



Employment & Skills Board – Draft Minutes

Tuesday 10 October 2023

Venue: Virtual meeting

Time: 10.00 to 12.00

Present:

Board Members:

Vic Annells
Ross Renton
Dan Edwards
Julia Nix
Rachel Hallam
Sarah Worsley
Mark Robertson

CPCA Officers:

Claire Paul
Parminder Singh Garcha
Laura Guymer
Janet Warren
Melissa Gresswell
Alexis McLeod
Jo Morley

Guest Speakers:

Pete Milsom
Nathan Wilkins

Director, Cambridge International Strategy
Principal – ARU Peterborough
General Manager, Marshalls Skills Academy
District Manager - Department for Work & Pensions (DWP/ JCP)
Policy and Insight Manager, Cambridgeshire County Council
Senior HR Officer, Baker Perkins
Principal, Cambridge Regional College

Interim Assistant Director Skills
SRO AEB
Strategic Careers Hub Lead
Commissioner – Adult Education
Project Manager: Skills Bootcamps and Special Projects
Senior Programme Manager
Governance Manager

Partnerships Manager – Apprenticeships, UCAS
Customer Engagement Manager, CITB

Apologies

Dan Thorp
Tony Jones
Martin Lawrence

Minutes:

1 Welcome, Apologies and Introductions

1.1 Melissa Gresswell, CPCA lead officer for the Board, opened the meeting and explained that Al Kingsley, former Chair of the Employment and Skills Board (ESB) had moved to become the Chair of the Business Board. The Terms of Reference for the ESB required the new Chair to be a member of either the Business Board or the Skills and Employment Committee, and as Vic Annells qualified on both accounts, and with his acceptance of the role, he was welcomed as the new Chair of the Board by members.

1.2 In his introduction, the Chair stressed the importance of reinvigorating the Board and making it more relevant than it previously had been. The importance of the connection to both the Business Board and to the Skills and Employment Committee was an area the Chair felt needed to be better understood. He then asked attendees to say a little about their roles, the companies that they represented, and to state what they felt the role of the ESB should be.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- a) Officers were keen to see leadership and input from the sectors the ESB was designed to deliver for.
- b) The Board should be used to both feed ideas in and to feed them out and to avoid duplication in the system.
- c) An industry perspective was vital and there were a few who felt there was currently not enough of it on the Board. There were new members who had applied and were being considered.
- d) The Skills picture was very complex so Members needed to have a clear understanding of what all the services offered were so that they could then signpost properly.
- e) The business voice needed to be brought to the forum.
- f) Since devolution of the AEB there had been a better bridge between education and employment and the current evaluation would hopefully provide the evidence of this so that new programmes could be developed and delivered.
- g) Officers were looking for a more forensic insight into the different sectors and also into the labour market within the CPCA area.
- h) Members wanted the Board to be more ambitious and support employers to develop skills and ambitions plans which providers could then work to meet. All companies should have a skills and talent plan.
- i) The ESB should be supporting work to maximise opportunities for *all* of the CPCA regions.
- j) The Board should work with employers to get their commitment around apprenticeships
- k) Colleges were working to gain a better understanding of what they could do to build the skills employers needed, and to meet the gap in skills provision.
- l) Baker Perkins were welcomed as a new member to the Board. It was felt that they would add an employer voice as it was a big employer of apprentices and had struggled with finding local training provision.
- m) The ESB could help the CPCA to set out its stall for a wider deeper devolution deal, further discussion of this should take place.
- n) The voice of the employer needed to be put alongside that of the educators so that a fuller picture could be presented to the Skills and Employment Committee.
- o) There needed to be a level of granularity to the training needs identified by employers.
- p) It was highlighted by a member that some communities were not getting access to higher skills and it needed to be addressed.

1.3 Apologies were received from Dan Thorp, Tony Jones, and Martin Lawrence.

<p>2</p> <p>2.1</p>	<p>Minutes of the Employment and Skills Board meeting on 16 May 2023 and Action Log</p> <p>It was agreed that the minutes from the last meeting held on 16 May 2023 would be circulated to the Committee for review before being approved at the next meeting of the Board.</p> <p><u>ACTIONS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minutes from the ESB meeting on 16 May to be circulated to Members 2. An Action Log to be developed to track and monitor the actions called for.
<p>3</p> <p>3.1</p>	<p>Work Programme (Forward Agenda Plan)</p> <p>Going forwards, the work programme would be a standing item. Prior to the ESB meetings, members would be given notice of what had been discussed and what was coming up at the Skills and Employment Committee meetings to help them plan a relevant work agenda.</p> <p><u>ACTION:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Officers to include ESB members on the circulation list for Skills and Employment Committee agenda papers where possible.
<p>4</p> <p>4.1</p>	<p>Introduction to Interim Assistant Director of Skills</p> <p>Claire Paul, the new Interim Assistant Director for Skills, introduced herself to the Board and outlined her skills background which included working with employer membership bodies, working with Government on policy, and during her time with the BBC as Director of Leadership and Talent, setting up the BBC Academy and developing the apprenticeship offer, going from six to over a 1000. Her last two years, working as a consultant with City and Guilds, had been spent growing green energy skills to meet Net Zero demands.</p> <p>On Claire's agenda was pushing the CPCA's skills offer to be 'best in class' and to develop a more strategic focus to understand what the big bets were that needed to be played.</p> <p>Claire was welcomed by members.</p>
<p>5</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p>	<p>DWP – Unemployment Data and Trends</p> <p>Board members received a presentation on unemployment data and trends from Julia Nix, District Manager - Department for Work & Pensions (DWP/ JCP). The presentation has been published on the webpage and can be found here: Employment & Skills Board</p> <p>The following points were raised in discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Employment rates continued to be strong with the area lying second in the UK, behind the South-East. b) Of the 69,000 economically inactive, 62,000 did not want to work and were not claiming. c) Getting more of those who were economically inactive back into work was needed for economic growth and also because it could be statistically shown that work was healthy for us. d) Because of shortages in the labour force, employers were having to think more about diversity which had contributed to the rise in the disability employment figures.
<p>6</p> <p>6.1</p>	<p>UK SPF – Skills Projects and Succession Planning for Skills Brokerage Service</p> <p>Members received an update on the UK – SPF – Skills Project and Succession Planning for Skills Brokerage service. The presentation has been published on the website and can be found here: Employment & Skills Board</p>

