

Coast to Capital



**Skills 360 Board
Skills Strategy and Action Plan
2020 - 2025**

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Welcome



I am honoured to be the Chair of the Skills 360 Board, the Skills Advisory Panel for the Coast to Capital region. I am supported in my role by Vice Chair, Winston Mahaffy of Thales, and a range of very talented individuals from across private and public sector businesses large and small, the further and higher education sector and the community and voluntary sector.

We are proud to represent an incredibly vibrant and varied region – from the towns of East Surrey and West Sussex to Britain's leading coastal city of Brighton. The area is home to some outstanding natural landscapes, including the beautiful South Downs National Park, and Gatwick Airport, our gateway to the world in Crawley.

At the start of the year, following a period of extended research and analysis, we had come to understand the very specific challenges facing the employment and skills landscape of our region. We were fortunate to have high levels of employment, a

highly skilled and entrepreneurial workforce and a broad based sector mix. However, we were surprised to discover that many of our businesses were being held back by recruitment challenges caused by a significant gap in our 20-40 year old population, skills gaps in particular occupations, most specifically those related to science, engineering and technology, and persistent pockets of lower skills particularly along the coast and in Crawley.

Working closely with our local partners, the Board had begun to identify the opportunities and interventions that would address our specific labour market constraints along with those global phenomena such as automation which will impact on the availability of lower level jobs in particular.

And then we were hit by a global pandemic which has changed everything. Despite our obvious strengths, COVID-19 will have a profound impact on the Coast to Capital economy. It is estimated that GVA in the Coast to Capital area could drop between 11% and 17% in 2020 compared to the national average estimate of 13%.

As of June this year, one third of the economically active population in the Coast to Capital area had already been directly impacted by COVID-19, and in receipt of Government support of one kind or another. As support schemes are brought to a close the unemployment rate is predicted to rise significantly. In the meantime, vacancies across the region have

“Recovery from the impact of COVID-19 will require intensive, tailored and integrated employment and skills support in all places across the country.”

dropped 30% since lockdown began.

Recovery from the impact of COVID-19 will require intensive, tailored and integrated employment and skills support across the country. While there will be common issues to address, we must tailor our recovery planning to the requirements of our local labour market, targeting the different needs and opportunities of each place, leveraging local knowledge, business partnerships and existing resources.

As Chair of the Coast to Capital Skills 360 Board I am pleased to share with you our Skills Strategy and Action Plan which is the culmination of a comprehensive study into the employment and skills market pre and post COVID-19.

Fran Rutter

*Chair, Skills 360 Board
Further Education representative,
Coast to Capital Board
CEO and Principal, NESCOL*

Executive Summary

This document sets out the skills strategy and locally tailored skills action plan to support the recovery and future resilience of the people, businesses and places in the Coast to Capital economy. It has been produced by the Skills 360 Board, the Skills Advisory Panel for the area and is the result of significant research, analysis, engagement and consultation.

It is well known that the Coast to Capital economy is significant, reaching £58 billion in 2019, providing very high levels of employment and excellent connectivity with global markets both for exports and inward investment. However, our research revealed that our regional economy was falling behind the levels of output and productivity seen in London and most parts of the South East with our labour productivity peaking in 1999.

- We established that the region's competitive advantage came from a range of high quality service businesses in all sectors, excellent international connectivity and strong cultural and leisure offer. Unfortunately, the impact of COVID-19 has proven to be particularly targeted on these areas of economic strength in particular, meaning that our economy appears to be among the worst affected in the country, compounding the existing structural challenges.
- As a result, the area is seeing unprecedented levels of unemployment and a significant drop in output which has shifted the short term focus of this skills strategy and action plan to minimise redundancies; get people back into work quickly; create new jobs; and support young people, providing options for education leavers and support for the most vulnerable.
- It also keeps an eye on the longer term, focussing on the development of higher-level skills, including in-work progression, and helping business and the economy adapt and take advantage of new opportunities.

The Skills 360 Board has identified two overarching priorities to support the short to medium term recovery and future resilience of our economy – PEOPLE and BUSINESS – with a number of sub-priorities. They are set out below:

Priority 1: PEOPLE

1a. FINDING OUT ABOUT WORK

Supporting young people to find out about and gain more experience of the world of work to improve their future career outcomes.

1b. STARTING OUT IN WORK

A renewed focus on getting young people in the class of 2020 and beyond into work to avoid a generation of high youth unemployment.

1c. STAYING IN WORK

Helping people to remain in high quality well-paid work and to progress their careers, with a particular short-term focus on those at risk of redundancy as a result of COVID.

1d. GETTING BACK INTO WORK

Supporting people back into work, specifically those who have lost their jobs as a result of COVID, with a focus on those who may face a particular disadvantage such as such as younger and older workers, those with low level skills or in places significantly affected by the crisis.

Priority 2: BUSINESS

2a. GROWING, RETAINING AND TRAINING THE WORKFORCE

Helping businesses understand their current and future skills and workforce needs and to build engagement with their existing workforce to ensure the business has the skills it needs to recover, build resilience and grow.

2b. WORKING TOGETHER

Bringing businesses and education providers together to build a better understanding of current and future skills needs and to develop collaborative approaches.

2c. MAKING THE MOST OF DIGITAL

Helping business owners and owner managers to understand the role that digital technology can have in the success of their business, particularly in the recovery from COVID-19.

At the end of this document you will find an action plan which sets out the proposed activity that we believe will help us to achieve these priorities. The Skills 360 Board will develop a programme based on this plan, setting out risk, resource and performance measures. Progress will be reported in our Local Skills Report which we are required to submit to the Department for Education, the first one due in March 2021.

