GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

Skills for Londoners Board

MINUTES

Meeting Skills for Londoners

Construction Sub-Group

Date Thursday 24 June 2020

Time 1.00pm

Place Remote Meeting

Agendas and minutes of the meetings of this Group are published at www.London.gov.uk/Skills-for-Londoners (except in those cases where information may be exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act).

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

Members present:

Cllr Peter John (Chair)
Bunmi Atta
Steve Drury
Yvonne Kelly
Seamus Keogh
Brian McKeown
Tom McLoughlin
Jessica Mellor-Clark
Martyn Price
Caroline Roberts
Janette Welton-Pai

Also in attendance:

Matthew Bracewell, Senior Project Officer, Skills & Employment Daniella Davila Aquije, Principal Projects Officer, Housing & Land [Item 9] Julia Harrowsmith, Senior Manager -Programme Delivery, Skills & Employment Michael Heanue, Principal Policy Officer, Skills & Employment Francesca Lewis, Interim Head of Housing Strategy, Housing & Land [Item 5 and 9] Laura Marshall, Senior Board Officer, Skills & Employment Laura Miller, TfL Beth Penwarden, Principal Policy Officer, Skills & Employment Rachel Roberts, MCA Programme Manager, Skills & Employment Sarah Spindler, Senior Project Officer, Delivery, Skills & Employment

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1 Introductions and apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the Group and led a round of introductions.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence were received from Andy Carson, Shenaaz Chenia, Mark Farmer, Paul Gallagher and Jenny Herdman.

2 Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 3.1 Members were asked to approve the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 3.2 Seamus Keogh noted that the Sub-Group had also met on 19 March 2020 and suggested that the minutes from that meeting should be agreed as well.
- 3.3 The Senior Board Officer explained that due to the restrictions put in place due to COVID-19 the week the Sub-Group had been due to meet, the formal agenda for the meeting on 19 March 2020 was not followed and the time was instead used for an informal remote meeting and formal minutes were not produced. The Sub-Group largely used the time to discuss the COVID-19 construction industry response, and an informal meeting note was circulated to members of the Sub-Group.
- 3.4 The Chair asked that the informal meeting note was appended to the minutes of this meeting (see Appendix A).

3.5 RESOLVED:

- (a) The minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2019 were agreed as a correct record; and
- (b) The meeting note from the informal meeting held on 19 March 2020 was noted.

4 Actions Arising

- 4.1 The Sub-Group received a report detailing the actions arising from the previous meeting.
- 4.2 It was noted that the Sub-Group's Terms of Reference had been updated to include "housing enabling infrastructure." Members heard that the Skills for Londoners (SfL)

Board would need to formally agree any changes to the Terms of Reference at its next formal meeting.

- 4.3 In response to a query, the Senior Board Officer explained that the formal agenda circulated for the meeting of 19 March 2020 was replaced at short notice for an informal discussion on the COVID-19 construction sector response, as noted at Item 3 above. As the formal discussion was not taking place, Members had been invited to submit comments on the agenda items to officers via email to discuss any questions or points that they wanted to raise.
- 4.4 Seamus Keogh reflected that, as members had not discussed the papers in a meeting setting, some of the actions had not been completed. Officers would revisit this after the meeting and an updated report would be brought to a future meeting.

4.5 RESOLVED:

- (a) The actions arising from the previous meeting were noted; and
- (b) The updated Terms of Reference were noted.

5 Construction and COVID-19 - Outlook and GLA Response

- 5.1 The Sub-Group received an update on the impact of COVID-19 on the construction sector and the GLA response. The presentation included an update on the impact of COVID-19 with regard to the make-up of the market, site closures, productivity and the pipeline of work and the direct impact on the construction workforce.
- 5.2 Beth Penwarden, a Principal Project Officer, outlined several key points which included:
 - Prior to COVID-19, construction was already vulnerable to high levels of insolvency. This point would be important to remember when thinking about training and longer term skills planning.
 - The majority of sites had reopened, and the larger developers had worked hard
 to respond quickly as government policy had changed to allow the reopening of
 sites. These larger developers had worked closely with the Mayor and the GLA
 to make sure that the reopening of sites was done as safely as possible.
- 5.3 Members heard that Tom Copley, Deputy Mayor for Housing, had established a new COVID-19 Housing Delivery Taskforce in April 2020 bringing together senior representatives of local government, the housing association sector, the private sector, membership bodies and trade unions.

