



Essex LSIP Board Meeting

12th March 2024 at 2pm

Via Teams

Attendees

Andy Sparks – Essex Chambers of Commerce
Joanne Giles – Essex Chambers of Commerce
Lisa Collins – Essex Chambers of Commerce
Julien Sample – Harlow College
Sarah Hamilton – Chelmsford College
Claire Wright – Rose Builders
Dave Cope – DWP
Paula Hornett – EPN
Janis Gibson – CAVS
Kate Kozlova-Boran – Thurrock Council
Cllr Tony Ball – Essex County Council
Hyla Grimwade – Greater Essex Careers Hub
Nick Brown – Southend City Council
Ann Scott – FSB
Louise Aitken – Essex County Council
Denise Brown – South Essex College of Further & Higher Education
Justine Addison – Ground Control

2) Welcome – AS

- Welcomes all Board members to the meeting.
- There's been lots going on in the world of skills. Ofsted are on the patch, monitoring how well we are meeting the skills need. It's good to see the work we are doing in the LSIP is being followed up. A number of colleges and providers have had Ofsted inspections or are due an inspection.
- As a Chamber we are just about to start our annual review of the LSIP which is due by the end of June 2024.

Apologies - JG

Denise Rossiter – Essex Chambers of Commerce
Elaine Oddie – NSO Associates LLP
Tom Broome – Constellation Marketing
Alex Brennan – Essex & Suffolk Water
Marcella MRaberty – London Stansted Airport
Karen Spencer – Harlow college – Julien Sample attended in place.
David Warnes – Chelmsford College – Sarah Hamilton attended in place.



Karris Rowbotham – DP World

3) Minutes of previous meeting 09.11.2024 – JG

- Approved by Board.

4) Actions arising from previous meeting – JG

- N/A

5) LSIP Stage 2 progress update – JG

- We are working at a fast rate within the county. There has been a significant amount of uptake and interest with the LSIP.
- I want to draw our attention back to the skills priorities we are focusing on:
 - Soft skills and behaviours
 - Basic English, maths & ESOL
 - Digital skills and Digitech
 - Green skills
 - Leadership and Management skills
- Sub Sector working groups update:
 - Construction – in place
 - Health Care and Med Tech – In place
 - Creative & Cultural – Setting up with Erica Gilson
 - Advanced Manufacturing, Engineering, Aviation – groundwork complete will be in place by end of April
 - Digitech – Utilising Microsoft and GMFJ digital working group
 - Transport & Logistics – Groundwork complete will be in place by end of April
 - Community & Voluntary – being developed
 - Transport & Logistics – groundwork complete will be in place by end of April
 - Education – utilising FEDEC, EPN, and Greater Essex Careers Hub
 - Professional Services – groundwork complete will be in place by end of April
 - SEND – We have implemented and additional sector to cover SEND 'Inclusive Stakeholder Alliance'
- LSIP current priorities:
 - Deep Dives & LMI
 - Executive Summary has now been completed and published
 - Annex C updated & published December 2023. Will be updated again in the summer
 - New look monthly bulletin published in January 2024
 - Sector deep dives will be completed and published by June 2024, supported by sector employer surveys
 - Business & Provider Engagement & Events



- LSIP ministerial event December 2023
 - Harlow jobs and Apprenticeship Fair – Jan
 - Chelmsford College – Engineering Roundtable Feb 24
 - SDN/LSIP T Level Event – Feb 24
 - LSIP update to Lead Governors – Feb 24
 - Harlow College – Aviation Roundtable Feb 24
 - Annual Apprenticeship Conference – Feb 24
 - Active Essex/CIMPISA skills roundtable – March 24
 - Professional Service Roundtable x 2 – March & May 24
 - SECG – Logistics Roundtable – April 24
 - Curriculum Planning support to date
 1. SECG
 2. Harlow College
 3. Chelmsford College
 4. TACC
 5. USP
 - Major Projects Group
 - LTC Employment and Skills Working Group
 - Backing Thurrock – Skills Operational Group
- It's important to let people know that every event we attend it's our intent to be visible and drive change, to raise awareness not only of the LSIP, but how people can participate, what the feedback is from employers and also from Government Ministers.
 - We have done a significant amount of work with colleges across the county, supporting curriculum planning, the information regarding the LSIP and how to interpret the data to ensure it's being understood clearly.
 - DFE Update
 - Updated priorities roadmap submitted to DfE, outlining the progress that we have made since September 2023
 - 6 weekly update to DFE – feedback is positive
 - Annual report on course to be published by June 24
 - LSIP – additional activities
 - Refreshed Gatsby approved toolkit ready by June
 - Annual LSIP report
 - Discussion with key stakeholders and the development and implementation of a new and exciting platform driven by AI – creating frictionless recruitment.
 - LSIP Budget Update
 - LSIP Stage 1 costs (to July 2023) - £169,821
 - LSIP Stage 2 costs (claimed to February 2024) - ££121,791
 - Total LSIP costs to date - £291,612
 - Projected costs to March 2025 - £240,895
 - Projected total LSIP costs - £532,507
 - Discussion