More than ever, collaboration is the key to the successful delivery of this strategy and action plan as we will need to leverage local knowledge; business partnerships; and new and existing resources.

We will review and update this document regularly to reflect the fast changing nature of the environment we are currently in.

Introduction to Coast to Capital



Our Organisation

Coast to Capital is one of 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) across England – but the only one lucky enough to be responsible for driving the economic growth and sustainable success of this beautiful, vibrant and exceptionally well connected region.

As a LEP, we are here to provide strategic leadership, connect business with support and act as a catalyst for transformational change. As an ambitious and professional business-led collaboration between the private, public and education sectors we work in partnership to deliver a successful strategy for economic growth.






Our Area

The Coast to Capital area does not fit the template. Rather than a single identifiable city region, it is a network of functional economic hubs around Gatwick airport, which is an asset of global importance and our gateway to the world.

The economic hubs of Greater Brighton, West Sussex and East Surrey each have their own distinct sense of identity, offering a powerful draw for businesses, entrepreneurs and visitors from London, across the UK and the rest of the world.



-  Coast to Capital LEP
-  Strategic relationship with London LEP
-  Strategic relationship with South East LEP

Our Economy

Our regional economy reached £50 billion in 2017

Before the COVID-19 crisis, it was already clear that our regional economy was falling behind the levels of output and productivity seen in London and most parts of the South East: our labour productivity peaked in 1999, we have lost 15% of our business space since 2013 and local house prices command the highest multiple of local salaries in England – with increasing numbers of people having to commute to London for higher wages.¹

In spite of this, the region's innovative and resilient economy continued to support notable business successes in a diverse range of sectors: including aviation, advanced manufacturing, tourism and leisure, viticulture and horticulture. Our regional economy reached £58 billion in 2019, providing very high levels of employment and excellent connectivity with global markets both for exports and inward investment. The region's competitive advantage came from our range of high quality service businesses in all sectors, excellent international connectivity and strong cultural and leisure offer.



The Impact of COVID-19...

Unfortunately, the impact of COVID-19 has proven to be particularly targeted on these areas of economic strength in particular, meaning that our economy appears to be among the worst affected in the country.

...on our sectors

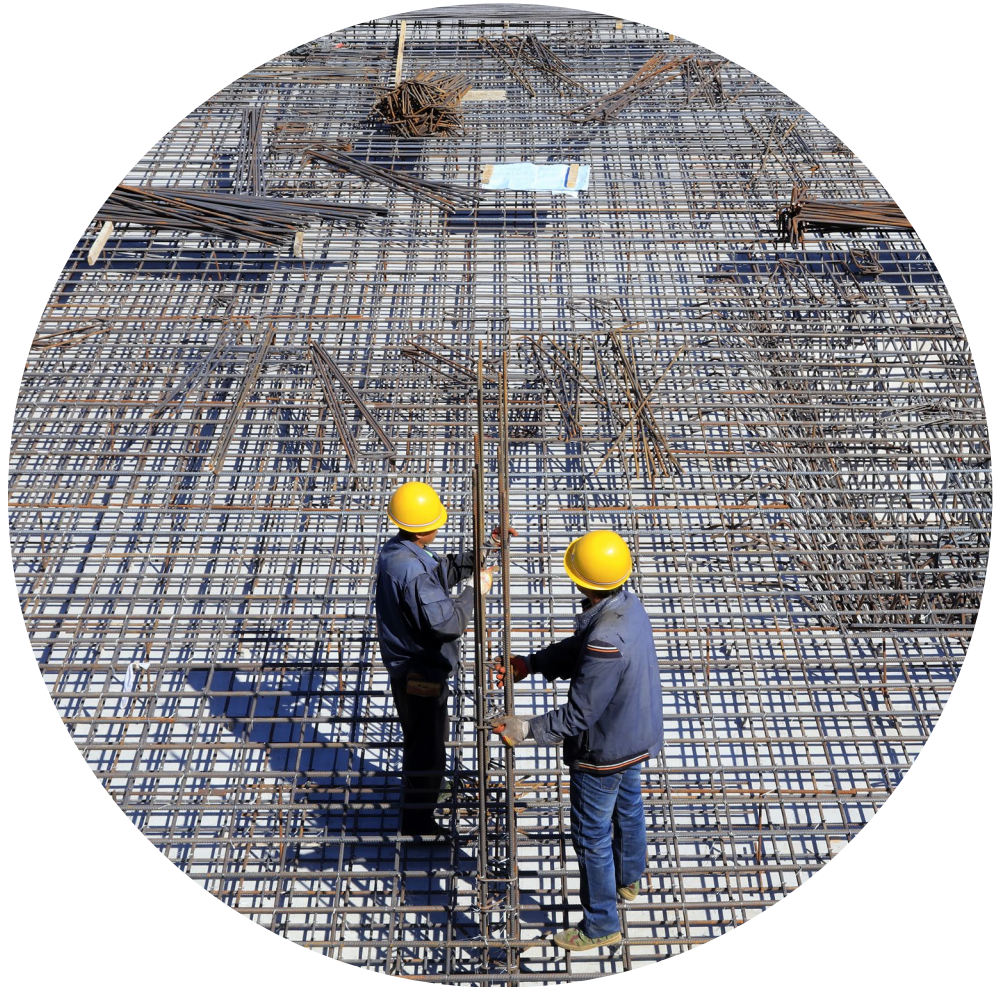
Restrictions on **air travel** and the long-term restructuring of the aviation sector will profoundly impact our area. Gatwick airport is our largest economic site, indirectly supporting up to 60,000 jobs and generating £5bn in the wider UK economy.¹ The airport's own capital investment programme has delivered more than £200m each year into the regional economy over the last decade, and the connectivity that the airport brings has driven inward investment into the region.

