

A CITY FOR ALL LONDONERS

Economy Workshop
23rd November 2016, 9.30 – 13.00

Further Education and Skills Table 2 Session 1

Facilitator in bold – facilitator comments in bold

Respondents in regular text

These notes are a summary of the conversation

Session 1, Table 2

Michael Heanue Facilitator

Jamie Saddler, London Councils

Verina Glaessner, London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies

Carole Williams, Hackney Council

Janaki Mahadevan, Newham Council

Mary Vine-Morris, Association of Colleges

Mandy Skinner, Richmond and Wandsworth Councils

David Pack, GLA

Jonathan Slater, London Voluntary Service Council

**We have a series of prepared questions or we can discuss on a wider basis.
Introductions and main interests.**

Skills and apprenticeships. Where is our role in helping local government, colleges and employers?

Represent groups lobbying on policy.

What is our Borough's contribution and recognising the different needs within different Boroughs?

Future skills and the economy.

What are your thoughts on question 1?

Include voluntary and social enterprises when talking about providers. Keep mentioning importance of this sector.

Further education is not just colleges – wide variety of independent providers.

Fragmentation of what is delivered. Get everyone to talk. There exist duplication and gaps, weakness and strengths – co-ordination will help to see these.

What are your thoughts on question 2? Government skills plan. Impact vocational and technical skills alongside academic routes. Employers at the centre of this conversation.

Skills devolution key aspect.

Employers – should continue to build career progression and pathways.

Whose job is that?

It is for employers to be more proactive.

Colleges to provide information and keep up to date with skills that employers want.

Co-ordinate at local government level.

Significant cultural change needed. Hearts and minds as well as financial.

Simplify options for employers. Advocacy role for local government.

Promote high-quality work experience. Give opportunities to young people. Schools don't have a statutory duty to offer work experience any more.

Who are we talking to now? The traditional way of inviting in businesses does not work anymore. SME sector more difficult to make and maintain a relationship with.

Work experience – need a different approach. What is the new version?

Employers' expectations are increasing. Need a dose of reality as to what is needed for jobs.

Some employers will not engage in the conversation. Apprenticeships offer opportunities to employers. Local government has a role in this. Risk – low-level jobs deleted and replaced with apprenticeships.

90 percent of parents think apprenticeships are a good idea, but only 35 percent think they are a good choice for their child.

Work experience is token, box ticking. Needs to be a genuine experience. Include all sectors.

What are your thoughts on question 3?

Levy – some companies will see as a tax and others as an opportunity.

Local authorities as employers. Provide apprenticeships. Talk to employers with high turnover of staff as to how apprenticeships can help them.

Parent attitude – branding issue here.

Apprenticeships need to be less constrained.

Importance of first experience of getting an apprenticeship – this can be poor. Range and quality of opportunities. Finding information.

Colleges are in a position to take the lead and demystify apprenticeships to employers. Get the message out.

Apprenticeship pay – there is work to do with employers here. London living wage. Employers need to think about how they use apprenticeships.

Need to be inclusive of people with disabilities.

Role of schools. Expanding connections. Providing comprehensive careers advice.

Higher education and apprenticeships should not be mutually exclusive.

More bridging between vocational and academic structure.

Skills plan about to come out. This will happen. Challenge in accessing SMEs. Does London need specific sector skills strategies?

Care and construction struggling. Need to get more people in. Might benefit from a specific approach.

Framework – London wide, sub regionally.

Strategies – not one fit for everything. Social care pressing priority.

Need a concerted effort to increase understanding, analysis of need. Creative and digital sectors moving very quickly. Need to change some of the ways we work.

With health and social care some providers are failing. Local authority almost pushed to start again as a provider.

Inadequate training for health and social care. Encourage change of career.

Does reskilling need to come into sharper focus? When an industry goes down, need for retraining. Change in economy too. Need to think about reskilling early on. Need to ensure that older workers are not left behind.

Care sector – need to address the gender pay gap. Primarily women, low skill and low pay.

In-work progression is as critical as reskilling.

Perception of care sector – needs to change.

Set up specialist advisory groups to feed into groups of employers. Encourage providers and employers to come together.

Employers don't know what skills they need or will need in five years' time.

Bring together local authority, employer and college. Area reviews – make more resilient and take momentum forward.

Conference – risk that it will just be a lot of talking. Set themes – governance, devolution deal.

Providers working with each other rather than competing. Create a pathway.

Barriers – many other providers. Bring together to create pathways in one Borough.

Creating real links that are well co-ordinated.

People with high-level needs and disabilities – employers nervous about taking on. LAs have role in working with employers and providing support.

Work and health programme in London.

Need to bring our discussion to an end and identify three points.

1. A clear role for skills for Londoners

- **Set out expectation and show leadership for sub-regional skills and employment board**
- **Need to get the language right – include all provider types**

2. Apprenticeship

- **Levy is a lever but also an opportunity to set things right eg pay and perception, perhaps through the business contract**

3. Whole-life journey

- **Need to get careers development and advice at the right times, not just year 9**
 - **Build on London Ambitions and its 100 hours' experience of world of work**
 - **Reskilling**
 - **Contribution of all providers and recognition of where learning takes place**
 - **Accessibility**
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Further Education and Skills

Table 2 Session 2

Facilitator in bold - facilitator comments in bold

Respondents in regular text

Session 2, Table 2

Michael Heanue: Facilitator

Jayne McCoy: London Borough of Sutton

Eliza Easton: Creative Industries Federation

Luke Ward: West London Alliance

Vicky Clark: Haringey Council

Graham Hart: Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Alisdair Aldous: University of the Arts London

Susannah Wilks: Cross River Partnership

Introductions. We have four questions but do not have to stick with these. At the end of discussion we will come up with three key points. What are your thoughts on question 1?

