



CONFIDENTIAL

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

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 30 October 2019, 10am–12pm at McAfee, Aylesbury

- Present:**
- Prof Rebecca Bunting, Chair (RB)
 - CLlr Anita Cranmer, Buckinghamshire County Council (AC)
 - Heather Dean, Buckinghamshire Business First (HD)
 - Gill Harding, Buckinghamshire County Council (GH)
 - Ian Harper, Buckinghamshire New University (IH)
 - Katie Higginson, Community Impact Bucks (KH)
 - Karen Mitchell, Buckinghamshire College Group (KM)
 - Dave Oxley, McAfee/Digital Sector Group Lead (DO)
 - Allan Potter, Adviza (AP)
 - Angela Spang, June Medical/Med Tech Sector Group Lead (AS)
 - John Spoerry, University of Buckingham (JS)
 - Sarah Stevens, Sylo Associates (SS)
 - Mark Wood, Reaction Engines/Space Sector Lead (MWo)
 - Mark Warrilow, HS2/Construction Sector Group Lead (MWa)

- Apologies:**
- Abigail Changer, NHS Health Education England, Thames Valley
 - Jo Meloni, The Misbourne School
 - Dena Read, Department for Education
 - Ailie Smith, Creative Media Skills/Creative Industries Sector Group Lead
 - Imelda Goldsboro, DWP
 - Nick Braisby, Buckinghamshire New University
 - Sandra Reynolds, Adviza
 - Sally White, SYLO Associates

- In Attendance:**
- Ian Barham, BLEP Partnerships Manager (IB)
 - Marina Jackson, BLEP Under 19 Skills Manager (MJ)
 - Catherine Godward, BLEP SAP Research Co-ordinator (CG)
 - Paddy Patterson, BLEP Apprenticeships Manager (PP)
 - Sarah Fraser, BLEP (SF)

ACTION

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

RB welcomed those present and thanked DO for hosting the SAP meeting.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 3 JULY 2019

Noting that Rupert Waters should be added to the attendees, the minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

2.1 Matters arising

Adviza project – There has been a good response to the project aimed at female returners to work; the outcome will be a qualification and guaranteed job interview. AP to forward further information.

AP

3 SAP TERMS OF REFERENCE

Following discussion with DfE, SAPs have developed from the previous Skills & Enterprise Boards and now provide a forum for discussion, bringing together supply and demand in terms of the skills agenda.

The terms of reference for the SAP, as circulated, have been updated in line with this broadened remit and reflect the reconfigured membership of the SAP.

It was noted membership of existing, and yet to be established Sector Groups feeding into the SAP, is under review to ensure these groups are fit for purpose.

It was agreed:

- To reword para 3 of the circulated terms of reference document reflecting the SAP works primarily (although not exclusively) with business organisations rather than individuals.
- To endorse the new terms of reference, subject to the above change.
- To keep the terms of reference under review to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

HD/PP

4 SECTOR LEADS UPDATE – Key messages

4.1 Space

- The sector provided support to the Bucks Skills Show in the form of a ‘Space Cluster’, promoting opportunities within the sector, specifically in Bucks.
- Work is progressing on a Level 4 Apprenticeship for Space Technicians and providers for this are being sought.
- Work is progressing on developing a Level 6 Apprenticeship for Space Technicians for next year.
- Members of the Space Sector Group attended the UK Space Conference in September and met with space sector representatives and government officials discussing aspirations for the UK space industry.

4.2 Construction

- The group met towards the end of September with cross sector representation including civil contractors, housebuilders and Bucks College Group.
- The findings of the sector research undertaken by CG formed the substantive agenda item, with the suggestion the research should include transport infrastructure and include discussion with Highways colleagues at Buckinghamshire County Council.
- The Bucks Skills Show was supported by a number of construction companies both in attendance and through sponsorship.
- Bucks College Group provided an update on a number of courses that have been running around ensuring people are ‘site ready’ and IOSH Health & Safety courses, particularly with a view to encouraging women into the sector.
- An update was shared on work with the CITB (who have a role in levying construction companies and recycling this funding to enable companies to upskill their workforce) to set up a local Training Board, utilising CITB funding.

Training Boards look at industry skills shortages, projected future demand etc and will access or bid for funding to support training locally in addition to normal government funding. The existing Construction Sector Group will adapt to become this new Training Board, with the requirement for increased business representation (around 25 employers).

- The existing group has commissioned some research around the apprenticeship levy and how this is being paid/utilised in Buckinghamshire, with a view to galvanising SMEs and assisting them in taking on apprentices.
- Work is progressing to develop closer links with Heathrow involving them with the Bucks College Group and looking to Heathrow's involvement in the Skills Show 2020.

