

MINUTES

DORSET LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP SKILLS ADVISORY PANEL AND BOARD

7 May 2020, 3:00pm - 4.30pm

Virtual meeting

Board Attendees:

- Emma Hunt, AUB, Chair (EH)
- David Walsh, Dorset Council (DW)
- Nicola Newman, Ansbury Guidance (NN)
- Rod Davis, Dorset and Somerset Training Providers (RD)
- Diane Grannell, Bournemouth and Poole College (DG)
- Lesley Spain, Skills and Adult Community Education (LS)
- Zannah Doan, Pavilion Dance South West (ZD)
- David Matthews, Upton Beach Consulting (DM)
- Adrian Trevett, BCP (AT)
- Jim Andrews, Bournemouth University (JA)
- Luke Rake, Kingston Maurward College (LR)
- Arvid Thorkeldsen – Deputy Vice-Chancellor AECC, representing LH (AT)

Also Present:

- David Lawrence, DLEP Operations and Governance (DL)
- Helen Stevenson, DLEP Careers Hub Lead (HS)
- Mira Koseva, DLEP Skills Analyst (MK)

Apologies:

- Nigel Evans, Weymouth College (NE)
- Lesley Haig, AECC (LH) - represented
- Emma Norton, Bluestone College (EN)
- Amanda Buttle, Department for Work and Pensions (AB)
- Hugh Joseph, Air Bearing Solutions (HJ)

| Item | Welcome and introductions | Action |
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| 1 | The Chair welcomed everyone to the first SAP Board meeting conducted remotely in line with coronavirus protective measures. The duration was shorter in line with the format and the Chair introduced virtual room protocol, calling for brevity of introductions. Apologies were received as noted above. | |
| 2 | Minutes, Actions and Matters Arising | |
| | The 11 February meeting minutes were agreed as an accurate reflection of the proceedings. There were no matters arising. | MK: Minutes to be published |
| 3 | Careers & Enterprise Company Enterprise Advisor Network and Careers Hub | |
| | The Dorset LEP Careers Hub Lead, Helen Stevenson updated the members on the Careers and Enterprise Company's two key programmes in Dorset – the Employer Advisors Network and the Dorset Careers Hub. | |
| 3.1 | <u>Employer Advisors Network (EAN) update</u> | |

The pan Dorset EAN has successfully engaged 71 schools and colleges with 55 matched to an Enterprise Adviser, supported by 3.5 FTE Enterprise Coordinators based in local councils.

In terms of the network performance towards achieving the Gatsby benchmarks, these were slightly above the national average in Dorset and have shown improvement between September 2019 and February 2020:

| Average number of benchmarks achieved | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|------------|
| | National | Dorset EAN |
| September 2019 | 3.0 | 3.2 |
| February 2020 | 3.2 | 3.5 |

3.2 Dorset Careers Hub update

The Dorset Careers Hub, offering additional funding and enhanced support to 40 schools and colleges within the EAN is progressing well. The Hub is governed by the Dorset Careers Hub Steering Group and supported by a Cornerstone Employer group made up of eight organisations.

3.3 After the Covid-19 crisis, the Cornerstone Employers have continued working collaboratively to prepare their support for schools in the next academic year and working on joint parental engagement project.

3.4 Partial closures have impacted schools' ability to deliver projects using the Careers Hub funding and the DfE's recent decision to roll over funding to the 20/21 academic year, has been welcomed and would allow projects to be delivered, albeit later in the year.

3.5 In terms of progress towards Gatsby Benchmark targets, the Hub has already met and exceeded most, outperforming wave 1 hubs (working since 2018) and being praised by the CEC for its achievements over such a short period.

| Benchmarks achieved | National | Dorset Careers Hub |
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| End of 2018/19 | 3.0 | 3.0 |
| Target | <i>At least an average of 4 benchmarks fully achieved across all Hub schools and colleges by the end of 2019-20</i> | |
| 2019 end of autumn term | Wave 1 = 4.4 Wave 2 = 3.6 | 4.475 |
| 2020 end of spring term* | TBC | 5.025 |
| | Benchmark 5 Employers encounters | Benchmark 6 Experiences of workplaces |
| Target | <i>75% Hub institutions fully achieve benchmark by 2019-20 YE</i> | <i>60% Hub institutions fully achieve benchmark by 2019-20 YE</i> |
| 2019 end of autumn term | 62.5% | 65% |
| 2020 end of spring term* | 80% | 77.5% |
| * data missing for 4 schools – previous assessment result included | | |

3.6 In order to gauge the lockdown effects on performance, the Compass tool is being adapted to estimate activity that could not take place.