Closer relationship with employers. Offer in tune with what employers' need.

This is set out in skills plan. Is employer voice there?

Higher education provision – the employers are represented in course validation. Extensive employer engagement, direct and indirect.

SMEs – less understanding of skill levels, what can be taught? Market demand often doesn't meet employer demand.

What about employability skills?

Provision of these skills in HE is important but aim primarily to teach subject. Skills can be relevant to subject. Creative young people may think degree best way so take HE option, which does not necessarily give you the skills you need for work.

SMEs in creative sector work well with creative institutions due to proximity. Mutual spaces, good management, tangible results for both and expectation of these. Policy – institutions judged by employability of students. Shift in what good employability looks like.

Fine art course – if after 6 months you are in employment, it is not a good course.

Good employment – if working, should not have to be topped up by the state.

Need more understanding of employment need. What are the vacancies that exist?

Find out employers' skills needs. Engage with local business – meet regularly. Providers training in areas where there are no jobs. LA can play role – contact businesses and bring together with the training providers.

Important to focus on local-level approach to meet different needs.

Local and sub regional.

Discussion with colleges – crucial relationship with LA.

Area skills review – diminishing resources to LA. Markets to 16-year-olds. Funding flows so that employers are sending signals as to their needs. Risk of replicating the national system. Too little about integration of employers into the system. Should LA be performing the mediating role? Why not employers talking directly to providers?

Question of visibility and relevance of FE in minds of businesses.

There is a disconnect. Colleges have lost their place.

Careers advice – always been patchy. Victim of cuts and savings. Need decent-quality careers advice.

Teachers are institutionalised to and from public sector.

Parental influence doesn't always look forward to the future.

Careers advice – behind what is happening in the employment sector. Miss opportunities.

Skills can be hard to identify by an employer.

What about question 4 – construction, health and social care?

Strategies need to be responsive and fit for the future.

Strategy just means a different set of people directing things. Colleges could respond to employers' needs.

Design and technology increase in need for people in this sector – problems with teaching now so cutting off future employees.

London needs a loud voice in lifelong approach.

Identify sectors and have accountability on subjects.

Skills for Londoners addresses this.

We are here in London at a workshop dealing with the economy, yet there is only one employer in the room from the private sector.

Employer sectors should be leading the strategy.

Financial sector does in-house training or commissions training from the private sector. It has the resources to get what it needs. Other sectors don't have the same resources.

Mayor's London Enterprise Panel being set up. Should cut across all sectors. Should not be competing for resources.

LEP, skills for Londoners, task force – 15 vocational routes. Why are we reinventing the wheel?

In Haringey the LA brokered a successful relationship between FE college and Siemens. Haringey small economy – need to look outside the Borough. Pressure from schools – encouraged to go to university regardless of ability. FE has the lower ability learners. Need key skills.

German programme where large employers bring in young workers and train them.

Working life – retraining and transferable skills.

Need to have a London voice for what is needed. For example, at national level art and design and design and technology are no longer delivered in many schools, but there is a shortage of these skills in this fast-growing sector in London.

There is an impact on engineering too – there is an academic route for engineers but not a design and technology route.

Schools lose money by not providing academic qualifications.

Skills plan will challenge that view

Middle ability cohort are neglected. For academic learners the pathway is clearer. Middle ability have the choice. Need to give guidance. A really good apprenticeship should be a positive choice. At a careers fair in Haringey young people had a real appetite for information.

Problem goes back to educational system. Not teaching skills for today's jobs or environment. LA has less influence.

Creative industries could not adopt the German system of apprenticeships. London is ahead in this sector.

Employment skills and entrepreneurial skills – are they the same? Many commonalities.

Giving information about opportunities versus enabling young people to be able to find out for themselves. Get young people to design a system. Maintenance of such systems is difficult.

Employers open their doors to students coming in.

London Ambitions – 100 hours' experience of world of work.

Apprenticeship levy is good.

Risk around levy – 50 percent of business will see it as tax. Not addressing cultural issues.

It is the expert group's job to keep an eye on their standards.

How do you incentivise employers to use levy to address skills shortage rather than on, say, admin training for their staff, where standards already exist? Incentives have to be funded.

18+ adult learners – how are their needs met?

Engage and reduce isolation.

Over-50s out of work – different approach. Growing need. Mid-life learners and reskillers need to be able to navigate through system also.

Now we need to identify our three key points.

1. Employer engagement

- **LA led**
- **Employers themselves**
- **How can we better enable this? Funding lever?**

2. Skills plan

- **Knowledge features too**
- **Make sure linked directly to schools**
- **Foster entrepreneurialism – ability to self-start and navigate a complex system**

3. Local political levers

- **London is a different economy**
- **Relevance of some elements of national policies eg EBacc, RE**