



## **Essex LSIP Board Meeting**

**2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024 at 2pm**

**via Teams**

### **Attendees**

Joanne Giles – Essex Chambers of Commerce  
Lisa Collins – Essex Chambers of Commerce  
Julien Sample – Harlow College  
Sarah Hamilton – Chelmsford College  
Claire Wright – Rose Builders  
Dave Cope – DWP  
Paula Hornett – EPN  
Kate Kozlova-Boran – Thurrock Council  
Cllr Tony Ball – Essex County Council  
Hyla Grimwade – Greater Essex Careers Hub  
Ann Scott – FSB  
Louise Aitken – Essex County Council  
Denise Brown – South Essex College of Further & Higher Education  
Elaine Oddie – NSO Associates LLP  
Kirstie Cochrane – University of Essex

### **2) Welcome – JG**

- JG welcomes all Board members to the meeting and introduces Dr Kirstie Cochrane who is the Deputy Director of Enterprise Research and Enterprise Office at the University of Essex. If all Board members approve, Kirstie will join as a Board member – approved by Board members.

### **Apologies - JG**

Denise Rossiter – Essex Chambers of Commerce  
Tom Broome – Constellation Marketing  
Alex Brennan – Essex & Suffolk Water  
Marcella MRaberty – London Stansted Airport  
Karen Spencer – Harlow college – Julien Sample attended in place.  
David Warnes – Chelmsford College – Sarah Hamilton attended in place.  
Nick Brown – Southend City Council  
Karris Rowbotham – DP World  
Janis Gibson – CAVS  
Justine Addison – Ground Control



### 3) Minutes of previous meeting 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 – JG

- Approved by Board.

### 4) Actions arising from previous meeting – JG

- N/A

### 5) LSIP Stage 2 progress update – JG

- We have been incredibly busy over the last 3/4 months with the work that's taking place in the LSIP, and I'd like to extend a thank you to Lousie Aitken who has worked tirelessly at producing the progress report for the LSIP that was due to be published on the 30<sup>th</sup> June. We received notification that the publication was not allowed to go live until after the General Election. The report is ready, but we are waiting for the DfE to allow us to publish the report. Please take a look at the report once published and let us know any feedback you may have. We are really pleased with the report and the response from the DfE as there was only one point of accuracy that they wanted us to change. They are really pleased with the progress we are making in the county.
- We have just submitted the auditors letter relating to year end.
- We have updated Annex C which is the data annex. You can find it on the LSIP page on our website. Annex C carries all the data based on all of our districts, and we have committed to updating the data twice per year. This is the second update we have published.
- Andy and I have continued to provide support around the county to our college colleagues. We have had a considerable amount of Ofsted inspections which have taken place over the last couple of months. With the inspections, the LSIP is one of the focal areas that will be looked at and we are invited to participate with the inspections.
- We have completed CPD with the colleges and would like to continue to do so. We have received feedback that it's been really useful and made them think about how they need to adapt and change their curriculum. If this is something you would like to continue with us, please let us know and invite us to any events that might be taking place in your colleges.
- The Employer Survey is now complete with the results below from 355 respondents:
  - Are you struggling to recruit skilled staff – 37% said yes
  - Is your business struggling from a skills shortage – 21% said yes
  - 24% said the current qualifications did not meet their needs
  - 65% did not offer apprenticeships to school leavers
  - 79% said they did not train their current workforce using apprenticeship funding
  - 48% said they do not offer WEX
  - 60% said they could offer WEX
  - 60% said WEX would add value to their organisation
  - 18% said they need more information on carbon efficiency
  - 17% said they need more information on how to be cyber prepared
- One of the points we had committed to was that we would complete sector insights which were called deep dives originally. Sector insights are in draft format, and we will circulate these. The granularity of detail through the lens of that sector will be what is published in the sector pages. We have taken the pages out to employers and the feedback has been



positive. The idea being that these pages will always remain live, and we will update them with useful information, so they end up being a rich source of information, advice and guidance for those that wish to seek it in those sectors. We have three that are already available but not published. The plan is we will have them all completed by the end of summer, and they will be published on the website.

