

MINUTES
DRAFT
**DORSET LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP
 SKILLS ADVISORY PANEL AND BOARD**
**5 July 2021, 2 – 3:30 pm
 Virtual meeting**
Board Attendees:

- Emma Hunt, AUB, Chair (EH)
- David Matthews, Upton Beach Consulting (DM)
- David Walsh, Dorset Council (DW)
- Hugh Joseph, Air Bearing Solutions (HJ)
- Jim Andrews, Bournemouth University (JA)
- Luke Rake, Kingston Maurward College (LR)
- Lesley Haig –Vice-Chancellor AECC (LH)
- Lesley Spain, Skills and Adult Community Education (LS)
- Nicola Newman, Ansbury Guidance (NN)
- Richard Renaut, University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust (RR)
- Rod Davis, Dorset and Somerset Training Providers (RoD)
- Steph Simpson, Department for Work and Pensions (SS)
- Tim Ford, Independent Director (TF)
- Zannah Chisholm , Pavilion Dance South West (ZC)

Also Present:

- Natalie Merry, Director of Apprenticeships & Employer Services, Weymouth College (NM)
- Michael Johnson, Chief Operating Officer, Bournemouth and Poole College (MJ)
- David Mutton, Business Relationship Officer, Dorset LEP (DMu)
- Rebecca Davies, Dorset LEP Head Of Enterprise, Skills And Industry (RD)
- Mira Koseva, Dorset LEP Skills Analyst (MK)

Apologies:

- Adrian Trevett, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (AT)
- Julia Howe, Weymouth College (JH), represented by NM
- Diane Grannell, Bournemouth and Poole College (DG), represented by MJ

Item	Welcome, introductions and apologies	Action
1	The Chair noted apologies and welcomed all delegates, extending a special welcome to David Mutton from Dorset LEP, joining the meeting for an update on Dorset Gateway and the skills related advice provided.	
2	Minutes, Actions and Matters Arising	
	The Chair verified the meeting minutes are accepted as accurate reflection of the 10 May proceedings and can be published as final. All actions arising at the previous meeting were confirmed as completed. MK updated that a solution on the apprenticeship finder is being developed as a result of investigations.	MK: Publish minutes

3	Recovery: Current Skills Activities	
3.1	<p>The Chair invited updates and presentations on current skills activities.</p> <p>Dorset Gateway update DMU gave a presentation on the work of Dorset Gateway - Dorset LEP's Growth Hub, which is part of the National Growth Hub network funded by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to provide business support and facilitate growth. DMU briefly summarised key business support initiatives supported by the hub:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Enquiries - in 20/21 over 1400 businesses were supported, with key inquiries related to Covid 19 business support and questions around available funding. • Peer Networks - Dorset is among the most successful areas in developing Peer Networks with 200+ business leaders partaking and further £300,000 secured to expand the programme. • International Trade – hosting 1-2-1, consultancy, workshops and training to facilitate local businesses' international trade ambitions. • Scale Up – programme and webinars facilitating growth • Bid Writing Support – 400+ hours of support provided resulting in 24 bidding applications and over 900k of Innovate UK grant funding. • Back to Business (Covid-19 Recovery) – a programme of events aimed at boosting business resilience and recovery <p>DMU also highlighted initiatives related to skills advice for businesses, which are of particular interest to the group, noting Gateway is launching a "Skills Brokerage Service" which aims to understand and support business skills needs and challenges and signpost them to available provision. Currently most of the inquiries are around the "Plan for Jobs" initiatives, e.g. kickstart scheme and apprenticeship incentive payments. DMU has established relationships with key partners locally and is particularly focused on enabling and increasing apprenticeships uptake among businesses and individuals by supporting businesses through the process of hiring an apprentice.</p> <p><u>Comments</u> RR welcomed closer collaboration and expressed interest in the peer networks programme. SS also expressed interest in a follow up meeting with DMU and closer collaboration with Dorset Gateway.</p>	<p>RD: Follow up with RR on peer networks contact</p> <p>DMU: Follow up contact with SS</p>
3.2	<p><u>Quarter 2 Labour Market Update</u> MK gave a presentation on the labour market developments over the first half of the year and quarter 2 in particular. Data signals most of the economy opened up and some fresh optimism on football coming home and an important milestone of 1million vaccines administered. The latest round of insights shows the labour market has also been buoyant with an exponential growth in vacancies across sectors, and noted decline in furlough and youth unemployment. Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant boost in recruitment activity - June was is the sixth consecutive month of vacancy growth with c.37,000 vacancies advertised in Dorset over the first half of 2021 - 42% higher than 2020 and 17% higher than 2019. 	