Traffic at Gatwick had declined by more than 99% by May 2020 and its return is slow meaning the economic impact is likely to be acute. The Centre for Cities predicts that Crawley, for example, is likely to be the place most exposed to the crisis in the country with as many as 53,000 jobs there classified as vulnerable.² 115,800 people had been furloughed in the districts and boroughs around the airport as at June 2020 – reflecting dependency there on jobs in airlines, aviation supply and maintenance, transport, retail, hotels and other sectors related to Gatwick.³

Restrictions on movement, social distancing and enforced closures are also dramatically affecting the **leisure, retail, hospitality and tourism sectors** which drive the economy across the region - particularly in Brighton, and in towns across Surrey and Sussex. In all of these sectors, businesses are looking for support so that they can adapt to the new operating environment. The specialisation of our region in arts, culture and events means that we are likely to bear a large part of the forecast £4.7bn national economic hit on that sector and the 400,000 jobs which are expected to be lost across the country.⁴

The **education** sector which contributes 6% of regional GVA is also in a perilous state with the Institute of Fiscal Studies estimating Higher Education providers could lose up to half of yearly income over the next four years.⁵ More locally it is estimated that the education sector in Coast to Capital could lose £1.6 billion in 2020, a decline in GVA of 38% between 2019 and 2020.⁶





...on our employment

The economically active population in the Coast to Capital region has already been directly impacted by COVID-19: 30% of those eligible are in receipt of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and 75% of individuals eligible have been supported through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), and the number of people claiming job seeking related benefits rose by 167% since the beginning of lockdown in March.⁷ As the CVJRS and SEISS schemes are brought to a close in October along with the Government's moratorium on commercial landlords seeking eviction notices, the unemployment rate is predicted to rise significantly.

In Crawley, 37% of eligible employments were furloughed through the CVJRS to June.⁷ This is a direct result of the

collapse in passenger air travel at Gatwick Airport and the knock-on effect on direct and indirect jobs. Flight volumes are not forecast to recover for another four to 10 years. In the meantime, vacancies across the region have dropped 30% since lockdown began.⁶

Also of concern is whether commuting to London will return to previous levels and the impact that this will have on incomes and employment levels in towns such as Horsham, Haywards Heath, Reigate and Dorking where equivalent local employment opportunities can be very limited.



...on our businesses

As we move further into the COVID-19 crisis, it is becoming clear that the economic damage wrought will be greater than was first predicted. The number of insolvencies in the Coast to Capital region rose 90% between May and June. 68% of all hospitality and leisure businesses are in suspended hibernation with the majority unable to predict when they will come out. Half of all businesses had less than six months of cash reserves in May.

Further Information

A more in depth analysis of the Coast to Capital economy and its people can be found at the following links and under the **Strategy section** of our website:

- **Gatwick 360 Strategic Economic Plan** – July 2018
- **Coast to Capital Economic Profile** – February 2020
- Coast to Capital Skills and Labour Market Study **Baseline Report** and **Baseline Appendix** – September 2019
- **Coast to Capital Coronavirus (COVID-19) Economic Impact Assessment** – September 2020
- **Coast to Capital COVID-19 Skills and Labour Market Impact Assessment** – September 2020

The Skills 360 Board

Role

Government's Industrial Strategy (2017) announced the introduction of Skills Advisory Panels (SAP) as a means to help LEPs and Mayoral Combined Authorities fulfil their local leadership role in the skills system by helping them understand their current and future skills needs and labour market challenges.

Coast to Capital's Skills 360 Board was set up in January 2019 and is now firmly established as the SAP for the area. It is formed of business and public sector representatives, as well as representatives from the education, community and voluntary sectors.

In summary its role is to:

- Provide strong leadership on skills in the local area, using an in depth knowledge of the local economy, business and skills ecosystems to contribute to and influence policy, strategy and delivery at a national, regional and local level
- Leverage the maximum investment into the local skills system
- Develop and maintain an understanding of the local labour market, and current and future skills needs, as well as the existing provision for skills and employment support available locally
- Develop and deliver a Skills Action Plan for the area
- Produce a Local Skills Report to inform national and regional policy and local skills provision
- Engage with business to increase opportunities for collaboration and raise awareness of local and national skills initiatives
- Share analysis and best practice with central government and other Skills Advisory Panels to learn from each other and tackle wider skills challenges

