

# MINUTES

**Meeting Skills for Londoners Recovery Task and Finish Group**

**Date Wednesday 9 December 2020**

**Time 9.30am**

**Place Remote Meeting**

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**Members:**

Anna Devlet, British Land and SfL Business Partnership Member (co-Chair in the chair)  
Jamie Mitchell, All Together (co-Chair)  
John Bennett, London Borough of Lambeth  
Cllr Nesil Caliskan, SfL Board member and Leader, London Borough of Enfield  
Arinola Edeh, SfL Board Member and HOLEX  
Rupa Grahame, Deputy Chair of the SfL Business Partnership, and Sainsbury's  
Sam Gurney, Trades Union Congress  
Helen Milner OBE, Good Things Foundation  
Farah Mohammoud, You Press  
Michael Morley, Department for Work and Pensions  
Olivia Vicol, Work Rights Centre  
Mary Vine Morris, Association of Colleges  
Tony Wilson, Institute for Employment Studies

**GLA Skills & Employment Officers:**

Michelle Cuomo Boorer, Assistant Director – Skills and Employment  
Matthew Bracewell, Senior Project Officer, Skills & Employment  
Phil De Montmorency, Principal Policy Officer, Skill & Employment  
Jack Gibson, Senior Business Engagement Officer, Skills & Employment  
Rachel Greenwood, Board Secretary, Skills & Employment  
Julia Harrowsmith, Senior Manager – AEB Delivery, Skills & Employment  
James Lee, Principal Policy Officer, Skills & Employment  
Laura Marshall, Senior Board Officer, Skills & Employment (Clerk)  
Forogh Rahmani, Senior Manager – Strategy, Policy & Relationships, Skills & Employment  
Cameron Tait, Strategy Manager, Skills & Employment

**Others in attendance:**  
Dianna Neal, Strategic Lead – Enterprise,  
Economy and Skills, London Councils

Pippa Nightingale, Chief Nurse at Chelsea  
& Westminster NHS Trust  
David Warnes, Deputy Principal of West  
London College

## **1 Introduction and apologies**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the inaugural meeting and thanked Members for joining the Group.
- 1.2 The Chair explained the aim of the Group which was to support London's recovery programme and the grand challenge 'to restore confidence in the city, minimise the impact on communities and build back better the city's economy and society.'
- 1.3 Members heard that the Group would help to steer and shape the actions that would deliver the 'Helping Londoners into Good Work' and 'Digital Access' missions. Members would also be challenged with providing their views on what success for these missions could look like.
- 1.4 Apologies for absence were received from Sarah Hernandez and Mary-Ann Stephenson.

## **2 Declarations of Interest**

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

## **3 Skills for Londoners Recovery Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference and governance arrangements**

- 3.1 The Senior Board Officer set out the terms of reference for the Skills for Londoners (SfL) Recovery Task and Finish Group and provided an overview of the SfL governance arrangements.
- 3.2 Members noted that the SfL Board would be asked to endorse the Group's terms of reference at their next meeting on 26 January 2021.

### **3.3 DECISIONS:**

#### **The Skills for Londoners Recovery Task and Finish Group:**

- (a) **Noted the Group's terms of reference, as set out at Appendix A of the report; and**
- (b) **Noted that Anna Devlet, Members of the Skills for Londoners Business Partnership and Jamie Mitchell, Founder, All Together had been appointed as Co-Chairs of the Group.**

## **4 Overview of Recovery Programme**

- 4.1 The Senior Manager – Strategy, Policy & Relationships outlined the context for recovery, explaining the 'grand challenge' set by the London Recovery Board which

would be achieved through nine recovery missions. Members noted the skills and employment support of the COVID-19 response to date and the key next steps for London's Recovery Programme.