- 5.4 The Taskforce would develop a comprehensive and holistic recovery plan for the housing sector focussing on what would be needed to address significant challenges to housing delivery.
- 5.5 It was noted that the aim was to publish the Recovery Plan in early-mid July 2020.
- 5.6 The Sub-Group heard that the Housing & Land team had also set up a larger expert panel of around 50 sector representatives to speak on specific issues. Members noted that the officers from the Housing & Land team engaged with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) regularly to discuss issues.
- 5.7 The Chair explained that there was an obvious issue around London failing to deliver a sufficient number of new homes for the last two decades.
- 5.8 The presentation also highlighted findings from Construction Leadership Council's *People Survey* which included 60% of companies expecting to take on fewer apprentices at the next intake in September 2020 and on average, those that paid the Apprenticeship Levy expected to lose 31% of their Levy pot at the end of this year, due to not being able to spend it within the two-year timeframe. Martyn Price queried the London Progression Collaboration (LPC) and the opportunity to put the unspent Levy funds in the LPC to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- 5.9 Beth Penwarden highlighted that officers and the Hub leads were working closely with the LPC and that she would be happy to talk this issue through with Cross Industry Construction Apprenticeship Task Force outside the meeting.

5.10 RESOLVED:

- (a) The update was noted; and
- (b) Beth Penwarden would talk through the idea of putting the unspent Levy funds in the LPC to help small and medium (SMEs) with the Cross Industry Construction Apprenticeship Task Force outside the meeting.

6 Transport for London (TfL) Hub

6.1 The Chair welcomed Laura Miller to present an introduction on the TfL Hub to the Sub-Group. The presentation included an overview of TfL's property development journey, a progress update on TfL's Mayor's Construction Academy (MCA) Hub, an assessment of the positives and challenges for the TfL Hub and the COVID-19 response.

[Steve Drury left the meeting]

6.2 During the subsequent conversation the following points were discussed:

- How the TfL MCA Hub would be impacted by TfL revenue shortfalls caused by COVID-19. Laura Miller explained that this was still an unknown.
- The future of onsite training and the likelihood that "blended learning" would remain a feature of training in a post COVID-19 world.
- The challenge of data collection/management and the need for the industry to get better at sharing resources.
- The impact virtual learning has had on attendance and pass rates. Members noted that since the TfL Hub had launched virtual learning three weeks previously, the learning sessions had been 100% attended and there had been a 100% pass rate.
- Members questioned how virtual learning could feed into ways of learning and whether it would appeal to a wider scope of learners after COVID-19. Laura Miller explained that "blended learning" would be explored with training partners.
- 6.3 The Chair and members thanked Laura Miller for attending the meeting and highlighted that they would like more MCA Hubs to present at Sub-Group meetings in the future.

6.4 RESOLVED:

- (a) The update was noted; and
- (b) Members requested for more MCA Hubs to come and present at Sub Group meeting in the future.

7 Interim Evaluation

- 7.1 Matthew Bracewell, a Senior Project Officer, explained that the GLA had commissioned ICF to deliver the evaluation on Round 1 of the MCA programme and to provide insights into whether the MCA programme had addressed key challenges in the construction sector, particularly in relation to provision across London.
- 7.2 Members noted that ICF had had issues with staff changes which had led to a delay with the evaluation. The Sub Group heard that the interim report had been received but the GLA had gone back to ICF and asked for further analysis. The updated interim report was expected by the end of July 2020 and would be circulated to the Sub-Group for comment.
- 7.3 Matthew Bracewell outlined some of the findings from the interim report. The discussion that followed focussed on the findings and early policy development being considered that was yet to be formally approved.

