

MINUTES

Meeting Skills for Londoners Recovery Task and Finish Group

Date Thursday 11 March 2021

Time 9.30am

Place Remote Meeting

Agendas and summary minutes of the meetings of the Skills for Londoners Recovery Task and Finish Group will be published at www.London.gov.uk/Skills-for-Londoners (except in those cases where information in the papers may be exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act). Meetings will not be held in public and are only open to those invited to attend by the co-Chairs.

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
Arinola Edeh, SfL Board Member and HOLEX
Sam Gurney, Trades Union Congress
Sarah Hernandez, Department for Work and Pensions
Michael Morley, Department for Work and Pensions
Jon Rees, Inclusion London
Olivia Vicol, Work Rights Centre
Mary Vine Morris, Association of Colleges
Tony Wilson, Institute for Employment Studies

GLA Officers:

Michelle Cuomo Boorer, Assistant Director – Skills and Employment
Rita Chircop, Senior Programme Manager, Good Growth, European Programmes Management Unit

Anna Cooban, Senior Policy Officer, Skills & Employment
Julia Harrowsmith, Senior Manager, Skills & Employment
Michael Heanue, Principal Policy Officer, 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
Vanessa Robinson, Senior Project Officer, Skills & Employment
Cameron Tait, Strategy Manager, Skills & Employment
PeiChin Tay, Principal Project Officer, Skills & Employment

Others in attendance:

Dianna Neal, Strategic Lead – Enterprise, Economy and Skills, London Councils

1 Introduction and apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Nesil Caliskan, Jordan Cummins, Rupa Grahame, Kirsi Kekki,¹ Helen Milner and Mary-Ann Stephenson.

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 10 February 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

4 Governance Update

- 4.1 Members heard that the pre-election period for the 2021 GLA (Mayor of London and London Assembly) elections would last from 22 March 2021 until Thursday 6 May 2021.
- 4.2 The Senior Board Officer explained that Skills for Londoners (SfL) subordinate bodies would be disbanded at the start of the pre-election period, and during this time officers would undertake a review of the subordinate bodies to ensure they continued to meet the needs of the SfL Board and Business Partnership and were responsive to any new policy development and manifesto commitments, particularly in light of the COVID-19 recovery work. Officers would also review the subordinate bodies to ensure they reflected Mayoral manifestos/new commitments. The Senior Board Officer explained that GLA officers would be in touch after the election to outline the next steps for the Group.
- 4.3 **RESOLVED:**
The Skills for Londoners (SfL) Recovery Task and Finish Group noted the update.

5 Academies Progress Overview: Green Skills and Creative Skills Academies

- 5.1 The Senior Manager outlined the 'Helping Londoners into Good Work' mission, explaining that the mission aimed to support Londoners into good jobs with a focus on sectors key to London's recovery. Members heard that the mission aimed to help those hit hardest by the pandemic which included young people, low paid and low

¹ Kirsi Kekki and Sam Gurney attend the SfL Recovery Task and Finish Group meetings on an alternating basis, representing the Trades Union Congress (TUC).

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skilled workers, women, the unemployed and those at risk of redundancy, older workers, disabled people, and Black Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) Londoners. The sector specific London 'Academies' aimed to support Londoners to gain relevant skills and move into good work in digital, health, social care, green economy and creative and cultural industries.

- 5.2 The Senior Policy Officer explained that the Mayor had an ambition to make London net zero carbon by 2030. She outlined several key challenges to achieving this aim, which included employers facing key skills gaps (especially around heat pump installers), Londoners not being aware of green jobs and green training opportunities, the lack of diversity in the green sector and difficulties around defining the 'green economy' in the present as well as the future.
- 5.3 Members heard that there were opportunities to create training and into-work programmes for Londoners in green sectors and to create joint skills and environment programmes. It was also noted that there were opportunities to provide routes for BAME and female Londoners to enter green industries, as well as opportunities for Londoners hardest hit by the pandemic to move into growing industries.
- 5.4 The Senior Policy Officer explained that after employer consultations, four areas came up consistently as areas where there were challenges in addressing skills gaps. These included low carbon: building technologies; low carbon: alternative fuel vehicles; green spaces; and active travel infrastructure.
- 5.5 James Lee, the Principal Policy Officer explained that COVID-19 had had a profound impact on culture and the creative industries, with long term problems including skills gaps, a lack of diversity and difficult entry routes. However, it was noted that there were still opportunities in the cultural and creative sectors around economic growth and job creation, as seen by 90% of productions being back up and running with COVID-19 safe guidance.
- 5.6 Members heard that after initial discussions with a variety of stakeholders, the Creative Sector Academy was likely to focus on film and TV, including animation and visual effects (VFX), as well as gaming.
- 5.7 It was noted that a Creative Sector roundtable, which included stakeholders representing film, TV, animation, VFX and gaming, took place on 5 March 2021. The Principal Policy Officer highlighted that stakeholders questioned whether VFX should be included in the focus of the Creative Sector Academy, as VFX was a graduate recruitment area. Stakeholders confirmed the importance of work experience and internships for the creative and cultural sector and the need for diversity in the Creative Sector Academy. Stakeholders had questions around how a Creative Sector Academy could include freelance workers and apprenticeships and how there could be further education/higher education collaboration within the Creative Sector Academy.

[Dianna Neal joined the meeting].

- 5.8 The Principal Policy Officer outlined the aim and the draft objectives for the Creative and Cultural Skills and Green Skills Sector Academies, current and potential resources for the Sector Academies, the minimum model of delivery, as well as any additional delivery asks for the Sector Academies and the next steps for this work.

5.9 RESOLVED:

The SfL Recovery Task and Finish Group noted the presentation and update.