- 4.2 The Strategic Lead – Enterprise, Economy and Skills, London Councils explained that one of the key missions for this Group was the 'Helping Londoners into Good Work' mission. Members were provided with more detail around this mission, specifically noting the actions, outcomes and key milestones, the key cross-cutting principals, and how achievements and successes would be measured.
- 4.3 The Senior Manager – Strategy, Policy & Relationships outlined the 'Digital Access for All' mission which would be another key mission for the Group. The aim for this mission would be for every Londoner to have access to good connectivity, basic digital skills and the device or support they would need to be online by 2025. Members heard more detail around the approach and the short, medium and long term actions linked to this mission.
- 4.4 Jamie Mitchell explained that London recovery was also about supporting enterprise, the self-employed and entrepreneurs. Cllr Nesil Caliskan agreed, explaining that there was a need to focus on job creation with micro businesses and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) having a key role to play in the job creation agenda. The Strategic Lead – Enterprise, Economy and Skills agreed, highlighting that it would be useful to work with this Group on how this work could be developed further.
- 4.5 Cllr Caliskan also questioned whether the GLA and London Councils had worked with the Sub-regional Partnerships (SRPs) that existed across London (for example, Local London) and whether the London Recovery Programme could align with the work of the SRPs. The Strategic Lead – Enterprise, Economy and Skills explained that London Councils were currently working with boroughs to try to understand local recovery plans and priorities so they could be mapped onto the Recovery missions. Members heard that the GLA and London Councils had been working with the SRPs and boroughs in the development of the missions and this work would continue.
- 4.6 The Chair explained that employers across London would be focussing on their budgets, resources and training, highlighting that there was a need to communicate information on, and priorities for, the London Recovery Programme to those businesses and employers that were not yet engaged.
- 4.7 Sam Gurney pointed out that it was important to remember the words 'good work' in the 'Helping Londoners into Good Work' mission. He highlighted the importance of 'The Great Jobs Agenda: Giving every worker the opportunity to progress' report from the Trades Union Congress, as well as the Good Work Standard in London.<sup>1</sup> He explained that it was important that employees had a voice, as well as an awareness of their rights, and that people going into 'good work' jobs were represented in the development of the London Recovery Programme.
- 4.8 Helen Milner OBE pointed out that there was some overlap and interplay between the 'Helping Londoners into Good Work' mission and the 'Digital Access for All' mission and there was a need to explore the intersectionality. Members heard that there was an overlap between digital exclusion and social exclusion and basic digital skills would be important for 'good work.'

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Great Jobs Agenda: Giving every worker the opportunity to progress' report from the Trades Union Congress can be found here - <https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/great-jobs-agenda-giving-every-worker-opportunity-progress>.

- 4.9 Tony Wilson highlighted the issue around scale of the recovery, and that the London Recovery Programme would not be able to achieve everything. He felt that some groups were not being well served by national programmes of support, such as disabled people, ethnic minority groups, older workers and single parents. He explained that it was important that the London Recovery Programme was clear on which groups needed to be targeted so they received the best support.
- 4.10 Tony Wilson also highlighted that there was a real opportunity to work at borough, SRP and local level across London to engage with stakeholders and it was important that the right people were included in discussions. The Chair agreed, commenting that it was important to have the right representatives involved when discussing London's recovery. There was also a need for collaboration between different sectors, and an importance that each sector understood the role it played in recovery. A question was also raised around the role of the public sector as employers, specifically how public sector hiring freezes would impact at a time of high redundancy rates in the private sector, as well as the public sector as commissioners and conveners.
- 4.11 Michael Morley explained that Jobcentre Plus (JCP) recognised the crucial role it currently played in getting Londoners back into 'good work.' Members heard that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had announced in June 2020 that the number of frontline staff would be doubled, hiring 13,500 new "work coaches" at JCP to help the unemployed into new roles. Michael explained that 4,000 work coaches would be recruited in London by March 2021.
- 4.12 Michael Morley agreed with Tony Wilson's point around disadvantaged groups needing targeted support and confirmed that JCP London was working hard to make sure these groups were fully supported. He also highlighted the good local collaboration taking place between London boroughs, explaining the need for a place-based approach and further collaboration.
- 4.13 Arinola Edeh agreed, explaining that it was important for the GLA and London Councils to look at the hyper-local level, specifically understanding what was happening on the ground with regards to employment. She felt that work needed to be done to encourage businesses to employ local people and suggested that the data collected by boroughs could be used to understand the recovery needs of local businesses. With regard to the 'Digital Access for All' mission, Arinola commented that work should be undertaken to understand how to repurpose vacant city centre office space, with the aim of using this space for digital access, particularly as there was likely to be more demand than libraries could support.

#### 4.14 **DECISION:**

**The Skills for Londoners Recovery Task and Finish Group noted the overview of the Recovery Programme and the subsequent discussion.**

## 5 **Sector Academies**

- 5.1 Members were provided an overview of the Sector Academies which formed a part of the 'Helping Londoners into Good Work' mission and covered key sectors including, digital, health & social care, the green economy and creative & cultural industries.
- 5.2 The Senior Manager – AEB Delivery explained that the Sector Academies were based on the ideas behind the Mayor's Construction Academy, as well as elements

of the Digital Talent Programme. Members heard details around the challenges facing each sector and the next steps for the development of the Sector Academies.

