

DORSET SKILLS BOARD – MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY 14TH OCTOBER – 14:00 – 16:00 - VIRTUAL MEETING HELD ON TEAMS
Attendees:

Nicola Newman, Chair (NN)
 Jon Bird, Dorset Council (JB)
 Joanna Gale, Seetec Plus (JG)
 Lesley Haig, AECC (LH)
 Hugh Joseph, Engineering Sector (HJ)
 David Matthews, Upton Beach (DM)
 Eleanor Parson, NHS Dorset (EP)
 Phil Sayles, Bournemouth and Poole College (PSa)
 Philip Sewell, Bournemouth University (PSe)
 Lesley Spain, Head of Skills and Learning, BCP Council (LS)
 Penny Syddall, Dorset Council (PSy)
 Ian Gardener, DWP (IG) for Karen Taylor
 Amy Walton, BCP Council (AW)
 Kate Wills, Weymouth & Kingston Maurwood College (KW)
 Rebecca Davies, Dorset LEP (RD(LEP))
 Clare Fleming, Dorset LEP (CF)

Apologies:

Rod Davis, DSTPN
 Helen Stevenson, Dorset LEP
 Adrian Gunner, SWRAC

Item	Notes and Decisions	Action
1.	<p>Welcome from the Chair.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No declarations of interest were received. • Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed 	
2.	<p>Skills England update</p> <p>NN outlined the published report and noted that Skills England is currently recruiting a Chair and Board. It is intended to be a pan-government body. She welcomed responses from the Board.</p> <p>PSa: A good report which looks at evidence and existing documents - a statement of intent for some thoughtful policy. We need to see how it translates into real things and real funding.</p> <p>LH: Need to see it creating solutions for local problems, especially clear and supported pathways.</p> <p>IG: Noted it does not include much detail about adult and child care, which is key to people for utilising skills they develop.</p>	
3.	<p>Resilient Skills workforce</p> <p>The Board discussed whether there is something collective that can be done to support recruitment, particularly in the HE / FE space, but also health and social care, and other challenged sectors.</p> <p>Ideas contributed included introductory training, targeted advertising, careers weeks, joint campaigns, onboarding, placements, connecting with programmes</p>	

	<p>such as Veterans into Teaching and Troops for Teachers (Brighton), information about working in Dorset, working with the post graduate community, experience events, focussing on breaking down barriers to work, and 'step into' days with the NCS. The discussion also noted the need to look at where vacancies are looked for / found and the recruitment process.</p> <p>EP noted experience events they are working on with BU and HSU and the new Join Our Dorset site</p> <p>LH noted the benefit of appealing to potential recruits from 'the great retirement' such as a flexible and collaborative agency model to create a bank of tutors.</p> <p>SWAPs, 50+ (both come under IG for Dorset) and Skills Bootcamps could also contribute.</p> <p>National Careers Service is proactive in working with companies who are losing staff and matching them to other organisations.</p> <p>DM noted the importance of understanding the attitudes of potential educators – and them understanding what it's really like to be an educator.</p> <p>AW / LH noted the challenges of bringing recruitment agencies together to provide 'value added'.</p> <p>It was agreed there were opportunities to work together and the Board is well placed to drive this.</p>	<p>RD(LEP) / EP to follow up with NCS re. health and social care jobs</p> <p>NN to take ideas forward with the Dorset Skills strategic communications group</p>
4.	<p>LMI September 2024</p> <p>RD(LEP) outlined the most recent Labour Market Insights produced by the LEP.</p> <p>Welcomed input into why we are seeing challenges due to short and long term ill health. There was a discussion about 'fit notes' (AW noted their pilot on Work Coaches in GP Surgeries), about recruitment and working with employers to understand what they really need to know about applicants and the importance of understanding barriers to applying for and entering work.</p> <p>RD(LEP) is hosting an event at the Digital Skills Hub Boscombe on 5th November for providers about the LMI. All welcome.</p> <p>IG noted the possible impact on lower vacancies from employers waiting for more information about the changes in employment rights, the budget and new government strategies.</p> <p>EP asked if it would be possible to see data alongside the salaries of the real cost of living in Dorset. EP would also like to connect with RD(LEP) about how to articulate the 'rightsizing' of the NHS workforce.</p> <p>PSa reminded the group that whenever there is a discussion about bringing people into Dorset – we must remember people who are already here and those working below their skill level and how to support them.</p>	<p>RD(LEP) / EP to follow up</p>

