

BROMLEY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.00 pm on 18 April 2023

Present:

Councillor Yvonne Bear (Chairman)
Katy Woolcott, London Biggin Hill Airport (Vice-Chairman)
Zoe Carr, Beckenham Together BID Company & Penge SE20
BID Company
Anne-Marie Douglas, Jobcentre Plus
Christopher Evans, Community Links Bromley
Gary Hillman, N. Hillman & Sons
Michael Humphries, Handelsbanken
Mike Lewis, Michael Rogers LLP
Lorraine McQuillan, LBB Place Shaping & Local Economy
Manager
Jason Stanton, Mytime Active
Caroline Tatchell, Splash Damage
Lee Thomas, Fairlight Group
Chris Travers, Orpington 1st BID Company

Also Present:

Ose Akpom, Economic Development Manager, LBB
Hal Khanom, Head of Economic Development, LBB

35 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Carol Arnfield – LBB Head of Service for Early Years, School Standards and Adult Education and Chandra Sharma – Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), and Elena Diaconescu – Head of Bromley Adult Education College and Sarah King – FSB attended as their respective substitutes.

The Chairman welcomed Clare Searle, Greener and Cleaner, to the meeting and proposed that she join the membership of the Partnership as a representative of the green sector.

RESOLVED that Clare Searle join the Bromley Economic Partnership as a representative of the green sector.

36 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

No questions had been received.

37 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31ST JANUARY 2023

AND MATTERS OUTSTANDING

The Chairman noted that there were no matters outstanding.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 31st January 2023 be agreed.

38 LOCAL OFFICE-BASED BUSINESS - CASE STUDY

The Chairman welcomed Gregory Micallef, Managing Director – Gregory Micallef Associates Ltd to the meeting to provide an overview of the company. A copy of the presentation is attached at Appendix A.

In response to questions, Members of the Partnership were advised that one of the key considerations was ensuring that the right workforce was in place to enable more contracts to be taken on by the company. The current employment market was interesting and for potential employees there was a clear differential between a family run business with a heart and soul and a larger commercial organisation.

Out of the 23 people working for Gregory Micallef Associates Ltd., 18 resided within the Borough. Members of the Partnership also noted that Gregory Micallef Associates Ltd. sought contracts locally and nationally as long as potential clients were seeking the good quality advice offered by the company.

The Chairman thanked Gregory Micallef for his attendance at the meeting and presentation.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

39 LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (LSIP)

Philip Doyle, Senior Policy Manager at Local London, provided an update to the Partnership on the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). A copy of the presentation is attached at Appendix B.

In response to questions, Mr Doyle suggested that increasing the skill level of the workforce and providing a pipeline of skilled workers would lead to an increase in demand for space for manufacturing across the Borough. The Chairman highlighted the importance of ensuring that young people had the skills required to access the jobs that were available.

The Vice-Chairman suggested that across London it would be helpful to have a pooled facility for certain skill sets. In addition, it would be necessary for the Borough as a whole to widen its vision around the skills and the employment land that would be required in the future in order to keep jobs local.

A Member of the Partnership emphasised the need to identify manufacturing land across the Borough in order to ensure that there was the necessary space for people to work.

The Head of Economic Development explained that the purpose of the Local Skills Improvement Plan was to address the skills challenge that had been highlighted by employers across London. The key for the London Borough of Bromley was to identify the correct sectors to be included in the Bromley Annex of the Improvement Plan.

The Partnership requested that the Annex be circulated following the meeting to enable Members to respond following the meeting.

A Member suggested that charitable organisations experienced skills challenges around developing people to become great managers. It was also noted that there was a need to develop individuals who had a broad range of skills including general administrative and managerial skills.

In response to a question from the Chairman, Mr Doyle confirmed that engineering would be picked up under the two headings of Construction & Civil Engineering and Manufacturing. The Chairman suggested that it may be beneficial to have engineering as a separate heading.

The Chairman noted that the Council experienced particular skills shortages within the Social Care sector but also the Housing and Planning sectors. It was recognised that in these sectors there were skills shortages across London and the challenges were not restricted to Bromley.

It was agreed that the consultation document would be circulated following the meeting and the report would be circulated when it was available.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

40 ULEZ EXPANSION - UPDATE

The Chairman provided an update on proposals from the Mayor of London to expand the Ultra-Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ).

