

**New Anglia Skills Advisory Panel Meeting**

**21st May 2020**

**Via Microsoft Teams**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**In attendance:**

Ben Miller, Konica Minolta (BM)

Bev Moxon, ESFA (BMo)

Christine Futter, Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support (CF)

Claire Cullens, New Anglia LEP Board and SAP Chair (CC)

Clarke Willis, Swallow Barns (CW)

Cllr Mary Evans, Suffolk County Council (ME)

Corrienne Peasgood, City College Norwich (CP)

David Pomfret, College of West Anglia (DP)

Dayle Bayliss, Dayle Bayliss Associates

Glen Todd, New Anglia LEP (GT)

Guy Hazelhurst, EDF (GH)

Jason Parnell, Steadfast Training (JP)

Julia Nix, DWP (JN)

Lynsey Sweales, representing Norfolk Chamber of Commerce (LS)

Michael Gray, Suffolk County Council (MG)

Natasha Waller, New Anglia LEP (NW)

Peter Basford, BDO Group (PB)

Richard Bridgman, Warren Services (RB)

Richard Self, agricultural representative (RS)

Seb Gasse, NCC (SG)

Stuart Smith, People with Energy (SS)

Tom Brown, Green Light Trust (TB)

Tom Humphries, Norfolk County Council (TH)

Tracey Cox, ESFA (TC)

Viv Gillespie, Suffolk New College (VG)

Yvonne Mason, The Mason Trust (YM)

**Visitors:**

Angela Berry, West Suffolk College (AB)

Karin Porter (NCC)

Polly Bridgman, University of Suffolk (PB)

Simon Papworth, New Anglia LEP (SP)

**Apologies:**

Chris Gribble, Writers’ Centre Norwich (CG)

Cllr Stuart Clancy, Norfolk County Council (SC)

David Gartland, Abbeygate 6th Form (DG)

Helen Langton (Professor), University of Suffolk (HL)

Jan Feeney, Norfolk County Council (JF)

Judith Mobbs, Suffolk County Council (JM)

Karen Gibson, Norfolk County Council (KG)

Lucy Walker, ESFA (LW)

Nikos Savvas, West Suffolk College (NS)

Peter Funnell, Oakmere Solutions (PF)

Stuart Rimmer, East Coast College (SR)

Vince Muspratt, Norfolk County Council (VP)

