

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (BLEP)
SKILLS ADVISORY PANEL (SAP) MEETING**

Minutes of meeting held on Friday 12 November 2021, from 10am, via Teams

Present:	Professor Gavin Brooks, Buckinghamshire New University	(GB)
	Shabnam Ali, Buckinghamshire Council	(SA)
	Juliet Anderson, Bucks Health & Social Care Academy	(JA)
	Beth Baker, University of Buckingham	(BB)
	Ian Barham, BLEP Partnerships Manager	(IB)
	Lucy Bowman, DWP	(LB)
	John Browning, Bucks Skills Hub	(JB)
	Emily Cashen, MHCLG	(EC)
	CLlr Anita Cranmer, Buckinghamshire Council	(AC)
	Heather Dean, Buckinghamshire Business First	(HD)
	Caroline Hargrave, Buckinghamshire LEP	(CH)
	Ian Harper, Buckinghamshire New University	(IH)
	Katie Higginson, Community Impact Bucks	(KH)
	Marina Jackson, BLEP Under 19 Skills Manager	(MJ)
	Simon James, Buckinghamshire Council	(SJ)
	Jo Meloni, The Misbourne School	(JM)
	James Moorhouse, Buckinghamshire LEP	(JMo)
	Dave Oxley, McAfee/Digital Sector Group Lead (Part meeting)	(DO)
	Martina Porter, All Spring Media (Creative Sector Group Chair)	(MP)
	Paul Skitt, Flannery Plant (Construction Employer Group Chair)	(PS)
	Mark Wood, Reaction Engines/Space Sector Lead	(MW)
 Apologies:	Karen Mitchell, Buckinghamshire College Group	
	Kerry Senatore, Careers & Enterprise Company	
	Jon Wardle, National Film & Television School	
	Sally White/Sarah Stevens, Sylo Beyond HR	
 In Attendance:	Sarah Fraser, BLEP	(SF)

ACTION

1 MINUTES

The Minutes from the meeting held on 17 September 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

1.1 Matters arising (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

- 1.1.1 ➤ Bid writing capacity** – HD confirmed Adrian Champney (Ngage/BBF) has arranged a meeting on 25 November for the group looking at bid writing capacity. HD to ensure JA receives a calendar invitation for this meeting.
- 1.1.2 ➤ SAP Membership - Young person representative** – GB/HD to discuss further.

**JA
GB/HD**

2 LOCAL SKILLS REPORT/BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SKILLS STRATEGY (Presentation attached)

Further to the presentation provided and subsequent discussion, the following was noted:

ACTION

- Adult Social Care is mentioned in the Local Skills Report but this should be extended to include recognition of the issues being experienced in Children’s Social Care. CH
- Children’s mental health is a particular problem in Buckinghamshire and this should be reflected within the Report. JA/CH to liaise. JA/CH
- With far more opportunities and fewer people available, due to early retirement/part time working, and students staying longer in education etc, the labour market is becoming an increasingly aggressive environment.
- The creative industries sector, particularly film and TV, is seeing far more production coming to the UK which has exacerbated existing skills shortages (rather than people leaving the sector). If the UK is unable to address skills shortages and increase the number of people entering the sector, production will be lost to other EU hubs. CH to ensure this is emphasised in the Local Skills Report. CH
- **Case Studies:**
 - It was suggested the Report would benefit from more case studies; at least one from each of the 5 key areas, particularly mentioned were case studies from the health and social care sector. **JB/JA to liaise re a case study around health and social care.** JB/JA
 - With regards to the creative industries film and TV case study, it was suggested including a supplementary entry from Disney, Amazon or a Pinewood tenants that employ directly into these roles (Pinewood Studios do not). **JB/MP to liaise on this.** JB/MP
- **Skills Improvement Plans (SIPs)** - It is unclear what role Skills Advisory Panels will play in development of SIPs but further clarification is due to be published shortly.
- **Skills Action Plan** - Further to the document circulated prior to the meeting, the following was noted:
 - **The Future Workforce - Item 2.5** – “Create a Special Educational Needs and Disability community of practice” - **SJ/JB to discuss further.** SJ/JB
 - **Inclusive Workforce - Item 3.1** – “Work with Buckinghamshire Council to promote opportunities created by town centre redevelopments and new affordable housing to attract people to live and work in Bucks.” – Significant work has been done in this area. **IB/CH to liaise re possible additions relating to Aylesbury Garden Town and Future High Street funding.** IB/CH
 - **Digital strategy** – Rachel Daley starts with the LEP on 15 November 2021 as Innovation and Digital Programme Manager and will be reviewing the Digital Strategy that has been drafted, with an anticipated publication in Spring 2022. Rachel will be looking at how the two arms of the document will be developed and how best to handle the Project Gigabit element.