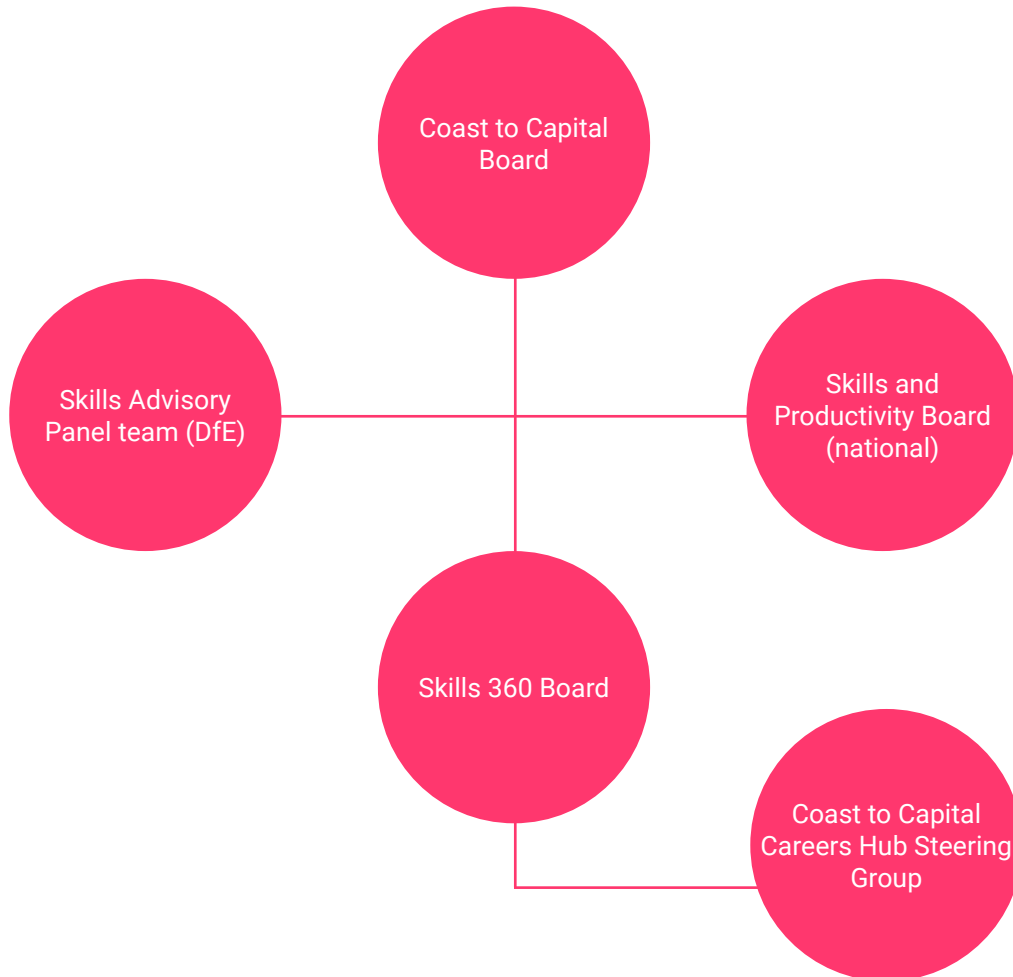
Further information on the Skills 360 Board and its membership can be found [here](#).

Governance

Figure 1 shows the Governance structure of the Skills 360 Board. The Skills 360 Board reports directly into the Coast to Capital Board and provides regular updates to the SAP team at the Department for Education (DfE). Local Skills Reports, the first of which is due in March 2021, are a requirement of SAPs and will be shared with both the DfE and the newly created Skills and Productivity Board. This national Board will provide the government with expert advice on how to ensure the courses and qualifications on offer to students are high-quality, are aligned to the skills that employers need for the future and will help increase productivity.

The Coast to Capital Careers Hub Steering Group will report directly into the Skills 360 Board.

Figure 1



Influence

The Skills 360 Board has an important part to play in the wider skills landscape.

Currently (summer 2020), at a **national** level, Coast to Capital is one of two LEPs involved in a Ministerial Economic Recovery Group which will make recommendations to inform national policy on devolution (Devolution White Paper due autumn 2020) and COVID-19 response in the run up to the autumn 2020 budget. Four Task and Finish Groups will produce the details of those recommendations. Coast to Capital has a valued seat on the Skills and Labour Market group and will be represented by the Chair of the Skills 360 Board (Fran Rutter).

Influence at a national level is important to ensure that we are able to shape and design skills provision that works for a non-city region in an area where skills funding is not yet devolved as it is in the large City Regions. The Skills 360 Board will play an important role in leveraging funding to ensure our education sector has the resource it needs to deliver skills for the 21st Century, recovery from COVID-19 and green and resilient growth.

At a **regional** level, the Skills 360 Board is one of six SAPs in the Catalyst South area, working collaboratively to help unlock the potential of the South's economy, ensuring that our residents and businesses have the skills needed to supercharge the UK's economic recovery.

Locally, the Skills 360 Board will engage, consult and collaborate with local partners to deliver this Skills Action Plan and to identify and maximise the resources needed to do so.



The Coast to Capital Skills and Labour Market

SWOT analysis: Coast to Capital in 2019

(pre COVID-19)



Strengths

- Highly skilled workforce
- High levels of employment
- Low levels of unemployment
- Broad based sectoral mix with significant sectoral strengths and opportunities in air transport; hi-tech industries; tourism; viticulture and horticulture
- Plentiful graduate employment pool
- Entrepreneurial workforce (old and young)



Weaknesses

- Missing working age population of 20-40 year olds
- Pockets of unemployment along the coast and in Crawley
- Predominance of lower level/ lower paid service industry jobs along the coast
- Pockets of lower skills levels along the Coast and in Crawley and lower levels of participation in further and higher education
- Reliance on commuting
- Significant recruitment challenges at associate professional and professional level, particularly in science, engineering and technology roles
- Over reliance on SMEs in providing jobs and often these businesses are less good at providing CPD, apprenticeships and graduate jobs than we might expect. Worsened by the lack of agglomeration in the economy.