LB Bromley and some other London Councils have bought a judicial review, of which some grounds have now been accepted so the JR will be proceeding, with the first hearing due in July.

The Chairman reported that the Council had no powers to prevent cameras being installed on 'A' roads and on traffic lights as these fell under the jurisdiction of the Mayor of London. The Mayor had confirmed his intention to proceed with the proposals and it was unlikely that the judicial review would prevent this, although the Council was working to slow down implementation.

It was reported that the view of the Council was that ULEZ was not right for Bromley. Tube stations were not common across the Borough and many residents were reliant on their cars. In addition, Bromley did not suffer from the heavy traffic congestion experienced in inner London Boroughs. ULEZ

was seen as a regressive tax which impacted on the most vulnerable residents.

The Head of Economic Development reported that it was likely that the judicial review would be heard in early July. In addition, the Council had challenged the statistics around death rates in Bromley due to the Borough's ageing population (which impacted these figures). The Council would be reviewing progress on the Borough's Air Quality Action Plan. The ambition remained to maintain good air quality across the Borough. ULEZ was perceived to have a limited impact on maintaining air quality.

Members of the Partnership highlighted that ULEZ would have the biggest impact on lower paid staff. It was however acknowledged that it would be a positive step forward to have a constructive conversation around improving air quality around Orpington High Street. Concerns were raised surrounding a recent ULEZ protest in Orpington Town Centre which had focused on the War Memorial.

The Partnership noted that there were a large number of key workers who commuted into the Borough from other areas. There was a concern that with staff essentially being taxed to travel to work they would seek employment in areas not subject to the ULEZ.

A Member of the Partnership made the point that, more broadly, the scheme was having a positive impact on air quality as a result of a large reduction in polluting vehicles across London, that many of these were using roads in Bromley and that was of benefit for everyone.

A Member of the Partnership noted that it would be helpful for more environmentally friendly transport methods such as electric vehicles to be promoted across the Borough. It was suggested that it would be helpful for the Economic Partnership to have a wider discussion regardless of the decision to be taken around ULEZ.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

41 LOCAL PLAN - UPDATE

The Head of Economic Development provided a brief update on the Local Plan. The Local Authority was consulting on a Local Plan Issues and Options document and at this point the Council was not setting out its preferred policy position, it was seeking views from local stakeholders regarding key issues for the Local Plan.

The Chairman highlighted that at this point the Council was trying to identify priorities for the Borough and the consultation contained a series of questions designed to elicit feedback from key stakeholders.

A Member of the Partnership highlighted that in the Borough there was very little Brownfield land for infill development. In terms of future development, it

was essential for the Local Authority and key stakeholders to identify the future direction for the Borough and urged all Partnership members to participate in the consultation.

The Chairman reiterated that the development of the Local Plan was based in evidence and there was a need to follow processes in order to develop a robust evidence base.

The Economic Partnership noted that the London Plan remained in place.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

42 STRATEGIC INVESTMENT FUND (SIF) - UPDATE

The Economic Development Manager provided an update reporting that the Council had recently submitted a proposal to the GLA to access up to £1m from their Strategic Investment Fund (SIF). The funding was available to target investment by broadband infrastructure providers in order to develop full-fibre infrastructure by connecting Council sites or building assets via a local dark-fibre network. It would also enable the infrastructure provider to commercialise the additional full-fibre capacity and passive infrastructure deployed under this project. The aim was to stimulate further commercial investment to increase the coverage for residents or businesses.

The key benefits of the project were that it would increase the speed and connectivity at key Council owned sites to improve productivity, increase the range of digital services, reduce costs and future-proof the Council to make better use of Smart/IOT technology. The project would also help to increase the general full-fibre footprint across the Borough and address gaps in connectivity at key or strategic locations. This was in accordance with the Council's Digital Infrastructure Work Plan and Economic Development Strategy.

The Economic Development Manager outlined the approval process explaining that the SIF funding was subject to approval by GLA with the decision anticipated by early May. It was also subject to approval by the Council's Executive committee.

Members of the Partnership recognised the importance of ensuring a robust broadband infrastructure as broadband was an essential tool.

