |
| <p>4.1</p> | <p>SAPB Action plan</p> <p>MK said the last labour market update has been sent via email and took the opportunity to kick off a process of redefining the SAP Board ways of working and areas of focus going forwards, while awaiting clarity on the SAP Programme future role and funding.</p> <p>MK went through the current action plan, tracking the three priority areas (Talent Attraction & Retention, Skills for now & Skills for the future) and a wide range of activities under each of them, noting it is extensive and due for review in 2022.</p> <p>A skills wish-list has also been developed based on the latest evidence, to help refocus the group and simplify the action plan going forwards. The wish list captures the key emerging areas of work to be tackled should funds become available, and includes:</p> | |

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| | <p>- addressing skills gaps, making Dorset more attractive as a career destination, graduate retention, providing targeted careers advice linked to local labour market opportunities, focusing on the demographic specifics of our talent pool, reversing the declining apprenticeship trends, tackling lower skills levels and aspiration across the county, etc. MK said the documents will be sent to the group for review and ideas in readiness for redefining this going forward.</p> <p><u>Comments</u></p> <p>LR agreed sending out the document for colleagues to consider as a start of the discussion.</p> | <p>MK: Send out action plan and wish list for review</p> |
| 5 | Future | |
| 5.1 | <p>Funding opportunities</p> <p>RD said there was nothing further to report on the Shared Prosperity Fund other than what was already said in the council updates (see point 3.3.2) – the fund will be managed by local councils and the investment prospectus will be released shortly.</p> <p><u>Comments</u></p> <p>AT added that it could be speculated that local council areas will roughly receive five, seven and fifteen million over the next three years from the SPF for skills. The DfE's Multiply initiative, aimed at improving numeracy, will take a lot of the skills funding out of the first two years and there will be more focus on communities and business support, while skills will be the focus in year three. Funding was mainly revenue.</p> | |
| 5.2 | <p>Levelling up</p> <p>RD said a document consolidating the education and skills related levelling elements will be shared with the group for information, but there are two main targets. One is to raise the educational achievements so that 90% of children are hitting the targets in maths and English. And on the skills side, they're looking to ensure 200,000 extra people have highly skilled qualifications.</p> | <p>RD: Send out Levelling up presentation for info</p> |
| 5.3 | <p>Future role of SAP Boards with Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs)</p> <p>RD advised that in terms of the implications of these policy and funding developments for SAP boards, the development and delivery of local skills strategies, the transition from Local Skills Reports to LSIPs, more information is expected over the next months. LSIPs will be led by Employer Representative Bodies, such as local Chambers of Commerce, and it is yet unclear how these will relate to the work of LEPs and SAP Boards.</p> <p><u>Comments</u></p> <p>LR reflected on the SAP Board as a very valuable forum that brings together key local stakeholders and the continuation of the group in the future would be something that would be very much welcomed and advocated for.</p> | |

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| | <p>AT agreed the SAP Board as a group had its merits, has been well supported by the LEP and would be required in the future, irrespective of what it is called or where the funding comes from.</p> <p>PS also pointed out the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill debate is coming to its conclusion, but there seems to be resistance to pin down the organisations responsible for the LSIPs and there is a strong argument for a wider range of stakeholders to be involved.</p> <p>LR agreed that there is a good relationship with the Chamber but having the widest possible range of views will deliver the best possible outcome.</p> <p>NN confirmed on behalf of the Chamber that there is a strong support for all the work that has been done and if commissioned an LSIP, the Chamber would very much consider the context and background, whilst engaging the private sector more heavily.</p> <p>The Chair thanked all members for their contributions and concluded the proceedings, saying the group is entering a hiatus period awaiting further clarity on remit, funding and how it would support the UK SPF. The following meeting will provisionally remain in the diary for the time being, subject to further information from government.</p> | |
| 6 | AOB | |
| | <p>DWP and business follow up NN reported that following the previous SAP Board, a meeting took place between DWP, FSB and the Chamber to address an information gap in the understanding of the support available for businesses to get more people back in the workforce, which has been helpful.</p> <p>Ukraine developments & refugees NN also noted that the latest developments have meant we are entering an even more challenging economic situation which is quickly evolving, but also Ukrainian refugees can work here if they are sponsored, so this is to be considered as a potential solution of local staff challenges.</p> <p>Apprenticeship costs and funding challenge RoD warned that the cost of training delivery, employment, supplies, resources, etc. is growing exponentially across providers and whilst some increase is expected in FE funding, there has been no increase in apprenticeship funding over a number of years, which will pose a challenge, particularly for apprentices and providers having to travel as part of their programmes. This was a cause of concern to be mentioned as part of our evolving evidence and planning.</p> <p>Dorset Council economic development JB said Dorset Council is in the process of selecting Head of Economic Development, which will hopefully result in a successful appointment shortly.</p> | |
| 7 | Date of Next Meeting | |
| | 6 June 2022 2-4 pm | |