

MINUTES

Meeting: Higher Level Skills Advisory Group

Date: 22 October 2020

Time: 2.00pm

Place: Remote Meeting

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Members present:

Yolande Burgess, London Councils
Pat Carvalho, Harrow College Uxbridge College
Professor Martin Doel, University College London
Ruben Hale, University of Arts Awarding Body
David Hillier, Chair of Linking London Higher Education in Further Education Practitioner Group
Yvonne Kelly, Barking & Dagenham College
Mary Vine-Morris, Association of Colleges

GLA Officers:

James Lee, Principal Policy Officer – Strategy and Relationships, Skills & Employment
Laura Marshall, Senior Board Officer, Programmes and Governance, Skills & Employment (Clerk)
Forogh Rahmani, Senior Manager – Strategy and Relationships, Skills & Employment (Acting Chair)
Beth Wheaton, Senior Policy Officer – Strategy and Relationships, Skills & Employment

Others in attendance:

Dr Kate Daubney, University of London

1 Introduction and apologies

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from the Chair, George Johnston and the Deputy Chair, Nichola Hay. Forogh Rahmani chaired the meeting on their behalf.
- 1.2 Forogh Rahmani welcomed members to the meeting of the Advisory Group.
- 1.3 Apologies for absence were received from Simon Ashworth, Dr Graeme Atherton, Katie Bell, Dr Philippa Lloyd and Rebecca Plant.
- 1.4 Members noted that Dr Bob Gilworth had retired from the University of London and had now stood down from the Advisory Group. Dr Kate Daubney had replaced Dr Bob Gilworth in his role at the University of London. Dr Daubney introduced herself to the Group.
- 1.5 Members heard that Dr Daubney had started in her new role on 19 October and will be made a member of the Advisory Group by the next meeting. It was noted that Dr Daubney was attending this meeting as an attendee as the Clerk was organising the relevant appointment documentation for Dr Daubney.

2 Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 Professor Martin Doel highlighted that he was a member of the Board of Cambridge Regional College which had a contract with the GLA for delivery of the Adult Education Budget (AEB).
- 2.2 Forogh Rahmani noted that other colleagues in the meeting were in a similar position. Forogh Rahmani explained that the Advisory Group would not be discussing anything that would present a conflict relating to the above point.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

3.1 RESOLVED:

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

4 Actions Arising

4.1 RESOLVED:

The actions arising from the previous meeting were noted.

5 Higher Level Skills (Level 4/5) Research Update

- 5.1 Members received an update on the Higher Level Skills (Level 4/5) research being carried out by RCU. This research looked at the provision of, participation in and demand for education and skills at Levels 4/5 in London.
- 5.2 Members heard that RCU had submitted a draft final report to the GLA which incorporated feedback from the Advisory Group and GLA officers. Members noted that the report also incorporated updates based on the latest 2018/19 Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data and conclusion of the Department for Education's (DfE's) review of Level 4 and 5 qualifications. Officers were in the process of agreeing the final version of the report with RCU, to sign off ready for publication.
- 5.3 Mary Vine-Morris questioned whether the original recommendations that had been shared with the Advisory Group had changed for final report. The Senior Project Officer explained that the recommendations had been adapted slightly as the original recommendations were directed more towards the GLA rather than the providers, employers and those with a stake in Level 4/5 more generally. Members heard that officers would share the final recommendations with the Advisory Group.
- 5.4 Professor Martin Doel highlighted that he would be happy to facilitate an invitation from the Centre for Global Higher Education if the GLA/RCU wanted to present the results of the research.
- 5.5 Yolande Burgess provided an update on the HE Journey of Young London Residents report which launched on 21 October 2020.
- 5.6 Members noted that London Councils had decided to continue with the series of reports even in light of a changed world due to COVID-19. Yolande Burgess explained that the HE Journey of Young London Residents report was a longstanding report which contained over a decade's worth of data.
- 5.7 Members heard that London Councils had tracked young people's entry into HE (institutions learners were coming from, the types of qualifications learners were completing, results learners were achieving, etc.) It was noted that a second set of data was used to understand where young people were going (graduate employment, for example). Yolande Burgess explained that the report launched on 21 October 2020 and included data for the year 2018/2019.
- 5.8 Yolande Burgess explained that in previous years, the HE Journey of Young London Residents report had been used to look at trends in HE across London. Members heard that discussions at the launch of the report seemed to focus on the need to use this year's report for benchmarking as it would be difficult for the HE sector to understand what HE would look like in the future due to COVID-19.