Opportunities

- Encouraging collaboration to support the development of attractive and well paid career pathways for sectors with significant skills and workforce gaps (eg AME/health and care/ agriculture)
- Up-skilling residents to access local well paid jobs
- Retaining and learning from the skilled older workforce
- Tapping into the willingness of local businesses to collaborate to address recruitment challenges and skills gaps



Threats

- Impact of automation (particularly in many of the key roles associated with the airport eg baggage handlers; security; etc)
- Ageing workforce combined with missing 20-40 year olds
- High cost of living
- Our towns are not attractive to young people

SWOT analysis: Coast to Capital in 2020

(since COVID-19 lockdown)

Strengths

- Workforce remains highly skilled
- Broad based sector mix means that there is potential opportunity for employment and economic growth to mitigate the impact on our worst affected sectors
- Plentiful graduate employment pool
- Entrepreneurial workforce (old and young) has proven invaluable during lockdown
- Regionally, we have lower numbers of benefit claimants than the South East and national averages (June 2020).

Weaknesses

As above plus:

- Severely weakened aviation, tourism, events and hospitality sectors
- Benefit claimant numbers in Brighton sit just above and in Crawley are significantly above the national average (June 2020)
- Crawley likely to be the place most exposed to the crisis in the country with as many as 53,000 jobs there classified as vulnerable because of dependency on sectors related to Gatwick Airport

Opportunities

As above plus:

- Closely track and trace young people from age 16 and work collaboratively across business and education to develop employment/employability opportunities
- Talent transfers between vulnerable and growth sectors (but not easy if the jobs are seemingly less appealing)
- A local collaborative response, reducing competition and safeguarding the quality provision of education, at all stages
- Ensuring the Adult Education Budget stays in the area and benefits local residents and employers

Threats

As above plus:

- Accelerated impact of automation
- Significant risk of high levels of youth unemployment from the 'class of 2020' and for several years to come
- Reduced access to public transport meaning that more people will be looking for jobs locally
- Potential shrinking of London commuter jobs increases labour pool in the area – those with lower level skills will be at a disadvantage
- Risk of currently furloughed staff being made redundant over the next few months

Skills Strategy and Action Plan

Introduction

The next section of this document sets out our skills strategy and locally tailored skills action plan which will support the recovery and future resilience of our people, businesses, places and economy.

It leverages local knowledge, business partnerships and existing resources to:

- Support young people, provide options for education leavers and support for the most vulnerable;
- Minimise redundancies;
- Get people back into work quickly;
- Support the development of higher-level skills, including in-work progression and graduate support;
- Create new jobs; and
- Help business and the economy adapt and take advantage of new opportunities.

The priorities are regional and have been determined from our extensive research, analysis and consultation. The activities within it are owned by the Coast to Capital LEP, Growth Hub and Skills 360 Board. They do not set out each and every potential activity that partners and stakeholders in the region could undertake to address our skills challenges and opportunities.

It is firmly linked to our wider objectives for our economy to come back stronger, smarter and greener, connecting people to high quality local employment and giving businesses the skills needed to adapt.

The importance of collaboration

Now more than ever we need to take a collaborative approach to addressing the skills and labour market challenges faced by the Coast to Capital area. The Skills 360 Board would encourage and support an approach which sees the Further, Higher and Community Education sectors working in partnership with each other and with

industry to provide clear pathways into employment. In the same way, we would encourage and support businesses large and small to collaborate where they haven't before to develop innovative solutions to their recruitment challenges and identified skills gaps.

Our Priorities

The Skills 360 Board has identified two overarching priorities:

Priority 1: PEOPLE



Priority 2: BUSINESS





Priority 1: PEOPLE

A focus on recovery

People will need to be trained in the skills to deliver what the economy needs and where businesses are recruiting. Training should be targeted at those who will be hardest hit. We need to give those without work the ability to maintain their work readiness and gain new skills to get a better job, and help to deliver a workforce for the future high-skilled economy.

At-risk groups who are more likely to require support to develop their skills are:

- **Education leavers.** They have less work experience and will enter a jobs market with high unemployment and few vacancies. Leaving education during a recession can have a large and long-lasting effect on employment and earnings. Those with low qualification levels are worst affected, but graduates suffer too.
- **Young people in the jobs market.** Even in normal times, youth unemployment has long-term effects on earnings and wellbeing. Young people experience greater, more persistent increases in unemployment from recessions.
- **Lower-skilled adults.** They become less employable during recessions and employers are less willing to hold onto them, resulting in increased unemployment.
- **Older workers.** Along with young people, older workers are at risk of remaining unemployed for longer and of experiencing greater impact on future earnings, health and wellbeing.
- **Those made redundant since March or who are at work/furloughed within 'at risk' sectors.** Some sectors may be more likely to see job losses, with the crisis accelerating trends creating shifting skills needs in the economy.
- **Those in the worst affected places.** Some of our local areas may feel the economic impact of the crisis more acutely than others.

The unemployed cohort may well look different to how it did pre-crisis, with a much higher number who have medium and high skills and a track record of employment in sectors which may have shrunk significantly.

Adults of all ages will need support to retrain and up-skill to get high skill jobs in line with the sectors and occupations most likely to thrive into the future. This is particularly true of those slightly further from the labour market, who are least likely to find work straightaway even if the recovery is swift.

Skills support will be needed for young people to help them 'wait out' the worst of the labour market crisis and so avoid the scarring effects of being NEET (not in employment, education or training).

Digital skills training will be essential for all.



Priority 1: PEOPLE

A focus on resilience and growth

In the medium to longer term we must focus on addressing some of the more established structural challenges in our economy. Our research has led us to realise that many of our businesses were being held back by recruitment challenges caused by a significant gap in our 20-40 year old population, skills gaps in particular occupations, most specifically those related to science, engineering and technology and persistent pockets of lower skills particularly along the coast and in Crawley.

