

# CROSS PARTY GROUP ON SKILLS

Tuesday 21 March 2017, 1300-1400 hours  
Committee Room 3, Scottish Parliament

## Minutes (Draft)

### Present

- James Dornan MSP
- Johann Lamont MSP
- Gillian Martin MSP
- Russell Gunson, IPPR Scotland
- Rachael Thomas, IPPR Scotland
- Joanne Buchan, Colleges Scotland
- Aileen Ponton, SCQF Partnership
- Anne Meikle, Women's Enterprise Scotland
- Anne Galbraith, SECTT
- Cara Hilton, CECA Scotland
- George Brown, SQA
- Robert Girvan, CITB
- Alex James, Scouts Scotland
- Eilidh MacKechnie, Scottish Land & Estates
- Stephen Young, Young Art Work
- Eoin Welsh, West College Scotland
- Helen Bready, City & Guilds
- Caroline Roberts, City & Guilds
- Robert Bruce, Semta
- Iain McCaskey, BESA
- Kenny Stewart, Open University
- Beatrice Morrice, Scottish Whisky Association

### Apologies

- Christine Powell, Essentials Plus Ltd
- John McKinney, Scottish Contractors Group
- Elaine Bone, EDAS
- Laura Peacock, Investors in Young People Scotland
- Margaret Munckton, Perth College UHI
- Katie O' Donnell, Scottish Waterways Trust
- Elaine Ellis, Select
- Simon Williams, NHS Education for Scotland
- Andrew Witty, Colleges Scotland
- Shona Struthers, Colleges Scotland
- Stuart McKenna, Scottish Training Federation
- Fiona Stewart, Skills Development Scotland
- Anne McInnes, Bemis
- Jim Metcalf, College Development Network
- Tony Stapleton, Employment Enterprise
- Ian McCulloch, ITC Academy
- Baljinder Birdi, Pearson UK
- Paul Mitchell, Scottish Building

### 1. Welcome

James Dornan MSP opened the meeting and thanked IPPR Scotland for sponsoring the lunch.

### 2. Apologies

Mr Dornan also noted there were a number of apologies from members.

### 3. Presentation and Discussion

Russell Gunson, Director, IPPR Scotland, presented on the think tank's recently published Equipping Scotland for the future: Key challenges for the Scottish skills system report. In his presentation, Russell set out the background to the report, including the changes to the skills system that have taken place over the last few years and the research undertaken to understand the challenges the system faces to meet the needs of the evolving economy. He also highlighted the six priorities for action that the report recommended, which are:

- Embedding an outcome approach and setting a clear national purpose of the skills system
- Regional integration of the skills system
- Clarifying roles of learning routes within the skills system
- Learners and employers co-designing a responsive skills system
- Improving flexibility of learning
- Increasing transferability of learning.

Russell confirmed that a follow up report would be published in May 2017, which would offer solutions to the recommendations.

In the discussion that followed, there was a focus on the impact and pace of technological change and the need to be able to be flexible and responsive to that from a skills perspective. It was noted that technological advancement can potentially create huge opportunities for young people.

There was also discussion on apprenticeships and the challenges facing small and medium-sized enterprises in taking on apprentices.

In addition, it was noted that there is a need to ensure that duplication within the skills system is minimised and that a holistic approach would be beneficial. It was suggested that routes into learning shouldn't be narrow and that learning opportunities should be available to people at various stages throughout their lives.

#### **4. Dates of future meetings**

The next meeting takes place on:

- Tuesday 20 June 2017 – 1300-1400 in Committee Room 4

#### **5. Close**

With no further business to conduct, Mr Dornan thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.