
SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL - FUTURE OF WORK IN SOUTHAMPTON

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 DECEMBER 2018

Present: Councillors McEwing (Chair), Fitzhenry (Vice-Chair), Bogle, Coombs, Furnell and Laurent

Apologies: Councillors Guthrie

6. **APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN PANEL MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

The apologies of Councillor Guthrie were noted.

7. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October, 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.

8. **THE FUTURE OF WORK IN SOUTHAMPTON - ENSURING THAT THE SOUTHAMPTON WORKFORCE HAS THE REQUIRED SKILLS TO STAY AHEAD OF THE ROBOTS**

The Panel received the report of the Director, Legal and Governance, requesting that the Panel consider the steps that are being undertaken to secure the right skills to drive the data driven economy in Southampton and how the Southampton workforce can acquire the required skills to stay ahead of the robots.

Following discussions with invited representatives the following information was received:

Professor Dame Wendy Hall - Regius Professor of Computer Science at the University of Southampton, Executive Director of the Web Science Institute and Skills Champion for AI in the UK

Securing the right skills to drive the data driven economy in Southampton

- The UK is strong in AI and has a remarkable legacy. The Government's AI sector deal is ambitious and world leading.
- The University of Southampton is strong in AI and technology and is a member of the Turing Institute.
- UK and Southampton need more people with Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths skills, especially females, as the new jobs created will require skills in science and technology. The more skills and the higher the skills the better.
- The city needs a pipeline of people studying for science and technology degrees and a pipeline to PhD's. There also needs to be opportunities for people to retrain and move into this field of work.
- The University of Southampton hosts a Web Sciences Centre for Doctoral Training funded by the UK Research Council. A bid by the University to become an Artificial Intelligence Centre for Doctoral Training is being evaluated. These initiatives are in addition to the various PHD's and research opportunities, in relevant disciplines to grow the tech industry, supported by the University.

- On-line learning can be an integral element of the skills jigsaw, helping to increase diversity of learners. The Southampton Data Science Academy, part of the Web Science Institute, was established to bridge the data skills gap and delivers a number of accredited on-line modular courses in data science. More can be done in Southampton to provide effective on line education to develop tech skills.
- Every country and university wants the top AI researchers. Keeping people in the UK is difficult because in the USA investment funding is easier to access and salaries can be significantly higher.
- To attract top talent the city needs to be open to people from across the globe coming to learn in Southampton and being supported to stay and grow here. We also need to recognise that there are opportunities to become a talent magnet and a developer of talent and accept that some talent will leak out of the system, possibly to return later. We need to create an environment that supports this.
- The Government is providing funding to create a National Centre for Computing Education to train teachers - <https://teachcomputing.org/>

Cllr Darren Paffey – Cabinet Member for Aspiration, Skills and Lifelong Learning
Geoff Glover – Associate Lecturer, Southampton Solent University, Chair of the emerging Southampton Education Quarter Forum
Sarah Stannard – Principal and Chief Executive, City College Southampton and Chair of the Southampton Careers Inspiration Group
Denise Edghill - Interim Service Director for Growth, Southampton City Council
Sajid Butt – Strategic Skills Manager, Southampton City Council

How the Southampton workforce can acquire the required skills to stay ahead of the robots?

- Moving forward there is a need for everyone to be digitally literate and have social skills.
- In Southampton there is a skills mismatch between where we are now and where we need to be. There has never been a worse time to not have the required skills.

Skills - Young People

- We need to make ‘invisible’ jobs visible. Too many young people in Southampton do not see the range of opportunities available. We need them to have experiences of work as early as possible to raise aspirations.
- The Southampton Careers Inspiration Group, with Education Business Partnership South, run an event annually called ‘Get Inspired’. Employers show children a range of new opportunities that are available. 1200 pupils from Southampton schools attended this year’s event with all but 1 school in the city attending.
- The new Careers Strategy is immensely helpful and it is welcome news that the Solent has been selected for Careers Hub funding (One of 20 areas in the country – funding comes through the Local Enterprise Partnership to help transform careers education and improve links between schools and business.
- Encouraging signs that the change in leadership at Ofsted might change the culture of ‘teach to test’ in UK schools, hopefully embracing a more holistic education with more emphasis on soft skills, learning and careers advice.

- T-Levels – Designed to create parity of esteem between academic and vocational education, Technical Levels are due to commence in 2020. Part of the course will include industrial placements.
- The Southern Universities Network (SUN) is a collaborative partnership comprising Higher Education (HE) providers in Hampshire, Dorset and the Isle of Wight. The SUN provides outreach activities for schools and colleges. The SUN has been tasked with increasing HE participation in over 70 wards, working with 101 schools and all further education (FE) colleges in the region. As directed in Office for Students' guidance, work will be focused on young people in Years 9 – 13 and their 'key influencers'. A number of these key wards are in Southampton.
- It is predicted that, within 20 years, 90% of all jobs will require some element of digital skills (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport 2017 – UK Digital Strategy). Effective digital skills training is essential to ensure that the Southampton workforce is prepared for future technological changes.
- Reflecting initiatives in London (Digital Talent Programme), Bristol (Young Future Bristol) and the West Midlands (Digital Skills Partnership), the Institute of Coding have been invited to Southampton to see how we can work together to enhance coding skills in the city.

A Learning Culture

- Around 90% of the current workforce will be working in 10 years' time (Solent Local Enterprise Partnership). The skills profile of the Solent, including Southampton, needs to improve. There is a need to inspire the community to learn and re-learn continuously throughout a working life.
- Funding for formal adult education has diminished. City College used to have 12,000 adult education students annually, there are now 3,000 adult learners. The Council delivers support to 3,500 adult learners, this used to be 5,000.
- However, significant levels of funding still being spent on training in the city but this is less likely to be undertaken through formal channels in a classroom. More training is online. This can result in duplication and less co-ordination of training activity across the city. Co-operation between the education and training providers and corporate businesses in Southampton could help increase the quality, diversity and accessibility of learning opportunities in the city.
- After a successful funding bid Southampton City Council will be delivering, on behalf of the Solent region, an Apprenticeship Hub. Plans include making it easier for Small to Medium-sized Enterprises to engage with the Apprenticeship Levy, and potentially work with business to pool the 10% share of the Levy that Levy paying firms can share with other businesses to deliver a collective skills offer to the city.
- There was recognition that the skills landscape is complicated for employers. The Council can play a key role in supporting local organisations to get the training they require.
- Southampton Education Quarter – This is work in progress but the concept is that this will be a physical area that inspires people to want to develop skills. The Council is engaging with Solent University, University of Southampton and City College to develop the vision. It is recognised that there are examples of good practice nationally and internationally but that a different approach, tailored to the resources and needs of the city, may be required to improve the culture of learning in Southampton.

- There was recognition that leadership skills were of paramount importance and that the City Council could set an example by ensuring suitable training is provided to staff and elected members.

RESOLVED that the comments made by Professor Dame Wendy Hall - Regius Professor of Computer Science at the University of Southampton, Executive Director of the Web Science Institute and Skills Champion for AI in the UK; Cllr Darren Paffey – Cabinet Member for Aspiration, Skills and Lifelong Learning; Geoff Glover – Associate Lecturer, Southampton Solent University, Chair of the emerging Southampton Education Quarter Forum; Sarah Stannard – Principal and Chief Executive, City College Southampton and Chair of the Southampton Careers Inspiration Group; Denise Edghill - Interim Service Director for Growth, Southampton City Council; and Sajid Butt – Strategic Skills Manager, Southampton City Council be noted and used as evidence in the review.