- Employers however also report serious staffing challenges and **hard-to-fill vacancies** across sectors and occupations.
- **Localities** - The largest number of vacancies were in Bournemouth (11,181) and Poole (7,369) and trends across localities appear to be returning to "normal".
- **Top employers** - Significant growth was noted in hospitality, engineering and construction demand while the National Health Service, J.P.Morgan, the Councils, Bournemouth University and residential care firms remain the top recruiters.
- **Top Jobs** - Nurses, software developers and carers remain most in demand in Dorset, as well as other professionals such as project, account and financial managers, lawyers and accountants.
- **Skills** - Employers most frequently requested skills in baseline communication, organisation, detail-orientation and planning. The majority of digital skills were stable or growing with MS Excel topping the lead table and Python growing amongst the programming languages.
- **Industries - Demand grows 14 times in tourism and hospitality**
Labour demand saw considerable growth over the second quarter across sectors in Dorset. Most notably, the Quarter 2 vacancies in the tourism and hospitality sector grew 3 times on the first quarter and were 14 times higher than 2020.
- **Employment response is lagging** - In 2020 employment rate in Dorset fell by 2% and unemployment increased at a similar rate, representing an estimated 8,400 fewer people in employment at the end of 2020 compared to 2019. The [latest ONS national figures](#) suggest the jobs market is recovering slowly (Q1 0.2pp↑).
- **Out-of-work benefit claimants**– 22,525 people 5% of Dorset's working age residents (6.5% UK) claimed job/ income support in May - c.2,300 fewer than in March, still over twice higher than the figures seen prior to the pandemic. The proportion is still higher for young people, but is declining faster (18-24 year olds - 6.7% with 8.3% UK reference) -610 fewer than back in March.
- **Furloughed workers**– There were 21,000 fewer people on furlough in Dorset at the end of May than back in February 2021. Yet there were still 27,700 furloughed workers (9%) in the county and over 50% of eligible self-employed were still claiming SEISS in May.

Comments

The Chair commended the quality of the data and the importance of making the most of these insights on latest developments and future indications of demand for labour and skills in making decisions, supporting local businesses and informing delivery.

LR asked whether the available data indicates the newly created jobs vs those that are reappearing due to hard-to-fill vacancies and staffing challenges. MK responded that current data does not allow determining such trends, however new analytical source EMSI should allow us to shed light on staffing challenges and hard-to-fill vacancies.

RR asked whether there was any indication on the effects of remote working on employment levels locally and MK said this will appear in

MK: Follow up on hard-to-fill vacancies and remote working/ employment queries

<p>3.3</p>	<p>employment statistics when these are released by ONS at local level and will follow this up when data is available.</p> <p>Update on University Hospital Dorset (UHD) innovation hub RR announced exciting developments for UHD and Dorset Integrated Care System (ICS - Our Dorset) on being selected by the Health Foundation for its new "Adopting Innovation" programme. UHD will receive £475,000 to lead one of four innovation hubs in UK on behalf of ICS. The programme will support health care providers to enable faster and effective uptake of innovations and improvements, at a time of accelerated need to adopt new ideas quickly to meet the challenges of changing demand and delivering quality of care to all who need it throughout the pandemic and its aftermath.</p> <p>The Dorset Innovation hub will focus on innovations with long lasting impact for patients and care in Dorset, help meet our priority health and wellbeing challenges, improve patient care, and save the NHS time and money. They will work with health, social care, and other services in the county to improve health and social care outcomes, equity and accessibility of care across Dorset. Some specific local issues include the complex needs of Dorset's older population, health inequalities, and variation in life and healthy life expectancy. Other important areas will be help for the workforce, skills and upskilling, COVID response, winter planning and exploring digital improvements.</p> <p>Innovations will be piloted and adopted in Dorset before being rolled out throughout the system. UHD will be working with industry and academic partners in Dorset, including the Wessex Academic Health Science Network, Dorset LEP and wide range of multi-sectoral partners to establish the Hub over the next months.</p> <p><u>Comments</u> The Chair congratulated RR on this success and encouraged collaborations for innovation across SAPB stakeholders, suggesting exploring linking up innovation strategies across partners.</p> <p>SS proposed a follow up with DWP who have started working with DHSE and looking into enhanced support for people with complex health/ mental health conditions to improve their employment outcomes.</p> <p>MK asked whether this project was linked to the innovative use of health and social data by the Dorset Intelligence & Insight Service (DiiS) and RR said it was part of the supporting evidence around prevention and population health management and further collaborations to improve understanding of workforce skills could be explored to benefit the employment and skills agenda.</p>	<p>RD: Consider ways to highlight innovation links</p> <p>SS: Follow up with RR on employment support for people with complex health issues</p> <p>MK: Follow up with RR on data on workforce and skills</p>
<p>3.4</p>	<p>DWP update SS gave an update on the DWP initiatives locally. Responding accordingly to the labour market developments, an increase in both opportunities and the number of people returning to work, particularly young people has been seen. There were 390 people in Dorset returning to work and another 330 on kickstart placements over the past quarter.</p> <p>DWP continues to drive these outcomes through the dedicated "plan for jobs" schemes focused on young people (Kickstart scheme and JETS</p>	

