



LEAD MEMBER FOR ECONOMY

DECISIONS to be made by the Lead Member for Economy,
Councillor Rupert Simmons

WEDNESDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2022 AT 2.00 PM

VIA MS TEAMS

AGENDA

1. Decisions made by the Lead Cabinet Member on 7 December 2021 (*Pages 3 - 4*)
2. Disclosure of Interests
Disclosure by all Members present of personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Members regard the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.
3. Urgent items
Notification of any items which the Lead Member considers urgent and proposes to take at the appropriate part of the agenda.
4. Working together partnership agreement between East Sussex County Council and the Department for Work and Pensions (*Pages 5 - 12*)
Report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport
5. Any urgent items previously notified under agenda item 3

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15 February 2022

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LEAD MEMBER FOR ECONOMY

DECISIONS made by the Lead Member for Economy, Councillor Rupert Simmons, on 7 December 2021 at County Hall, Lewes

Councillors Stephen Holt, Pat Rodohan, Alan Shuttleworth, Colin Swansborough, David Tutt and John Ungar spoke on item 4 (see minute 7)

4. DECISIONS MADE BY THE LEAD CABINET MEMBER ON 12 NOVEMBER 2021

4.1 The Lead Member approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2021 as a correct record.

5. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

5.1 Councillor David Tutt declared a personal interest in Item 4 in that he is the Leader of Eastbourne Borough Council, but he did not consider this to be prejudicial.

6. REPORTS

6.1 Reports referred to in the minutes below are contained in the minute book.

7. CONSULTATION ON THE UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON'S 'PROSPECTUS FOR CHANGE' ADVOCATING THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON'S CAMPUS FROM EASTBOURNE

7.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

DECISIONS

7.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to (1) Agree to East Sussex County Council responding to the consultation by the 10 December 2021, expressing concerns about the proposed withdrawal of Higher Education provision by the University of Brighton from the county and its implications for the efforts to recover the economy in the wake of the pandemic;

(2) Delegate authority to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport, to

(a) pursue ways in which the County Council can foster ongoing Higher Education provision via brokerage and partnership working with both the University, with whom the County Council will continue to engage, and our local Further Education providers;

(b) explore opportunities to broker relationships with Kent-based and other Higher Education Institutes who may be able to support learning across the county; and

(3) Confirm that in the event that the University progresses withdrawal, the County Council encourages the University to use all endeavours to minimise the damage to the provision in sectors of high growth and skills required within the local economy such as the Health and Social care sector, and the effect this will have on our ability to train individuals from across the county to become qualified staff.

Reasons

7.3 The proposals in the University of Brighton's 'Prospectus for Change' will have a negative impact on learning in East Sussex. It will have a detrimental impact on the local economy in terms of jobs, spend, post-pandemic recovery, and most significantly will remove Higher Education provision from the county. At a time when the health sector has recruitment shortages and when there are cohorts of potential learners across the county, particularly to the East, who are ready to enter the sector, removing allied professional health courses and sports science courses will have a detrimental effect on our NHS, Care, sport, health, and fitness sectors locally and on our important leisure infrastructure.

7.4 The County Council is also mindful of the need to maintain a positive working relationship with the University in order to encourage the aspirations of local students.

Report to: Lead Member Economy

Date of meeting: 23 February 2022

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Working together partnership agreement between East Sussex County Council and the Department for Work and Pensions.

Purpose: To seek Lead Member endorsement of the proposed working together partnership agreement between ESCC and DWP in relation to employability and skills work.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) Review and approve the actions proposed in the appended Department for Work and Pensions – East Sussex County Council partnership agreement titled ‘Working in Partnership Across East Sussex’ and
 - 2) approve that the agreement is reviewed annually by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport and amended if required.
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1 Background Information

1.1 Following discussions with East Sussex County Council, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has drafted a partnership agreement (Appendix 1). The agreement explores ways that the DWP can work with the County Council to better align their delivery with the wider work undertaken by the County Council and Skills East Sussex (SES), the recognised local strategic employment and skills board.

1.2 The DWP sits on the Skills East Sussex Board, but with an undefined remit, and the partnership agreement sets out a specific role for DWP and a commitment to joint working between the County Council and the DWP within the context of the Board and its task groups.

