

## MINUTES

# DORSET LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP SKILLS ADVISORY PANEL AND BOARD

**8 November 2021, 2 – 4 pm**  
**Virtual meeting**

### Board Attendees:

- Emma Hunt, AUB, Chair (EH)
- Luke Rake, Kingston Maurward College, Chair (LR)
- David Matthews, Upton Beach Consulting (DM)
- Diane Grannell, Bournemouth and Poole College (DG)
- Jim Andrews, Bournemouth University (JA)
- Jon Bird, Dorset Council (JB)
- Julia Howe, Weymouth College (JH)
- Lesley Haig –AECC (LH)
- Nicola Newman, Ansbury Guidance (NN)
- Richard Renaut, University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust (RR)
- Rod Davis, Dorset and Somerset Training Providers (RoD)
- Tim Ford, Independent Director (TF)
- Zannah Chisholm, Pavilion Dance South West (ZC)

### Also Present:

- Rebecca Davies, Dorset LEP Head Of Enterprise, Skills And Industry (RD)
- Mira Koseva, Dorset LEP Skills Analyst (MK)

### Apologies:

- Steph Simpson, Department for Work and Pensions (SS)
- Adrian Trevett, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (AT)
- Hugh Joseph, Air Bearing Solutions (HJ)
- Lesley Spain, Skills and Adult Community Education (LS)

Item	Welcome, introductions and apologies	Action
1	EH opened the SAP Board proceedings by marking this as her final meeting as a Chair and that LR would be taking over as an interim Chair. LR applauded EH's successful 2 years as Chair of the SAP Board and confirmed his content to take this great work forward. In order to ensure a smooth transfer the meeting was chaired jointly. Apologies were noted.	
2	<b>Minutes, Actions and Matters Arising</b>	
	EH inquired delegates whether the meeting minutes were true record of the 13 <sup>th</sup> September proceedings. RoD made a correction to his update on apprenticeship incentives being ceased, which has since been reversed as part of the Autumn budget. Upon this correction, the minutes are to be published as final. RD gave an update on actions arising from the previous meeting, confirming all actions were in progress or completed.	MK: Correct & publish minutes

3	Place	
3.1	<p><b>Local Skills Report (LSR) review</b></p> <p>RD reminded that an LSR update was due by 28 January 2022 as a condition of SAP funding and together with MK gave a presentation on the progress on key priorities and activities included in the first edition of the report published earlier this year. RD sought the group's views on the conceptual elements of the skills strategy along with the intervening activities and their ongoing relevance for Dorset, to ensure they are still on track and headed in the right direction.</p> <p><b>Skills Strategy and Planned Activities Review</b></p> <p>Giving an update on recent developments around the Dorset's Skills Strategy (the full presentation is published with the committee papers), including the three main challenges; 'productivity', 'inequalities' &amp; 'ageing workforce', RD confirmed they are still very much valid and whilst we are making incremental steps to address them, there is much work to be done. RD also gave updates around the SAPB's agreed skills priorities around 'Talent Attraction &amp; Retention', 'Skills for Now' and 'Skills for the Future' and led a discussion around these still being the right areas of work to address Dorset's key challenges.</p> <p>Speaking of the Future Skills and Employment Week at Boscombe's Royal Arcade, delivered by BCP Council in October, RD felt this was a good example of demonstrating the role of skills initiatives in levelling up in places of social disadvantage, whilst also testing the public interest in future skills and learning initiatives.</p> <p>Reviewing some of the other key initiatives across priority areas, RD mentioned the expansion of careers education and employer links across secondary schools; the opportunities for adult education devolution; the ambitions to link the future smart place developments with the local education and skills on offer, and the innovative projects and partnerships to cater for the needs of an ageing workforce and Dorset's population as a whole.</p> <p>RD also spoke of the SAPB's progress over the year in expanding the Dorset's Careers Hub, Enterprise Advisor Network and Cornerstone Employer Group, introducing the Skills Brokerage Service and the development of high quality Labour Market Intelligence informing career choices and employability interventions, as well as supporting and developing collaborations across stakeholders noting the report update would offer an opportunity to highlight these achievements.</p> <p>Another area of work has been the forward look in the strategic future skills needs across Dorset, where the SAPB initiated a Dorset-wide Skills Commission, which has recently been approved across the two local authorities. Reflecting on the strategy, activities and monitoring elements, RD urged members to offer their respective institutions information and intelligence as well as their perspectives and views in the context of LSR update and activity planning going forwards.</p> <p><b>Comments</b></p> <p>JB said in summary, the challenges, the ambitions, and the actions captured in the report are as relevant as they were before, some of them even more so. Whilst the mechanisms of change (recovery, place and future) were added to the strategy in response to the Covid disruption, JB felt with the economy and employment levels recovering quicker than</p>	