The Chairman noted that a significant amount of work was being undertaken to ensure that there was good broadband coverage across the Borough.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

43 NTEZ UPDATE

The Partnership received an update and presentation regarding the Night-Time Enterprise Zone (NTEZ). The Place Shaping and Local Economy Manager confirmed that Bromley's application for a Night Time Economy Zone had been successful and a number of events had been arranged for over the summer.

Members of the Partnership were asked to help with the promotion of events.

It was noted that research had been commissioned into the Night Time Economy in Bromley and the findings from this research would be presented at the next meeting in June alongside an update on the Umbrella Project.

Members of the Partnership noted that the Economic Development Team were aware of the impact of vacant units on the High Street. An update on progress to re-let the units would be sought from the Council's Property Team.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

44 CORONATION UPDATE

The Place Shaping and Local Economy Manager reported that there would be big screens in Queen's Gardens, Bromley and Market Square, Orpington screening the Coronation on 6th May 2023. Grants had been provided for community events and fees for street parties had been waived. In addition, there would be a Best Decorated Shop competition with a £100 gift voucher donated by the Glades for the winning business.

The Partnership noted that the BIDs were also decorating the Town Centres for the celebrations.

The Chairman reported that the grant funding for Street Parties had been highly oversubscribed, and the Council was hopeful that there would be a good weekend of celebration across the Borough, boosting local businesses.

It was noted that information on Coronation celebrations across the Borough was included on the website and a link to this information could be circulated following the meeting.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

45 PARTNER UPDATES

Anne-Marie Douglas – there was a drive to encourage priority group customers, including those customers who were over 50, to upskill. A Twitter online Jobs Fayre had been developed and this had proven to be very popular and businesses were encouraged to advertise any vacancies on the platform.

Prior to the start of the meeting Mike Humphries sent the following update - The Cost of Living challenges, rising inflation and increases in Bank of

England Base rate seen through 2022 have continued to have an impact on the economy and all of us both personally and in our businesses in the first quarter of 2023. This has also started to be seen in the financial markets with a couple of bank failures in the US and Credit Suisse in Switzerland. Regulations in the banking industry in the UK are very stringent and at this juncture we are not aware of any UK banks that might be struggling. Handelsbanken I am pleased to say remains one of the strongest Banks worldwide in terms of asset size and has the best Credit rating of any Bank in the whole of Europe. The positive news for the economy generally is the view currently that further increases in Bank of England Base rate are expected to be limited to perhaps one further increase of 0.25% in May, with Base rate then remaining at 4.25 / 4.5% for much of the rest of the year before some reductions are seen during 2024. Much however depends on inflation which is currently 10% plus but which will reduce sharply over the coming months not least because the impact of the energy increases last April will drop away; so our economists anticipate (naturally based on life as it is today) currently that inflation by year end could be half what we see today. The path to full recovery is likely to be 2 to 3 years, but the UK may now just avoid a recession and as I have reported previously the prospects for 2024 / 2025 are looking promising. So not all doom and gloom. In conclusion Handelsbanken continue to view the future with confidence and remain fully occupied - opening accounts, receiving large deposits and lending both to Private individuals via Mortgages and to businesses via commercial loans, our "Local Relationship Banking" model proving hugely popular.

RESOLVED that the updates be noted.

46 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

4.00pm, Tuesday 27th June 2023
4.00pm, Tuesday 7th November 2023
4.00pm, Tuesday 9th January 2024
4.00pm, Tuesday 26th March 2024

The Meeting ended at 6.05 pm

Chairman

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Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP)

London Labour Market

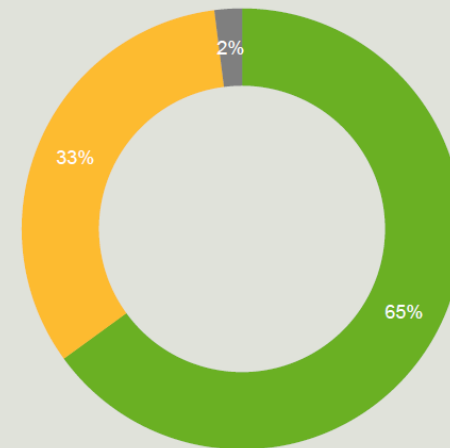
- Job vacancies remain **high** although recruitment demand showing signs of slowing with likelihood of **recession**
- Nationally, and mirrored in London, there are more vacancies than available people yet, in London unemployment higher than national average and over 1 in 5 out of the labour market (economically inactive) and rising as well as labour shortages, skills gaps remain rampant
- Emerging skills needs such as green and tech rising but ill defined
- Those from black and minority ethnic communities are already more likely to be lower skilled and out of work and in poverty
- **Cost of living crisis** will make matters worse
- We need to give the unemployed the skills and support needed to get back into work and help fill the gaps, do more to help the inactive return to the labour market, and give those in work the skills employers are desperate for.