- The sub sector working group were a really important part of the work we need to do in the county and will allow us to move the dial on some of the priorities.
- Sub sector working group update:
  - Construction – in place
  - Health Care and Med Tech – in place
  - Advanced Manufacturing, Engineering – meetings set up and taking place
  - Transport and Logistics – meetings set up and taking place
  - Education – utilising FEDEC, EPN and Greater Essex Careers Hub
  - SEND – We have implemented an additional sector group to cover SEND 'Inclusive Stakeholder Alliance@
  - Community and Voluntary – in place and meeting
  - Digitech – utilising Microsoft and GMFFJ digital working group
  - Creative and Cultural – meetings in place and set to commence in September
  - Professional Services – meetings for October to commence
- We have a good representation from employers around the county. These aren't fixed groups, and we would like to continue to add new employers as and when we meet them and if they would like to participate and add value to those groups.
- LSIP – what's next
  - Agree key priorities for the next 6 months – following revised action plan
  - Complete and publish the 'Employer Toolkit' – late summer
  - Complete and publish Apprenticeship Toolkit – late summer
  - Finalise and launch data dashboard
  - Published Q & A with employers – Autumn
  - Publish 24-page Skills Supplement – showcasing the provision around the county – Winter – will need FEDEC and EPN to support
  - Essex Connector – Many of the priorities fed back that we have a fragmented system in the county, and we need a unified approach to that system. We are working very closely with Essex County Council who are working to support the development of a product.
- JG shares a video introducing the Essex Connector. The work that is taking place to develop the portal is with key stakeholders around the county. Essex County Council are leading on the piece of work and working closely with the districts, Essex Careers Hub, EPN and FEDEC have been invited to participate. We are involving key stakeholder employers around the county to be potential early adopters of that. Once the scoping of the product is complete, Essex County Council will go through a procurement process to see if there is anything like what we have been developing around the county in any way.

### Questions

- What are Labours plans if they get into power in relation to LSIP? Have they declared they will keep this process? *We haven't had a direct conversation with the DfE following on from the General Election, but what we know when we read the manifesto and from conversations with Shadow Ministers is that skills are a priority.*



## 6) Local Authority Update

- **Essex County Council – Cllr Ball**

- It's great to see the work that's underway in the progress report and we continue to align our work with the LSIP.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> edition of our all-age Careers magazine is now out.
- We have launched the Green Skills Hub.
- We are working with Chelmsford College on a Green Careers event to be held in November during Green Careers week.
- Work has been continuing to establish a Greater Essex Business Board, post LEP.
- The Essex Connector event that was at the County Hotel was fantastic, there was a real buzz around it. If we get this right, it could be a gamechanger for Essex.

- **Thurrock Council – KKB**

- Our evaluation of our OnTrack has come through. This was an ESF funded project, we had OnTrack 1 from 2014 – 2019 and the OnTrack 2 has just finished December 2023 and latest 3 years. They can only value OnTrack 2, which has been calculated at 19.62 million.
- We are progressing with our all-age Careers Service. We use the UK SPF to fund careers advice and to provide an all age offer to our residents. We completed our yearly target from April 24 to March 25. It shows how needed this service is and we have to make sure that we put everything possible in place to sustain this service after April 25 when we do not know what UK SPF will look like.
- We are working closely with all of our stakeholders on the implementation plan of our skills strategy and a lot of colleagues help and assist us. Thank you for everything you do for Thurrock.
- Our focus is on apprenticeships. All age apprenticeships, 0.88 of residents nationally are in apprenticeship positions. We are trying to increase the Thurrock figure which is 0.83 to the national figure.
- We have launched our apprenticeship hub on the Thurrock Opportunities website.
- We've had a couple of Ofsted Inspections. The results will be published on the website in a few weeks.
- Thurrock Adult Community College are holding a Careers Fair on 10<sup>th</sup> September. If anyone would like to join us, please let me know.
- We are working on Green Skills and using some of our UK SPF for promoting Green Skills and upskilling careers advisers and careers coordinators in schools on green careers.

### Questions

The Thurrock Opportunities pages had limited funds to continue, is this still the case or has that changed?

*It's still the case and we should be able to fund it until April with the SPF. We have posted an offer to employers to fund or partially fund pages on Thurrock Opportunities, but we have not had any take up as yet.*

We need to keep that high on our agenda to see if we can identify any financial opportunities to support the page. We will take this as an action.