<p>expected, the language of recovery might become obsolete soon. Whilst agreeing that many sectors are returning to a new “normal”, LR noted that some of them are still reeling from the aftershocks of the pandemic, such as the hospitality sector.</p> <p>RoD asked whether local authorities they have put in county deals and whether skills and adult skills specifically have been considered and linked up to the strategy.</p> <p>With regards to the post-pandemic world, RoD felt this update was a good opportunity to reflect on the disruption and the shifts in business behaviour. For example, exploring whether there is a change in the factors important for inward investment from office and factory space to other decisive environment and technological factors. Understanding where we are now versus predictions would also allow us to reset our thinking regarding the plethora of skills funding available at different levels most of them focused on recovery.</p> <p>DG mentioned the emerging Higher Technical Qualifications seen by the government as a route to delivering vital skills for the local economy, noting that a discussion on how these fit into our local landscape and how we will encourage young people to see them as a route of choice should also be captured with the update.</p> <p>DG also felt that despite our active Dorset Careers Hub work, there is still a disconnect with local schools and how they are buying into the local skills and talent retention agenda. The default route to successful outcome remain A Levels followed by university degrees. There should be equal emphasis on successful outcomes linked to higher technical qualifications and good jobs in local companies. LR agreed with this point and said there is a clear direction for schools in delivering national policy, but not so clear around delivering the skills needed for Dorset. LH felt raising the profile and adding value to local opportunities, T-Levels and technical qualifications would contribute to levelling up through skills, but there is much work to be done in that space.</p> <p>DM concurred with that view sharing his experience as an enterprise advisor affirms the need for further work to improve understanding of local LMI insights across local schools and was keen to explore this further. LR agreed this could be a project the SAPB works collaboratively on, looking at both the information provided to young people but also steps to winning the hearts and minds of senior leaders.</p> <p>DM also felt that employer engagement remains a key area of work for our local skills strategy as smaller employers in general are particularly disengaged and not looking locally when solving their skills challenges, few of them offering apprenticeships or taking advantage of the kickstart programme for example.</p> <p>NN asked about the data measures of success across priority areas and whether these are systematically collated, and MK said that indicators listed are mainly from statutory sources which could lag and not show the immediate picture. Current data from providers would be very useful to gain richer local insights. NN reiterated recent data analysis being critical for the SAPB to judge the real impact of the programme of activities.</p>	<p>RD &amp; MK: Follow up on LMI for schools</p> <p>MK: Ensure focus on acquiring recent data from providers</p>
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<p><b>3.2</b></p>	<p><b>Update on key indicators</b></p> <p>To inform further discussion, MK gave an overview of latest developments on some of the key indicators and the labour market. Key findings were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Labour market recovery in terms of hiring demand has been impressive throughout 2021 when compared to the previous two years and an unseen spike in demand was seen over the summer</li> <li>- Employment levels declined and unemployment increased, but much less than expected and have been protected by the furlough scheme.</li> <li>- There are many reports for an unmet labour demand, skills gaps and hard-to-fill vacancies and data indicates hiring difficulties across the top jobs in demand, and particularly when hiring Software Developers and healthcare workers, whilst we still see elevated levels of unemployment.</li> <li>- Survey data also indicates that few employers are engaging with training providers to solve their skills challenges and only small proportions are developing their talent pipeline through apprenticeships.</li> <li>- These difficulties have affected STEM roles specifically, which are critical for the post-pandemic world and apprenticeships trends are also on the decline.</li> </ul> <p>In response to queries MK explained that the vacancy data has limitations in terms of identifying opportunities that are not advertised online with particular gaps in certain sector areas such as agriculture and construction and should therefore be taken with caution.</p> <p>EH advised some care around reporting and analysing graduate outcomes and the economic value brought by graduate level education. The unintentional consequence of the universities' efforts to improve these outcomes for their graduates mean that London and the South East, where average salaries are higher, might be more attractive graduate destinations. EH also reiterated that while some future jobs might not be highly paid, they remain strategically important.</p> <p>EH suggested Dorset's positioning for ethical and sustainable business to be featured in the report considering the growing green drive across industries. Also, the economic value and growth of the creative industry to be disaggregated within the data, particularly around the growth in entertainment areas such as films and games and the opportunities these offer in Dorset.</p> <p>JB noted it would be interesting to find out where the data is 'spiky' and short-term response to Covid and where it points to longer-term trends thus supporting the reflection and revision of the direction of travel.</p> <p>JB also felt discussing attraction and retention of the right people and qualifications, the wider issues of affordable housing, social life and rural Dorset's image of a place that closes at 9 o'clock at night, must be noted. While Bournemouth and Poole had a similar image 20-30 years back, this has now shifted.</p> <p>Reflecting on pandemic impact, JH noted Weymouth College has seen a 40% reduction in adults enrolling on Access to Higher Education courses against constant stable recruitment for some years – a decline that was</p>	
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	<p>also confirmed by Bournemouth and Poole College and identified as another area to be further examined by the report including the funding model for these courses as mentioned by RD.</p> <p>JA found this an interesting observation as there was an increase in the demand for higher education throughout the pandemic– both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels so not only among younger learners.</p> <p>Regarding graduate retention, JA also said there was an increase in the number of people wanting to stay and study locally over the last couple of years and this could be linked to pandemic challenges. Many of them would be keen to seek jobs and careers locally but housing affordability is a major barrier and therefore important these agendas to be joined in.</p> <p>RD wrapped up the key points of the discussion recognising the group's active contributions and noting follow up meetings will be planned over the next weeks and a draft shared in January 2022.</p>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Recovery: Current Skills Activities</b>	
<p><b>4.1</b></p> <p><b>4.2</b></p> <p><b>4.3</b></p>	<p><b>Latest LMI Update</b>          The <a href="#">Quarter 3 Labour Market Update</a> was shared in advance for noting.</p> <p><b>Dorset Council update</b>          JB gave an update on the skills related work led by Dorset Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>The Skills Commission</b> – has now been approved at <a href="#">Dorset Council</a> Cabinet</li> <li>- <b>Business Grants</b> –remaining competitive funding business grants are now open for <a href="#">Dorset</a></li> <li>- <b>Defence Battlelab 1 Innovation hub at Dorset Innovation Park</b> – is nearly completed and should be opened in the new year. Plans for Battlelab 2 are being explored.</li> <li>- <b>Levelling up fund</b> application including investment in skills, transport, and areas of deprivation across Dorset has unfortunately been unsuccessful.</li> <li>- <b>Community renewal fund</b> bid for young enterprise development has been awarded successfully.</li> </ul> <p><b>BCP Council update</b>          RD gave a brief update on behalf of BCP Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Boscombe Skills Hub (Boscombe Town Deal - Royal Arcade)</b> pilot 18<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> October was a success seeing over 300 visitors</li> <li>- <b>BCP Economic Development strategy</b> is currently in draft form and headed towards <a href="#">Cabinet on 24 November</a> and the <b>Boscombe Skills Hub</b> proposal is expected in December.</li> <li>- <b>The Skills Commission</b> – has now been approved at <a href="#">BCP Council</a> Cabinet and there is a meeting booked between the two councils and LEP to look at ways to operationalise it.</li> </ul>	

