

# MINUTES

## Meeting Skills for Londoners Construction Sub-Group

Date Wednesday 4 November 2020

Time 1.00pm

Place Remote Meeting

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

### Members present:

Seamus Keogh (Chair)  
Bunmi Atta  
Shenaaz Chenia  
Steve Drury  
Paul Gallagher  
Jenny Herdman  
Yvonne Kelly  
Brian McKeown  
Martyn Price  
Caroline Roberts

### Also in attendance:

Matthew Bracewell, Senior Project Officer,  
Skills & Employment  
Anna Cooban, Senior Policy Officer, Skills  
& Employment  
Julia Harrowsmith, Senior Manager –  
Programme Delivery, Skills & Employment  
Michael Heanue, Principal Policy Officer,  
Skills & Employment  
Laura Marshall, Senior Board Officer,  
Skills & Employment (Clerk)  
Barry Mortimer, West London Hub  
Coordinator, West London College  
Rachel Roberts, MCA Programme  
Manager, Skills & Employment  
Rebecca Roper, Programme Officer,  
Skills & Employment  
Claire Sherer, Senior Manager –  
Programmes & Governance, Skills &  
Employment  
Sarah Spindler, Senior Project Officer,  
Delivery, Skills & Employment  
Amanda Winder, London South Bank  
University Hub Coordinator

## **1 Introductions and apologies**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the Group and led a round of introductions.
- 1.2 Members heard that Cllr Peter John had stood down as Leader of Southwark Council and Chair of London Councils and therefore would no longer Chair the Skills for Londoners (SfL) Construction Sub-Group. As such, Seamus Keogh had kindly agreed to Chair the meetings of the Group until the Mayoral election in May 2021. The Chair thanked Cllr John for his work as Chair of the SfL Construction Sub Group.
- 1.3 Apologies for absence were received from Andy Carson, Mark Farmer, Tom McLoughlin, Jessica Mellor-Clark and Janette Welton-Pai.

## **2 Declarations of Interest**

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

## **3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

### **3.1 RESOLVED:**

**The minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2020 were agreed as a correct record.**

## **4 Actions Arising**

### **4.1 RESOLVED:**

**The actions arising from the previous meeting were noted.**

## **5 Mayor's Construction Academy Context and History**

- 5.1 The Sub Group received an update on the context and history of the Mayor's Construction Academy (MCA). Members heard that the SfL Construction Sub Group dated back to the Mayor's 2016 manifesto commitment to "create a Skills for London taskforce" and to "establish a construction academy scheme, with the housebuilding industry, to close the gap between our ambitious housing targets and the need for more skills construction workers in London."
- 5.2 The Principal Policy Officer outlined the specific challenges in 2016 that led to the Mayor's manifesto commitments, the MCA's aims, the four elements of the MCA programme (MCA Quality Mark construction skills training providers; revenue funded

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'Hubs' supported by a central MCA delivery team at City Hall; capital funding for premises refreshment/training equipment; and wider promotion of the construction industry through targeted interventions), and detail on the MCA Hubs and collaborating partners, Hub locations and Hub outputs.

- 5.3 Members received an update on MCA Hub outputs, specifically noting that the Hubs had engaged with a large number of employers and there was a strong pipeline of learners undertaking Information Advice and Guidance and construction training. The MCA Programme Manager highlighted what had gone well for the MCA Round 1 Hubs and what challenges the ICF Evaluation had identified which still required more work. These included: volumes of learners undertaking work placements; the capturing of data for jobs sustained (payments are not linked to the job sustained outcomes through Adult Education Budget (AEB) funding, so data was not consistently captured); and the historic underreporting of some equalities data.
- 5.4 Steve Drury explained that 2020 had been a busy year in terms of bidding and procurement for public sector contracts. Members heard that there was a real need for the public sector to move at pace to the commissioning stage to help stimulate the construction sector.
- 5.5 Members commented that it would be good for the Sub Group to understand where the MCA Programme was now, where it needed to get to and the progress made against the original programme targets. Members felt that there was a need to update data (especially now priorities were changing in light of COVID-19) and create sharp, short output measures for hubs to work against in this new environment.
- 5.6 Members noted that qualitative detail was just as important as the quantitative, and good news stories from employers about the MCA Hubs were important to capture. There was also a need to look at displacement from other sectors and attracting talent from those sectors.
- 5.7 Yvonne Kelly highlighted that there was an issue with collecting destination data. She explained that this challenge was also a funding body issue and suggested it would be helpful if the Pay As You Earn (PAYE) system could be used. Brian McKeown explained that there was a data sharing issue with regard to using the PAYE system.
- 5.8 Brian McKeown explained that it was important to understand what the skills gaps were and that the provision from colleges matched the need. In addition, members felt that it would be useful to understand where employer engagement was strong and there was a need for the GLA to understand how to get construction learners into employment.
- 5.9 **RESOLVED:**