6 Academies Deep Dive: Green Skills and Creative Skills

- 6.1 The Chair explained that members would be split into two break out groups, one focussing on the Green Skills Sector Academy and the other focussing on the Creative Skills Sector. Members would be asked to discuss the draft objectives for the Creative and Cultural Skills and Green Skills Sector Academies, what the minimum Academy model offer should be and what additional delivery asks could there be for the Sector Academies.
- 6.2 Members discussed the above questions within their breakout groups and re-joined the Group to share the key discussion points.
- 6.3 Mary Vine Morris summarised the key points discussed by the breakout group that focussed on the Creative and Cultural Skills Sector Academy:
- The importance of acknowledging what work had already taken place and that previous work should be referenced. Examples included Bectu's Theatre Diversity Action Plan which was an innovative approach to tackling the lack of diversity in the theatre workforce and the Talent Development programme of Stride (a partnership of several London boroughs including Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham and Wandsworth), which had funded a number of pilot projects in the creative sector to improve diversity within the sector.
 - There was a discussion on why Creative and Cultural Skills had been chosen as a Sector Academy, with members agreeing that it made sense to focus on one aspect of the creative sector.
 - The need for this work to be driven by evidence, specifically around what jobs there were and what jobs would be available with the right support being made available to learners, especially those learners that had been hit hardest by the pandemic.
 - The importance of informed choice – people needed to understand what they were getting involved with as well as knowing what their rights were.
 - The need to test the freelance model, referencing the new flexibility in the apprenticeship model (acquiring knowledge and skills and build over time).
 - The importance of working with employers, questioning what capacity there was to change the industry, change employers and encourage them towards 'good work' and encourage them to meet the needs of a diverse community.
 - The importance of the quality of learner experience.
 - The importance of collaboration and bringing people together, acknowledging that this would require facilitation.
- 6.4 Tony Wilson outlined the points discussed by the breakout group that focussed on the Green Skills Sector Academy:

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- There was a discussion around the suggested objectives for the Sector Academies (as outlined in the earlier presentation) with the group agreeing with most of the objectives.
- Members felt that the Green Skills Sector Academy could be framed around a smaller number of objectives which included:
 - simulating green growth and supporting the transition to net zero carbon;
 - helping employers to meet the demand for skilled work;
 - supporting inclusive jobs recovery and the need to prioritise disadvantaged groups; and
 - the need to build up capacity and capability and being flexible and responsive to future changes.
- The importance of working effectively with employers and Job Centre Plus.
- The need to focus on new green jobs rather than the content of existing jobs, acknowledging that most jobs would be affected by the transition to net zero carbon.
- The importance of supporting new entrants and disadvantaged groups, especially those impacted by the pandemic.
- Members discussed the design of the Green Skills Sector Academy, specifically focussing on potential users and audiences (individuals, employers, boroughs, providers and the public) and concluding that there were several key user audiences that needed to understand what the Sector Academy model looked like.
- The need for the starting point to build on existing provision, with members discussing Sector-based work academies (including the example of Barnet Southgate College and external wall insulation).
- The potential of building on the Quality Mark model used in the Mayor's Construction Academy.
- The need to address any gaps and identify opportunities, e.g. through changes to apprenticeships, or by extending the period of training permitted within the sector-based work academies approach.
- The importance of sharing best practice between boroughs and shining a light on what was working well.
- The importance of brand and ensuring that there was buy in to green jobs and the green brand.
- The potential gap around self-employment (as seen with the high numbers of self-employed in the construction sector) and the need for the skills system to support the self-employed.

6.5 The Senior Project Officer explained that the GLA was looking to contract an external partner organisation to conduct a research project that would identify courses which supported the acquisition of skills in 'green' sectors in London. Members heard that the research would identify existing Adult Education Budget (AEB) courses that mapped onto the skills required for occupations in 'green' sectors. The research

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would also identify courses not currently funded by the AEB, but which could be, that formed part of the full training pathways for workers to qualify for entry-level jobs in green sectors.

- 6.6 Sam Gurney highlighted that there were several critical elements of good work that needed to be covered in the Sector Academies. He explained that as part of the Sector Academy work, there was a need to make sure that people were aware of what they should expect in a job and what they were entitled to. He also felt that there was a need to prioritise those who had been disproportionately impacted by pandemic.
- 6.7 He went on to explain that sectors of the economy would need to change in order to meet the net zero carbon by 2030 challenge. Members heard that in order to meet this challenge, jobs could go and there would be a need to make sure that these workers were included in any prioritisation groups.
- 6.8 The Chair thanked the Senior Policy Officer and the Principal Policy Officer for their presentation and for facilitating the breakout groups, as well as thanking members for their input.
- 6.9 **RESOLVED:**
The SfL Recovery Task and Finish Group noted the discussion.

7 Date of next meeting

- 7.1 The next meeting of the Skills for Londoners Recovery Task and Finish Group was yet to be scheduled.

8 Any Other Business the Chair Considers Urgent

- 8.1 The Chair outlined the next steps for the Group and officers reiterated the principles and rules around GLA communication during the pre-election period.
- 8.2 Mary Vine-Morris suggested that there was a real need to understand what was going on regarding London's recovery, across London. The Senior Manager – Strategy, Policy & Relationships agreed, explained that the GLA wanted to build on good practice and confirmed that the GLA sat on several sub-regional level boards and would continue to work with the Sub-Regional Partnerships. Members heard that after the pre-election period, the GLA would have more opportunities for formal engagement and planning for this would take place during the pre-election period.
- 8.3 **RESOLVED:**
The SfL Recovery Task and Finish Group noted the discussion.

9 Close of meeting

- 9.1 The meeting ended at 10.54am.

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