

Skills for Londoners Board

MINUTES

**Meeting Skills for Londoners
Construction Sub-Group**

Date Monday 24 June 2019

Time 2.00pm

**Place Committee Room 3, City Hall,
The Queen's Walk, London SE1
2AA.**

Agendas and minutes of the meetings of this Group are published at www.London.gov.uk/Skills-for-Londoners (except in those cases where information may be exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act).

Meetings are not held in public and are only open to those invited to attend by the Chair.

Members present:

Cllr Peter John (Chair)
Bunmi Atta
Shenaaz Chenia
Mark Farmer
Paul Gallagher
Sarah Garry
Brian McKeown
Tom McLoughlin
Jessica Mellor-Clark
Martyn Price
Caroline Roberts

GLA Skills & Employment officers in attendance:

Matthew Bracewell, Senior Project Officer
Laura Dubeck, Senior Manager –
Programme Delivery
Rachel Greenwood, Senior Project Officer
(Clerk)
Julia Harrowsmith, Senior Manager –
Strategy, Policy & Relationships
Michael Heanue, Principal Policy Officer
Beth Penwarden, Principal Policy Officer
Rachel Roberts, MCA Programme
Manager

1 Introductions and apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the Group and led a round of introductions.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence were received from Andy Carson, Steve Drury, Yvonne Kelly, Seamus Keogh, Janette Welton-Pai and Jenny Herdman, for whom John Slaughter attended in her absence.

2 Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3 Terms of reference

- 3.1 The Group received a report setting out its membership and chairing arrangements, which were agreed by its parent body the Skills for Londoners Board on 10 April 2019.
- 3.2 A request was made for infrastructure to be added to the Group's remit, as the challenges it was set up to address were wider than just housebuilding. Officers noted that the Group's work would encompass infrastructure and agreed to look at updating the terms of reference to formalise this.

3.3 RESOLVED:

The Skills for Londoners Construction Sub-group:

- (a) **Noted its terms of reference, as set out at Appendix A to the report; and**
- (b) **Noted that Cllr Peter John had been appointed as Chair of the Sub-Group.**

4 Overview of the Mayor's Construction Skills priorities and Mayor's Construction Academy (MCA) Programme

- 4.1 The Group received a report and presentation providing an overview of the Mayor's Construction Academy (MCA) programme, including progress to date and next steps.
- 4.2 During the subsequent discussion, the Group discussed a range of challenges for the construction sector, and how they may be able to provide support to the Mayor's programme as a Group. The key areas of discussion are set out below:
 - 4.2.1 Career progression and sustained employment was discussed in detail, with members noting that retention was a particular issue in the construction industry. There was also a challenge around attracting more apprentices and career progression after the course is completed;
 - 4.2.2 The need to increase the supply of skilled labour was discussed, with members suggesting that an aggregated view of demand for labour in the

construction industry across London would be useful. Development of the demand tracker (as recommended by the predecessor to this group) may go some way to addressing this and would provide an important coordinating role in identifying where the skills shortages were;

- 4.2.3 Challenges around procurement were discussed, with members commenting that a shift towards procuring against factors other than cost alone would be beneficial. A move towards outcome-led procurement with an emphasis on social value would go some way to addressing some of the issues employers face in investing in staff, training and progression opportunities, however central government would need to take the lead in implementing this;
- 4.2.4 Another challenge was around how to engage better with local communities and build better collaboration across boroughs, employers and infrastructure projects;
- 4.2.5 On a discussion on the MCA Quality Mark, members commented that the scheme would benefit from higher profile and increased use of communications to improve credibility and raise awareness within the sector. The Group also discussed how success of the Quality Mark is measured, and how well providers need to perform to keep it;
- 4.2.6 Members also discussed the MCA Hubs, including the prospectus for the next round and how best to capture the benefits of the programme and promote best practice. It was suggested that in developing the prospectus for the next round of Hub funding, officers should engage employers and seek their feedback on proposals. The programme should also have a focus on improving outcomes (not just outputs) and working with colleges to engage employers in programme design;
- 4.2.7 Key performance indicators (KPIs) for the Hubs were also discussed. Members were keen to understand whether the responsibility for the six months' sustained employment would lie with the college or the employer, and also suggested monitoring how many remain in employment between months 6 and 12;
- 4.2.8 A query was raised as to what difference and additionality the Hubs and Quality Mark provide. Officers outlined the benefits of the programme and noted that performance data which identifies additionality of the hubs would be circulated to the Group once activity was underway. It was also suggested that case studies would be a good way to demonstrate the differences made as a direct result of the funding; and
- 4.2.9 Other areas of discussion included job brokerages, and how they need to be better used to effectively generate supply; the London Local Labour Initiative; and the Unite construction charter, including the benefits of moving towards more direct employment.