- 5.3 Pippa Nightingale, Chief Nurse at Chelsea & Westminster NHS Trust and David Warnes, Deputy Principal of West London College presented an overview of the strategic collaboration that had already begun between NHS employers, colleges and local authorities in North West London. The size of the health and care sector in North West London was outlined, as were the workforce challenges, objectives for the strategic partnership, the vision for the health and care skills partnership and specific examples of collaborative working. Members noted that the strategic partnership's main aim was to scale, sustain and formalise the collaboration in North West London, to fully integrate NHS and social care skills, careers and employment activity to promote good work.
- 5.4 The Chair and other Members thanked Pippa Nightingale and David Warnes for coming to the meeting and for their interesting and informative presentation.
- 5.5 Jamie Mitchell questioned how the London Recovery Board had decided on the choice of the sectors that the Sector Academies would focus on (described at point 5.1 above). He felt that it would be helpful if the rationale behind the choice of sectors could be shared with the Group.
- 5.6 Members discussed the impact and timing of the Sector Academies, querying whether some work could be prioritised and completed sooner than planned, as some sectors had a greater need for support than others. The Group agreed that there was a need for the Sector Academies to have an impact sooner and suggestions were made as to whether the number of Sector Academies could be reduced so support could be delivered more quickly. Members also commented that the focus on growth sectors may need to be reconsidered as many people instead worked in sectors with high turnover, such as retail and hospitality, and there was a need to create 'good work' in all sectors.
- 5.7 Members commented that there were already examples (like the strategic partnership in North West London outlined in the earlier presentation) of collaborative working, and boroughs were well-placed to support the unemployed now, with work was already underway in places to support those who needed it. It was noted that in developing the Sector Academies, it would be important for the GLA to understand what this approach would bring that the London boroughs working collaboratively could not do sooner.
- 5.8 It was also suggested that the GLA/London Councils should "borrow with pride" from existing collaborations so that the impact was felt sooner.
- 5.9 The Senior Manager – AEB Delivery explained that timelines of the Sectoral Academies depended on the GLA's budget. Members noted that there would be a clearer picture with regards to the GLA's budget by the next meeting of the Group.
- 5.10 The Senior Manager – AEB Delivery agreed with the point around using existing models, highlighting that the evidence gathering phase planned for Spring 2021 could unearth different models/programmes that could be adopted so a more immediate impact could be felt. Members heard that the GLA wanted to engage with a very broad group of stakeholders so that more voices could be heard and could feed into the recovery work.
- 5.11 Sam Gurney offered to discuss union engagement for the Sector Academies and would follow up with officers following the meeting with questions and points that focussed on the importance of transferrable skills, how AEB funding could support

Sector Academies and the need for an additional Sector Academy for the tourism and hospitality sector.

- 5.12 Mary Vine-Morris felt that a key reason that the strategic partnership in North West London had been successful was the time taken to build trust with organisations and the facilitation of this activity, which would be important for the GLA to keep in mind when developing the Sector Academies. She also highlighted that the GLA should be mindful of the current confidence of learners and potential learners. John Bennett explained that it was also important to think about how learners and potential learners could find out about the support available.
- 5.13 Tony Wilson explained that there was a need to keep self-employment in mind when developing the Sector Academies, highlighting that the self-employed historically had not had good access to skills provision. He suggested that the Sector Academies should also target older people, the low skilled, and those on low incomes.
- 5.14 The Senior Manager – AEB Delivery, Skills & Employment thanked Members for their feedback and asked Members to email her with any further comments.

#### **5.15 DECISIONS:**

##### **The Skills for Londoners Recovery Task and Finish Group:**

- (a) **Noted the presentations and the update on Sector Academies; and**
- (b) **Agreed that the London Recovery Board's rationale for focussing on the specific sectors chosen would be circulated with the Group.**

#### **6 Date of next meeting**

- 6.1 The Chair explained that officers have reviewed timelines for the next meeting and a new date would be circulated after the meeting.

#### **7 Any Other Business the Chair Considers Urgent**

- 7.1 There was none.

#### **8 Close of meeting**

- 8.1 The meeting ended at 11.00am.

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