6.	<p>Skills Opportunities in Dorset</p> <p>PSa outlined the presentation from Portland Port to the LEP Board about the current activities of the port and the significant national infrastructure projects that are in the pipeline.</p> <p>KW noted the need for collective agreement about the specialist skills needed – it's important to keep this as a local piece.</p> <p>IG recognised the importance of understanding the length of time different skills are needed, and focussing on the longer term opportunities. Also noted that EDF helped fund a construction college at Bridgwater College as part of Hinkley C planning and the work that was done with younger students to get a pipeline of skilled workers.</p> <p>JB referenced the Economic Growth Strategy document DC are starting work on. Also recognised that these are skilled jobs, paying salaries that make it possible to live in Dorset.</p> <p>PSa recognised that we need to think about the bigger national infrastructure priorities and projects and anticipate the impact if some of these come to Dorset.</p> <p>RD(LEP) noted that the first project could launch at the end of 2026 – there will be a construction phase and an operational phase. Agreed that the skills needed support national and Great South West priorities.</p>	
7.	<p>LSIP Actions update Nicola Newman</p> <p>NN has shared an early draft of the LSIP Report. NN requested each organisation delegate a member to feedback by 8th November. The report is due for submission on 22nd November.</p>	ALL to feedback
5.	<p>2025 / 2026 Nicola Newman</p> <p>The Skills Board is a LEP Board sub committee. With the expected changes to the LEP after March, NN would like to continue to convene and chair the DSB either until the end of June next year or until a new plan for delivery of LEP functions is agreed.</p>	
8.	<p>Brief Partner updates</p> <p>PSy: Reported on a successful Coding Day and looking ahead to events focussed on STEM. Noted that DSIT will be producing a plan before Xmas around digital skills – focussed on 4 pillars of Access, Skills, Confidence and Digital Inclusion.</p> <p>KW: Current focus is on estate development and forward actions on their curriculum and commercial activity.</p> <p>LH: HSU has won a Wave 3 apprenticeships bid for Level 6 apprenticeships and are about to submit an enhanced clinical practice bid.</p> <p>PSe: BU also successful in Wave 3 funding for 5 new Level 6 apprenticeships focussing on skills needed in Dorset. Currently undertaking a big piece of work looking at how to support people from disadvantaged backgrounds in understanding apprenticeships.</p>	

	<p>LS: Still expecting to be the conduit for the £3m / year Universal Support programme supporting disabled people into work with funding rolling out from April with a combination of some commissioning and some direct delivery.</p> <p>AW: Is part of the Homelessness Partnership whose core aims include commitments to look at employment. This also links in with the Homewards programme. BCP has also signed up to Making Every Adult Matter. There is lots of working going on around Skill Up. Currently waiting for a new carbon literacy training programme to be accredited.</p> <p>EP: Continuing work on widening access and participation ensuring connections between health and social care. Have had 20 T Levels start (15 in health, 5 in digital). Lots of learnings, particularly around the wraparound support that is needed. Ran a successful Teacher Encounter session in Bournemouth and looking to run one in Dorchester in the New Year. Have also started a programme around Start Small, Dream Big (primary level) (project delivered alongside Teacher Encounters by Dorset Careers Hub) and working with BU and Dorset Careers Hub on work experience opportunities. Working closely with Breaking Barriers Innovation and developing a community of practice across coastal communities. RD(LEP) noted the feasibility project in Portland.</p> <p>JB: UKSPF programme is active as is Skills and Learning and Multiply. Also have a small project with Portland Quarries Trust around traditional skills. Starting to develop DC's new Economic Growth Strategy. Recognises the challenges around demographics, productivity, skills and housing affordability.</p> <p>JG: Confirmed that the extension to the WHP Pioneer programme has not been extended meaning that there is no add on provision to the job centre for those with extra needs.</p> <p>RD(LEP): Thanked everyone for their support during the changing times for the LEP, which continues to deliver strongly until March '25. Currently have a consultation running on a strategic document for Dorset.</p> <p>NN: Provided an update from the Dorset Chamber Business Festival. LSIP's current focus is on data collection, particularly around employer needs and the curriculum groups. Also working on the finer detail of the People festival.</p>	
9.	<p>AOB</p> <p>Link to the Modern Industrial Strategy consultation was shared.</p>	

Next Meeting: 3rd February 14:00 – 16:00 on Teams TBC