Q4. What do you feel are the biggest drivers of recruitment challenges in your business?



BASE: Respondents struggling to fill vacancies. Total: 514.

Q2. Which of the following is closest to your view?



■ We are struggling to fill some of our vacancies ■ We are not struggling to fill some of our vacancies ■ Don't know

BASE: Respondents with open job vacancies. Total: 791.

Add comments

Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

The Issue

- Business doesn't have access to the skills it needs because the training system is not providing them

What is an LSIP and how will it help?

- Introduced as part of the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 (2022)
- An employer-led and data-driven plan for better matching training provision to employer skills demand in order to help employers meet their skills gaps, fill vacancies and ultimately to get more Londoners into jobs

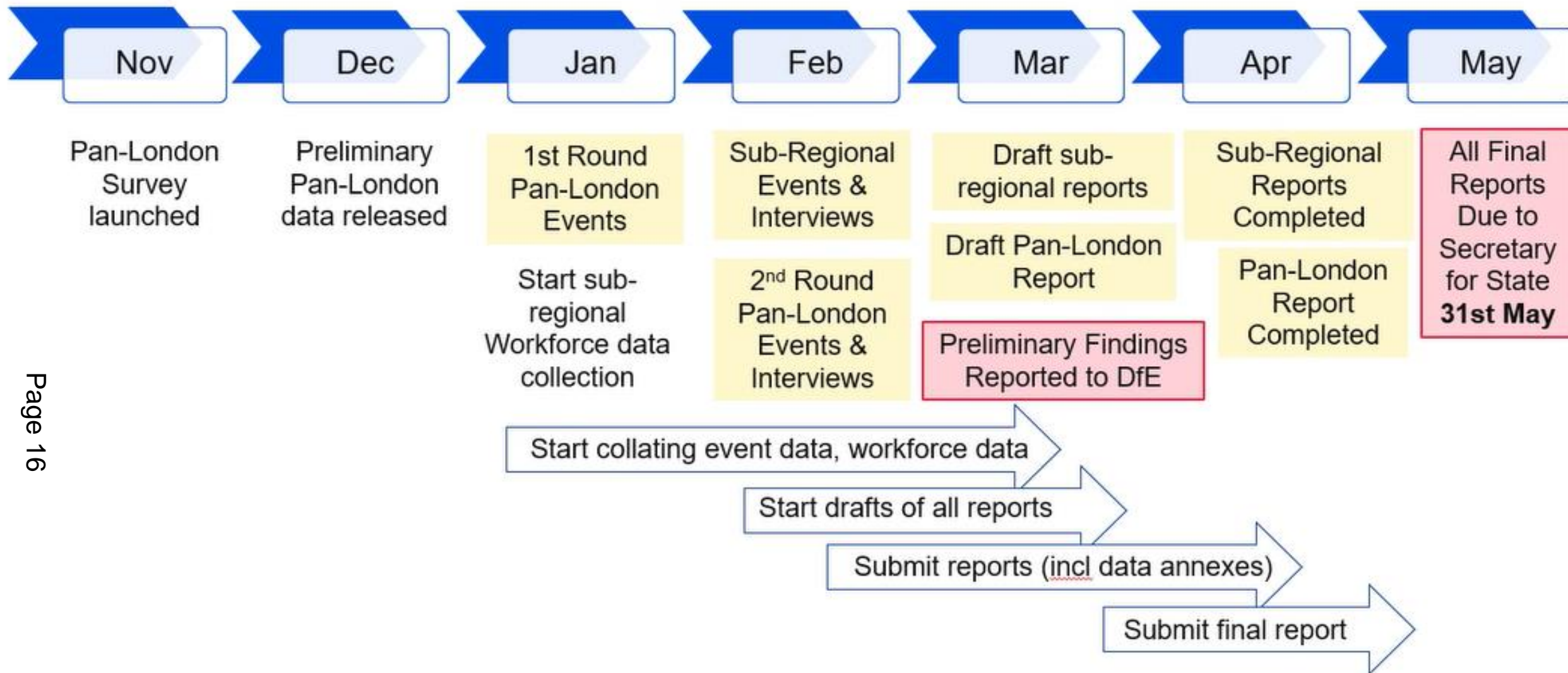
How will it work?