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| | <p>It is anticipated that actual performance will dip as a result of the situation, with events being cancelled over the spring and summer term. Taking this into account, two scores may be required –actual and projected based on planned, but disrupted activity.</p> <p>3.7 The Careers Hub is still recruiting Enterprise Advisors for two schools and in anticipation that some EAs would become unavailable in the current climate. The plan is to promote the role through some new marketing materials due to be released. Also working on releasing Labour Market Information in support of parents and young people entering the labour market.</p> <p>3.8 Due to excellent performance, the CEC has invited the Dorset Careers Hub to bid for further funding to expand its remit and include the rest of the Dorset schools within the EAN. An expression of interest has been submitted and more details to come on the outcome.</p> <p>3.9 HS informed the group on the current priorities in response to the crisis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virtual Careers Leaders and Enterprise Adviser group and cluster meetings - Supporting remote/virtual careers learning - Roll out of Compass+ platform - Recruitment and induction of Enterprise Advisers - Contingency planning for postponed events - Development of LMI materials - Cornerstone Employer roundtable meetings - Work on transitions - Supporting apprenticeship activity and reviewing impact of current landscape - Planning for Dorset CEC delivery for 2020/21 (potential extension) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members noted the excellent progress of the EAN and Careers Hub and the need to promote this work. • JA noted that where Cornerstone Employers are involved (NHS in particular), a coordinated approach should be ensured to avoid crossovers between individual institutions projects and the CEC work. | <p>JA and HS to have an offline discussion on employer projects</p> |
| 4 | Dorset Careers Hub Steering Group meeting | |
| <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> | <p>Minutes from most recent meeting were available to the members within the meeting papers pack. LR who is chairing this group advised that the group is active, progressing well on projects and holding productive meetings.</p> <p>LR raised the need indicated at the last meeting to monitor a possibly challenging situation with the transitioning of young people from year 11 into further education/ training/ apprenticeships/ employment from September. With the potential effects of a recession and an expected decline in recruitment, it is important that the group shares information and ensures a joint response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members noted the work of Dorset Careers Hub Steering Group and the importance in joint approach in these uncertain times. | <p>All to share information on the impact on apprenticeship and transitions and useful new developments</p> |
| 5 | Dorset 2020 Employer Skills Survey | |

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| 5.1 | <p>The Dorset LEP Skills Analyst, Mira Koseva presented the results from the Dorset 2020 Employer Skills Survey, conducted earlier in the year. While the data collection took place prior to the coronavirus crisis, the results still provide valuable insights on the skills needs and challenges in Dorset. In total 242 Dorset employers from a range of sectors and sizes responded and results were weighted in line with the county's business profile. Respondents were entered into a prize draw for tailored business consultancy.</p> | |
| 5.2 | <p>Main findings offered were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23% of the responding organisations have experienced hard-to-fill vacancies over the past year, with 40% of these specifying difficulties in filling Engineering and Manufacturing roles. • 56% identified at least one skills gap within their existing workforce with 41% of these employers experienced shortages in the areas of digital, technical and/or complex analytical skills. • Aside from job-specific skills, employers felt that technical and practical, leadership and managerial, and sales and marketing skills gaps had the biggest impact on their productivity. • A third of respondents expected changing skills needs in the next three to five years the most commonly anticipated to need more people with digital, technical, and sales & marketing skills. • While two thirds of employers envisaged at least some (further) automation and digitalisation in their workplace, a quarter felt they lack the appropriate skills to embrace these developments. • Employers are investing in skills with the vast majority (83%) reporting having taken action to improve their workforce skills in the past 12 months offering predominantly in-house/on-the-job training. • The most common suggestion for improving training provision was around accessibility – the location of training, funding support, and the relevance of training to small employers. • Just 8% of employers were currently employing an apprentice. Over half said they would consider offering apprenticeships in the future, however the biggest barrier was the type of work they were able to offer and limited understanding of the apprenticeship process and sources of information | |
| 5.2 | <p>The Chair recognised these as interesting findings, highlighting the importance of coordinated efforts in providing and communicating the skills offer and invited members to comment.</p> | |
| 5.3 | <p>Concerns on apprenticeships DW raised concern around the highlighted low proportion of employers currently employing apprentices in the context of coronavirus developments further exacerbating the issue.</p> | |