It was confirmed the aim is to have completed the refresh of the Local Skills Report and to publish by end January 2022. Those present were asked to contact JB with any further updates/comments on any of the parts of the document, the final draft version of which will be forwarded prior to Christmas for review.

- **Buckinghamshire Education & Skills Strategy** - The current Strategy comes to an end in 2022 and will be refreshed to 2027; this is to be completed by end March 2022. It was suggested the skills element of Buckinghamshire Council’s Education and Skills Strategy should be aligned with the skills strategy being set out in the Local Skills Report, as agreed by the SAP; providing one overarching Skills Strategy for the entire county.

3 **BOOTCAMPS** (Presentation attached)

Reflecting on the plethora of schemes and initiatives in the skills landscape and further to the presentation provided, those present were asked to consider whether the bootcamp model will fit with any of the priorities identified for Buckinghamshire and whether there is a desire to submit a bid for a bootcamp(s) in the county.

The subject of Bootcamps will be discussed at the Bid Writing Capability Sub Group meeting on 25 November.

This subject will also be discussed further at the SAP meeting scheduled for 21 January 2022 in preparation for when bidding information is received from Government. SF to add to the agenda for 21 January.

SF

4 **COUNTY DEAL**

IB reported that no further update on the progress of the County Deal had been received as part of the Spending Review.

Further information on County Deals may arise following publication of the Levelling Up White Paper prior to Christmas; this may, or may not, include reference to Buckinghamshire's proposal. A conversation with officials is planned for 1 December and, in the meantime, work will be undertaken to ensure business cases in the document (which are being independently appraised) are robust.

The County Deal remains a live opportunity and will be an ongoing priority for the Buckinghamshire Growth Board.

5 **PARTNER UPDATES**

5.1 University of Buckingham

- There have been increases in postgraduate numbers and significant growth in medical school applications; a full cohort is expected in January.
- There is significant renovation underway including the Student Union building and the second phase of the Verney campus.
- With regards to skills and employability the University has:
 - Asked students to write reflectively about the skills they are acquiring during their time at the University.
 - Launched a micro-internship programme, funded by the University, for the benefit of students and SMEs. Internships will be for a maximum of 45 hours and 48 employers are currently registered with the scheme and establishing appropriate projects.
- The University is finally returning to on-campus events.

5.2 DWP

- The Kickstart programme has recently been extended and is open until 17 December for employers to register vacancies.
- Unemployment numbers continue to fall and have now returned to pre-lockdown levels. There has been no big increase in unemployment following the cessation of furlough.
- Work is underway to ensure JCP customers are aware of the opportunities coming through Bootcamps and Sector Based Work Academies.

- DWP are running monthly sector based campaigns; the current month is focussed on Health & Social Care opportunities/careers and there is ongoing work to ensure JCP coaches are upskilled on the opportunities presented in each of the different sectors.
- LB reported she will be moving on from her current role and will be replaced on the SAP by Jo Lynch.

5.3 Buckinghamshire LEP

- The LEP has now officially launched the Buckinghamshire Economic Intelligence Observatory providing a central source for all Buckinghamshire related data. Emails will be forwarded to those registered with the Observatory when new content is added. Please let CH know if you wish to be added to the mailing list caroline.hargrave@buckslep.co.uk.
- CH will be on maternity leave from end February 2022 and recruitment is underway for someone to lead on research for the next 12 months. Please contact CH if you know of anyone that may be appropriate caroline.hargrave@buckslep.co.uk.
- The latest iteration of the Business Barometer survey is now live and businesses present were encouraged to complete the survey to provide deeper business intelligence. Link is here - <https://ecv.microsoft.com/NSAlwEQsTa>
- An announcement on the outcome of the LEP Review is anticipated prior to the end of December.

5.4 Buckinghamshire Business First

- BBF has recently been successful in winning a bid to the Community Renewal Fund (CRF) focussed on the Visitor Economy and supporting businesses to recover post lockdowns.
- Within the new CRF contract there is provision for some digital training support/workshops for businesses until the end of June 2022.

5.5 Buckinghamshire New University

- Apprenticeship numbers continue to be strong with circa 900 now registered.
- Undergraduate numbers are good for the current year with a further Open Day planned for 13 November; anticipated total numbers are in the region of 700-800.
- Planning is underway around higher technical qualification courses.