- A comment on the DfE feedback - in Essex we seem to have this joined up. The Careers & Enterprise Company are supporting all of the LSIPs across the Country and it has come out clear that we have this joined up across the County compared to anywhere else in the Country. This is due to Jo, Andy and the team, so thank you.
- Ditto to Hyla's feedback. Query about the February bulletin. February bulletin hasn't gone out yet. This will be published under updates on the LSIP page of the Essex Chambers website.
- Could you circulate the memberships of those Sub Groups so we could contact them if they may be able to contribute.
Yes, we will publish them all on the website.

6) SELEP update – LA

- I work for Essex County Council & SELEP. This presentation is a SELEP update.
- We represent the largest LEP area in England. We cover the South East – East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend & Thurrock. This was set up to drive economic growth with skills being a key part.
- In August, Government informed LEP's that core funding will end in March 2024 and the SELEP Board agreed that an effective and swift transaction should be sought by 31st March 2024.
- Upper Tier Local Authorities will undertake LEP functions in future.
- Five workstream to help ensure an effective transition of work:
 - Governance & Capital Programme
 - Partnerships & Network
 - Growth Hub & Business Support
 - Data & Intelligence
 - Resourcing
- Local authorities also updated on integration plans – government has asked LAs to share plans and how the business voice will be represented.
- Working with Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for government advice on arrangements on aspects such as LEP capital programme and Assurance Framework.
- Growth Hub Funding for 2024/2025 confirmed in Autumn Statement with County Councils to act as Accountable Body for GHs in their area, pending funding clarification.
- LEP Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) and Working Group had a final meeting in December. Linking Essex members (e.g. Morgan Sindall, Konica Minolta) into LSIP work.
- Work continuing with partnership groups to continue beyond April 2024 – e.g. housing, major projects, creative economy group.
- LSIPs a clear role also in skills work alongside Local Authorities.
- Skills has been central to SELEP's work given importance to the economy.
- Has included £40 million+ skills capital funding to ensure there are the right buildings, tech & kit needed to train residents and respond to business needs.
- South East Institute of Technology facilities now rolling out.
- Official role supporting LSIPs and data and intelligence to support these.
- SELEP Major Projects and Major Projects Skills Group to continue. Skills group to be led by CITB. To maintain link between the two groups.



- Work underway with Lower Thames Crossing to develop content for T-Levels/ related qualifications. Workshop with SDN next week.
- Working with local authorities around opportunities with Skills Bootcamps.
- SELEP also has a major projects skills group, a sub group to the main MPG group – to be led by the Construction & Industry Training Board.
- Projects include – The Lower Thames Crossing, Hoo Peninsula developments, Ebbsfleet Garden City, Thames Freeport and Freeport East, UK Health Security Agency. Longfield Solar Energy joined also.
- Handover meeting in March to look at areas of action including original skills needs analysis, action plan, tutor shortages work.
- Bootcamps an option of interest also to projects.
- Essex LSIP leads Andy & Jo will be invited to attend meetings going forward.
- Workshop tomorrow with LTC and Strategic Development Network exploring creating content for T Levels.
- As part of transition, SELEP is currently sharing best practice, lessons learnt and information. EU Funding webinar held in November looking at £160m EU Funding deployed across the LEP.
- A public – private partnerships webinar was held on 7th February and there is an accompanying guide.
- A successful T Level event was held in January, with over 90 attendees and including representation from Kent Science Services and Gallagher.
- A booklet showcasing capital funding to be published soon.
- We still hold a lot of data, our state of the region report has been welcomed and well used. We do still have a data analyst so if there's any data requests you have going forward, with my ECC hat on we have data we can help to provide.
- There will be a final LEP event held on 22nd March in London – 'The Future of Local Growth' and this will also explore future arrangements.
- The main SELEP website will remain live in coming months, for reference information and signposting – skills page and contacts to be added/updated.
- SELEP newsletter continuing to go out and you can register via the latest one to continue receiving information from local authorities.