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- 5.9 Members noted that the report had a key focus on ethnicity and diversity and what this looked like in HE in London.
- 5.10 Yolande Burgess explained that London Councils had produced borough level reports as part of the HE Journey of Young London Residents report and this could be circulated to Advisory Group members on request after the meeting.
- 5.11 Dr Kate Daubney questioned the use of graduate outcomes data, specifically whether London Councils was using the new Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) graduate outcomes survey data for employment outcomes. Yolande Burgess confirmed that the new data had not been used, but this report was the last time London Councils would be using the 'Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education' (DLHE) survey. Members noted that this would have an impact on the next iterations of the HE Journey of Young London Residents report as it would take two to three years to catch up with the new survey in terms of providing London Councils the full picture of graduate employment.
- 5.12 Dr Kate Daubney explained that there were a lot of interesting differences in the graduate outcomes survey, around meaningfulness and use of skills for example. Dr Kate Daubney offered to link up Yolande Burgess with HE colleagues who had been working with the graduate outcomes survey data set extensively.
- 5.13 Mary Vine-Morris questioned whether the HE Journey of Young London Residents report would continue and whether London Councils would compare what HE in London looked like ten years ago, to what it looked like now, as well as trying to understand where the HE sector would want to be in ten years' time.
- 5.14 Yolande Burgess confirmed that London Council's intention was to continue publishing the report but pointed out that future iterations would look very different due to COVID-19. Yolande Burgess explained that London Councils would want to continue with the trend-setting data, but they would also want to capture some indicators that might come out of the unique assessment arrangements that had taken place due to COVID-19.
- 5.15 It was explained that bigger strategic questions would likely arise in future iterations of the report. Yolande Burgess highlighted that she would like to bring these strategic questions to the Advisory Group for member input, especially on issues such as changes in trends around part time academic study, looking at HE in a different way, whether the HE offer need to be presented differently, etc.
- 5.16 Forogh Rahmani agreed that it would be very helpful to bring this to a future Advisory Group meeting.

5.17 RESOLVED:

- (a) The Higher Level Skills (Level 4/5) Research Update was noted;**
- (b) Officers would share the final RCU recommendations with the Advisory Group when finalised; and**
- (c) Members to contact Yolande Burgess or the Senior Project Officer if they would like to access borough level reports.**

6 London Recovery Update

- 6.1 The Advisory Group received a presentation on the work the GLA and the Skills & Employment Unit had been doing around COVID-19 Recovery.
- 6.2 Members noted that the London Recovery Board had been set up to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic at the GLA. The 'Grand Challenge' set by the London Recovery Board was to 'restore confidence in the city, minimise the impact on London's most vulnerable communities, to recover and renew the city's economy and society.'
- 6.3 The Principal Policy Officer – Strategy and Relationships explained that eight economic and social Missions and five cross cutting principles (including tackling inequality, sustainability and value for money) had been developed so that the GLA could meet this challenge.
- 6.4 The Principal Policy Officer outlined the Good Work Mission which aimed to support Londoners into good jobs with a focus on sectors key to London's recovery.
- 6.5 The Principal Policy Officer explained that officers were in the process of setting up a new steering group which would sit under the Skills for Londoners (SfL) Board and Business Partnership. This steering group would act as a sounding board for developing proposals linked to the Recovery Missions. The Principal Policy Officer asked the Advisory Group to consider the questions outlined at point 4.5 of the report.
- 6.6 During the subsequent conversation, the following points were discussed:
 - The need to integrate government initiatives, make them more coherent (for example, how the Kickstart Scheme¹ was related to apprenticeships as two government departments had started two different initiatives) and then signpost a route to higher skills through that means.