- Led by a designated business group, an LSIP will set out a clear articulation of employers' skills needs both now and in the future and the priority changes – in training courses and system changes - required in the local area to help ensure post-16 technical education and skills provision is more responsive and flexible in meeting local labour market skills needs.
- The end product will be a report setting out those key priorities. The process to develop the report, i.e. bringing together employers and providers to understand skills needs and provision, is just as important as the report itself.
- It has statutory clout

Process

- Identifying employer skills needs – what are the skills employers need locally, but struggle to find?
- Translating employer needs into changes in provision – how can those needs best be met by providers in more responsive ways.
- Addressing learner demand and employer engagement – what can local stakeholders and employers do to raise demand for and make better use of those skills.

LSIP TIMELINE



London's LSIP

- London will have one plan with annexes covering the four sub regions, relevant to their own part of London, based upon evidence from the sub region and setting out recommendations for the sub-region.
- Business LND – Have been appointed by DFE to produced the London LSIP
- Local London has been appointed to complete an Annex for the London LSIP report which covers our sub regional area
- Local London have appointed the **Institute for Employment Studies** to develop our sub-regional plans.

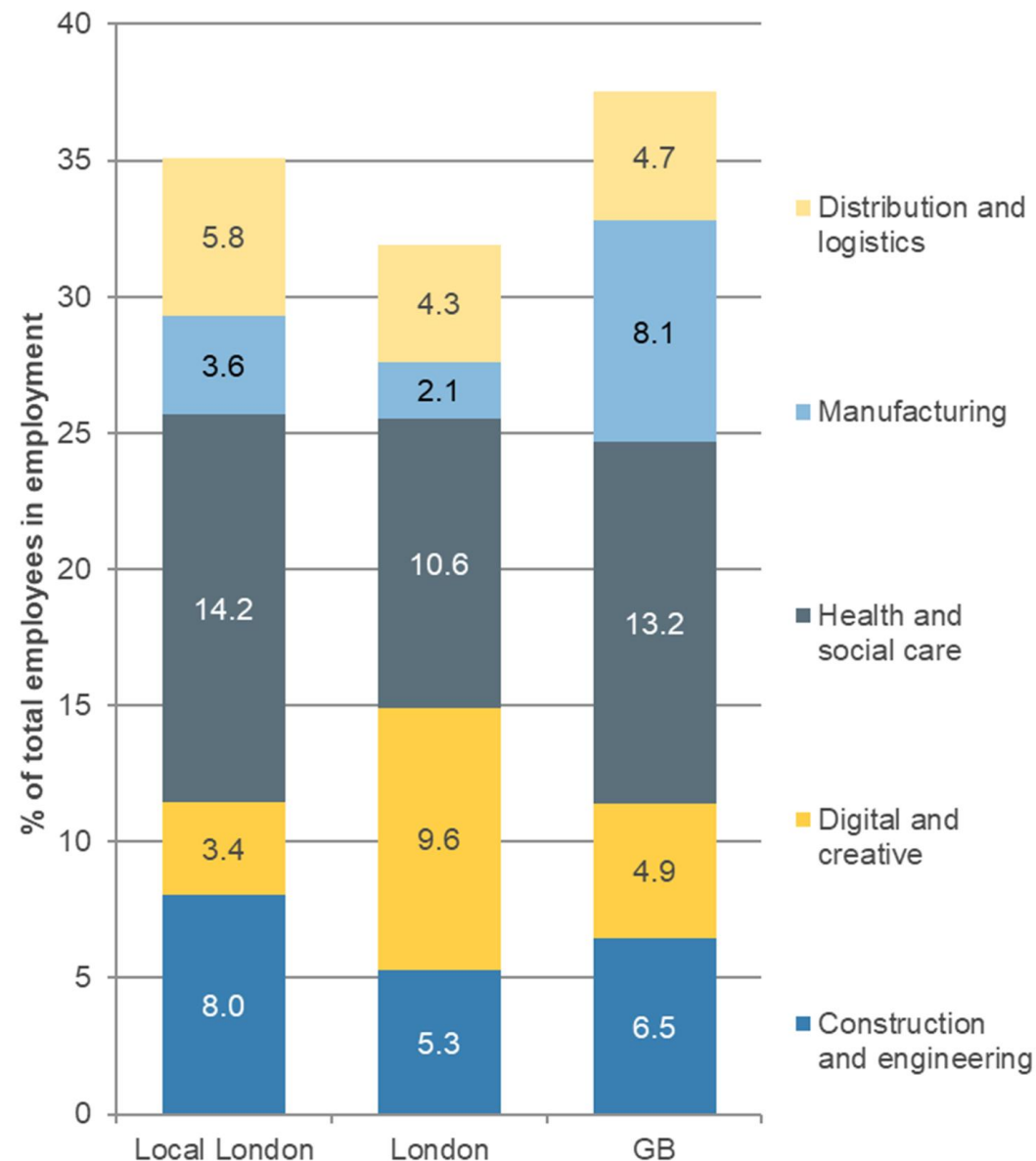
Process

- Analysis of employment and skills data
 - Workshops
 - Face-to-face interviews
 - Stakeholder survey
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- Emerging findings and draft recommendations presented 29th & 30th March 2023
 - Business LDN Consultation
 - Final report to be submitted by 31st May 2023

London LSIP Support – Local London

Priority sectors

- Priority sectors for the Local London area have been identified taking account of total employment size, relative size in comparison with national employment, the Mayoral priorities, and local strategic priorities
- Construction and engineering – a Mayoral priority sector and above the London and national averages; accounts for 10% of all employees in Havering and Bexley
- Digital and creative – Mayoral priorities, but relatively small in Local London; largest in Greenwich and Redbridge (c. 5%)