7) Local Authority Update

- Essex County Council – Cllr Ball
 - We continue to align work to that of the LSIP and it's good to see work underway such as the Essex Construction Alliance and the Inclusive Stakeholder Alliance are being utilised for the LSIP.
 - We have just launched the fourth addition of the Careers magazine which goes out across Greater Essex and has been well received by all ages.
 - Soon we will be launching a Green Skills Portal, and we are going to be running a pilot with the NHS for jobs in the NHS for younger ages. There will also be an Apprenticeship Toolkit for employers.
 - We are working with Chelmsford College on a Green Careers event which will be happening this month.
 - I had a meeting with Jo, Andy & Denise earlier in the year which was a really good meeting. We have agreed we will align and join up a lot more.



- Devolution is on hold but that hasn't stopped us putting in place, post LEP Board such as Greater Essex Business Board, Skills Board which has been reinforced by a letter from the 3 leaders of the councils with their commitment to work collaboratively.
- Adult Community Learning was inspected by Ofsted before Christmas and was rated good.
- **Thurrock Council – KKB**
 - Thurrock is progressing with the skills plan. Thurrock's skills plan is not that dissimilar to the Essex & Southend and the LSIP. We have priorities of increasing apprenticeships and inclusivity.
 - We meet monthly and I would like to thank Jo and Andy for contributing to the conversation we had around skills in Thurrock.
 - We have five main priorities – Building a diverse economy and looking at the vulnerable groups, increasing apprenticeships.
 - We had an Apprenticeship event in February with JCP at Thurrock Adult Community College that was oversubscribed. This was pleasing to see. This only happened due to a close partnership with JCP.
 - We have started this January in Thurrock an all age Careers Service. We were able to secure a share of the prosperity fund for this year and with the help of this fund we are delivering the all age Careers Service from the Hub in Grays. We haven't advertised too much as we are already fully booked until mid March which shows how much this service is needed.
 - The strong partnerships work well and I'd like to thank Andy & Joanne for their input.
- **Southend on Sea City Council – NB**
 - We are trying to keep the LSIP front and centre, we refreshed our Local Skills Strategy in Southend City last year, we are keen not to duplicate.
 - We have been working with Hyla and her team to see how we can strengthen the links from their representation in Southend to improve our business offer, in line with the findings in the LSIP, the soft skills, the pathways, making those connections between employers and the workforce of tomorrow.
 - We've also maintained our focus on the pathways to work programme. We have the Halo Programme which is a pathway to work programme in Southend trying to get people into those social care roles. This has gone well, and we have just had the second year of funding announced. Now we are covering Southend, Basildon, Thurrock & Chelmsford, this has gone beyond our boundaries, and we have a great project manager who is pushing this on.
 - We are hoping for taster sessions pathways to work courses for parents in the 6 deprived Wards in Southend. This is through A Better Start, Southend which is Lottery funded.
 - We've just had ratified in council, our new 4-year Economic Growth Strategy for Southend City. There's a lot around inclusive growth, trying to leverage green skills, trying to diversify our economy. How can we go beyond and look at the future and look at a Green Agenda, skills, and other potential emergent technologies like AI.



8) Greater Essex Careers Hub update – HG

- The Greater Essex Careers Hub was established in 2021 and work with school, colleges, training providers, and employers across the Essex patch to help every young person find their best next step. The work we do is mainly supporting schools and colleges to improve their careers education. Within this we link in training providers and employers.
- We are currently funded by the Careers and Enterprise Company which is part of the DfE and co funded by Essex County Council, Southend City Council & Thurrock Council.
- I finally have a full team which is fantastic. We had 10 people that support 97% of schools and colleges across Essex. This covers all secondary schools, special schools, alternative provisions, and colleges.
- One of our new members of staff, Stephanie Warren joined us from the Careers and Enterprise Company, she is our operational hub lead but has a specific focus on employer engagement and support so will be able to support the work of the LSIP going forward.
- In terms of employers, we have around 200 we currently support in various ways. We are now going to focus on increasing the number of employers that we can support through our work and how we can make that as meaningful and impactful for not only the young people but for the employers.
- I have been talking a lot to Jo recently about supporting the LSIP work but also avoiding duplication where possible. The two things I'd like to suggest to the group after speaking to Jo – We as part of the Careers Hub have to have something as part of our funding agreement called the Corner Stone Employer Group, this is made up of employers, to avoid duplication and to look at the LSIP Boards and Employer Groups that are being set up. One of the skills system priorities is careers education and IAG skills so we think it makes sense that our Corner Stone Employer Group was the working group that supports that skills system priority and will be the working group. It means employers don't have to choose or spend time in two places. The second thing is there have been a lot of great feedback from the various surveys as part of the LSIP work. A lot of employers that are answering have expressed an interest in finding out more on apprenticeships, industry placements etc. It's difficult to find an organisation who can take those employers and signpost them to other organisations where there's independent information and work across the whole of Essex. I suggested to Jo that now I'm full staffed perhaps the Careers Hub could be the triage for those employers and direct them to what they are looking for.
- JG Out of the 169 responses 77% of those employers do not use apprenticeships to train their current workforce. If we can move the dial by having the right info with the right employer and have that info filtered through to the colleges or independent training providers, that will increase participation and value to the County. Is everyone happy that we follow this route? All Board members agree.