¹ Blended learning is an approach to education that combines online educational materials and opportunities for interaction online with traditional place-based classroom methods.

7.4 RESOLVED:

The update was noted.

8 Programme Update – Post COVID-19

a) Mayor's Construction Academy Hubs - Round 1 & 2

- 8.1 Members received an update on the MCA Hubs Round 1 and Round 2. It was noted that due to COVID-19, Round 1 Hubs had pivoted delivery from skills shortages to business support. All hubs had been promoting the London Growth Hub through local networks.
- 8.2 Members heard that MCA Hubs Round 1 were slowly returning to business as usual as colleges and construction sites reopened but there were some long term challenges that the MCA team were supporting MCA Hubs with.
- 8.3 It was noted that quarter 4 (Q4) performance reporting had been impacted due to COVID-19 and that reconciliation of this reporting was planned for quarter 1 (Q1).
- 8.4 Rachel Roberts, the MCA Programme Manager provided an update on MCA Hubs Round 2, explaining that there were four Hubs with grant awards totalling £1,000,297. The Round 2 Hubs were due to go live in March 2020, but rollout was paused due to the lockdown restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 8.5 Members heard that the Round 2 Hubs were hoping to go live in quarter 2 (Q2) 2020/21. The Hubs were working with the GLA to explore any changes to delivery models, spend and outputs. It was noted that subject to approval, the plan was to extend delivery of the MCA Hubs Round 2 until June 2022.

b) Careers Campaign

- 8.6 Members heard that the London Enterprise Advisor Network (LEAN) helped young people build the skills and experiences they needed to lead successful futures by connecting businesses with schools and colleges. It was noted that there was a construction specific aspect to the LEAN which was funded as part of the Construction Careers Campaign. This had been approved for expansion (with additional SEND provision) for a further 12 months.
- 8.7 Michael Heanue, the Principal Policy Officer, explained that one reason for this expansion approval was that it would unlock funding from the Department for Education (DfE) to which it would be matched. Members noted that an update on the impact of this would come to a future meeting.
- 8.8 The Sub-Group heard that the Workforce Integration Network (WIN) aimed to help improve pathways for underrepresented groups into the construction sector. It was

noted that some proposals had to be reworked due to COVID-19 and the closures of schools/colleges and restrictions placed on stakeholders involved. It was noted that proposals had not been approved yet but an update on this item could be provided to the Sub-Group by email.

- 8.9 Michael Heanue explained that the Skills London event that usually took place at ExCeL London in mid-late November had been cancelled this year, due to COVID-19. It was noted that the GLA planned to hold back some of the money that was assigned to support this activity so the GLA could provide Skills London with its full support in 2021.
- 8.10 Members heard that the Skills & Employment Unit had earmarked funding for other activities. Due to COVID-19, these activities were unable to take place and funding would therefore be reallocated to support the wider GLA recovery response.

c) Quality Mark

- 8.11 Beth Penwarden explained that the MCA team had undertaken a review of existing providers and were in the process of scoring new applicants at the end of March 2020, however the decision was taken to suspend the review process.
- 8.12 Members heard that the MCA team hoped to put forward recommendations to the Sub Group for approval by the Jules Pipe, Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills, by the end of the summer.
- 8.13 Beth Penwarden explained that the MCA Provider Network met on 9 June 2020. During this meeting several projects had been identified to take forward with CITB, specifically looking at a London Construction Training Directory (ensuring that a register was developed that captured the broader scope of construction training).
- 8.14 Members noted that the MCA team still planned to open Round 3 of the Quality Mark in Spring 2021.

d) Stakeholder Engagement

- 8.15 The Sub-Group heard that Beth Penwarden had set up numerous phone calls with employers to understand how they were feeling in the current climate.
- 8.16 Members heard that Beth Penwarden had planned several workshops on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and mental health and wellbeing. It was noted that there was an MCA Employer Group Roundtable on 28 February 2020 which discussed these issues. Beth Penwarden explained that the planned workshops would not continue in the current climate, but work was happening.
- 8.17 Beth Penwarden explained that there was a real risk of letting the EDI focus slide as the sector responds to issues arising from the impact of COVID-19. Members heard that Beth Penwarden had been speaking with professional networks (such as

Women into Construction, for example) to discuss whether they would like to lead the conversation on this issue.

