

CROSS PARTY GROUP ON SKILLS

Wednesday 24 April 2019, 1300-1400 hours
Committee Room 5, Scottish Parliament

Minutes (Draft)

Present

- Jamie Halcro Johnston MSP
- Joanne Buchan, Colleges Scotland
- Tom Hall, Colleges Scotland
- Liz Byrne, Skills Development Scotland
- Sara Collier, Skills Development Scotland
- Fiona Stewart, Skills Development Scotland
- John Kemp, Scottish Funding Council
- Lynne Raeside, Scottish Funding Council
- Grant Ritchie, Dundee and Angus College
- Robert Girvan, CITB
- Aileen Ponton, SCQF Partnership
- Svea Miesch, Scotland IS
- Cara Hilton, CECA Scotland
- Geoff Campbell, Nithcree Training
- Fiona Harper, SELECT
- Stephen Young
- Jennifer Adamson, Lantra
- Tommy Breslin, STUC
- Anne Galbraith, SECTT
- Simon Williams, NHS Education for Scotland

Apologies

- Johann Lamont MSP
- Tavish Scott MSP
- Ross Greer MSP
- Gillian Martin MSP
- George Brown, SQA
- Liz Barron-Majerik, Lantra
- Robert Bruce, Semta
- Ian McCulloch, ITC Training Academy
- Andy Witty Colleges Scotland
- Will McLeish, Colleges Scotland
- Janis McCulloch, Scouts Scotland
- Amelia Morgan, Venture Trust
- Isabel Bremner, Argyll and Bute Council
- Anne Meikle, Women's Enterprise Scotland
- Shona Matthews, Chartered Banker Institute
- Stuart McKenna, Scottish Training Federation
- Bal Birdi, Pearson UK
- Mary Weir, Pearson UK
- Wendy Burton, Scotland Union Learning
- Drew McGowan, West College Scotland

1. Welcome and Apologies

Jamie Halcro Johnston MSP opened the meeting and noted apologies from members of the group.

2. Approval of Minutes from the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Wednesday 27 February 2019 meeting were ratified. It was noted that the Convener has now had a response from Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills, Jamie Hepburn MSP, regarding the Flexible Workforce Development Fund which has been circulated to the group.

3. Presentations and Discussion

Liz Byrne from Skills Development Scotland (SDS) gave an overview of what Skills Development Scotland does now in terms of skills alignment, including looking at labour market demands, and creating Skills Investment Plans and Regional Skills Assessments which allow for planning at both a regional and sectoral level. There were now 12 sector Skills Investment Plans now in place which are helping to plan provision. Liz highlighted the Enterprise and Skills Review, which has a number of recommendations and actions which are important for skills going forward.

John Kemp from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) continued the discussion around the Enterprise and Skills Review, noting that large elements are already in place and will be fed into the Outcome Agreements of colleges. He stated that there is still work to be done – there is a range of skills provision available, however marrying up that choice with industry need is key.

John also discussed work-based learning and the uncertainty of EU funding which is unlikely to be available in the long-term. John also highlighted the important work around the Learner Journey to create a more fluid system and need for SFC and SDS to work together on this substantial piece of work.

Grant Ritchie from Dundee and Angus College explained that they gather intelligence locally and work with SDS to determine what regional skills needs are. Part of their role is upskilling SMEs and that there are opportunities there to improve engagement and to help businesses problem-solve and improve services. He said that the college sector has set up a Skilled Workforce Forum which is helping to ensure that colleges are aligned nationally.

Grant also highlighted that they are working to deliver the new Higher National 'Next Gen' qualifications which will begin in 2021 and that colleges are working on a number of strategic skills projects to build capacity and deliver a skilled workforce through the Energy Skills Partnership.

A group discussion followed around the issues/challenges of the skills environment and skills alignment. A question was asked on the uptake of Graduate Apprenticeships to which SDS confirmed that as this is in its infancy, that the numbers are relatively small – the vast majority are on Modern Apprenticeship programmes. Grant Ritchie noted that there has been significant growth in Foundation Apprenticeships.

There was discussion around the need to fill skills gaps in logistics and road haulage and it was noted that there are opportunities for partnership working in this area. SDS stated that they are keen to support providers. Code Clan was highlighted as a good example of a model that could work well in other skills areas to upskill employees.

The SCQF Partnership highlighted that there are opportunities to utilise credit rating powers more fully to support the skills system and City & Guilds noted that digital badges can be used to recognise skills obtained.

4. Dates for Future Meetings

The date of the next meeting is as follows:

- Wednesday 12 June 2019 (1pm-2pm).

It was noted that any suggestions for more detailed topics and discussions should be emailed to Joanne Buchan.

5. Close

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