9) FEDEC Update

- Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) update – JS
 - The LSIF is funding from the government to help training providers to meet and put on courses to cover the skills needs that are being identified by employers.
 - We have two parts, the revenue, and the capital. The capital is more money, over a longer period, people are buying new resources.
 - The capital is spread over 2 years. You can see from the capital projects that the structure of activities is better, there's the time to go, find quotes and do things in a more coordinated approach. Things are progressing well.
 - The revenue side we have structured our activities around the Strategic Development Fund activities which were successful. The LSIF we were led to believe would be more flexible than the SDF which hasn't been the case. We've been bogged down with the admin that the DfE are requiring us to do which has taken away some of the collaboration that took place in SDF.
 - The spread of activity from a revenue perspective has been slightly different than the SDF. Funding to support recruitment, funding to support industry updating of staff has been popular and the numbers that are coming through in terms of KPIs are encouraging.
 - We included into the LSIF fund to support soft skills as it came up in the LSIP. This has been positive. Partners have been using the funding effectively.
 - One of the key things of the LSIP is to speak to employers and find out what their skills needs are and to put on courses for that. This is difficult due to the length of the project. With the SDF a lot of the activity happened towards the end or once the project had been completed which I think will be the same case with this project.
 - JG – At every roundtable we have attended employers bring up soft skills. City & Guilds have done a big piece of work with mapping all of the 38 LSIPs and what came out on top was soft skills. They are looking at ways to weave this into their products. The awarding bodies are picking up on this now.

- FEDEC – Response to LSIP update – SH
 - DW asked me to table a document that has been created as part of FEDEC members, it's a commitment statement. As part of FEDEC they have been discussing a commitment statement around skills. All FEDEC members have agreed with their Boards to include a commitment statement in their accountability agreements. This will confirm their willingness to collaborate on curriculum planning which will align the LSIP. Two approaches from the commitment statement:
 1. Speaking as one voice to promote and raise a profile of further education and skills including apprenticeships, higher education & adult education to influence change for the benefits of our learners, communities, regions & members.



2. Collaborative planning and delivery of regional skills offer building on successful modules from the SDF & the current Local Skills Improvement Fund. This feels different, the SDF was successful and it's great to work on these projects together for the common good. I feel excited about our future as a region in terms of making sure people's skills are addressed.
 - We expect the document to be finalised and put into the public domain.
- IOT update – DB
 - We secured funding from government around 2 years ago to set up the South East Institute of Technology. It's a partnership. There are 6 colleges & 3 Universities involved in the partnership – Harlow College, Chelmsford College, East Sussex College South Essex College Group, Plumpton College and MidKent College. The 3 universities are University of East Anglia, Canterbury Christchurch University, Anglia Ruskin University.
 - For the last couple of years, the colleges have been involved in putting a capital programme in place that is their share of South East Institute of Technology. All the colleges have progressed well with the capital elements. There are some challenging KPIs that have been agreed with the DfE as a result of the funding that's been given. I'm pleased to say the first years of those KPIs have been met but there is a step change in delivery as we go forward.
 - The focus of the South East Institute of Technology is providing higher level technical qualifications. There is a South East Institute of Technology Board. Populated by employers – DP World, Morgan Sindall, Port of Tilbury, The Wines of Great Britain, Stansted Airport, Leonardo, NHS and more. We are actively seeking other employers.
 - All the partner colleges have begun delivery and have opened their version of the South East Institute of Technology.
 - Through the LSIF funding and the South East Institute of Technology funding we have developed a range of training facilities across Essex which I don't think are widely known. One of the things we could usefully do is pull together a list of all the training facilities that have been funded through the injection of funding, so employers and independent training providers can see what's there. Working in collaboration we could map where these facilities are across Essex to make sure they are fully utilised. It's all public funds and there to be used to bridge those skills gap.
 - Another injection of funds, the DfE have invested in is for the development of HTQ (High Technical Qualifications) that is embracing some well-known qualifications and creating new qualifications. We've had an injection in wave 1 & 2 for HTQ's which has developed facilities. I don't think a lot of people are aware of this new qualification, the HTQ, what it means and how it can be accessed. It's another initiative and resource that's going in the right direction, but not enough people know about it.
 - HG – What stage are you at in getting the young people into these courses and can we help in doing so?
We have had meetings with careers teams on courses that will lead in to the South East Institute of Technology developing a lot of curriculum at Level 3 which will