5.6 Buckinghamshire Health & Social Care Academy

- The Volunteer Faculty has now been established and is going well.
- The Buckinghamshire Coaching pool is being established and will be operational from March 2022. Those present were asked to share what coaching they currently provide from basic careers training to higher executive leadership coaching.
- Work is underway to fill social care gaps, including linking with Buckinghamshire Universities on seasonal work opportunities.
- The Academy is working with the University of Bedford re provision of a 'sandwich' year of clinical practice placements as part of the health and social care courses offered at the University.
- The Academy is working with the University of Bedford and Buckinghamshire College Group on the launch of a scored resilience tool in an effort to retain staff in health and social care.

5.7 Community Impact Bucks

- There is a continuing high need for volunteer board members to work with charities and not for profit organisations.

- There is a continuing high demand for volunteers in a number of roles and increasingly within health and social care, and in GP practices to support the ongoing vaccination programme.
- Work is underway to create a Buckinghamshire Data Exchange to provide solid data and assistance to Buckinghamshire charities with programme design and in developing funding bids.

5.8 Bucks Skills Hub

- The new dedicated Skills Show webpages have recently been unveiled; more information to be found here: <https://bucksskillshub.org/the-skills-show>.
- The Skills Hub has run x4 webinars in the last week reaching circa 3,300 young people and adults.

5.9 McAfee

- The company continues the process of dividing its business.
- Significant “poaching” of staff continues to take place and it is anticipated this will lead to high wage inflation within the sector.

5.10 Reaction Engines (Space Sector Lead)

- There is significant activity in the space sector around the UK Space Agency and emerging strategies coming from BEIS.
- Level 3/4 apprenticeship in the sector has now been approved, with a Level 6 apprenticeship under discussion with employers and the UK Space Agency, etc.

5.11 All Spring Media (Creative Sector Lead)

- Apprenticeship provision requirement has grown fivefold in the last few months with 175 apprentices due in January with over 200 expected in the next academic year.
- There is a significant number of young people looking for entry level positions but not as many seeking higher level opportunities, perhaps due to employers using higher level apprenticeships as one method of retaining staff, particularly in production co-ordination and production management.
- Work is underway on a Skills Transfer Programme with the Sector Skills Council and news is awaited on a programme bid to draw and retrain accountants from sectors outside the creative industries.

5.12 Flannery Plant (Construction Sector Lead)

- The Construction Employer Group at its last meeting considered the skills shortages apparent across the board within the sector.
- It is planned to establish a Sub Group to the Construction Employer Group to look at solutions to attracting people into the construction sector.
- The construction sector has supported the online Bucks Skills Show in the last week and will seek to support the in person show in the New Year.
- Meetings have taken place with Buckinghamshire College Group to look at how the construction sector might work more effectively with the College and the UTC.
- Flannery Plant has submitted a bid to Buckinghamshire LEP to establish the Bucks Operator Skills Hub. The project is currently going through the planning application process in the hopes of delivering the building by the end of March 2022.

5.13 Buckinghamshire Council

- There is significant work underway on the skills agenda across the county and Council representatives are seeking to ensure this is undertaken in a strategic manner.

- An inspection is expected shortly from Ofsted and the Healthcare Commission around the “Preparing for Adulthood” provision for SEND students.
- The Council continues to seek to ensure work experience placements for students.
- Work on the County Deal will benefit from having all strategic skills discussions in one place.

6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

This being their last meeting, thanks were offered to both Jo Meloni and to Lucy Bowman for the contributions both have made to the work of the Skills Advisory Panel.

7 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS (10am-12pm)

- **2022** – 21 January, 18 March, 13 May, 8 July, 16 September, 18 November

All meetings will be held via Teams with the exception of either 13 May or 8 July.

8 SUMMARY ACTIONS

- **Bid writing capacity** –HD to ensure JA is invited to meeting on 25 November. **HD**
- **SAP Membership - Young person representative** – GB/HD to discuss further. **GB/HD**
- **Local Skills Report:**
 - CH to ensure issues experienced in Children’s Social Care are included in report. **CH**
 - JA/CH to liaise re how to reflect the significant issues with children’s mental health within the Report. **JA/CH**
 - CH to ensure discussion on skills shortages in the creative industries sector reflects that this is as a result of increased production coming to the UK (rather than people leaving the sector). **CH**
 - **Case Studies:**
 - JB/JA to liaise re a case study around health and social care. **JB/JA**
 - JB/MP to liaise on a creative industries film and TV case study from Disney/Amazon or Pinewood tenants employing directly into roles. **JB/MP**
 - **Skills Action Plan:**
 - The Future Workforce - Item 2.5 - SJ/JB to discuss further. **SJ/JB**
 - Inclusive Workforce - Item 3.1 – IB/CH to liaise re possible additions relating to Aylesbury Garden Town and Future High Street funding. **IB/CH**
- **Bootcamps** – SF to add discussion to the agenda for the SAP on 21 January 2022. **SF**

The meeting closed at 11.50am.