**The update was noted.**

## **6 Mayor's Construction Academy Round 2 Hubs**

### **a) West London College (EHWLC)**

- 6.1 The Chair welcomed Barry Mortimer to present an introduction on the West London College Hub to the Sub-Group.
- 6.2 Barry Mortimer explained the remit and focus of the EHWLC Hub and its 'immediate universe' highlighting EHWLC's closest partners which included West London College, Harrow and Uxbridge Colleges, Build Training, West Thames College, MIT Skills and Action West London. Members heard that the relationships between these partners had changed dramatically since the establishment of the EHWLC Hub and all were working in a much more collaborative way.
- 6.3 Members noted that the EHWLC had established a Hub Partners Group and an Employer Advisory Board. Barry Mortimer explained that he chaired the Hub Partners Group which included members representing charities, local authorities, employers, etc. The Hub Partners Group's goal was to improve partnership working and collaboration, initiate projects, and share common concerns. Key issues such as digital construction, T-Levels, barriers & incentives for employing apprentices had been addressed in the Hub Partners Group meetings.
- 6.4 Members heard that the Employer Advisory Group was chaired by Paul Skitt, Skills Development Director at the Flannery Plant. This Advisory Group included the Federation of Master Builders, large and small employers as well as West London Training providers. The core focus of this group was to drive a skills and employment strategy for West London, ensuring employers could access various schemes and initiatives to support employers and people made redundant as a result of COVID-19.
- 6.5 Barry Mortimer confirmed that a key challenge for the EHWLC Hub (and MCA Round 1 Hubs more generally) was delivering on female and progression key performance indicators (KPIs). Members heard that a key issue around progression KPIs, was the difficulty for Hubs to keep track of people after they had left jobs (for example, someone leaves a plumbing course over six months ago, the Hub would have to track the person down to obtain progression statistics).
- 6.6 Members heard several good news stories and case studies from the EHWLC Hub.

*[Paul Gallagher and Yvonne Kelly left the meeting].*

- 6.7 Bunmi Atta queried data capture and the fact that systems were not aligned, specifically questioning whether the EHWLC Hub had factored this into their business planning and whether there were any additional costs as a result. Barry Mortimer confirmed that there were no additional costs and explained that as the EHWLC Hub Coordinator, he tried to remain pragmatic and tried to simplify processes as best he could for providers reporting statistics.

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- 6.8 Caroline Roberts explained that keeping track of progression was a long-standing problem and questioned whether social media could be used in a better way to track learner progression. Barry Mortimer highlighted that capturing email addresses, mobile phone numbers and contacting people at different times of the day had worked best for the EHWLC Hub.
- 6.9 Jenny Herdman explained that the Hub Coordinator role was key for networking and collaborative work and the presentation had highlighted this. Steve Drury and Jenny both highlighted the importance of a connected college network and that the 'joining up' work carried out by Hubs was vital.
- 6.10 Shenaaz Chenia suggested that it would be useful to understand what collaboration between Hubs looked like, what the common impact measurements across the Hubs were and how they worked together to ensure skills needs were met across the network. The MCA Programme Manager explained that an item on Hub collaboration could be added to the agenda for the next meeting.
- 6.11 The Chair and members thanked Barry Mortimer for his informative presentation and for coming to present for the Sub Group.
- 6.12 Barry Mortimer highlighted that the #ConstructLondon event was taking place 26 November 2020, 11am-3pm.

*[Caroline Roberts left the meeting].*

**b) London South Bank University (LSBU)**

- 6.13 The Chair welcomed Amanda Winder to present an introduction on the London South Bank University Hub to the Sub-Group.
- 6.14 Amanda Winder explained that the key goals for the LSBU Hub was to establish a world class construction skills programme that focused on local tri-borough employers (LB Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark), offering talent progression from schools to higher degree apprenticeships and to offer apprenticeships in Construction & Built Environment from level 2-7.
- 6.15 Members noted the LSBU Hub's progress from January 2019 to September 2020, with almost 4,000 learners completing courses (56.5% BAME, 9.4% female, 8.8% disabled) and over 1,500 people entering construction employment (27% BAME, 15% female and 4.5% disabled).
- 6.16 Amanda Winder highlighted two examples of partnership working: Breyer QS Academy and Naturally Talented Me, an online portal that helped match an individual's natural talents to the job profiles that complimented these.
- 6.17 Similar to the Barry Mortimer's presentation and EHWLC's experience, Amanda Winder explained that LSBU faced challenges around attracting females and obtaining data from and engaging with training providers. Members heard that LSBU

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had developed a Female Action Plan which included female role models/case studies, a targeted female attraction social media campaign, and other measures.