6.2	<p>The following points were raised in discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) There were not many unskilled roles so bootcamps and college courses were needed to get young people to a level of education with their English and Maths so that they could then be offered apprenticeship roles. b) There needed to be one shop-front event that highlighted the resources on offer. <p><u>ACTIONS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Claire Paul, Assistant Director for Skills and Nathan Wilkins from the CITB to organise a meeting to further discuss the role of apprenticeships.
7	<p>Further Education Cold-Spots</p> <p>7.1 Parminder Singh Garcha gave members a verbal update on the FE Cold-spots project in East Cambridgeshire and St Neots explaining that the first step was to use some funding to commission a feasibility study looking at whether there was the need and demand for provision. This would consider future skills needs and local employer requirements.</p> <p><u>ACTION:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Education Cold Spots report that went to the September meeting of the Skills and Employment Committee to be circulated to Members.
8	<p>The Role of the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), Business Engagement and Local Skills Information in the Construction Sector</p> <p>8.1 Nathan Wilkins, Customer Engagement Manager, gave a presentation on the role of the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB). The slides can be found here: Employment & Skills Board</p> <p>8.2 The following points were raised in discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The grants available to employers meant that the cost of taking on an apprentice was actually very small. b) All of the Colleges' apprenticeship employers should be claiming the CITB grants available to them. c) CITB advisors would work with employers to develop a skills strategy and work out what the most appropriate way was to address skills needs. d) There was new entrant support to help businesses claim financial support and manage the apprenticeship role. e) The CITB was a training provider as well as a membership organisation with three training colleges in Kent, Norfolk and Scotland. f) The CITB hoped to work with ARU Peterborough as part of phase 2 of the university and their new engineering facility. g) Marshalls Skills Academy was working on a housing and business park project that would need 300 apprenticeships over the next 35 years to fulfil the project. They were working with the CITB and ARU Peterborough to build something special for Cambridgeshire. h) There had been a massive increase in construction sector enrolments from the CA's devolved funding; from 100 in 2019/20 to 1,100 in 2022/23 with bootcamps being offered in L2 Civil Engineering and Groundworks.
9	<p>Report from Careers Hub Steering Group</p> <p>9.1 Laura Guymer, Strategic Careers Hub Lead, gave an update on the Careers Hub. The presentation can be found here: Employment & Skills Board .</p> <p>9.2 During discussion, the following points were noted:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Careers hub worked with 76 educational establishments in the region. b) All contractual KPI targets, except three, had been hit and strides had been made to improve on these three outstanding targets. c) ARU Peterborough was planning to launch a Civil engineering degree course for 2024/25 which had had lots of interest from employers. d) The Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) monies (which followed on from the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)) were not channelled through the CPCA but went directly to the colleges. They now had the funding to deliver on the planned courses in construction and retrofit skills. e) The National Skills Academy for Construction (NSAFC) offer, which had been developed by the CITB, supported local authorities to set industry agreed skills targets on developments in the area through their procurement and planning consent channels.
10.	UCAS Update
10.1	<p>Pete Milsom, Partnerships Manager gave a presentation to Members on UCAS Apprenticeships. (Employment & Skills Board)</p> <p>The following points were raised in discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) UCAS was making a big move away from just universities to discovering other pathways, particularly apprenticeships. b) Industry guides had been developed, aimed at 13-14 year olds which was not UCAS's natural audience c) The industry guides provided information on the labour market and average salaries as well as testimonials from apprentices and managers. d) There was a journey to parity with university courses as UCAS wanted to offer to prospective apprentices everything they offered to a prospective undergraduate. From 2024 students searching on the UCAS Hub would be able to see relevant apprentice opportunities right next to equivalent undergraduate options. e) In Autumn 2023 employers would be able to use the data UCAS held about students to target potential apprentices that would meet their specific requirements thus widening their recruitment pools. <p>The Chair apologised to Pete as the meeting over ran and his presentation was cut a little short. It was requested that he come again to a future meeting as his input was welcomed and considered very useful.</p>
11.	Any Other Business
	<p>Ross Renton. Principal of ARU Peterborough promoted an event being held at the university on Thursday 9 November which was designed to support individuals, businesses and employers in today's ever-changing workplace. Details for the event can be found here: Go further with ARU Peterborough - ARU</p>
13	Date of Next Meeting
13.1	The date of the next meeting is 12 December 2023