2 Supporting Information

2.1 East Sussex has a high proportion of low qualified adults in the county (approximately 50% are only qualified to Level 2) and significant numbers of unemployed adults (December 2021: 14,560 people), a proportion that has increased significantly since the start of the pandemic. The county is also concerned with addressing the needs of its young people, including care leavers, preventing them from becoming NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training) and where they are unemployed, to help them move swiftly into meaningful work or learning.

2.2 The Government’s ‘Plan for Jobs’ outlined a range of measures and programmes to address unemployment nationally, which are overseen by the DWP such as:

- Kickstart which focuses on unemployed young people aged 16-25 and is due to end in March 2022
- Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS) programme which focuses on those most recently unemployed
- Restart programme which addresses employment among those who are furthest from the workplace

The proposed partnership agreement recognises that there needs to be collaboration between the DWP and the County Council to identify how to ensure that these programmes link to other relevant provision in the county for these groups and to determine effective referral mechanisms between

Job Coaches and other agencies to enable individuals to access the most relevant and useful provision to support them on their pathway into work.

2.3 Furthermore, the DWP needs to work more closely with businesses to address unemployment via the commissioning of Sector Based Work Academy Programmes (SWAP) with Further Education providers locally. The DWP has had some success with this working with the SES Construction task group and Visitor Economy task group to create the successful 'Hospitality Rocks' SWAP model, which is now being rolled out nationally. The intention in the partnership agreement is to expand on this work with other SES task groups in 2022.

3. Risks and Challenges

3.1 The partnership agreement commits to delivering a set of actions which focus on:

- sharing information
- ensuring that DWP staff and SES partners are aware of the range of opportunities available to address unemployment in the county
- improving referral pathways into unemployment interventions delivered by a range of stakeholders in the county
- maximising use of resources
- avoiding duplication

3.2 In order to mitigate the risk of these actions slipping, the agreement proposes that the DWP and County Council meet six-monthly to monitor and review progress against targets to ensure that commitments are being adhered to on both sides of the partnership.

4. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

4.1 The proposals in the partnership agreement will have a positive impact on the ability of the DWP, ESCC and all SES Stakeholders to address the employment needs of East Sussex residents. Active participation by DWP in the Skills East Sussex Board, the Skills East Sussex Task Groups and the sharing of labour market information will enable better alignment of provision and a stronger offer for those who are unemployed, which is to be welcomed.

4.2 It is therefore recommended that the Lead Member approves that the proposal is formally adopted by the County Council and is reviewed annually thereafter.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All members

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

Working in Partnership Across East Sussex



Department
for Work &
Pensions

East Sussex
County Council



Agreement Document

WORKING TOGETHER

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and East Sussex County Council (ESCC) are committed to work together to address employment and employability needs in the county. Through this Agreement Document, we set out how we will strengthen and formalise this positive working relationship.

To achieve our strategic aims we will need to work together to encourage and lead:

- Implementation of the national policy drivers announced by the government for example, its 'Plan for Jobs', at a local level.
- Stakeholder participation and collaboration – the council and DWP, employers, training providers, further education, universities, LEP, LSIP, business and education networks, and the third sector, all working together to address priorities
- Governance and accountability – monitoring and reporting, supportively challenging, and managing risks detrimental to recovery.

SKILLS EAST SUSSEX

Skills East Sussex, the strategic skills board, is facilitated by ESCC and brings together key stakeholders, including the DWP, to address the skills and employment needs of local residents in line with economic growth and business needs.

The Board is supported by a number of sector focused and area focused task groups. These bring together businesses with training and employment providers. [Skills East Sussex](#)

Skills East Sussex has set a range of strategic priorities:

- 1) Ensuring that national policy and funding supports the delivery of learning and skills in East Sussex**
- 2) Upskilling our workforce to minimum Level 3**
- 3) Supporting the unemployed and unqualified into work**
- 4) Enabling our FE/HE establishments to recruit excellent educators with specialist technical knowledge**
- 5) Improving our digital skills and digital inclusion**
- 6) Skills for a Net Zero future**

In East Sussex less than 50% of the population holds a Level 3 qualification and we have significant numbers of people who have no qualifications. We need to ensure that there are a wide range of targeted interventions available to move this cohort into learning and work. Some are a long way from being work ready and need specific pre-employment and work readiness programmes. Work needs to be done, via effective adult careers promotion activity and advice, to ensure that residents are aware of and encouraged to take up opportunities available to them.

Wherever possible, employment programmes such as Kickstart, Restart and Apprenticeships should be promoted to our employers, whilst retention of existing staff can be encouraged by greater awareness of Access to Work.