<p>3.5</p>	<p>(Job Entry Targeted Support) as well as working with sectors experiencing high levels of employment demand through SWAPs (Sector-based Work Academy Programmes). Currently the work is prioritised in hospitality, construction and manufacturing.</p> <p>A careers event was also being planned by JCP Bournemouth at the end of July and DWP are also supporting the Weymouth College jobs fair in order to promote jobs, kickstart and apprenticeship opportunities. SS asked group members to support promoting these events.</p> <p>SS also confirmed reports that employers are finding recruiting for occupations in high demand challenging with issues particularly pronounced in hiring chefs and construction workers.</p> <p><u>Comments</u> LR concurred that the labour market is challenging for employers, sharing their own difficulties hiring catering staff in the college. MJ agreed, expressing concerns that difficulties recruiting plumbing and electrical lecturers could result in capping student numbers on these courses. Upon inquiry, the issue appears to be common across the South West, where colleges are responding by paying staff in these specialisms above the top of their pay grade in an attempt to retain them. RoD echoed recruitment difficulties have been reported by employers hiring apprentices, agreeing there is a sector bias to the issue.</p> <p>RoD also expressed concerns of the impact educational disruptions have on young people's successful transitions into work. SS agreed that many young people have been affected by the pandemic with mental health issues on the rise. NN expressed concerns of limited provision available locally with the closure of Ansbury and the Face Forward project to support those experiencing complex issues and thus at risk of becoming NEET. The Chair said that as a skills board the group would continue to monitor these developments both here and now and also any future effects on providers, their planning activities, regulations and student outcomes</p> <p>MJ also expressed interest for a follow up meeting with SS on SWAPs development.</p> <p>Dorset LEP skills activities update RD started by sharing a positive update on a bid by Dorset LEP for CEC funding to support young people moving further away from the labour market and at risk of becoming NEET. The outcomes of the bid are yet to be announced, but there are indications of a positive outcome which will mean some of the great work done in previous projects could hopefully be taken forward.</p> <p><u>Comments</u> The members congratulated RD and LS said that local partners are already discussing interventions to address the needs and outcomes of young people at particular risk, such as care leavers. LH also confirmed that learning providers have experienced serious increase in mental health issues but also wider social issues with inequality of life outcomes and EH concurred that while already on the rise, these issues were exacerbated by the pandemic. RD responded she would be delighted to link up this project with work that is already happening.</p>	<p>MJ: Follow up with SS on SWAPs</p>
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<p>3.6</p>	<p>RD also confirmed that CEC funding has been extended for the Dorset Careers Hub for another year offering funding for enhanced careers support across the county. As part of these developments the Hub will be funded for extra three roles that are soon to be announced. RD also briefly highlighted key initiatives of the Hub, such as virtual work experience, school grants provision, Dorset Careers Live webinar series, SEND support and the Dorset Careers and Apprenticeship Show noting that fuller updates are available in the paper distributed with the meeting invite.</p> <p>Independent training providers update</p> <p>RoD started with an update that a Community Renewal Fund application for Skill Up in Dorset did not go ahead after a consideration of Dorset priority status and limited resources and timelines. RoD also provided updates on apprenticeship delivery and said the apprentices demand is clearly on the rise across sectors in Dorset, while highlighting again the issues with low number of applicants.</p> <p>He also announced there are now over 600 apprenticeship standards developed by employers, offering wide ranging opportunities for young people and businesses.</p> <p>New requirements in place from April mean that all apprenticeship employers should directly reserve an apprenticeship and request incentives via the Apprenticeship Service directly, which was previously largely administered and supported by the training providers. This has caused a serious challenge, particularly for small businesses and providers who experienced a serious pressure on their resources. MJ from BPC gave an example that the College had to help around 200 small employers claim their incentive before the deadline with a very short notice, resulting in a team of 8 members of staff completely dedicated on this support over that period. DSTPN have been monitoring the situation and put through insight of these challenges but the process is expected to remain the preferred direction of travel going forwards.</p> <p>RoD also announced a consultation on flexible apprenticeships has also been launched to support sectors including creative, agriculture and construction, which are struggling to offer long-term (minimum 12 months) placements to offer more flexible apprenticeship opportunities. RoD shared previous experience from a feasibility study done locally suggesting these developments are worth monitoring.</p> <p>The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education has launched consultations reviewing funding bands and occupational maps and some changes are expected to be adopted in the future.</p> <p>RoD also shared ESFA plans to implement a portal to support employers in transferring Apprenticeship Levy. The new online pledge function will allow Levy employers, willing to transfer funds to supply chains, relevant businesses or otherwise, to advertise on a public facing platform. Levy employers will be able to define the criteria of the apprenticeship they wish to support e.g. within their sector or geographical location, helping to address skills gaps/shortages. The public facing platform will enable other employers, training providers & intermediary bodies to see what opportunities are available and apply for a transfer pledge via their Apprenticeship Service account.</p>	
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	<p><u>Comments</u> EH expressed gratitude to RoD for helping the SAPB navigate through a complex apprenticeship landscape and asked whether there is interest in flexible apprenticeship provision among the employers represented at the board. ZC commented that this is a welcomed development offering many opportunities.</p>	
4	Place	
	<p>Dorset Local Skills Engagement Plan RD presented an engagement plan (distributed with the meeting papers) to highlight some of the Local Skills Report (LSR) findings and bring the report to life through monthly content, including topical thought pieces, engaging stories and events. The LSR has a wealth of information and analysis around the key challenges and initiatives involving numerous stakeholders. Areas of focus in the report, including innovation, discussed at the meeting today, but also local areas, pathways, skills, careers, sectors, businesses and jobs, current projects and future aspirations featured in the report all provide engagement and collaboration opportunities.</p> <p>With the plan we are aiming to highlight the work of the SAP Board and key providers, raise awareness of local employment and learning opportunities, and increase apprenticeships uptake and employer engagement with training. One of the ways that we are planning to achieve that is through a monthly theme as proposed in the plan.</p> <p>While Dorset LEP is coordinating this work, we have limited capacity. As part of Dorset Careers Hub funding, one of the roles will have an engagement and communication focus, which will give us some additional support. However the SAPB stakeholders input will be crucial for the delivery of the plan and the co-creation of content. Creativity is welcomed and a dedicated contact from each organisation would help the process of coordination of ideas and monthly activities. As part of the process we would also identify synergies and common themes to enable further collaborations and growth, but also make sure that we access and repurpose content that is developed by providers.</p> <p>We have already started the process by launching the report through various initiatives and redesigning the Dorset LEP skills pages where we have featured case studies and providers. The ambition is to grow and enhance these resources further and provide more personal stories and pathways that we would like to promote to young people at schools, but also to people across different career and life stages in Dorset. RD and MK are keen to work with members to ensure the features are highlighting the work of providers in the best way possible.</p> <p>The Chair stressed the importance for this group, representing partners across education and business to make the most of this opportunity to showcase their work and case studies across the different themes. The Chair encouraged the SAPB members to respond to this call and support the delivery with content and insight.</p>	<p>ALL: Follow up on the proposed plan with contacts, comments, ideas and content</p>