- 8.18 The Chair explained that a key recommendation proposed when the MCA was first being conceived was that the MCA was not just for employers but also for the public that might not have thought about a career in construction. The Chair queried whether there was any evidence to show that the public were recognising that the MCA was the right place to get construction training and the MCA Quality Mark was making a difference.
- 8.19 Beth Penwarden explained that the MCA Quality Mark had been useful in conversations about choosing training providers. However, it was noted that a lot of the work that the MCA Hubs were doing went through partnerships and relationships. Therefore, the learners would not necessarily know that they were engaging with an MCA Hub.

[Caroline Roberts left the meeting]

- 8.20 Martyn Price explained that collaboration between partners and employers working together was a real success for the Quality Mark and the MCA brand. He suggested that more needed to be done through social media and/or marketing that recognised the MCA brand. The Chair agreed arguing that more could be done to brand Hubs as MCA Hubs.
- 8.21 Jessica Mellor Clark questioned whether work could be done to promote best practice around staggered start and finish times on site to help support the thousands of workers who stream onto sites each day. The Chair agreed with this suggestion and explained that local authorities' cooperation would be required.
- 8.22 Jessica Mellor Clark explained that she had received feedback from her employees about safety, specifically their safety getting to and from work using TfL services and mental health and wellbeing. It was noted that COVID-19 had shown that staggered site times had worked. Jessica Mellor Clark and Janette Welton-Pai suggested that COVID-19 had presented the construction sector with an opportunity to change the way things were done on sites as a whole.
- 8.23 Beth Penwarden explained that this issue had been picked up by the Housing Delivery Taskforce and was supported by the Mayor as part of the safe operation of sites. The Chair offered to bring this issue to light with Local Authority partners.

8.24 RESOLVED:

The update was noted.

9 Construction Skills Shortages and the London Local Labour Initiative (LLLI)

- 9.1 Daniella Davila Aquije, a Principal Projects Officer provided the Sub-Group with an update on construction skills shortages and the London Local Labour Initiative (LLLI). The presentation included information on the Mayoral response to the construction skills shortage, benefits and challenges around S106 agreement and local labour requirements, detail on the LLLI 2018 proposal, and detail on the LLLI current proposal.
- 9.2 Seamus Keogh queried when the standardised S106 approach would be expected. Members heard that there had been officer level conversations with local authorities and the initial response had been encouraging. The COVID-19 pandemic had impacted this work but GLA officers were carrying out desk-based research to better understand changes in the sector following the pandemic and there would be continued engagement with key stakeholders.
- 9.3 The Chair asked that an update on S106 and LLLI with timelines be added to the agenda for the Sub-Group's meeting in September 2020.
- 9.4 Bunmi Atta suggested that a formal process across planning consent should be developed. Members heard that she was concerned that the LLLI would be voluntary under the current proposals. She suggested that it would be helpful if the LLLI could align with the London Plan so that the LLLI was a minimum requirement.
- 9.5 Bunmi Atta felt that it was important that the LLLI timelines were not out of sync with obtaining planning consent and existing consent as it should not be a disincentive for developers, contractors and housing associations that are ahead of the curve with this work.
- 9.6 The Principal Projects Officer explained that the LLLI current proposal was still being refined and all feedback from members would be taken on board to shape the final proposal. Jessica Mellor Clark highlighted that Lendlease would be happy to feed into these conversations.
- 9.7 Yvonne Kelly queried whether S106 would solely focus on apprenticeships. She suggested that consideration needed to be given to the pipelines to an apprenticeship via industry placements, T Levels and traineeships.