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| **Item 1: Welcome** |
| Claire Cullens welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the etiquette of the meeting. She expressed that skills are vital in dealing with the challenges of Covid-19.  CC also reminded us about the workshop that took place at Norfolk Community Foundation at the end of February when we shaped 8 potential projects under the 4 SAP objectives. These have initially been reviewed by Skills Officers and amendments made at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic ready to bring to today’s meeting.  CC had also approached 4 private sector members to act as Champions for the objective with typically support from 4 public sector members plus officer support:  Agile and responsive training – LS, PB and NW  Driving Skills Progression for the Workforce – CF, JP and MG  Equipping Young People for Success – BM, CP and KP  Tackling Barriers to employment – GH, JN and CC  Many activities will take place outside these meetings but we will need clear outputs moving forward. Future meetings will look at the questions and support needed from these groups.  **ACTION:** Panel members to inform NW which of the 4 objectives they want to support. |
| **Item 2: The Current Landscape** |
| Data Update - Simon Papworth (SP)  SP is having weekly meetings with Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce and FSB to review local business intelligence. ONS have a delay in producing local data information. LEP/LA teams are providing this where they can. SODA/NODA being utilised (Suffolk/Norfolk Office of Data Analytics). Both organisations being used to co-ordinate data for each authority area. Economic data, not specific to skills information.  Metro Dynamics have also been commissioned to provide a data evidence base and act as critical friends.  New Anglia LEP is working with partners to produce a range of core data releases, typically released annually but we cannot underestimate the challenge. Furloughing is masking the redundancies and we may need to change our questions, delivery and needs of businesses, e.g. how will increased home working impact on town centres and skill sets?  Questions were asked about the speed of response and the volume of surveys. SP explained that intelligence is being gathered by a wide number of sources including local sector groups and is being analysed by the LEP team. This will then be fed into a plan which is coming to the next LEP Board with a section specifically on Skills. We have been also trying to coordinate surveys but this is not always possible.  DWP Update – Julia Nix (JN)  (Please note - these figures have been clarified with JN post SAP meeting and subsequently updated)  3.12M employed in East England which covers Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. This equates to 78.2% against a national picture of 76.6% which is up 5.2% from 2010.  Unemployment levels are 3.5% against a national 4% figure. Great Yarmouth has not had the upturn as expected, compared to places like Bury St. Edmunds.  In one day, JCP had 2.2M calls into Job centres! Customers asked to journal requests through website. Teams responding well with 95% of first payments made.  10k staff deployed into UC from other DWP areas. Staff working from home, where possible, social distancing applies with challenges for those in the offices. They are seeking to support the most vulnerable groups.  Also have responsibility to support their main employers, e.g. the NHS in Kings Lynn and Two Sisters in Thetford.  JN was asked about how there could be increased links for the voluntary sector supporting their clients. This is something she is working through on a national basis and she hopes there will be some changes from the end of June.  JN was also thanked by CC and many members on the work of DWP.  **Action: CC to meet with JN about where the local voluntary sector offer is best placed.**  Education Update – Corrienne Peasgood (CP).  FE/Independent providers are open but delivering very little face to face as provision has moved online.  As businesses they are struggling financially and are protecting their staff wellbeing. They are also reviewing requirements of the current and prospective cohort.   * Apprenticeships - many are furloughed or have been made redundant. Concerns about whether they will return to the workplace/study. There is lots are delivery online, End Point Assessments (EPAs) are not in place for many meaning that students are unable to complete and others have been modified. * Depending on the course, some students are being given a calculated grade based on assessments. Many will not have completed all modules but may be having a professional discussion to prove competence. Those courses with a licence to practice are also causing challenges. * Completing students will be moving into a very crowded jobs market so progression options are being explored and also potential offers for those who have lost their apprenticeship place. * The mental health of vulnerable students returning to learning after 6 months also needs supporting in September.   A question was raised about physical capacity on courses. Both CP and VG were quick to allay fears but did acknowledge that it will be alogistical challenge that they are having to work through as they will not want to turn students away.  CC informed members that KPMG are now offering unlimited internships online so employers are responding - <https://www.insidesherpa.com/virtual-internships/theme/m7W4GMqeT3bh9Nb2c/KPMG-Data-Analytics-Virtual-Internship> |
| **Item 3: Workshop – reviewing the SAP potential investment fund projects** |
| **Equipping Young People for Success – led by Karin Porter**  **Priority - Equipping young people with the confidence and work-ready skills**  Karin explained that for young people it is a scary place at the moment and they will be disproportionally hit. The working group considered activities to increase their social and cultural capital on an individual basis, some will be vocational skills, others personal skills. Included will be essential life skills such as the Creative Computing Club.  KP encouraged the members to think bolder and learn the lessons/positives from lockdown. BM backed up the discussions stating that participation in activities allows young people to learn what they like/don’t like.  **Priority - Careers Inspiration & Improving CEIAG, Employer involvement & economy info**  KP explained that the thrust of the priority is for senior leaders to engage in the EAN network and to review the impact the EAN is currently having and whether Gatsby benchmark still of equal relevant in C-19 world.  GT stated that there are examples of virtual activities e.g. Morgan Sindell have been carrying out virtual work experience. The CEC are also currently in discussion with Gatsby Foundation regarding a review.  There was agreement that online support from employers is more viable at this current time and we need to bring Ofsted and awarding boards with us on this ethos. We also need to equip young people with the tools and equipment to find their way forward into their career.  BM stated that there is flexibility developing around virtual apprenticeship activities but no flexibility seen as yet on T-Levels. TC encouraged us to keep feeding comments into the ESFA as they will be fed up to ministers. She also stated that Ofsted recognise that things need looking at differently.  DB also suggested that if there are any construction related concerns then she can feed into the IfA Construction Route Panel and other IfA employer forums. Sometimes an employer/business voice is heard a little louder!  **Objective – Agile and responsive training led by Natasha Waller**  **Priority – Training Providers response to the sector skills plans**  **Priority – Tutor shortages in key sectors**  NW stated that we want to develop a checklist and summary for what is important in the area. It will summarise the recommendations from SSPs and available for us as SAP members and local stakeholders to help steer the curriculum and skills priorities.  Secondly, we will be looking at tutor shortages and develop a joined up campaign for lecturers for Norfolk and Suffolk, with some focus on our key sectors.  There was discussion aroundthe challenges of low lecturer pay, the role that industry should make in supporting colleges possibly through seconding the older end of the workforce age spectrum or a rite of passage in personal development (supervisor/trainer role as per EDF) and the use of technology to deliver subject specialists from the workplaces - such as immersive classrooms.  **Objective - Driving Skills Progression led by Michael Gray**  **Priority - Sector approaches to encourage in work progression**  **Priority - Clear pathways to enter /progress in/between key sectors**  **MG** reminded members that this objective is about ensuring everyone in the workforce can develop new skills, creating the high productivity levels that we need, thus reducing reliance on the benefits system. We are in a rapidly changing economy with higher growth in tech skills, needing a workforce that is flexible and adaptable. The February meeting discussed developing a higher level Skills Support for the Workforce programme, widening and growing the remit of the programme to include L3 and above. There would also be a communications campaign to raise the profile of workplace training.  We also need to raise the understanding of transferable skill sets and address the barriers in uptake of L3/L4 courses. This is particularly important to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 when employers may be less likely to focus on skills.  There was discussion around the exacerbation of issues if training is put back, the access to IT to develop CVs and the options to develop case studies to promote good practice.  **Objective - Tackling Barriers to Employment led by Claire Cullens**  **Priority - Pathways into employment for the economically inactive**  **Priority – Basic skills**  CC explained that it is important to create pathways for the economically inactive plus a big issue is around midlife career options - the50+ workforce. There should be more engagement with employers and encourage them to consider mid-lifers. Previous history has shown that this age group can be adversely impacted rather than capturing their experience and knowledge.  With the basic skills project, we need to understand why there is still a problem and develop a communications programme around it. We will also need employers and their supply chain/communities to understand the benefits of improving basic skills in English, Maths and IT.  Discussions took place around this linking to other objectives, having contextualised learning, the scale of supply chains, scaling down of businesses and people leaving the workplace due to ill health.  CC reminded members to align with one of the objectives and informed them that there will be meetings with the new Champions so that we can develop the projects further. |
| **Item 4: AOB** |
| No AOB.  Next meeting scheduled for July 24th. Details to follow. |