5	Future	
	<p>Skills and Post-16 Education Bill</p> <p>The Chair updated the board on the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill developments noting a dedicated update paper has been distributed in advance and pointing out it has been widely discussed in the media with various opinions on its proposed legislative changes.</p> <p>The Bill is calling for a more integrated and inclusive post compulsory education approach linking employers and training providers – both HE and FE. This direction of travel could translate into an endeavour for the SAPB to bring partners closer together to solve local skills challenges. Models developed in certain areas such as Sheffield and Manchester create strong integrated educational systems and flexible approaches to sharing credit and continuous education and professional development, which could be researched locally. Of course the complexity and the various political and policy elements and players are making such systems strategically quite challenging for organisations to implement, but clearly a direction of travel to be closely monitored and considered and a possible agenda item for the group at one of the following meetings.</p> <p><u>Comments</u> LH commented the idea of “Dorset Skills Passport” has been discussed previously by the board and it could be something to explore further.</p>	<p>EH/RD: Consider integration as a future agenda item</p>
6	AOB	
<p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p>	<p>National Apprenticeship Awards RD informed the board that the National Apprenticeship Awards are opened for nominations and called for partners to promote this opportunity across Dorset so that success stories from Dorset are put forward and nominated.</p> <p>Skills Commission EH was pleased to announce that following previous conversations and discussions, she has now met with the leaders of both councils and they have both agreed they share a political consensus to develop a Skills Commission that is business led and looking in the long-term (20-30 years) future skills needs and inform funding and delivery endeavours in the county. Both councils will now be taking this work, emerging through the SAPB forward.</p> <p>Extraordinary meeting EH informed the board that Sandra Rothwell, who has previously worked with SAPB and other LEP committees is now involved in developing the BCP Council Economic Development Strategy and has reached out for the SAPB's input around skills. EH proposed an extraordinary meeting to be organised by RD and attended by interested parties from the board.</p>	<p>RD: Set up a meeting with Sandra</p>

6.4	Retirement EH announced that DW – a valued member of the board - will be retiring at the end of the month and expressed gratitude for all his work and contributions over the years. EH was joined by all members in wishing him a happy retirement.	
7	Date of Next Meeting	
	13 September 2021 2-4 pm	

DRAFT