

Heart of the South West Skills Advisory Panel

1st December 2020

from

10:00am – 12:30pm

Via Microsoft Teams

10:00am Welcome, Introductions and Declarations of Interest

Attendees:

- Fiona McMillan
- Mike Green
- Mike Matthews
- Steve Cardew
- Bill Blythe
- Stuart Elford
- Eifion Jones
- Rod Davis
- Mel Roberts
- Carl Wyard
- Edward Coley
- Phill Adams
- Keri Denton
- Sharron Robbie
- Hilary Stevens
- Paul Blackmore
- Jackie Grubb
- Khristine Norton
- Rosie Bates
- John Laramy
- Laurence Frewin
- Jo Holmes
- Andy Berry
- Tony Skeel
- Nora Corkery
- Cheryl Ward
- Helen Higgs
- Gabrielle Climbe
- Stephen Henagulph
- Lee Tozer
- Joanna Caine
- Mark Sheppard
- Jacob Coburn
- Chris Evans
- Sean Mackney
- Tina Brinkworth

Apologies:

- Rob Bosworth
- Alan Denby
- Jamie Evans
- Debbie Wright
- Nicola Williams
- Julie Hawker
- Katy Quinn
- Suzanne Bond
- Victoria Hatfield
- David Ralph

10:05am Minutes of Last Meeting

- Actions from last meeting:
 - There were no declarations of interest to report and all actions had been completed.

10:15am Update on Impact of COVID – Phill Adams

- An update on the latest impact on the economy from Covid were presented to the group. It was advised that projections originally forecasted have now been superseded by the second wave and timing of the second lockdown. It was highlighted that we are now likely to see a much steeper downturn and a longer recovery period. Figures suggest a 11% fall in output this year. It was reported that the HoTSW is roughly 1% behind national averages in all

scenarios. Leisure, hospitality and retail are the most vulnerable sectors who have taken the hardest hit.

It was highlighted that the second lockdown has meant that there is now a 11.5% reduction in GVA compared to the original figures which predicted a 8.5% reduction.

An economic trajectory was presented to the group. This showed the impact on the economy between April 2020 and the second lockdown. A much steeper decline is now being presented with a longer build back time.

Unemployment figures are advised to be currently suppressed by furlough, when this ends it is predicted that unemployment rates will be at 8% compared to the 6% predicted in June 2020.

As previously mentioned, figures show that hospitality, accommodations, arts, entertainment and recreation have been hardest hit by the second lockdown with employment predicting a 20% hit.

In conclusion, it was advised that the second lockdown has created a difficult period for some sectors. If Brexit is taken into consideration alongside these predictions estimate a further 2% decline however sectors including manufacturing and construction are predicted to be sectors impacted the most. It was advised that these sectors tend to be more resilient however this would still have an impact on the recovery position.

10:25am Update from Members – All

- Steve Cardew from Plymouth emphasised that they are seeing the predictions that have been presented. It was advised that they have two large employers which are doing well fortunately and therefore this is slightly bolstering the area. It was advised that manufacturing is doing much better than was anticipated however hospitality has been largely affected.
- Tina advised that labour market intelligence has been collated which showed growth in both defence and health. The next task is to identify new job opportunities and ensuring demand within the workforce is matched by upskilling those within the tourism/hospitality sectors that have been affected.
- Jacqueline Grubb advised that the decline predicted with apprentices has not yet been shown due to defence, manufacturing and engineering opportunities. It was advised that they are also looking at upskilling those in the hospitality and tourism sector.
- Mel Roberts highlighted that they are sign posting people to careers available with careers fairs. These are mostly providing opportunities within the Health and Care sector. It was advised that they are also working with employers who are making staff redundant to sign post to other opportunities available.
- Andy Berry highlighted that they are seeing issues within the tourism and hospitality sector however they are seeing a boom in online training. The team have been working on digital bootcamps which is offering training within health, social care and welding. Currently there has been a positive uptake with these courses and it is expected that around 60 adults will be attending each course.
- Mark Shephard advised that they are overrepresented in the hospitality sector. They are piloting 16 – 24 initiatives involving creating brands and getting a job. Data on effects on mental health with covid on employers is also being sought. Further steps are being taken to encourage employers to be more youth friendly.
- John Laramy highlighted that digital apprenticeships have faced many challenges.
- Rosie Bates highlighted that the visitor economy is a priority as footfall is currently bouncing back. It was advised that some sectors are coming through more strongly with recruitment and roles including digital, health and social care. It was highlighted that a brand new independent restaurant is opening up in the centre of Exeter, this is positive

news considering the circumstances. Finally, kickstart was advised to be working well for employers.

