



CONFIDENTIAL

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (BLEP)
REDUNDANCY TASKFORCE/SKILLS ADVISORY PANEL (SAP) MEETING**

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 5 August 2020, from 3pm, via Teams

- Present:**
- Professor Gavin Brooks, Buckinghamshire New University (Chair) (GB)
 - Karen Brown, DWP (KB)
 - Maria Butler, SiteReady/Construction Sector Group Lead (MB)
 - Adrian Champney, Ngage Solutions Ltd (AC)
 - Sue Cross, Adviza (SC)
 - Heather Dean, Buckinghamshire Business First (HD)
 - Sam French, Align JV (SF)
 - Gill Harding, Buckinghamshire Council (GH)
 - Ian Harper, Buckinghamshire New University (IH)
 - David Howe, NHS (DH)
 - Teresa Meredith, Buckinghamshire Council (TM)
 - Dave Oxley, McAfee/Digital Sector Group Lead (DO)
 - Paddy Patterson, EFKB (PP)
 - Dena Read, Department for Education (DR)
 - Michael Sedgewick, EFKB (MS)
 - Mark Warrilow, HS2 (MW)

- Apologies:**
- Juliet Anderson, Health Education England
 - Ian Barham, BLEP Partnerships Manager
 - Cllr Anita Cranmer, Buckinghamshire Council
 - Imelda Goldsboro, DWP
 - Maninder Hayre, Adviza
 - Katie Higginson, Community Impact Bucks
 - Kevin Hoctor, BEIS
 - Marina Jackson, BLEP Under 19 Skills Manager
 - Karen Mitchell, Buckinghamshire College Group
 - Caroline Perkins, Buckinghamshire LEP
 - Ailie Smith, Creative Media Skills/Creative Industries Sector Group Lead
 - John Spoerry, University of Buckingham
 - Sarah Stevens/ Sally White, Sylo Associates
 - Mark Wood, Reaction Engines/Space Sector Group Lead

- In Attendance:** Sarah Fraser, BLEP (SEF)

1 REDUNDANCY TASKFORCE - AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

GB welcomed attendees to the joint meeting of the Skills Advisory Panel and Redundancy Taskforce group. The aims and objectives of the latter being to support employers and employees faced with redundancy already or in the coming months as Government’s Job Retention Scheme comes to an end.

It was reported the Taskforce will seek to bring all sources of support under one umbrella, identify gaps in support, consider how these might be filled, and look at funding available.

In order to progress this work quickly, six sub groups have been established around:

- Training and reskilling
- Health and social care
- Construction
- CV writing/personal support/career advice etc
- Employer group
- Young people (led by DWP)

2 RESEARCH UPDATE (Presentation attached)

HD provided an update on research into the impact of COVID-19 on the Buckinghamshire labour market, those hit hardest by the pandemic and the sectors worst affected (which include aviation, hospitality and tourism).

It was noted an initiative is underway to help those working in aviation at Heathrow transition into careers within the film industry linked to work at Pinewood.

It was also noted there is a significant number of vacancies within the Construction sector due to the many large infrastructure projects taking place in the county.

3 FEEDBACK FROM SUB GROUPS

Feedback received from the leaders of the above Sub Groups highlighted:

- The urgent need for a single point of reference for all support available; signposting employers and employees to relevant information.
- There has been enormous benefit in pulling together disparate stakeholders and this has seen opportunities developing from the conversations held.
- The need for a robust evidence base, both for assessing interventions needed but also to support calls for funding to help address gaps in support.
- The need for clarity and amplification of information around career pathways, educating people on the opportunities available, eg within construction these range from entry to higher degree level.
- The huge piece of work to be done around employability.
- The need for training to be available locally (some DWP training takes place outside Bucks).
- There is limited opportunity to make changes in courses due to be offered from September. Longer term course offerings can be considered in the light of what is needed in future, reflecting the research previously undertaken in producing the Skills Action Plan.
- The need to look at transferrable skills, helping employees move from sectors badly hit by COVID-19 into sectors with greater opportunities eg the 'Airline to Film' initiative.
- The use of DWP's Sector Based Work Academies in assisting people to move cross sector.
- The importance of alignment of agencies, business support organisations, employers, etc in supporting this work.
- Apprenticeship numbers do not appear to have been adversely affected by COVID-19 at the moment with many students returning to learning earlier in Buckinghamshire than in some other areas.
- The huge amount of Personal Support in terms CV writing, careers advice, webinars etc already available, with possibly more to be done on transferrable skills and building confidence – although a number of these programmes (eg Building Futures) come to an end in the coming months unless extensions and further funding can be secured.

- Shortage of resources, both human and financial, are one of the biggest issues in providing ongoing support and the issue of capacity will now need to be addressed by the sub groups.
- The appointment of a Workforce Skills Manager in the Bucks Skills Hub will greatly assist in progressing this work.

4 **SUMMARY OF SUPPORT AVAILABLE AND WHAT NOW?**

It was agreed there is a huge amount of information and support already available, the key task will be in bringing this altogether in one place and then 'driving traffic' to this portal.

It was suggested the proactive use of social media platforms by all partners involved in the Taskforce will be essential in promoting the service, including using the virtual Skills Show taking place in November to highlight the service available.

The group noted the need to have a mind for ensuring ongoing funding is both sourced and secured to enable this work to continue.

Work will continue to build content on the BBF website around the Redundancy Taskforce with the aim of moving this content to the new Skills Hub website once operational.

The possibility of increasing the functionality of the new Skills Hub website in development was discussed; the ability to do this requiring match funding to the £25k already committed by Buckinghamshire LEP. **Partners that may be able to provide this match funding were asked to contact HD.**

It was noted there is a need to consider careers at all levels; much support is currently aimed at lower paid/lower level careers.

5 **NEXT SKILLS ADVISORY PANEL MEETING**

It was suggested the Skills Advisory Panel meeting on 7 September 2020 will focus on updating the Buckinghamshire Skills Strategy, last created in 2018, in light of the immediate impact of COVID-19 and the medium and longer term requirements to address the effects of the pandemic and to ensure delivery of the aspirations in the Local Industrial Strategy.

6 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Those presented noted the need to engage with under-represented groups in the labour market (BAME groups, those suffering with a disability, etc).

It was agreed to include discussion on how to be more inclusive with this work at the next round of Sub Group meetings.

7 **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

- Mon 7 September 2020, 2-4pm, Skills Advisory Panel, venue tbc or via Teams
- Weds 18 November 2020, 10am-12pm, Skills Advisory Panel, venue tbc or via Teams

The meeting closed at 5pm