- 6.18 Bunmi Atta queried how LSBU was dealing with the common stereotypical view of careers for females in construction (for example, women usually being directed to quantity surveying rather than construction management). Amanda Winder explained that there was a female civil engineer case study at LSBU which had been used in marketing campaigns (“Civil Engineering isn’t just for the boys”) to try to tackle stereotyping. Members also heard that LSBU female role models now included a crane operator and female role models active on social media.
- 6.19 The Chair and members thanked Amanda Winder for her detailed presentation and for coming to present for the Sub Group.
- 6.20 RESOLVED:**
- (a) The updates were noted; and**
  - (b) Agreed that an item on Hub collaboration would be added to the agenda for the next meeting.**

## **7 Mayor’s Construction Academy Capital Projects Update**

- 7.1 The Chair asked for this item to be added to the agenda for the next meeting due to time limitations.

**7.2 RESOLVED:**

**Agreed that Item 7 would be added to the agenda for the next meeting.**

## **8 London Recovery – Green Skills in Construction Discussion**

- 8.1 Members noted that the London Recovery Board had finalised definitions for nine missions for the London Recovery Programme on 15 September 2020 with green skills falling under the ‘Good Work for All’ and ‘a Green New Deal’ missions. Members heard that the Skills & Employment’s policy team were leading on this work.
- 8.2 Bunmi Atta highlighted that a key green construction challenge was around the design, implementation and the service offer and education was needed around these three areas for organisations to embrace green construction. Members heard that there were often affordability concerns, especially when there was a skills gap. Awareness was needed around the cost of factoring the skills gap with the end user and marketing and promotion were needed on the operational side of green construction.

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- 8.3 Jenny Herdman echoed Bumni Atta's point and felt that there was a piece of work around the public educator angle. Jenny Herdman used the example of the government policy announced in March 2019 that gas heating for new houses would be banned by 2025. She explained that awareness around the skills gap linked to this policy, the training provision need, and public education was needed for this policy to succeed.

*[Bumni Atta left the meeting].*

- 8.4 Steve Drury pointed out that the banning of gas heating for new houses by 2025 was not far away and it was clear that more people would need to be trained with firms that would be able to install the right technology needed to replace gas (air source heat pumps, ground source heat pumps, etc.). Members heard that these schemes were adding costs to construction presently and awareness of design impact was needed.
- 8.5 Shenaaz Chenia felt that there was a real opportunity for the GLA to connect with manufacturers as they would have a lot of training tools, information and knowledge to share which would help develop green construction skills.
- 8.6 The Chair suggested that it would be useful for the GLA to connect with the UK Green Construction Board if they had not already done so. He also explained that officers should be cautious of the word 'green' as he feared that this term was losing its impact.
- 8.7 Officers questioned where the green skills gaps were in the pipeline. Steve Drury felt that there were green skills gaps across the whole pipeline but explained that upfront design and development skills were especially needed. He also felt that there was a 'cost gap' – a lack of cost understanding in green construction.
- 8.8 The Chair explained that Transport for London (TfL) was a procurer of construction activity and with that in mind, highlighted that it was important to understand what TfL's green agenda looked like. Members heard that it was important for the GLA to use champion clients from its client base.

*[Jenny Herdman left the meeting].*

- 8.9 Officers questioned what interventions were needed to help address diversity issues in green construction. Steve Drury suggested that it could be beneficial to focus on a specific sector/agenda and direct the sector towards a diversity group.
- 8.10 The Chair questioned whether it would be useful to put this sustainability item on the agenda for MCA Hub Coordinators so that feedback could be captured from a wider group of people who met more regularly than this Sub Group. Matthew Bracewell confirmed that MCA Hub Coordinators had already been engaged in discussions to help shape the GLA's thinking.

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- 8.11 Steve Drury explained that he had joined the Mayor's Good Work Standard-Diversity in Construction Webinar on 3 November 2020. Members heard that presenters included Women in Construction, Jeremy Crook OBE, Chief Executive of the Black Training Enterprise Group (BTEG) and Amos Simbo, the Chairman of the Black Professionals in Construction Network. He suggested that it would be helpful for officers to connect with these presenters further to discuss sustainability and underrepresentation in the sector.

**8.12 RESOLVED:**

**Noted this update on the work of the London Recovery Board.**

**9 Date of next meeting**

- 9.1 The next meeting of the Skills for Londoners Construction Sub Group was yet to be confirmed.

**10 Any Other Business the Chair Considers Urgent**

- 10.1 There was none.

**11 Close of meeting**

- 11.1 The meeting closed at 15.00pm.

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