- Health and social care – Mayoral priority and above regional/ national averages; accounts for 20% of employment in Havering
- Manufacturing – small overall but some local concentrations in Barking & Dagenham (8%), Bexley (6%) and Enfield (4%)
- Distribution and logistics – above average proportion of total; largest in Barking & Dagenham (9%) and Enfield (7%)
- Green skills cut across a number of sectors, including construction and distribution/logistics, while sustainability important for all sectors



Local London Priorities

- Health and Social Care
- Construction / Built Environment
- Digital / Creative
- Manufacturing
- Transportation / Storage

Areas of Interest

- Tourism
- Hospitality
- Finance/admin

Sector Skills Needs – Local London

Construction

- **Recruitment - occupational priorities:** Difficulties getting entrants into the sector at lower levels – groundworkers (9121) and elementary construction workers (9129); don't need skills at that level, just motivated and resilient applicants
- Also site managers (5330)
- **Recruitment – skill system issues:** Colleges suffering from a lack of skilled tutors
- **Recruitment – employability issues:** Construction not seen as an attractive option (in a hole with a spade) but good prospects for motivated people – be more ruthless at talking about earnings potential; T-Levels can also help raise profile
- Charities working with disaffected young people are good outreach opportunity to promote sector at pre-16 level
- Promoting construction to women and people from ethnic minority groups
- **Existing staff:** Green skills – when demand comes, sector will respond

Health and social care

- **Recruitment - occupational priorities:** In social care the priority is frontline care workers (6135), while in health it's registered nurses (2234)
- Have 10%+ vacancy rate in health in Local London – meaning recruiting over 4,000 staff just to replace leavers
- **Recruitment – skill system issues:** More difficult to identify and access placement opportunities in social care compared to health
- Using international recruitment in health while develop more consistent and supportive pathways into employment for local residents
- **Recruitment – employability issues:** Employers in social care using values-based recruitment and then training rather than trying to recruit qualified/skilled staff