4.3 Med Tech

- The Med Tech group had its first meeting mid-October and will look to represent (and involve as far as possible) the 47 Med Tech manufacturing companies in Buckinghamshire, in addition to the large number of Med Tech distribution companies etc.
- The group has representation from SMEs as well as large employers and is investigating the possibility of linking with Med Tech employers in neighbouring areas that may have employees or operations within Buckinghamshire.
- There are significant regulatory changes coming in the sector affecting medical device testing/marketing on both existing and new products; in addition to changes being wrought as a result of Brexit. There is significant skills demand for people with regulatory experience /knowledge.

5 **COMMUNITY IMPACT BUCKS** (Presentation attached)

New member, Katie Higginson of Community Impact Bucks, provided a brief summary of the organisation's aims and objectives.

The SAP noted the links between volunteering, the development of "encore careers" and the work in the LIS to develop and retain local talent; volunteering providing an excellent bridge into employment.

6 **APPRENTICESHIP PLAN** (Presentation attached)

Further to the information presented by PP, the SAP commented as follows:

- There is more work to be done on providing the wider county picture.
- The nature of the Buckinghamshire economy as largely micro businesses 'restricts' the number of apprenticeship places offered as many businesses perceive this as too labour intensive for a small workforce. It was suggested more should be done to make this process easier for employers and perhaps develop opportunities for SMEs to 'share' apprentices.
- It was suggested repeating the Employer Perspective Survey bearing in mind the different generations within the workplace and the need to survey wider than simply, businesses. This could be undertaken with a view to informing employers on the types of apprenticeships that will attract people.

It was agreed:

- To update the Apprenticeship Plan in light of the comments made, circulate this, and set time aside at the next SAP meeting to discuss this further.
- To review the possibility of repeating the Employer Perspective Survey.

PP
PP/HD

7 CAREERS HUB UPDATE

Further to the reports previously circulated, MJ provided an update on the work of the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub, providing the top performing Careers Hub in the country.

It was reported the Skills team continue to develop relationships with Buckinghamshire's schools, supported by the 49 Enterprise Advisers in place, with the hope of increasing this number to two Enterprise Advisers for every school.

Those present were asked to contact MJ if they are able to offer workplace visits or work experience placements.

ALL

7.1 Skills Show

The Skills Show saw c 4,000 visitors across 2 days; a 30% increase on the previous year's attendance. 130 employers were involved, with good representation from the Sector Groups.

It was noted the sector sponsorship worked well this year, more than offsetting the lack of a headline sponsor, and it was planned to grow this for the 2020 show.

MJ reported the current venue for the Skills Show is at capacity and thought will need to be given as to how to grow the event in 2020. It was suggested this might be in the form of a Skills Festival, akin to the Business Festival run by BBF, linked with other events taking place eg the Open Doors event at Pinewood; or possibly by moving the event to take place during the working week rather than partly at the weekend.

The SAP congratulated the Skills team on the fantastic results being achieved.

8 SAP REPORT TO DfE: PROGRESS ON SUBMISSION (Presentation attached)

Further to the presentation given, SAP members were asked to contact CG with any comments/feedback on the research findings, particularly around the 'Mismatches' slide, either endorsing or highlighting errors/omissions.

The SAP noted the level of employees operating under capacity in terms of their qualifications. The group also noted reports of an increased demand for training to better utilise workforce skills and qualifications, as well as increased demand for training on team effectiveness and the use of psychometric testing to ensure people are being used in the best way possible.

ACTION

It was considered the research provided valuable high level information and started to highlight how this might be used to inform the skills strategy.

It was agreed:

- To use the next SAP meeting to hold a more detailed discussion on the research available, focussed on the 4 priority sectors in the LIS, to start to inform the Skills Action Plan.
- To circulate the Executive summary from the final analysis submitted to DfE.
- In advance of the next meeting, CG/IB/HD/PP will give some consideration as to how to use the data collected to enable strategic level consideration of what is required for the county.

**ALL
CG
CG/IB/
HD/PP**

9 AOB

- HD shared information on resources available to support businesses to become 'Brexit-ready' through BBF at www.bbf.uk.com/brexit and via the government website www.gov.uk/brexit.

10 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

- **Wednesday 22 January 2020, 9am-12pm, Buckinghamshire College Group Aylesbury Campus, Skills Action Plan workshop**
- Weds 6 May 2020, 10am-12pm, venue tbc (sector leads pre-meet 9am)
- Weds 22 July 2020, 10am-12pm, venue tbc (sector leads pre-meet 9am)
- Weds 18 November 2020, 10am-12pm, venue tbc (sector leads pre-meet 9am)

The meeting closed at 12.10pm.

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Professor Rebecca Bunting
Chair

Date: