

CROSS PARTY GROUP IN THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ON CONSTRUCTION

CROSS-PARTY GROUP IN THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ON CONSTRUCTION

**CR5, SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT,
EDINBURGH, EH99 1SP**

6.00pm TUESDAY 29 MAY 2018

Brief Notes

1. Welcome

Ms Lennon welcomed members to the meeting

2. Matters Arising

The meeting adopted the notes from the meetings on 27 March 2018 and 3 October 2017 and also approved the minutes of the meeting on 20 June 2017.

None

3. Treasurer's Report

Mr Barn issued details of the groups accounts.

4. Apprenticeships Now and the Future

a) Jamie Hepburn MSP - Minister for Employability and Training

The Minister outlined the importance of the construction industry to the Scottish economy and the high number of apprentices it employed.

He highlighted challenges facing construction with an aging workforce, possible impact of Brexit on availability of future labour, lack of gender diversity and that many who left the sector during the economic downturn had not return to it as workloads increased.

It was essential there was a skilled workforce for Scotland's construction industry. The Scottish Government had delivered several initiatives to address the possible future skills shortage including Foundation Apprenticeships, Graduate Level Apprenticeships and Developing the Young Workforce (DYW).

These initiatives needed full industry support and the Scottish Government was grateful to the construction industry for doing so.

Ms White asked about some of the large housebuilders who did not employ a direct labour force and therefore did not directly employ apprentices. She was also concerned that local contractors did not get the opportunity to work on local

Secretary : John McKinney

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housing developments and therefore reduced opportunities for local apprenticeships.

There was concern regarding the skills test within SVQ 3 Craft Apprenticeships and an ongoing dispute regarding the delivery of these. This could result in many apprentices exceeding the four year apprenticeship term which would create issues regarding their employment status for employers.

The Minister was aware of issues relating to the skills test but industry had not previously highlighted issues regarding exceeding the four year apprenticeship term and would look into this. He felt that other issues were not insurmountable and was aware of ongoing discussions about these.

The Minister highlighted routes for career changers to get accredited training to join the construction industry and the funding that was available.

The issue regarding Carillion was discussed and SMEs needed the right trading conditions to allow them to employ apprentices. Prompt payment throughout the supply chain was essential for this and if addressed, could result in increased apprenticeship opportunities.

The Minister acknowledged that payment through the supply chain was essential and the Scottish Government led by example and insisted all its direct contracts had prompt payment.

The Minister was asked about the Flexible Workforce Development Fund and if private training providers could access this in the future.

The Minister said the Scottish Government had consulted with industry when the Apprenticeship Levy was created by the UK Government. This resulted in the Flexible Workforce Development Fund which would be regularly reviewed to ensure that it met the needs of industry.

The Minister was pleased to hear that DYW had been well received by industry and the Scottish Government had committed to fund it until 2021.

b) Ken Thomson – Principal of Forth Valley College

Dr Thomson said that demand for college construction courses was very high.

Course content continued to be positively influenced by feedback from the industry, most notably was changes following the recommendations within the Cole Report. This ensured construction course content reflected the needs of industry.

Dr Thomson had said that DYW had been very positive in developing links between construction, colleges and schools.

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There were concerns that some construction students did not possess the required core academic skills and the college had to provide additional training to allow them to fulfil their potential within their college, and future, training.

Colleges themselves had to identify local employers eligible for the Flexible Workforce Development Fund as details of those paying the Apprenticeship Levy were not available from the UK Government. This had been time consuming process but allowed the college to work with the local employers to develop and deliver training through the funding.

Forth Valley College ensured cross department working which encouraged cross sector fertilisation and innovation for mutual benefit. This had resulted in the Sports Sciences department creating trade specific warm up routines which helped reduce injury and therefore maximised productivity.

Colleges were paid by outputs and therefore only candidates who successfully completed courses. This could create issues regarding the viability of courses with relatively low demand should some candidates not completing the course.

The college currently had a new campus being built in Falkirk and was working with the main contractor on the delivery of the Community Benefit Clauses to ensure their maximum impact and a positive legacy for the local community.

Colleges could be flexible regarding the delivery of training if there was sufficient demand for a different delivery method for a course.

The whole of the education sector was looking at delivering training in a collaborative way for the benefit of the student. Strong working relationships across the education sector had been, and continued to be, developed for this purpose.

Success of innovative delivery methods were assessed through review of Key Performance Indicators.

The perception of construction had a negative impact on addressing gender equality in the industry and needed to be addressed at the early stages of school. It was suggested that the construction industry could use the STEM agenda to help address this issue.

5. Any Other Business

None

6. Date of Next Meeting

TBA

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Attended

Monica Lennon MSP (Convenor)
Alexander Burnett MSP
Jamie Hepburn MSP
Alison Johnstone MSP
Sandra White MSP

Grahame Barn – CECA Scotland – Treasurer
John McKinney – Scottish Contractors Group – Secretary

Martin Coopland – MPA Scotland
Maureen Douglas – Forster Group
Anne Galbraith – SECTT
Robert Girvan – CITB
Cara Hilton – CECA Scotland
Fiona Hodgson – SNIPEF
Ian Hughes – CITB
Iain McCaskey – BESA
Newell McGuinness – SELECT
Paul Mitchell – SBF
Lindsay Neill – FMB
Ian Rogers – SDF
Thomas Simmons – Glasgow School of Art
Fiona Stewart – Skills Development Scotland
Stuart Tennant – University of West Scotland
Ken Thomson – Forth Valley College
Alan Wilson – SELECT
Stephen Young – CECA, GMG Contractors and ISE

Apologies

Stewart McKillop – South Lanarkshire College
Gordon Nelson – FMB Scotland
Alan Seath - Seath Planning Consultancy Ltd.
Colin Tennant – Historic Environment Scotland

Secretary : John McKinney

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