¹ In response to COVID-19 and subsequent high youth unemployment, the Government launched the Kickstart Scheme which provides funding to employers to create job placements for 16 to 24 year olds.

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- The need for integration at the point of delivery (at a borough level rather than a city level).
- The need to model the user journey for a range of students so that the GLA could identify which types of people it needed to reach out to and at which stage. The GLA could then map out the journey for these groups of people, from their perspective as the basis of integration.
- The need to acknowledge that different people were at different stages of their career journeys (for example, someone who had been made redundant but had a plan of what they would like to do next vs. someone who had been made redundant but did not know what to do next).
- The need to understand where people were on their career readiness journeys. The unemployed/underemployed status would include a much broader range of people in a COVID-19 world than it did before and there would be a spectrum of journeys taking place.
- The need to make sense of these different career journeys and explain them to employer groups.
- The need for the RCU final report to be tied into the GLA's London recovery work.
- The need to understand the journey for different people in different situations (for example, a key group could be adults who were looking at work and how they could change their career but were working at the same time).
- The need to understand what jobs/careers were out there and the need to link up the modelling of journeys with careers advice and available opportunities.
- The challenge of shaping provision against skills needs.
- The importance of understanding how the jobs market was shaping up, understanding what jobs there were and what jobs were needed.
- The importance of working collectively and collaboratively at a sub-regional level and the importance of removing anything that would hinder conversations such as how things were going to be funded and the recognition of the work that needed to go into things, for example.

6.7 Ruben Hale explained that ScreenSkills² had been doing a lot of labour market intelligence work, highlighting that ScreenSkills had some interesting statistics about the level of employment regionally. Forogh Rahmani explained that the GLA had been in touch with ScreenSkills and wanted to do more work with them on what a cultural academy could look like. It was clear that parts of the culture sector had been severely impacted by COVID-19 and freelancers faced a real challenge.

² ScreenSkills is the industry-led skills body for the screen industries - film, television (including children's, unscripted and high-end), VFX (visual effects), animation and games.

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- 6.8 Professor Martin Doel explained that if the GLA wanted swift action, it should work with a set of trusted providers (colleges, university and independent training providers (ITPs), for example) rather than going through a competitive bid process. Professor Martin Doel highlighted that the amount of time spent on bid writing, bid preparation and speculative work would drive a lot of inefficiency into the system and would drive out responsiveness.
- 6.9 Forogh Rahmani agreed that there was a need for rapid interventions but the GLA was also thinking about longer term strategies and how the GLA worked with its anchor institutions.
- 6.10 Forogh Rahmani asked for members to contact the Clerk or the Senior Policy Officer if they were interested in joining the new steering group which would act as a sounding board for developing proposals linked to the Recovery Missions. Members were also encouraged to contact the Clerk and the Senior Policy Officer if they had any further thoughts on this item.

6.11 RESOLVED:

The update on the work of the London Recovery Board was noted.

7 Date of next meeting

- 7.1 The next meeting of the Higher Level Skills Advisory Group was to be confirmed.

8 Any Other Business the Chair Considers Urgent

- 8.1 Mary Vine-Morris highlighted that it was Colleges Week 2020 (Monday 19 October – Friday 23 October 2020). She thanked the Mayor and the GLA for publicising Colleges Week 2020 on their social media accounts and asked members to use their social media channels to publicise it also.
- 8.2 Forogh Rahmani thanked Mary Vine-Morris for involving the GLA in Colleges Week 2020.

9 Close of Meeting

- 9.1 The meeting closed at 14.58pm.

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