<p><b>4.4</b></p> <p><b>4.5</b></p> <p><b>4.6</b></p>	<p><b>Dorset Careers Hub update</b> Recent developments were included in the meeting papers and RD gave a brief verbal update, mentioning the targets have become more challenging this year, for example 100% of schools to be allocated an Enterprise Advisor, so currently there is some catching up to do across schools, particularly middle schools where careers are not at the forefront of the agenda. Key developments include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing a new dedicated Dorset Careers Hub website</li> <li>- Boosting social media presence</li> <li>- Developing materials for parents</li> <li>- Inducting and training the new members of staff</li> <li>- Preparing for the Careers and Apprenticeships Show and targeted events in West Dorset</li> </ul> <p><b>DWP update</b> Recent DWP programme updates and funding developments announced with the spending review were provided in writing with the meeting papers.</p> <p><b>Independent training providers update</b> RoD gave an update on apprenticeships and training provider network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Commenting on historic information on apprenticeship participation RoD said looking at the numbers back in 2016-17 is misleading due to the changes in policy and provision. He also noted datacube breakdown of apprenticeship delivery by provider would be helpful in the report.</li> <li>- Looking at the number of apprenticeship vacancies listed on the 'Find an Apprenticeship' website, these have more than doubled from the previous update in May with currently 377 vacancies listed across Dorset.</li> <li>- RoD noted however that whilst we are entering the degree recruitment season, where larger employers in the area are now recruiting now for next year apprenticeship programmes starts, there were only 5 degree level and 5 higher apprenticeship vacancies listed, pointing a possible gap to be looked at.</li> <li>- DSTPN are working through the different skills routes available and identifying changing patterns of behaviour to inform providers in future planning.</li> <li>- DSTPN have also welcomed two new members to their governing body bringing a fresh perspective to their work.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Future</b></p>	
	<p><b>Skills Funding and Post-16 Education Bill</b></p> <p>LR thanked RD for sharing a round of Spending Review announcements and EH noted that key funding decisions have been further delayed as has been the LEP review. LR said these are still early days to gauge the impact of the different elements on the FE financial position, as colleges will be affected by the increases in minimum wage, national insurance contributions and higher number of students. RoD also agreed it was difficult to interpret the announcements and whether the increases in funding are to cater for better provision of higher number of learners.</p>	