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| 5.4 | <p>This concern was echoed by DG, who reported their current experience with ongoing apprentices was showing these have either continued in training or were being furloughed. However the impact was evident in decreased new apprenticeship starts. It is expected to become a serious issue from September if employers are to drastically reduce their offering, as indicated by the early signs, particularly among smaller employers and those within the hospitality and hairdressing. The focus should be to help get apprenticeships back on track once the restrictions are lifted.</p> <p>In this regard, DG also highlighted a threat for training providers where apprenticeship funding was the main source of income.</p> <p>RD agreed that the pipeline is the main worry and stressed the recovery is expected to be very sector dependent. RD shared he is working with the National Apprenticeship Service possible Governmental support discussions to maintain the apprenticeship brand and encourage apprenticeships as part of the economic recovery. RD felt a joint stance as a county rather than as individual training providers would provide a stronger voice.</p> <p>JA also commented the results indicating that further support might be required for employers to understand and utilise the apprenticeship levy better. It might provide help to employers through the crisis as well, as it is an untapped opportunity for many.</p> <p>Next steps</p> <p>DG commented that the report is providing rich insights and it is important how we take them forward, weaving these into further strategies and actions.</p> <p>LS echoed this sentiment saying these findings offer an opportunity for a targeted marketing and communication campaign allowing for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providers to reiterate the employer feedback in offering courses or learning interventions in response to their needs, - The apprenticeship model to be promoted as part of the solution, with the potential to bring these lacking skills into organisations through a blended learning approach. <p><i>Further comments on these items summarised under Item 8.</i></p> | |
| 6 | Policy developments on skills update | |
| 6.1 | <p>David Lawrence, Operations and Governance at Dorset LEP, gave an update on skills initiatives and latest DfE developments summarised in an associated paper.</p> <p><u>Understanding the impact</u></p> <p>Within this fast moving and volatile climate, the Government is trying to gauge the impact on the economy, and the Dorset LEP Covid 19 Business Impact survey has been part of this effort.</p> <p>While it is clear that the impact is already substantial, particularly on Hospitality, Food and Retail sectors and sole traders, with significant part of the businesses predicting they would cease trading in 6 months or less with the current measures in place, there is much yet unknown and evolving.</p> <p>One of the avenues explored is a wider survey investigating the emerging issues in more depth in partnership with the Dorset Chamber, but timing would need to be right for that.</p> | |

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| <p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p> | <p><u>Apprenticeships and young people</u> Among the key emerging issues, as already raised, is the state of apprenticeships, the disproportionate effect on young people and those that are not in employment, education or training. Some of the larger LEPs are reporting that companies, having furloughed apprentices, are feared to follow that up with unemployment. There is however a strong suggestion from DfE that receiving all the required information from a variety of sources, such as DWP and ONS, may take longer and we might not have a full picture before September. We are therefore conducting our own research, the first issue attached as a paper to inform members on early signs. That is hoped to evolve in sufficient data and commentary to allow members to act accordingly.</p> <p><u>Ofsted interested in employer needs and local prospects</u> The DfE are coordinating assessment processes with the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) in order to ensure inspectors take into account the exit routes for pupils coming to the end of their school careers. Ofsted inspectors will be taking into account the needs of local employers, emerging new business topography, the nature of employment and the strategies that drive growth in industrial sectors, when making assessments of schools, colleges and apprenticeship providers in the future. This is where the skills agenda and careers agenda come together to ensure better experience and information for young people. We have been supplying the HMI research team with the LEP's most recent strategies and growth targets. We are also in the process of producing more visual and appealing labour market information to inform choices.</p> <p><u>Launch of The Skills Toolkit</u> The government launched The Skills Toolkit (theskillstoolkit.campaign.gov.uk/), which allows adults to access free, high quality online courses whilst at home and consists of digital and numeracy courses, ranging from basic to more advanced levels. This resource is linked from the Dorset LEP webpages.</p> <p>DL also felt unlikely that every aspect of life will return to 'as it was' before March and whilst there are a number of difficult challenges ahead and the way forwards may appear less distinct, this also provides an opportunity to bounce back quicker than other places and using this unprecedented time to reset and build on emerging innovations.</p> <p><i>A wide discussion followed this update summarised under Item 8.</i></p> | |
| <p>7</p> | <p>Skills research update and COVID-19 related labour market developments</p> | |
| <p>7.1</p> | <p>The Dorset LEP Skills Analyst, Mira Koseva gave an update on skills research and plan and encouraged members to read a report on early signs of coronavirus impact on the labour market available as an associated paper.</p> <p>The skills research deep dive has been extended based on comments raised at the previous meeting to incorporate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings from the employer survey • Dedicated section on the link between productivity and skills • Adult learning participation and achievement • Apprenticeship participation and achievement at different levels • Schools and achievement at different levels of study • Industries - productivity, recruitment demand and employment | |