- Mike Matthews highlighted that manufacturing employers are worried about what unknown Brexit rules may come into force.
- Bill Blyth emphasised that North Devon are seeing worrying signs of businesses who are unsure if they will be able to pay their mid-December rent payments. Business rates kicking back in from April is also creating worry within businesses. It was highlighted that apprenticeship numbers within Petroc are on the rise which is positive.
- Carl Wyard indicated that the supply chain for the food and drink sector has been impacted as a result of the hospitality sector shutting. There is also a growing concern over the number of independent businesses who have not got a digital presence.
- Laurence Frewin advised that there is reasonable demand in digital, health and marine. There is also an interesting demand in the visitor economy. Apprenticeships are currently holding up with some strong recruitment in some sectors. Traineeships have doubled and the demand for kickstart is encouraging.
- Sharron Robbie indicated that they are seeing signs of growth in Apprenticeships. Smaller businesses including hairdressing opportunities are limited as due to the new restrictions this has meant that they are unable to take on apprenticeships. Some employers are struggling with the digital aspect of apprenticeships which is causing a hold up with starting.
- Rod David echoed this and highlighted that currently they are bucking the trend of the national statistics.
- Stuart Elford highlighted the concern with the kickstart scheme. It was advised that 322 placements have been registered by only 22 have been approved. Further it was advised that funding support for start ups needs to be considered alongside ensuring businesses can meet the digital demand.
- Phill Adams highlighted that work is being done to lobby for funding at the moment to help businesses. It is crucial that we are not working in silos with businesses and we do not lose our positive bounce back news in messages.
- Eifion Jones informed the group that they published a copy of the LIS last week which sets out the medium and long term actions. They are now working to finalise the build back better strategy.

10:45am Consultation on the Local Skills Plan – Phill Adams

- Phill Adams discussed the requirements of the local skills report with the group following the request from Government that all SAP's have one by March 2021. Four primary roles have been identified for the report. These include, it is the 'go to' document for all local skills matter, it feeds intelligence and priorities into the national skills and productivity board, it provides a core engagement tool with employers, providers and wider partners and it shares and insight into the local skills needs.
- It was emphasised that the report must be no more than 30 pages and must be consistent throughout whilst providing both a current and future focus.
- Four key areas were identified including readable, relevant, skills specific and responsive. To maintain this it was advised that the font will be appropriately sized, it will offer interesting local insight and updates, it will be refreshed every 2 years, it will be adaptable and it will bring all skills related content to one place.
- An overview of the content to be included within the report was also provided. Phill advised that the focus for the meeting would be on the core part of the strategy. It was

advised that a first rough draft was circulated in November however this was circulated to obtain feedback and comments and will be reshaped/written accordingly.

