

CROSS PARTY GROUP ON SKILLS

Tuesday 6 February 2018, 1300-1400 hours
Committee Room 2, Scottish Parliament

Minutes (Draft)

Present

- Jamie Halcro Johnston MSP
- James Dornan MSP
- Jackie Galbraith, Ayrshire College
- Chris Brodie, Skills Development Scotland
- Fiona Stewart, Skills Development Scotland
- Sara Collier, Skills Development Scotland
- Katie MacLeod, Skills Development Scotland
- Anne Galbraith, SECTT
- Drew McGowan, West College Scotland
- Stephen Young, Young Artwork
- Fiona Harper, SJIB/BSE Skills
- Paul Mitchell, Scottish Building
- Jennifer Adamson, Lantra
- Ian McCulloch, ITC Academy
- Robert Girvan, CITB
- Cara Hilton, CECA Scotland
- Keith Geddes, Pagoda Porter Novelli
- Stuart McKenna, Scottish Training Federation
- Mary Weir, Pearson UK
- Robert Bruce, Semta
- Grant Thoms, Ingeus
- Alex James, Scouts Scotland
- Iain McCaskey, BESA
- Daniel McGinn, GMG Contractors Ltd
- Gerry McGinn, GMC Contractors Ltd
- John McGinley, South Lanarkshire College
- Elaine Ellis, Select
- Jim Metcalf, College Development Network
- Will McLeish, Colleges Scotland
- Andy Witty, Colleges Scotland
- Joanne Buchan, Colleges Scotland

Apologies

- Johann Lamont MSP
- Gillian Martin MSP
- Colin Smyth MSP
- Tavish Scott MSP
- George Brown, SQA
- Shona Matthews, Chartered Banker Institute
- Ishabel Bremner, Argyll and Bute Council
- Aileen Ponton, SCQF Partnership
- Cate Nelson Shaw, Remarkable
- Anne Meikle, Scottish Women's Enterprise
- Simon Williams, NHS Education for Scotland
- Kenny Stewart, Open University
- Fiona Riddoch, Edinburgh College

1. Welcome and Apologies

Jamie Halcro Johnston MSP opened the meeting and noted apologies from members of the group. He then thanked Skills Development Scotland for sponsoring the lunch.

2. Approval of Minutes from the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the 21 November 2017 meeting were ratified.

3. Presentation and Discussion

The topic for the meeting was the new apprenticeships target and presentations were heard from Chris Brodie, Head of Skills Planning, Katie Macleod, Skills Planning Executive and Fiona Stewart, Head of NTP Operations, Skills Development Scotland and then from Jackie Galbraith, Vice Principal – Strategy and Skills, Ayrshire College.

Chris Brodie provided an overview of Skills Development Scotland's Skills Planning Model which aims to align provision to the economy. He also highlighted the four big challenges for the skills system: boosting productivity; inclusive growth; Scotland's demography; and the changing world of work including digitisation and automation, all of which will require the skills system to be flexible and responsive to change.

Katie Macleod and Fiona Stewart focused on assessing the demand for Modern Apprenticeships. This is a collaborative process – it is data led, tested and validated by industry through an online survey and consultation, and then reported on. It was noted that this is an ongoing process and there is still work to be done to ensure better skills alignment with Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council. It was also noted that there is currently a higher demand than is being delivered in some sectors.

Jackie Galbraith presented on how colleges are contributing to the delivery of apprenticeship targets. She highlighted that apprenticeships are critical to meeting skills needs and that the college provide end to end support for employers. As well as recruiting apprentices and delivering training, this also includes playing a role in stimulating and identifying demand which is then built into provision. She noted that Ayrshire College works with 500 employers and is training almost 1,000 apprentices, mainly in engineering and construction. She said that the college is promoting Foundation Apprentices to pupils and parents as well as working with schools to attract young women into STEM careers. It was noted that they currently deliver three Foundation Apprenticeships with plans to deliver five.

In the question and answer session that followed, there was a discussion on how we get people to value the apprenticeship route. Jackie Galbraith noted that we all have a role to play in ensuring that college is seen as a first choice and that we should be delivering programmes for young people that keep them engaged. Chris Brodie stated that the work colleges are doing to promote Foundation Apprenticeships is essential.

It was asked whether the Apprenticeship Levy had affected colleges. Jackie Galbraith stated that the apprenticeship target had grown and that through the Flexible Workforce Development Fund, Ayrshire College has worked with 40 employers already.

There was also a question around balancing immediate skills needs with future needs. Chris Brodie stated that Skills Development Scotland was working in partnership, looking at deep insights through sectoral work, regional skills assessments with colleges and developing skills investment plans. Skills Alignment will help address these issues and engage in all areas of education.

4. Dates of Future Meetings

The dates for future meetings are as follows:

- Tuesday 1 May 2018 (Committee Room 1)
Topic: Flexible Workforce Development Fund

It was noted that any suggestions for topics should be sent to Joanne Buchan at Colleges Scotland.

5. Close

With no further business to conduct, the meeting was closed.