## 7) Greater Essex Careers Hub Update – HG

- Some of you may have heard of Gatsby Benchmarks, it's a set of 8 benchmarks that schools need to try to achieve in order to show they have a world class education. From December to a couple of days ago, the schools that are part of the Careers Hub in Essex are progressing 3 times the rate of achieving those benchmarks compared to national. We had a much lower starting rate but none the less we are catching up which is fantastic. All credit to the employers and the schools that are involved with that.
- As part of the different sub sector groups that are part of the LSIP, one of the sub sector groups will be our Cornerstone Employer Group. This is to bring employers together to look at careers education and make sure that it's meaningful for all involved. Over the summer we will be approaching those employers to invite them to be a part of that group. If you have any ideas, let me know. We are looking for employers that are walking the walk, rather than talking the talk. This will be our priority for the best part of this year.
- We will be supporting the LSIP survey data and contacting employers to support around apprenticeships and to provide signposting, in term of local apprenticeships providers and how they might be able to use that in their business. The other side of it is the work experience, one of our team will be contacting the employers that have said they do or want to offer it to discuss next steps with them and to see if there are any challenges or barriers to that and how we can support them.
- On apprenticeships, we are collaborating with some of the work that Paula is doing at EPN to promote local training and education offers and try to simplify the process for employers.
- In terms of T Levels, we are currently asking our schools who are and who are planning to offer T Levels to see what the growth is going to look like and to see if it is matching up with the key sectors and different areas that we know through the LSIP that we need it and also to facilitate conversations to support industry placements that are essential within the T Levels.
- We know from our training providers that they cannot cope with the demand from schools in terms of some of the requirements around legislation in terms of apprenticeships and technical education. We have launched on our website a set of videos to help schools and promote different apprenticeship opportunities with the providers locally.
- Great to hear about Annex C being updated. We use that to promote the data package out to schools and colleges.

## 8) FEDEC Update

- **Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) update – JS**
  - The LSIF projects split into Capital and Revenue, Revenue ended as of March 31<sup>st</sup>, we are now into year 2 which is just Capital. The bureaucracy in administrative processes we have to go through with DfE have been difficult and haven't got any better since the last update. We have only just closed off Year 1 financial claims.
  - Performance from a Revenue perspective, we have met the majority of the KPI's, not all of them. We were 10% under on the expected enrolment on Level 3 courses, but we were 20% above on Level 4 enrolments across the partnership. We are pleased with the total number of people we have put through training.
  - One area we put into the SDF is the idea of trying to support college and training providers because of the lack of tutors, teaching across campuses. We haven't made the progress we wanted under the LSIP, but we hope this will continue under the IOT.





The colleges have the technology, but I think it's more complicated than having the equipment to do it.

- Revenue prospective closed off now, we are moving into Year 2, Capital only. Everything is going well with that, and we are on track for people to have their capital projects to be finished earlier than March 31<sup>st</sup>. Hopefully by the end of this calendar year, we will be looking at colleges having some nice equipment and facilities to carry out the training employers are needing.
- Because we don't have the revenue funding now, the colleges have done some great work with employers in creating courses and it's been good that we've had the DfE LSIF money to fund those courses for free. We have the DfE funding ending, we have the Essex County Council match funding but that will end shortly, so we will be in a situation where we have created courses and we now are going to be saying to employers, because they're bespoke, employers will need to pay for the training. We're not sure how that will work.
- The Essex County Council match funding is an extension of the LSIF work, it has been seamless and the DfE liaison and communication has been continuing.
- The Essex LSIF match funding, the main part I'm pleased with are Colchester Institute and Harlow College have projects on industrial updating. We have some really impressive numbers on staff that have been able to get CPD done, really trying to make sure they have the up to date skills.
- New City College, Colchester and ourselves have been collaborating to get people together which fits in with the industry updating, trying to get providers to share what they are doing to support each other.

### Questions

The fact that you anticipate you will have courses that will need commercial support to continue, what does that look like, and do you have a list of them, could you circulate that list? This could add value, particularly when we are going towards the potential for Devolution, post the General Election. The more information we can bring together, the more we are able to shape the parameters around what devolved adult skills look like.

The tutor part you spoke about, that we don't have enough tutors and we can't get the from industry because we can't afford them came out loud and clear at an earlier meeting as being one of the biggest challenges and that's a significant cost. We gave an action to that group this morning to find out what that looks like against per head count. If we know what that looks like it gives us more opportunity to have those conversations with the LA's, Thames Freeport or LTC to be able to match fund some of these things.

*I can gather more information, what we don't know at the moment is individual colleges and training providers plans on how they might deliver that in the future. It might be there may be something that can be delivered under the LTC Skills Accelerator Fund. It could be helpful for the bootcamps too.*

*Through the LSIF we gave partners a small amount of money to support recruitment, everyone used that on supporting the fees they had to pay to recruitment agencies for members of staff. It's amazing when you look at the cost of colleges and training providers are putting in to try and recruit people.*

The time given for each pot of LSIF just doesn't feel long enough. We were given it just before Christmas and it ended in March. You just get going and then it stops. We



have built relationships with a couple of companies locally that we have done training for, they want more training but now we haven't got any money to do it with them. We have to ask them to pay commercially and to see if we can get it out of A SF which doesn't always work as they don't always want accredited learning.

This year was the first year that as part of the AB Budget you got the Innovation Fund which was a percentage of your AB. This can be used to innovate within your college when looking at curriculum development, so this can be used to support engagement with employers, but it doesn't allow you to spend that money on training.