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| 7.2 | <p>This, along with the emerging DfE guidance on the requirements of the report has resulted in a substantial piece of work that covers 2019. While some of the findings might have now changed, we are reconsidering how to publish this information as it provides a good review of the economic context, employer and industry demand, as well as the supply of skills through educational providers. Before publishing, it would be provided to some of the group members for a sense check.</p> <p>This research, along with the skills plan would need further review in light with latest developments to establish the findings and actions that are still holding and those that need to be redefined.</p> <p>MK appealed for sharing information on key areas that have been highlighted as “at risk”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people – first & part-time jobs, apprenticeships • NEETs • Employment and job retention scheme • Digital skills and digital deprivation | <p>MK to provide skills research for review</p> <p>All to share information on the identified areas at risk</p> |
| 8 | Discussions and next steps | |
| 8.1 | <p>The Chair appreciated all the updates and reports on latest developments. In taking this further, she reminded of the role of the group in ensuring the skills priorities are in alignment with the wider local industrial strategy and the development and recovery plans of local authorities, and should remain strongly focused on re-evaluating and re-imagining the future in light of the presented evidence without losing sight of the overall direction. The Chair invited the group to discuss further steps having that background in mind.</p> <p>Joint thinking, work and visibility</p> <p>AT raised a number of initiatives currently going ahead, where joint thinking or references to the work of the SAP Board are not apparent. This could cause a divergence from the direction and is important to clarify the process of establishing whether these ideas are directly supporting local people and the strategic priorities that we want to achieve.</p> <p>AT also informed the group of the BCP Council’s plans to convey the first economic recovery plan meetings and invited interested members to contribute. This was a prime opportunity to put the skills agenda on the map and hold a discussion within the wider context of economic recovery.</p> <p>DG reiterated establishing the real needs in Dorset would help ensure that new initiatives are not simply reactions to funding opportunities but are aligned with the evidence of genuine priority areas. DG gave an example with wave 2 of Institutes of Technology (IoT) funding call, where the BPC has made an expression of interest and the requirements for that investment have become more challenging so a shared understanding is paramount.</p> <p>DW also supported the idea that the skills element should be consistent across all the recovery plans for the Councils and at LEP level, without losing sight of the great work that has already been done on identifying key sectors and strategies for growth, while also tackling the arising issues for those most at risk in the given situation.</p> <p>NN reverberated these reflections stressing the heightened anxiety amongst various stakeholders and the public on current plans to address forecoming issues with unemployment that are particularly acute for young people. She</p> | |

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| 8.2 | <p>also warned of the diverse needs of different groups at risk and the insufficiency of a blanket approach. NN called for a media release on the role of the SAP Board in addressing these problems. The Chair agreed on the importance of visibility and sharing information about the work of the group and ensuring alignment and steering towards the agreed direction are key.</p> <p>In line with all the above, DG proposed, and it was supported by members for a working group to be setup, involving main partners in the IoT bid to look at the most urgent requirements and evidence in relation to engineering skills in the first instance and possibly move to long term planning going forwards.</p> <p>The Chair anticipated that more subgroups will emerge focusing on specific areas such as health related skills, tourism, agriculture, as well as crosscutting skills such as digital and creative as this work progresses. LR mentioned that he will be gathering the rural group to discuss the impact on the traditional agri-environment businesses.</p> <p>Crisis response</p> <p>AT projected that announcements are expected by large employers on making redundancies of scale and the group might like to work on a statement in response to these in advance. This is to highlight the collaboration with educational providers and career support available. The Chair agreed this should be part of the media announcement and both RD and DG said they are keen to support it. Also NN highlighted the National Careers Service as a national response and LS spoke about the overall increase of demand for Job Centre+ support and the importance to help people out of unemployment.</p> <p>LS felt a media campaign, as raised earlier in relation to the survey results with regular updates on what is coming in terms of support would be appreciated. She proposed "Dorset Forward" or "Skills Reset Dorset" as possible themes of the campaign.</p> <p>The Chair proposed that coordination of media messages and developing a campaign to be taken forward by the LEP.</p> | <p>MK to work with NN and other members as well as the comms team on visibility</p> <p>DG to setup and lead a working group</p> <p>MK to follow up on media response</p> |
| 9 | Date of next meeting | |
| | 10.00hrs 15 th July 2020 – AECC or virtual TBC | |