Whilst broader activity is needed to address the issues of place that are causing our young workforce to relocate or commute to find work, we believe that there are specific interventions related to skills that will address some of these more ingrained challenges.

It is also important to ensure that we are training people to establish the skills that will support us to develop a clean and green economy – one where we are significantly reducing as well as offsetting our carbon emissions and at the same time increasing the biodiversity of our area.

The Skills 360 Board has identified **three transformational interventions** which take a longer term approach to addressing our skills challenges. Each of these interventions has an immediate geographic focus on the towns around Gatwick Airport, in particular Crawley. The rationale is two-fold: to address the impact of COVID-19 on the civil aviation sector and the need to diversify the economy away from air transport; but also to drive up skills levels to meet the recruitment challenges of the advanced engineering and other advanced technology businesses in the area.



Priority 1: PEOPLE

Transformational Interventions

1. Careers Hub

A **Careers Hub** which brings together 35 schools and colleges in Crawley and the surrounding towns. This Hub would develop a shared strategic vision and work closely with businesses and other stakeholders to improve careers outcomes for young people in the area across each of the eight Gatsby Benchmarks set out in the Government's Careers Strategy.

This Careers Hub would form a part of the Coast to Capital Enterprise Adviser Network, which is in itself a part of the Careers and Enterprise Company's wider Network. We have successfully bid for funding for this Hub and it will be the first of its kind in the area, starting delivery in September 2020.



Priority 1: PEOPLE

Transformational Interventions

2. Institute of Technology

An **Institute of Technology** which offers a collaborative and innovative approach to higher level technical education to help address skills gaps, particularly in science, engineering and technology areas. Further and Higher Education providers and businesses would work together with a focus on specific local technical skills needs, to ensure that local people can access the appropriate skills to meet employer demands, setting out a clear pathway into technical employment.

Through our research we have identified a lack of higher level technical provision in key science, engineering and technology sectors, specifically for advanced engineering. Anecdotally from businesses we know that there are significant numbers of hard to fill vacancies for engineering roles across different disciplines, particularly in the area in and around Crawley.

A competition for capital funding for Institutes of Technology is due to launch in the autumn and the Skills 360 Board would strongly encourage and support the development of an ambitious bid for the area.



Priority 1: PEOPLE

Transformational Interventions

3. Innovation Centre

An **Innovation Centre** in the heart of Crawley which brings together the advanced engineering cluster in the surrounding area with the digital innovation expertise of the many micro businesses across Coast to Capital to address the innovation and workforce capacity shortcomings we have identified in the regional economy.

Once established, the Innovation Centre would be a dynamic cluster of hi-tech digital and advanced engineering entrepreneurs and businesses driving R&D and leading to spin off enterprises. This will create a thriving eco-system of businesses supporting high value employment growth through the Coast to Capital area and accelerate the growth of micro, small and larger businesses both creating jobs for local people and attracting talent to the area.

Funding has been secured to deliver this project through the Getting Building Fund (August 2020).



Priority 1: PEOPLE

To support the short to medium term recovery and future resilience of our people, places and economy we have set four sub-priorities as follows:

1a. Finding out about Work

Supporting young people to find out about and gain more experience of the world of work to improve their future career outcomes.

1b. Starting out in Work

A renewed focus on getting young people in the class of 2020 and beyond into work to avoid a generation of high youth unemployment.

1c. Staying in Work

Helping people to remain in high quality well-paid work and to progress their careers, with a particular short-term focus on those at risk of redundancy as a result of COVID.

1d. Getting Back into Work

Supporting people back into work, specifically those who have lost their jobs as a result of COVID, with a focus on those who may face a particular disadvantage such as such as younger and older workers, those with low level skills or in places significantly affected by the crisis.



Priority 2: BUSINESS

A focus on recovery

With a higher than national average number of SMEs in the area, a predominance of micro businesses and an over-reliance on the aviation and tourism sectors, Coast to Capital's businesses have been hard hit by the COVID-19 lockdown. However, the entrepreneurial spirit of our people and our businesses has led to many stories of diversification and a surprising number of business births during the last few months.

If businesses are to survive and recover, they will need to consider change. They will need to plan, potentially for a second lockdown, and they will need to review their workforce requirements. More than ever, businesses should be considering the skills that they need now and in the future and comparing that with the people and skills that they have.

Government has launched a **Plan for Jobs** (July 2020) with specific schemes to incentivise businesses to retain staff that they have furloughed, to offer a 6 month work placement to 16-24 year olds and to take on an Apprentice. These schemes will work for some and not for others, but it will be important to raise awareness of these schemes amongst our businesses so that they are fully informed and making decisions which help their business to recover.

Whilst there are businesses that are shrinking, there are also those that are growing and recruiting. In and around Crawley there will be people in the labour market who have spent most of their adult working lives employed in jobs related to the airport. Businesses (and people) will need to focus on the importance of transferable skills and less on experience of a particular sector if we are to match people to business need.



Priority 2: BUSINESS

A focus on resilience and growth

Whilst we focus on recovery, we should not ignore the more structural challenges that the area faces. Medium to longer term plans should focus on addressing the skills gaps that we face and the accelerating pace of change brought about by automation. In order to do this we will need to encourage a continuation of the collaboration between businesses themselves and between industry and education providers that was beginning to emerge before COVID-19.

