

MINUTES

Meeting: Skills for Londoners Recovery Task and Finish Group – Informal Meeting

Date: Tuesday, 15 June 2021

Time: 9.30 am

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:

Jamie Mitchell, All Together (co-Chair in the chair)
Anna Devlet, British Land and SfL Business Partnership Member (co-Chair)
John Bennett, London Borough of Lambeth
Arinola Edeh, SfL Board Member and HOLEX
Sam Gurney, Trades Union Congress
Helen Milner OBE, Good Things Foundation [Item 5-8]
Mary Vine Morris, Association of Colleges

GLA Skills & Employment Officers:

Michelle Cuomo Boorer, Assistant Director – Skills and Employment
David Lee, Senior Manager – Economic Recovery, Strategy and Communications
Laura Marshall, Senior Board Officer, Skills & Employment (Clerk)
Andrew Moffat, Regional Lead, London Enterprise Adviser Network, Team London (Volunteering)
Forogh Rahmani, Senior Manager – Strategy, Policy & Relationships, Skills & Employment
Atif Shafique, Senior Project Officer, Skills & Employment

Others in attendance:

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

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Inna Yordanova, Principal Policy and Project Officer - Employment & Inclusive Growth,
London Councils

1. Introduction and apologies (Item 1)

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the informal meeting.
- 1.2 Members heard that Kirsi Kekki had left the Trades Union Congress. Kirsi was a member of the SfL Business Partnership as well as a member of this Group. Members noted that the Clerk was currently drafting a thank you letter to be sent from the Mayor.
- 1.3 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Nesil Caliskan, Jordan Cummins, Rupa Grahame, Sarah Hernandez, Michael Morley, Jon Rees, Mary-Ann Stephenson, Olivia Vicol, and Tony Wilson.

2. Declarations of Interest (Item 2)

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. Actions arising from previous meeting (Item 3)

3.1 RESOLVED:

The actions arising from the previous meeting were noted.

4. Hospitality Roundtable (Item 4)

- 4.1 The Chair explained that he had chaired a Hospitality Roundtable with businesses from the sector on 8 June 2021.
- 4.2 Members heard that the following challenges were raised during the Roundtable:
 - There had been a disruption to the pipeline of young people coming into the industry during the pandemic.
 - The jobs and skills that were most in need in the short term were security, door staff, housekeeping and kitchen teams. Many of these roles were previously filled by EU workers and agency staff.
 - In London, a significant proportion of foreign workers in the sector had left the country, and many were not returning from furlough into the hospitality industry.
 - English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), digital skills and languages in hospitality and tourism were needed.

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- Staff and skills shortages had created an inflationary pressure on salaries due to a high demand for skills in the sector and poaching of staff between competitors.
- Many felt that there was a negative perception of the hospitality industry as a career of choice and suggested that there was a need to change the image of the sector as a positive career choice.
- Employers found it difficult to connect with people who were seeking work.
- Many suggested that apprenticeships provided opportunities for the industry to attract new talent.
- The extension of the congestion charge into the evening had increased expenses for workers who worked night shifts and previously drove to work.
- Diversity and inclusion also needed to be addressed. Large parts of the industry were male dominant, such as security and kitchen staff.

4.3 The Chair explained that the following actions were underway or had been proposed to respond to the challenges outlined above, including:

- The extension of the sector skills academies programme to include hospitality.
- Producing a guidance document for hospitality businesses on existing programmes/support and contact details of government representatives.
- Working with apprenticeship levy paying businesses to pledge their unspent levy to create new hospitality apprenticeships.
- Continuing to support calls by the industry for a 'coronavirus recovery visa' to help bring foreign workers back quickly after lockdown.
- Promoting the sector as a career option for Londoners.
- Encouraging the adoption of the London Living Wage and Good Work Standard to address the challenges of low wages, job security, employee development/ progression and diversity in the sector.
- Officers also planned to organise similar Roundtables for other key sectors.

4.4 Mary Vine Morris questioned whether training providers and colleges within the sector had been invited to the Roundtable. The Assistant Director – Skills & Employment explained that the Roundtable only included businesses from the hospitality sector and there was some representation from the Sub-Regional Partnerships (SRPs). She highlighted that the key observation from the Roundtable was that the business community were not clear on what services were available to them, suggesting that there was a role for the Mayor to promote what services were available and how business could access these services. Members heard that the Skills & Employment Unit were taking this feedback away and looking at it from a marketing/communications perspective.