Sector Skills Needs – Local London

Transport and logistics

- **Recruitment - occupational priorities:** Largest volumes of job vacancies in 2022 (Adzuna) were for warehouse workers (9252), lorry drivers (8211), delivery drivers (8214), and vehicle technicians (5231).
- Recruitment difficulties often caused by shift work/unsociable hours (Survation survey)
- Also project managers (3542) and data analysts (3544) highlighted by large transport infrastructure employers.
- **Recruitment – skill system issues:** Reports of difficulties engaging with schools/colleges by logistics employers – less tradition of engagement and not seen as a career pathway?
- **Recruitment – employability issues:** Old age profile in engineering roles
- **Existing staff:** Digital skills important for wide range of roles – London Business 1000 survey found high proportion of respondents citing basic IT skills as a key challenge, and Survation survey reports basic digital skills as very common skill need over next 2 to 5 years; Leadership skills; Softer skills – agility and resilience; Green skills – carbon literacy is growing skills for health and safety, leadership and project management roles

Digital and creative

- **Recruitment - occupational priorities:** Priorities for IT sectors mentioned in CLF and SLP - IT professional roles, data analysts etc. In **digital creative sectors** (film, TV etc.) there are a range of occupations needed – hair and make up (6221/6222), carpenters (5316), production accountants (2421) as well as creative occupations (eg actors (3413), dancers (3414), musicians (3415), camera operators (3417)); High degree of self-employment in creative side
- **Recruitment – skill system issues:** Technical skills shortages linked to slow moving skills system, out of date curricula and equipment
- **Existing staff:** Resilience, to cope with negative aspects of the digital creative sector (poor management, long hours, stress)

Sector Skills Needs – Local London

Manufacturing

- **Recruitment - occupational priorities:** The manufacturing sector in Local London is predominantly food and drink, and vehicle manufacturing, with the following occupations being the largest: food, drink and tobacco process operatives (8111); production managers and directors in manufacturing (1121); packers, bottlers, canners and fillers (9132); warehouse operatives (9252); sales accounts and business development managers (3556); metal working production and maintenance fitters (5223) (LFS and BRES data)
- In textiles manufacturing, felt to be a shortage of skilled machinists (5413), perhaps because of the image of the sector and not seen as a desirable career
- **Recruitment – skill system issues:** Early days to tell if T-Levels are improving practical/vocational routes into employment
- Shorter, modular courses to give more options for adults to upskill or re-skill into the sector
- **Recruitment – employability issues:** Lack of females in engineering Apprenticeships – not using full talent pool (also ethnicity imbalance)
- **Existing staff:** Current gaps in basic digital skills and basic maths skills (Survation survey), and need for digital skills will grow particularly in relation to green/sustainable skills
- Also, London Business 1000 survey found gaps in softer skills such as teamworking, problem solving, and leadership; also foreign language skills (multi-cultural workforce)

Feedback from consultations – Local London

Skills system issues

- Issues with residents and businesses navigating the training provision landscape and accessing information about career pathways available through different training courses – learners need to see the jobs available at the end of the training
- Employers often don't know what they don't have, the skills needs they lack and gaps, see especially digital. They also may not know what's on the horizon, e.g. future skills needs.
- Courses currently available are too onerous in terms of timings and duration, particularly for shift workers
- Providers currently focused on qualifications and completing that process, rather than the skills employers need
- Significant shortage of basic digital skills and options for gaining those skills
- Lack of pastoral support for young people to support them with information on employer and provider expectations, leading to low retention rates
- Lack of opportunity for business and provider engagement
- Inability of providers to put on courses due to lack of numbers and lack of opportunities for SMEs in particular to collaborate to ensure courses are viable
- Current provider business model distorts provider offer leading to duplication of provision in some areas and gaps in others
- Lack of flexibility in use of Apprenticeship Levy leading to under-use

Feedback from consultations – Local London

Suggestions for recommendations – skills and training provision

- Assistance for residents and businesses in navigating the training provision landscape, and in providing information about career pathways available through different training courses – learners need to see the jobs available at the end of the training
- More of a focus on delivering ‘skills’ for businesses, rather than ‘qualifications’ (may need changes to funding mechanisms)
- Digital skills, particularly in health and social care, including the skills for using automation/AI in the sector
- Also basic digital skills training so that learners can access online/blended courses
- Skills for retrofit – broad range including electric vehicles, PV and solar, heat pumps; also insulation
- Shorter, modular courses, delivered face-to-face and available locally – particularly important for sectors with shift working such as social care
- Raising awareness of bootcamps – move away from young people thinking of binary choice of university or Apprenticeship and highlight other options available
- Increasing pastoral support for young learners, potentially via mentors from employers, as a means of increasing retention rates and giving information about what jobs entail and even job opportunities