Businesses small and large should be and will be considering the need for and impact of digital transformation. There is potential for a support ecosystem across the area in the form of a Digital Skills Partnership (DSP) which would bring together public, private and charity sector organisations to help increase the digital capability of individuals and organisations. DSPs extend from a commitment within the UK Digital Strategy which sets out government's ambition to create a world-leading digital economy that works for everyone.



Priority 2: BUSINESS

To support the short to medium term recovery and future resilience of our businesses, places and economy we have set three sub-priorities as follows:

2a. Growing, Retaining And Training The Workforce

Helping businesses understand their current and future skills and workforce needs and to build engagement with their existing workforce to ensure the business has the skills it needs to recover, build resilience and grow.

2b. Working Together

Bringing businesses and education providers together to build a better understanding of current and future skills needs and to develop collaborative approaches.

2c. Making The Most Of Digital

Helping business owners and owner managers to understand the role that digital technology can have in the success of their business, particularly in the recovery from COVID-19.

Our Plan

The next section sets out our plan for each of the priorities in more detail.

Sectors

Through extensive research into our economy carried out over the last three years, and the most recent analysis of the impact of COVID-19, we have learned that we have a broad sector base. That broad sector base is formed of sectors that employ high numbers of people and those where we see opportunity for growth. The distinction is more important than ever as we move through recovery into building resilience and growth.

Sectors identified as having potential for future economic growth:

- Horticulture
- Viticulture (wine growing)
- Tourism
- Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering

High employing sectors:

- Health and Care
- Construction (including skills for decarbonisation e.g. through retrofitting homes)
- Financial and Professional Services

Priority 1a: PEOPLE

- Finding out about Work

Supporting young people to find out about and gain more experience of the world of work to improve their future career outcomes.

Target Groups	Objectives	Activities	Timescales			Roles			Target Sectors/Places
			Short term (0-1 year)	Medium term (1-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)	LEP	Growth Hub	Skills 360 Board	
School and college students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve career outcomes Build an understanding of the world of work Offer (virtual) experience of the world of work 	Continue to grow the Enterprise Adviser Network across Coast to Capital	●	○	○	DELIVER and FUND	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	GOVERN	High employing sectors and those identified as having potential for future economic growth ALL Places with an immediate focus on those places worst hit by COVID-19
		Establish a Careers Hub covering East Surrey, Crawley and Mid Sussex	●	○	○	DELIVER and FUND	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	GOVERN	
		Form a Cornerstone Employers Group to support the Careers Hub	●	○	○	DELIVER and FUND	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	GOVERN	
College students	Offer (virtual) experience of the world of work	T Level industry placements	●	●	●	SHARE LMI	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	LOBBY for financial stimulus for SMEs	
University students		Under graduate work placements	●	●	●	PRIORITISE for funding and SHARE LMI	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PRIORITISE for funding	
Young people not in education, employment or training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve career outcomes Build an understanding of the world of work Offer (virtual) experience of the world of work 	Traineeships	●	●	●	SHARE LMI	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	LOBBY for further financial stimulus for SMEs	
		Employability programmes	●	●	●	PRIORITISE for funding	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PRIORITISE for funding	

Priority 1b: PEOPLE

- Starting out in Work

A renewed focus on getting young people in the class of 2020 and beyond into work to avoid a generation of high youth unemployment.

Target Groups	Objectives	Activities	Timescales			Roles			Target Sectors/Places
			Short term (0-1 year)	Medium term (1-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)	LEP	Growth Hub	Skills 360 Board	
School and college leavers	Work with learning	Traineeships Apprenticeships	●	●	●	SHARE LMI	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	LOBBY for further financial stimulus for SMEs	
University graduates	Improving employability and developing a broad range of business skills, to include digital skills	UK Gap Year – a year of employment in one or more sectors	○	●	○	DEVELOP and PILOT	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	MONITOR and REVIEW	High employing sectors and those identified as having potential for future economic growth
		Graduate (virtual) internship programmes	●	●	●	PRIORITISE for funding and SHARE LMI	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PRIORITISE for funding	ALL Places with an immediate focus on those places worst hit by COVID-19
School and college leavers and university graduates	Developing entrepreneurial skills	Business start-up programmes	●	●	●	PRIORITISE for funding and SHARE LMI	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PRIORITISE for funding	

Priority 1c: PEOPLE

- Staying in Work

Helping people to remain in high quality well-paid work and to progress their careers, with a particular short-term focus on those at risk of redundancy as a result of COVID.

Target Groups	Objectives	Activities	Timescales			Roles			Target Sectors/Places
			Short term (0-1 year)	Medium term (1-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)	LEP	Growth Hub	Skills 360 Board	
Current workforce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in low skilled roles at short or medium term risk of redundancy due to impact of COVID-19 in jobs vulnerable to longer term disruption (e.g. automation) with a disability who are older workers 	Rethink Information Advice and Guidance; financial advice; health considerations; ways of working Refresh Improve skills, to include digital skills Reinvent New skills, to include digital skills; new career; start own business	Career reviews	●	●	●	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PRIORITISE for funding	High employing sectors and those identified as having potential for future economic growth ALL Places with an immediate focus on those places worst hit by COVID-19
		Skills training programmes (reskill/upskill)	●	●	●	PRIORITISE for funding and SHARE LMI	See Priority 2a	PRIORITISE for funding	
		Apprenticeships	●	●	●	SHARE LMI	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	LOBBY for further financial stimulus for SMEs	
		Olderpreneur programmes	●	●	●	PRIORITISE for funding and PROMOTE		PRIORITISE for funding	
		Roving learning and employment contracts	○	●	○	DEVELOP and PILOT	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	MONITOR and REVIEW	

Priority 1d: PEOPLE

- Getting Back into Work

Supporting people back into work, specifically those who have lost their jobs as a result of COVID, with a focus on those who may face a particular disadvantage such as such as younger and older workers, those with low level skills or in places significantly affected by the crisis.