Any information you are able to provide, send to JG and she can take it to British Chambers and we can feedback to the DfE within the LSIP progression.

We are going to be producing some data at the end of the academic year which will show every piece of learning that took place in the county for Essex residents. It will showcase who the provider was. It won't show occupance, just enrolments within the academic year. It will also show conductive learning outside the county and what they learnt and also learners that are from outside the county but learn inside the county within our provision. Within this we will see trends around what is coming into the county, what national providers are providing. I hope this will tell us what adult skills we don't have. This will allow us to influence conversations with Essex County Council.

- **ECC / Match Funding Update – LA**

- We really helped the revenue part of the LSIF funding to continue a little bit longer. We were pleased to be able to support that as it aligns so well with what we want to do.
- Devolution would enable a longer term approach and it's what's needed to be able to take the longer term view.
- We are working on a proposal for skills bootcamps. We have been discussing with colleagues around the table to look at what the need is and to make sure we are aligning to the LSIP and the LSIF.
- Following on from the conversation around the lack of funding and employers needing to contribute, it will be interesting to see how many employers are willing to do that. The default position shouldn't necessary be that we will fund these things.

### **Questions**

The large companies that are promoting the larger infrastructure projects are keen to have a physical hub to label their community spirit towards. This is frustrating, in terms of the need for particular courses that are already developed, there needs to be more virtual hubs rather than physical space.

There was an employer grant fund that ended in March for industry placements. We found it difficult to get rid of that money to employers. It was offering money to take a young person into their workplace and paying for laptop or uniform, but due to it being a small amount of money it's not worth the time and effort, however if it's a larger amount of money, then they listen. There's another pot of funding around green skills, it's a pot of funding that's there regularly, 4 times a year. This was described by a consultant we are using to support that is that you can offer an employer £500, the training costs £700 therefore the employers only have to pay



£200, then they are prepared to listen. It's about the ratio of money that's being offered.

It is difficult to keep up with the email flow, so we need to look at how we get things out there.

- **FEDEC Response to LSIP Update – SH**

- FEDEC members have been involved with the FEDEC Professional Development Conference that took place at our college a week ago where teachers across our patch came together for a taking teaching excellence further event. This was well received and was a collaborative piece that happened through funding from LSIF.
- There was a Green Skills Expo Event which a couple of colleges were involved with. It was a B2B event with many presenters, of which Colchester Institute, Chelmsford College, ARU and Writtle presented at all around the journey to sustainability and net zero. David presented about our AOC Roadmap, which is a 3 year journey, other FEDEC colleges are involved with sustainability. This was another well received event. There needs to be more support for our businesses around the sustainability piece.

- **IOT Update – DB**

- The biggest thing that's happening at the moment with the South East IOT is working collaboratively to form a network of IOT's to bid into the Freeport skills Innovation Fund, in terms of leveraging the facilities that have already been heavily invested in and encouraging large employers like the Freeport not to build there own skills hub as there is plenty around. The 3 IOT's which involves colleges from across Essex forming a network to bid for a pot of funds from the Freeport that concentrates on Level 4,5 and 6 Hydrogen Power, which feeds into the sustainable energy piece and to write courses in Hydrogen Engineering and to start of by offering Hydrogen Safety qualifications to all Level 3 engineering students in and around Essex so that we start to get a pipeline of engineers coming through that are hydrogen aware and to expand Level 3 engineering and then build Hydrogen qualifications for Level 4,5 and 6. It is an aspiration of the Freeport that hydrogen as a power source starts to drive it's operations. There are few hydrogen engineers around, we have to draft them in from other parts of Europe if any work needs to be done. The idea is we start to create a training market, with an eye to the skills needed of the future and then to offer lots of short courses around hydrogen. The bid deadline is Friday 5<sup>th</sup> July, we will let people know the outcome.

## 9) EPN Update – PH

- In terms of building the skills ladder, we must have in the back of our mind it takes funding from independent training providers. Any lobbying we can do to receive any funding will be gratefully received.
- I'm grateful that FEDEC chose to include independent training providers in the bid. There were 3 that took part in the programme, and we hit most of our KPI's. We've spoken about the cost of bringing a tutor on board, it's £5k at the least which is a huge amount of money when you are a small independent training provider.





- We are in the process of finalising the generic provision prospectus. That will help support the work the Careers Hub are doing but also form part of the basis of the connector programme too.
- We are working alongside the LA, in terms of Essex, working with Louise closely on Bootcamps and Dave in terms of his ideas from a DWP prospective.
- We are at the cusp of developing a bootcamp for childminders. In particular areas such as Tendering, there is a great need for childcare provision.

#### 10) AOB

N/A

#### Future meetings

- Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2.00pm – 3.30pm