- 4.3 Following the discussion, the Chair suggested that a report be brought to the next meeting setting out how the Group can measure if the MCA programme is a success, and taking into account the issues raised around career progression, procurement and social value.

RESOLVED:

The SfL Construction Sub-Group:

- (a) Noted the plans for the refresh, review, reopen plan for the Mayor's Construction Academy (MCA) Quality Mark;**
- (b) Noted the progress to date in the implementation of the MCA Hubs and endorsed the options set out for the second round of MCA Hub funding;**
- (c) Noted progress on the MCA element of the Skills for Londoners Capital Fund; and**
- (d) Agreed that a report would be brought to the next meeting setting out how success of the MCA programme is measured, and taking into account the issues raised around career progression, procurement and social value.**

5 CITB and Government's National Retraining Scheme

- 5.1 Caroline Roberts presented an overview of CITB's Construction Skills Hub, and set out how this initiative aligned to the Government's National Retraining Scheme as well as the MCA Hubs and other construction skills initiatives.
- 5.2 During the discussion that followed, it was noted that measures for this programme were currently being developed, however there would be both formative and summative evaluations to ensure it was running effectively. The key challenges identified already included improving progression pathways and sustainable employment. It was noted that, unlike the MCA Hubs, this programme funded outcomes and therefore could look to directly measure impacts in these areas.
- 5.3 Members also discussed the use of social media to promote the construction industry to young people, with an example provided of the National Skills Academy for Rail using a series of videos to demystify careers in the industry and engage young people.

5.4 RESOLVED:

The presentation and subsequent discussion were noted.

6 MCA and CITB careers campaigns

- 6.1 The Board were provided with an overview of the MCA Careers Campaign. Funded by the GLA's Business Rates Retention Pilot, the campaign would involve a tailored programme to promote construction careers in London and specifically target those underrepresented in the sector, including women and BAME individuals.
- 6.2 Members heard that the campaign would launch at the Skills London event in the autumn and a number of mechanisms would be used to promote the campaign, including social media. The Chair suggested that officers also look into whether the Transport for London network could be used to advertise the campaign.

- 6.3 It was also noted that the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills had met with the Chief Executive of CITB to discuss how the London campaign can align with CITB's national campaign.
- 6.4 During the subsequent discussion, Members provided the following comments:
- 6.4.1 It was important that the campaign had a wider focus on infrastructure, and not just housebuilding. Officers noted that the Mayor's manifesto pledge focused on housebuilding and the focus to date had been in this area however the remit of the campaign would be wider;
- 6.4.2 The campaign should also focus on sustaining careers in this sector, noting that the number of people leaving the construction industry after a couple of years was significant. It would be important to work directly with employers to address this, and this should include improving onsite behaviours, cited as a key reason for people leaving the industry; and
- 6.4.3 There was a need to pay closer attention to health, safety and wellbeing in the construction industry, particularly with regard to mental health. Officers noted that the GLA would be working with the MCA Hubs to reflect on current practice in this area, and look at how this can be improved. Further to discussions on procurement earlier in the meeting, members commented that health, safety and wellbeing of staff is something that can be built into the procurement process and incorporated into contractual requirements, however it would need to be measured on an ongoing basis to ensure it was effective.

6.5 RESOLVED:

The update and subsequent discussion were noted.

7 Date of next meeting

- 7.1 The next meeting of the SfL Construction Sub-Group was to be confirmed.

8 Any Other Business the Chair Considers Urgent

- 8.1 There was no urgent business.

9 Close of meeting

- 9.1 The meeting closed at 3.35pm.

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