Feedback from consultations – Local London

Suggestions for recommendations – broader changes to skills system

- Sector-focused brokerage systems to bring providers and businesses together, with a suggestion for a possible product that provides information to employers about what providers are offering, that can be used by employers to see which providers are ‘going their way’ and to support SMEs in coming together to get sufficient numbers of learners so that courses can be run
 - Greater co-operation between publicly-funded providers, assisted by local authorities, to overcome the potential of the current business model of skills provision to distort providers’ offer to employers
 - A further suggestion about co-operation was to have a “branded” approach across the SRP which helps identify the best option for learners/businesses, rather than each provider having a “parochial” approach of trying to recruit learners/businesses in their Boroughs – this has happened in relation to green skills provision across Local London
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- A potential role for Boroughs to help oil the wheels for engagement between employers and providers, and to help employers identify their skills needs and gaps (eg planning and procurement staff in Boroughs providing information to construction SMEs about upcoming retrofit needs)
- More flexibility on businesses being able to use the Apprenticeship levy in their supply chains, or to support wages of Apprentices (particular issue in health and social care)

Next Steps

Consultation:

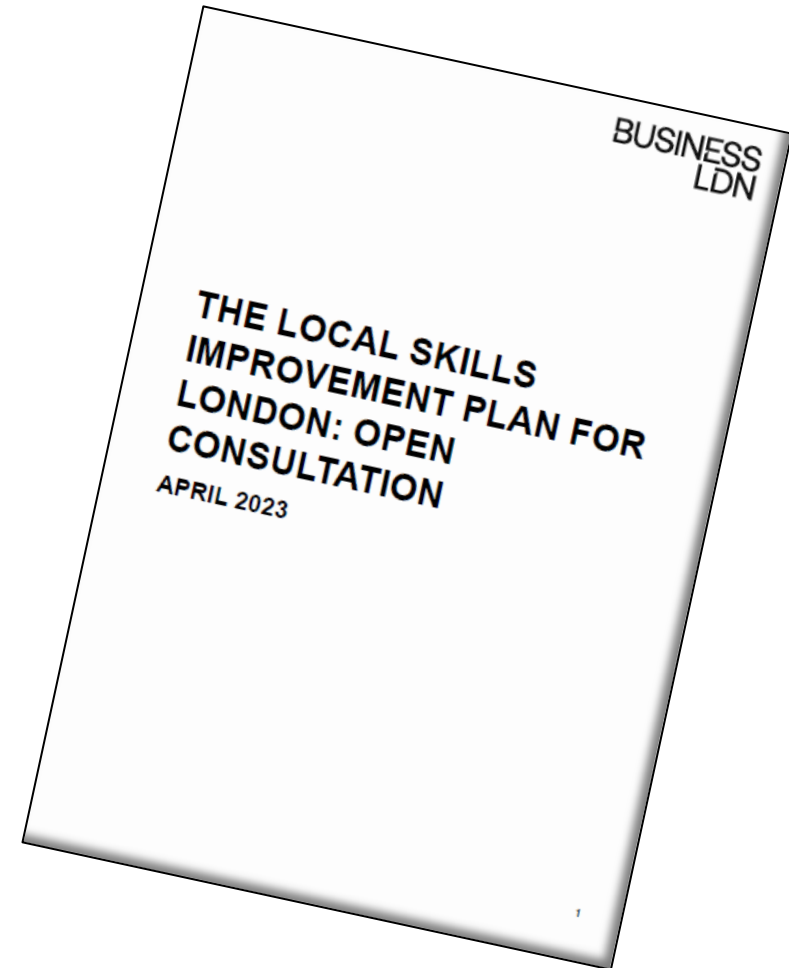
- Local London p49-56
- Consultation closes at 23.59 on Thursday 27th April

Submission to DfE 31st May 2023

LSIF

Publication Summer 2023

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