9.8 RESOLVED

- (a) The content of the Construction Skills Shortage and LLLI presentation was noted; and
- (b) An update on S106 and LLLI with timelines would be added to the agenda for the Sub-Group's meeting in September 2020.

10 Date of next meeting

10.1 The next meeting of the Skills for Londoners Construction Sub-Group was scheduled for 1.00pm on Wednesday 23 September 2020.

11 Any Other Business the Chair Considers Urgent

11.1 Seamus Keogh highlighted that there had been no discussion on capital funding in this meeting. The Chair asked that an item providing an update on capital funding be brought to the September meeting.

11.2 RESOLVED:

Members agreed that an item on capital funding should be brought to the September meeting of the Sub-Group.

12 Close of meeting

12.1 The meeting closed at 15.24.

Contact Officer: Laura Marshall, Senior Board Officer, Skills & Employment

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Skills for Londoners Board

MEETING NOTE

Meeting Skills for Londoners

Construction Sub-Group

Date Thursday 19 March 2020

Time 9.30am

Place Remote Meeting

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This meeting took place via conference call and the formal agenda was not followed.

Members dialled in:

Seamus Keogh (Acting Chair)
Bunmi Atta
Shenaaz Chenia
Paul Gallagher
Brian McKeown
Jessica Mellor-Clark
Caroline Roberts
Janette Welton-Pai

Officers dialled in:

Matthew Bracewell, Senior Project Officer,
Skills & Employment
Laura Dubeck, Senior Manager —
Programme Delivery, Skills & Employment
Michael Heanue, Principal Policy Officer,
Skills & Employment
Laura Marshall, Senior Board Officer, Skills
& Employment
Beth Penwarden, Principal Policy Officer,
Skills & Employment
Rachel Roberts, MCA Programme Manager
(Interim), Skills & Employment
Sarah Spindler, Senior Project Officer, Skills
& Employment

1 Introductions and apologies

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from the Chair, Cllr Peter John. Seamus Keogh chaired the meeting on his behalf.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed members to the Group and thanked them for dialling into the meeting remotely. The Chair led a round of introductions.
- 1.3 Due to the escalation of Government policy around the COVID-19 outbreak, officers had made the decision to change the focus and format of the meeting. This in particular was due to the announcement that schools, colleges and nurseries in England would shut on Friday 20 March 2020 until further notice, and because a number of members had sent their apologies in order to deal with business critical matters in relation to the outbreak. The formal agenda issued was not followed and instead the time was used to have a remote discussion on the impact of COVID-19 on the construction industry.
- 1.4 Apologies for absence were also received from Andy Carson, Steve Drury, Mark Farmer, Sarah Garry, Jenny Herdman, Yvonne Kelly, Tom McLoughlin, and Martyn Price.
- 1.5 The first few items of the formal agenda were summarised briefly. There was a brief discussion about the data provided in Items 6, 7 and 8 and the need for Member analysis of the data. Members acknowledged that other parties still needed to formally contribute. Officers offered to set up individual phone calls after the meeting so that any Members unable to dial into the meeting could still contribute to the discussion.

2 Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting will be reviewed and approved at the next formal meeting of the Group.

4 Actions Arising

4.1 The actions from the last meeting will be reviewed at the next formal meeting of the Group.

5 Skills for Londoners Governance Update

- 5.1 Members heard that the Mayor of London and Assembly elections that were scheduled for May 2020 had been postponed for a year due to the COVID-19 virus.
- 5.2 Members noted that their Terms of Appointment for the Sub-Group had also been due to end in May 2020. Officers were working with the Mayor's Office to understand what the postponement of the elections would mean for the group, its membership and the wider Skills for Londoners governance arrangements going forward, and they would be in touch with Members to confirm in due course

[Due to the change in the focus of the meeting, items 6 (Mayor's Construction Academy Hubs), Item 7 (Mayor's Construction Academy Capital Projects and Targets) and Item 8 (Quality Mark Update) were not discussed in detail and will be revisited at a later meeting date. A brief summary was provided, and Officers offered to set up individual phone calls after the meeting so that Members could still discuss Items 6-8 if necessary].