	<p><u>Comments</u></p> <p>LH commented that levelling up, skills and sustainability were prevalent in the Spending Review conversations and felt that the group could work in partnership to approach the opportunities in disposal together in maximising effects on key priorities for Dorset. LH said that a local scheme of incentives including discounts to keep school leavers in Dorset could make a real difference on retaining talent.</p> <p>LR responded that concord agreements between local partners were worth exploring collaboratively as many of the providers already had similar schemes in place for their staff and students and welcomed a discussion going forwards.</p> <p>JB said that the expected Shared Prosperity Fund announcements would most likely provide further opportunities for skills and learning projects locally.</p>	
<b>6</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
	<p><b>Acknowledgement</b></p> <p>In closing the last meeting with Emma Hunt as a Chair, RD expressed the SAP Board and LEP's gratitude for Emma's fantastic leadership over the past two years congratulating her on her many achievements. In bringing all partners together, building a spirit of collaboration and partnership, Emma has led the SAP Board to agreeing a county-wide strategy for skills and learning that will shape the direction of travel for years to come.</p> <p>RD also took the opportunity to congratulate Diane Grannell on her planned retirement thanking her for an active role in the strategic skills planning for Dorset and valuable contribution to the work of the SAP Board.</p>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>	
	10 January 2022 2-4 pm	