4.5 Mary Vine Morris highlighted that providers needed to have an input, for example, she felt that the London Progression Collaboration was better at informing

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employers on what the offer was than a Kickstart – Guide for Employers leaflet. The Chair highlighted that UK Hospitality had a key role to play as they were a powerful advocate for the industry, and they did a lot of work in this area.

- 4.6 Arinola Edeh suggested that there was a disconnect in terms of what businesses from all sectors were saying they needed and the fact that there were people in need of employment. She explained that it was important that the opportunities were visible and there was a need to make sure that the right people were in front of employers. The Chair agreed, highlighting that this was the reason the work of the Sector Academies would be so important moving forward.
- 4.7 Sam Gurney explained that it was important to state that there were calls for a ‘coronavirus recovery visa’ but this could not be tied to employment sectors. Members heard that there would be a danger of precedence, where a visa was tied to an employer which could leave an employee open to exploitation. He explained that the workings of the coronavirus recovery visa would be very important and was happy to pick these points up outside of the meeting with officers.
- 4.8 **RESOLVED:**
The Skills for Londoners (SfL) Recovery Task and Finish Group noted the update.

5. Update on the Career Hubs (Item 5)

- 5.1 The Regional Lead, London Enterprise Adviser Network, Team London (Volunteering) outlined the work of the London Enterprise Adviser Network (LEAN), current LEAN delivery and its impact, and the future of the LEAN beyond 2021.
- 5.2 He highlighted that the GLA were due to establish four Careers Hubs in London in September 2021. Members heard that there would be a Careers Hub in each of London’s SRP areas and each Hub would build on the work of the existing LEAN in that area. They would ensure that all young people had the information, skills and experiences they would need to make informed choices about their future careers.
- 5.3 Members heard that the GLA had pledged to make the Careers Hubs available to every mainstream secondary school, Further Education (FE) college, alternative provision institution and special school in London by 2024. Members noted that this pledge aligned with Government commitments to the continued expansion of the Careers Hub model across the country in the “Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth” report.
- 5.4 The Group heard that the Careers Hubs programme was led by The Careers & Enterprise Company and was match-funded by the Department for Education. The value of the proposed expansion was £11.5m over three years.

[Helen Milner joined the meeting].

- 5.5 The Chair explained that it was important for the GLA to ensure that enterprise

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was a career option which was embedded into any hubs programme. He explained that younger people were naturally entrepreneurial and business creation was an economic driver. The Regional Lead confirmed that there was no dedicated strand for enterprise as part of the Careers Hub, but members heard that the GLA was working with an organisation called Skills Builder. This organisation reviewed the skills someone would need for future careers, which included enterprise and entrepreneurship as important skills.

- 5.6 Members noted that over 40 per cent of the enterprise advisers came from small and medium-sized enterprises, explaining that there was a lot of enterprise representation for those working with schools and colleges through the Careers Hubs. The Chair explained that he would be happy to follow up on this issue outside of the meeting, highlighting that he had written a policy paper titled 'Enterprise and Youth Unemployment – the Hidden Opportunity' which he offered to share with officers and members.
- 5.7 Anna Devlet highlighted that she was keen to understand what being a 'cornerstone employer' would mean for the Careers Hubs programme and asked to pick this up with officers outside of the meeting.
- 5.8 Several members felt that the name 'Careers Hub' should be reconsidered, specifically highlighting that younger people had a positive impression of entrepreneurs and if the name was not right, this may result in cutting off a route automatically. Linked to the naming of the Careers Hubs, Anna Devlet explained that it was also important for work to be done on the promotion of certain sectors (such as retail and hospitality) as good careers and changing the mindset of young people, their networks and families.
- 5.9 Arinola Edeh suggested that the work of the Sector Academies should be linked to the cornerstone employers of the Careers Hub programme to avoid fragmentation of initiatives trying to achieve similar aims. She explained that employers were time-poor, and it was important to make everything as simple and linked up as possible. The Regional Lead confirmed that he had been working closely with the Sector Academies team, explaining that he had suggested that it may be useful for the businesses that were engaging with the Sector Academies programme to nominate someone to sit on the cornerstone employer groups to link the two.
- 5.10 Mary Vine Morris suggested that the Careers Hub model sounded like it was primarily aimed at schools rather than colleges. She questioned whether the Careers Hubs had been designed to address the issues of adult skills and adult careers guidance, specifically querying how this programme would link in with the 'No Wrong Door' approach. She felt that the Careers Hub programme was a small part of the solution but not the answer to the skills challenge that the GLA had set itself in London.
- 5.11 The Senior Manager – Strategy, Policy & Relationships agreed that the Careers Hubs on their own, would not solve the overall careers challenge. She also agreed that the Careers Hubs were primarily directed at young people. Members heard that the GLA were trying to make the programme work for colleges and confirmed that it would be useful to have a conversation with FE and adult learning providers

outside of the meeting to understand how the LEAN be improved and how the other strands of Careers Hubs could be used to support adult learning.