- Phill opened the room up to comments on chapter 2 (local skills context).
- Chris Evans highlighted that business support including the extent of self-employment and start ups could be worth including.
- Hilary Stephens highlighted that qualification level trends have turned. The number of 19 years olds achieving level 2 and 3 qualifications has declined. There are also lower levels of adult participation in training. New employer skills survey from Autumn last year has been realised. Skills utilisation is also a problem within the area.
- John Laramy highlighted that there is a disconnect with training that is being offered and the skills needed. Do not feel it is useful to state how good the quality of provision in the area is as we need to be pushing to better this therefore a more balanced argument would be better.
- Helen Higgs advised there is a real drive through the national infrastructure strategy. A realistic view that required skills demand across the pipeline. Focusing on key principles of manufacturing in the UK to level up and ensure clean energy.
- Steve Cardew highlighted that it lacks reference to early interventions that are required in schools to make an impact and difference.
- Fiona McMillan advised that gaps need to be emphasised more. We should not be spending too much time celebrating successes and what has been achieved. Need to get a sense of the changing environment.
- Mike Matthews highlighted that they do not want to link skills to level of attainment.
- John Laramy advised that we need to be brave and talk about what we need to prioritise. Wouldn't change the priorities rather structure them into 3 'takeaway' headings that are more succinct. Headings that were advised include, enhance the skills and life chances of individuals in the area; agile, responsive and forward-facing provision and impact and improved productivity and prosperity.
- Sean Mackney emphasised that there are some exciting and different reasons as to why our area will do some of these things better, it is important to highlight this.
- Chris Evans advised that improving substantial innovation opportunities is important to highlight. Entrepreneurship was not mentioned within the document, it would be good to include this within the productivity section.
- Fiona McMillan questioned if something more business focused should be included?
- Andy Berry highlighted that the gravity project is not mentioned. We do not want to loose the concept of network/collaboration way of working within the piece as this is important going forward.
- Tina highlighted there is a strong education model to support this and is important to include into this piece.
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Action

- ***Guidance to be circulated alongside the minutes – SM-R***
- Phill moved onto chapter 3 for discussion (core skills strategy). It was highlighted that a large amount of actions were received and this made it difficult to focus down into one area.
- Fiona McMillan emphasised that it is important that proof can be made against actions that have been stated. This would be easier if actions noted were more specific.
- PA highlighted that the challenge with that is that if actions are made too specific then we could be made accountable if they are not met.

- John Laramy advised that the more specific actions are could in turn make them more restrictive. Digital, advanced engineering and clean energy are not really identified.
- Fiona advised that actions could be passed out to constituent parts.
- Steve Cardew highlighted that ESB's/FSB's do not have the resources so we need to ensure that responsibility for actions are not placed on these areas.

Action

- **All to send any comments on action points to Phill Adams.**
- The next discussion was held on chapter 4 (skills action plan).
- Fiona McMillan highlighted that collaboration needs to be included.
- Laurence Frewin advised that a balance needs to be made between recognising the risks but also recognising the opportunities.
- Sean Mackney questioned how we facilitate co working if we have people working internationally but want to live here? How will this be facilitated? Not much has been included around AI and the impact on the economy and skills requirement.
- Steve Cardew highlighted that much of this is dependant on the investment of infrastructure. Does this need to be mentioned so it is explicit?
- The final discussion point was around chapter 5 (forward look). Phill Adams that additional feedback would be appreciated.

Action

- **All to offer any additional changes to Phill Adams using tracked changed.**

12:00pm South West Institute of Technology – Steve Maridas

- Steve Maridas attended the meeting to provide an update on IOT's (Institution of Technology). Steve advised that IOT's were born out of a manifesto government pledge. They cover level 4 and 5 programmes. It was advised that the Government issued 12 IOT's in wave 1. The South West were the second place to have theirs signed off. Wave 2 bid IOT's have recently been circulated. It was highlighted that they were surprised the UK picture looks at engineering and manufacturing within skills. SW bucks the trend with 60% focusing on digital. Met office, petroc, babcock are current anchor employers. Marine engineering, data and nuclear are unique directions that our IOT offers that other areas do not. Other areas have now come for advice and guidance within these areas.
- Steve advised that a launch event would be taking place on 28th April 2021. There will be 2 forms of curriculum. This will require new needs from partners. The collaboration with other partners allows this to be tweaked to ensure the employers needs are met. Observatory work focuses on two key areas of data and a post-doctoral researcher is now in place to assist with this. Marine engineering will be using the learnings from focus one process ensuring 'single' contact with employers between spring – summer 2021.
- Bill Blythe advised that moving forward, ensuring IOT's move of a building project will be critical.
- Andy Berry highlighted that the welding facility is now up and operational. It is important to consider health going forward and look to extend this.
- Jackie Grubb advised that numbers are looking positive. They are looking to move in next year.

- Sean Mckney highlighted that IOT's provide a platform for what they would like to build going forward, it would be good to include health in this.

12:25pm **AOB / Round Up**

There was nothing further to report.

12:30pm **Close**