Schemes such as sector Work Based Academy Programmes (SWAP), delivered in partnership with the DWP and local training providers provide an excellent way to recruit to ring-fenced positions for new staff, while programmes such as ESTAR, which supports specific cohorts of unemployed people (those living in supported or temporary accommodation for example) should be supported and built upon.

As well as DWP promoting all opportunities, ESCC will also ensure that these are flagged on the East Sussex website: www.careerseastsussex.co.uk

The Skills East Sussex Board also worked together to create 'Mission Two: Building Skills, Creating Jobs' of the Economy Recovery Plan for East Sussex, with a wide range of activities to support employment and skills post pandemic. The action plan actively addresses the need to tackle increased unemployment, with youth unemployment being of particular concern. The plan also highlights the need to encourage recruitment into vacancies in key sectors such as health, construction and logistics which has seen increased demands for staff. [Economy Recovery Plan](#)

DWP Recruitment campaigns and specific sector focused recruitment will continue and complement the Skills East Sussex plan for jobs with the ESCC skills forums included in the planning and agreeing of deliverable outputs to ensure that joint priorities are met. In 2022 DWP are planning at least three additional sectoral campaigns. These will focus on:

- Health and Social care
- Agriculture and Farming
- Green construction industries

The Partnership Agreement

This partnership agreement outlines ways in which DWP and ESCC can collaborate to share information, improve referral pathways, maximise the use of resources, avoid duplication and strengthen the local skills infrastructure to better support residents and employers.

AGREED AREAS FOR PARTNERSHIP WORKING

1. DWP as active member of Skills East Sussex (SES) to help shape and improve the local skills offer, which includes contributing to the Economy Recovery Plan and attendance at SES meetings (3 times a year) and participation in sub-groups as agreed: Sector Based Task Groups, Careers Campaign Working Group, Apprenticeships East Sussex.
2. DWP to share and present more granular, localised data at SES meetings (annually – Autumn meeting of SES)

3. ESCC will work with DWP to help ensure local residents and DWP advisors have up to date information about local provision, courses, recruitment campaigns, and other support and resources available to their clients. This includes utilising and promoting Careers East Sussex platform, which houses an e-prospectus of local courses & training (for young people & adults), an online pre-employment support programme database, an online application system and careers information & resources. DWP to also help shape and develop Careers East Sussex to help meet their client's needs and feed into the development of the careers search tool which is currently being developed and added to the site.
4. Provision and support will be targeted to priority groups and/or wards most in need of additional intervention to improve employment outcomes, social mobility and raise aspirations. This also includes ensuring employment support is widely accessible, to maximise resident engagement. Based on current evidence from the Index of Deprivation, initial efforts will be focused on residents most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, whilst not losing sight of the ABC ethos, as well as those who historically fare less well in the labour market, such as:
 - a. Unemployed Young People aged 18-24
 - b. Newly unemployed
 - c. Long-term unemployed
 - d. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities
 - e. Unemployed people with health conditions and disabilities
 - f. Unemployed people with complex needs
 - g. Homeless people
 - h. Care Leavers.
5. Youth Hubs: DWP and ESCC to work together to ensure Youth Hubs are established across East Sussex to ensure support in place for young people (16-24yrs)
6. Explore/establish a mechanism for ESCC to help support local DWP, MHCLG, DfE and ESFA contractors (I.e. REED, TWIN UK, SCDA) to establish link/partnerships/referral routes with local colleges, training/employment support/careers providers
7. Preventative and early intervention work; over 400 16-18 year olds are NEET, most of which will not be current DWP clients. Explore and expand on work with schools to prevent NEET and opportunities to try and reduce existing 16-18 NEET
8. Kickstart; work together to improve the process of getting vacancies live and promoting vacancies far and wide. And provide reports on sectors and progressions
9. DWP to Co-chair ESTAR; focusing on how to support those in social housing, at risk of homelessness, ex rough sleepers. Group focusing on raising aspirations and motivation of long term unemployed – delivering some trial

initiatives which have potential to be expanded and built upon via FSF and other collaborative bids to address strategic priorities

10. To identify and support pathways to and from DWP paid for provision (Plan for Jobs), including Kickstart, Restart, Sector- based work academies

DWP and ESCC commit to meeting every 6 months to monitor and review the Partnership Agreement

On behalf of DWP

Print name:

Signature:

Role:

Date:

On behalf of ESCC

Print name:

Signature:

Role:

Date:

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