enable learners to go onto these higher technical qualifications. Happy to work together and get some good quality, simple to understand information on progression pathways.

- JS into this we could add the next part of HTQ's which is the Module Acceleration Programme where you can do modules that lead to a HTQ. The DfE have brought out their new campaign trying to get people to understand what HTQ's are and what the module acceleration programme is. The key is for employers to know what they are. It will be interesting to see what we could do.
- JG We will take this as an action, Hyla and I will pick up and take it to FEDEC as a broader decision and make it a task and finish group.

10) EPN Update – PH

- EPN will be holding their members network meeting in person at USP Campus, Extend on 27th March. The focus is immersive learning and supporting the ever increasing problem of tutor shortages. All our members will be there to experience the innovative work that's being developed there.
- We have been working with colleagues across the East of England, the line of sight strategically will start to alter more towards the East of England colleagues, I've been working with colleagues in those districts and looking at a report that's been devised which will be published 18th May and be provided to Robert Halfon's Apprenticeship group on 18th March, looking at Levelling Up across the South East. I have taken part in 2 of these sections, the first being infrastructure, the second part of the report I've been involved in is the overview of the barriers facing the general population in terms of Levelling Up. Hopefully, people will start taking note of the issues that have been raised in the report.
- Going forward I will hopefully be working alongside ECC and the DfE in the promotion of Bootcamps. I'm keen that our members become the forefront of developing new courses.
- I spoke to a company called Clear Links who originally work to support under graduates at university that may have special needs. They are now going to widen their approach to include apprenticeships. I wonder if there's a gap there that could be filled in terms of bootcamps because the type of adult that may attend a bootcamp may have difficulties in terms of learning and this could be something we could review going forward.
- I'd like to say a huge thank you to Cllr Ball & Hyla in terms of the funding that been made available for the independent sector to go out into schools and promote apprenticeships as an equal route to academic study. To give you a figure, in the last term (Sept – Dec) over 1848 young people have been reached in terms of promotion activities. Fingers crossed we can continue this momentum.
- JG One of the biggest complaints we hear often are individuals are not aware of the choices they need to make, to hear that's impacted on 1848 people is fabulous.

11) ECC / Match funding update - LA



- We contributed £610,000 to the LSIF pot. In line with what Cllr Ball said, we are trying to line up as much as possible with the LSIF & LSIP, it struck us we were going to do similar activities, so it made more sense for us to pool our funding.
- Our funding does have time limits and has to be spent in the next few months, but it helps a little bit with the revenue side of things, alongside the capital. The funding will help with new courses designed and delivered at Levels 1 – 4. There will be 6 of these supported that our funding will help to extend those. Newly qualified teachers being supported by advance practitioners - 18, staff undertaking industry training or CPD - 300, learners undertaking activities to develop soft skills - 500. There will be more details that follow.
- It's fantastic we have this support. Those revenue activities would have stopped in 2 weeks' time, this means we can now carry this on through to the end of July. This is really positive.
- Uniquely across the country we are the only LSIF that includes an independent training provider sector.
- JG we were asked to feedback to the DfE last night as they are putting a piece together about lobbying to treasury. One of the lines I sent back to the DfE – With regard to the LSIP the plans now serve as a central nexus for skills policy, decisions within local district and unitary authorities. By fostering collaboration and coherence they streamline policy formulation and funding allocation, there by optimising taxpayer's resources. In summary the skills and post 16 education act has ushered in an era of unprecedented, symbiotic collaboration. Strategic alignment and official resource utilisation as we continue this journey our collective commitment and government funding support to skills development should remain unwavering.
We are challenging considerably, to be able to continue as it's clear it is making a difference, not only in Essex but in the broader economic development.

12) AOB

N/A

Future meetings

- Tuesday 2nd July 2.00pm – 3.30pm
- Tuesday 8th October 2.00pm – 3.30pm