Target Groups	Objectives	Activities	Timescales			Roles			Target Sectors/Places
			Short term (0-1 year)	Medium term (1-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)	LEP	Growth Hub	Skills 360 Board	
Short-term unemployed people actively seeking work Longer-term unemployed people actively seeking work Currently inactive people who are able and willing to return to work	Rethink Information Advice and Guidance, financial advice, health considerations, ways of working	Sector / industry academies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration between industry and education • Employability training • Guaranteed interviews / job matching 	●	●	○	PRIORITISE for funding and SHARE LMI	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PRIORITISE for funding	High employing sectors and those identified as having potential for future economic growth ALL Places with an immediate focus on those places worst hit by COVID-19
	Refresh Improve skills (including digital skills)	Employability programmes	●	●	●	PRIORITISE for funding and SHARE LMI	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PRIORITISE for funding	
	Reinvent New skills (including digital skills), new career, start own business	Business start-up programmes	●	●	●	PRIORITISE for funding and SHARE LMI	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PRIORITISE for funding	
		Olderpreneur programmes	●	●	●	PROMOTE	PROMOTE	PRIORITISE FOR FUNDING	

Priority 2a: BUSINESS

- Retaining and Training the Workforce

Helping businesses better understand their current and future skills and workforce needs and to build engagement with their existing workforce to ensure the business has the skills it needs to recover, build resilience and grow.

Objectives	Activities	Timescales			Roles			Target Businesses/ Sectors/Places
		Short term (0-1 year)	Medium term (1-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)	LEP	Growth Hub	Skills 360 Board	
Grow • Expand your workforce according to your current and future business needs	Assess and analyse business skills needs in relation to wider business planning	●	○	○		DELIVER and FUND		
	Peer to Peer support programmes with a focus on skills/workforce development	●	○	○		DELIVER and FUND	Businesses with high growth potential	
Retain • Engage with your workers • Understand your current retention • Engage your managers • Promote & redeploy • Signpost staff to support	121 clinics with a focus on skills/workforce development	●	○	○		DELIVER and FUND	High employing sectors and those identified as having potential for future economic growth	
	One to many webinars with a focus on skills/workforce development	●	○	○		DELIVER and FUND	ALL Places with an immediate focus on those places worst hit by COVID-19	
Train & Retrain • Embed a culture of workforce review & development • Ensure opportunities for all ages • Retrain your staff	Business support programmes that encourage workforce development	●	●	●	PRIORITISE for funding		PRIORITISE for funding	

Priority 2b: BUSINESS

- Working Together

Bringing businesses and education providers together to build a better understanding of current and future skills needs and to develop collaborative approaches to planning and delivery.

Objectives	Activities	Timescales			Roles			Target Businesses/ Sectors/Places
		Short term (0-1 year)	Medium term (1-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)	LEP	Growth Hub	Skills 360 Board	
Collaborative planning and delivery of higher level skills provision	Establish an Institute of Technology in Crawley	●	●	○	PRIORITISE for funding and PARTNER		PRIORITISE for funding	Science, Engineering and Technology in Crawley and surrounding towns
	Establish an Innovation Centre in Crawley	●	●	○	PRIORITISE for funding and PARTNER	CONNECT to other innovation activity	PRIORITISE for funding	Advanced Engineering / Digital Tech in Crawley and surrounding towns
A mutual exchange of support	Develop a 'work charter' that sets out an offer to and an ask of businesses	●	○	○	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	DEVELOP and HOST	Businesses with high growth potential
Accessing support and information	Create an Employment and Skills Portal	○	●	○	HOST and PROMOTE portal	HOST and PROMOTE portal	PRIORITISE for funding	High employing sectors and those identified as having potential for future economic growth
Professional development for the school, FE and HE sector	(Virtual) externships for teachers & lecturers	●	●	●	PRIORITISE for funding	PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses	PRIORITISE for funding	ALL Places with an immediate focus on those places worst hit by COVID-19

Priority 2c: BUSINESS

- Making the Most of Digital

Helping business owners and owner managers to understand the role that digital technology can have in the success of their business, particularly in the recovery from COVID.

Objectives	Activities	Timescales			Roles			Target Businesses/ Sectors/Places
		Short term (0-1 year)	Medium term (1-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)	LEP	Growth Hub	Skills 360 Board	
Raising awareness of the benefits of digital technology	Digital Week	○	●	○	FUND and PROMOTE to stakeholders	FUND, PROMOTE to and ENGAGE businesses and HOST	PROMOTE to networks	Businesses with high growth potential High employing sectors and those identified as having potential for future economic growth ALL Places with an immediate focus on those places worst hit by COVID-19
	Digital tech training for owners and managers through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer to Peer support programmes 121 clinics One to many webinars 	●	●	●	PROMOTE to stakeholders	DELIVER and FUND	PROMOTE to networks	
Building expertise and collaboration	Establish Digital Skills Partnership	○	○	●	DEVELOP and DELIVER	DEVELOP and DELIVER	GOVERN	

References:

1. Gatwick 360 Strategic Economic Plan, Coast to Capital, July 2018
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3. Office for National Statistics, July 2020
4. **Creative Industries Federation**, June 2020
5. **Institute of Fiscal Studies**, July 2020
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