6 Stakeholder Engagement Activity & the COVID-19 Discussion

- 6.1 The Group received an update on stakeholder engagement activity and general information on what the Skills & Employment Unit and the wider GLA were doing to support the construction industry throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 6.2 Members heard that the Head of Economic Development, GLA had set up the London Strategic Coordination Group. Beth Penwarden was also working with colleagues from the Housing & Land team, Infrastructure team and Regeneration team to support the Economic Development Team and to make sure that the challenges that the construction industry was facing were communicated.
- 6.3 Members noted that the work of the London Growth Hub was still ongoing. The London Growth Hub targets small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and provides a broad business support service. The London Growth Hub was working to get as much information and guidance on the COVID-19 virus on its website as soon as possible. Beth Penwarden was working with industry groups so that they were aware of London Growth Hub and their work.
- 6.4 Members heard that Beth Penwarden had been in touch with the Lighthouse Club. They had seen an uptake in calls for support, specifically urgent help such as the need for food parcels. Most of the calls seemed to be coming from self-employed people with thin financial buffers who were being told not to go to sites. Beth Penwarden stated that she was happy to introduce Members to her Lighthouse Club contacts.

¹ The Lighthouse Club is a charity that provides financial and emotional support to the construction community and their families who have suffered an injury or long term illness or simply need a helping hand.

- 6.5 The Chair asked for each Member to provide an update on their organisation's response to the COVID-19 virus.
- 6.6 Members outlined a variety of measures that their organisations had adopted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic which included:
 - The increased use of working from home;
 - Utilisation of remote working tools such as Skype, Microsoft Teams, webinars and e-learning;
 - The focus on business continuity and skills mapping;
 - Cancellation of events;
 - Closure of National Construction Colleges (NCC) with learners given the option to reschedule courses or to request a refund;
 - The importance of supporting apprentices;
 - The use of a two team system for essential workers (one team working one day and the other team working the next day);
 - Regional staff working in the same regional offices to minimise travel; and
 - The payment of workers if defined as sick (statutory sick pay, being made redundant, payment as usual).
- 6.7 Brian McKeown (Department of Work & Pensions (DWP)) explained that DWP were encouraging self-employed people to make a claim for benefits. Members noted that people could claim by digital means or telephone. Brian McKeown circulated a website link to Members during the call.²
- 6.8 Members felt that the Mayor of London should put pressure on the Treasury to support the most vulnerable in the construction industry and in society as whole.
- 6.9 Members noted that the Federation of Master Builders (FMB) had carried out a survey of its members. Findings concluded that to date there had been low levels of redundancies overall but there were higher numbers of redundancies relative to the size of the business. 75% of FMB members reported cancelled/delayed projects and one third of members knew someone in the business that was self-isolating.
- 6.10 Beth Penwarden thanked all Members for their contributions and explained that the Skills & Employment Unit would keep in touch with the Sub Group.
- 6.11 The Chair thanked all Members for their contributions and for dialling in, acknowledging that dialling into a Board meeting remotely was challenging.
- 6.12 The Chair asked that Members and Officers keep communicating with each other and queried whether Members were happy for the Clerk to share the Sub Group's contact details with each other. All Members agreed that they were happy for their contact details to be shared.

²The Clerk circulated the following link to Members after the meeting by email. https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/coronavirus/

6.13 RESOLVED:

The Skills for Londoners (SfL) Construction Sub-Group:

- (a) Noted the update and the subsequent discussion; and
- (b) Agreed that they were happy for the clerk to circulate the Sub Group's contact details.

7 Date of next meeting

- 7.1 Members noted that the next meeting of the SfL Construction Sub-Group was currently scheduled for 24 June 2020.
- 8 Any Other Business the Chair Considers Urgent
- 8.1 There was none.

9 Close of meeting

9.1 The meeting closed at 10.52am.

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