- 5.12 Members heard that the next item would provide more information on the 'No Wrong Door' approach. The Senior Manager – Strategy, Policy & Relationships explained that officers were looking at the relationship the GLA had with Prospects,¹ to be more responsive to skills needs and to understand what the GLA could do to support the join up the variety of services in place.

5.13 **RESOLVED:**

- (a) The update, presentation and subsequent discussion were noted;**
- (b) The Clerk would circulate a policy paper written by the Chair, titled 'Enterprise and Youth Unemployment – the Hidden Opportunity' after the meeting; and**
- (c) Members agreed that it would be useful for GLA officers to set up a meeting with FE and adult services providers to discuss how the other strands of the Careers Hub programme could support adult learning.**

6. Update on the 'No Wrong Door' Approach (Item 6)

- 6.1 The Senior Project Officer, GLA and the Principal Policy and Project Officer - Employment & Inclusive Growth, London Councils talked the Group through the 'No Wrong Door' proposals, specifically providing an overview of the key features and desired outcomes, the key objectives of the initiative, the proposed interventions and how the proposals aligned with the Careers Hubs. Members also heard details around how the GLA and London Councils had engaged and would engage with businesses further, explaining what the user journey and 'minimum viable product' of the research and innovation programme could look like at a high level.
- 6.2 Arinola Edeh explained that there was a need to raise the profile of what was already available, and this would need to be at the core of the 'No Wrong Door' approach. She highlighted that she had concerns around taking a total SRP level focus and suggested that a more local level could work better (for example, every day people were unlikely to know which sub-region they lived in). She felt that a pan-London campaign was needed and branding that could then be aligned for local use.
- 6.3 The Senior Project Officer explained that the GLA and London Councils had spoken with boroughs and SRP leads to discuss what level of engagement was needed, highlighting that a level of flexibility would be built into the design of the Integration Hubs.
- 6.4 Members questioned whether the Integration Hubs would be virtual or physical,

¹ Prospects provide a portfolio of graduate career and postgraduate study recruitment options and work in close partnership with Higher Education (HE) and FE professional bodies and government to deliver services that benefit the sector as a whole.

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questioning how the Hubs would work. Arinola Edeh highlighted that infrastructure within the skills and employment system already existed and it would be important to map what was already available. The Senior Project Officer confirmed that the Integration Hubs would be virtual, and the allocated budget would be used to recruit staff who would deliver the activities of the Integration Hubs.

- 6.5 Members heard that there was a mix of people needing support, including highly skilled people who needed to know who to go to for help, as well as people with low/no skills who also needed access to services. Arinola Edeh highlighted that the proposed Toolkits would need to be useful and accessible to the different types of people who were at different stages of their career. She explained that there was a need to understand the different personas that would need support and there should not be a 'one size fits all' approach for this work.
- 6.6 The Senior Project Officer agreed that it was important to understand who these interventions would support and how. Members heard that the GLA were planning on carrying out some research to understand user journeys and the barriers/opportunities to support learners. Arinola Edeh explained that a lot of work had already been done on understanding user journeys, barriers and opportunities for learners at a local authority and SRP level. She suggested that officers should discuss this issue with borough and SRP leads so that funding was not used on research, where intelligence was already available.
- 6.7 The Senior Manager – Strategy, Policy & Relationships suggested that officers could develop some suggestions on what the research could focus on and bring the suggestions back to a future meeting to consult with members.
- 6.8 **RESOLVED:**
 - (a) The update, presentation and subsequent discussion were noted; and**
 - (b) Members agreed that suggestions on research topics/questions would be brought to a future meeting for discussion.**

7. Date of Next Meeting (Item 7)

- 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 (Item 8)

- 8.1 There was none.

9. Close of Meeting

- 9.1 The meeting ended at 10.50am.

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