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## EMPLOYMENT, SKILLS AND EDUCATION GROUP

<b>Meeting Type:</b>	DoO Governance Group Meeting
<b>Date:</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
<b>Venue:</b>	MS Teams
<b>Meeting Chair:</b>	Michael Gray (SCC)
<b>Attendees:</b>	SZC: Guy Hazlehurst (GH), Jen Mills (JM) – Observer, Fiona McMillan (FM) – Observer, Johnathan Reynolds (JR) – Observer SCC: Michael Gray (MG), James Chandler (JC), Chris Dashper (CD) – Observer, Natalie Freislich-Mills (NFM) – Observer ESC: Jo Probitts (JP)
<b>Apologies:</b>	Chris Young (SZC)
<b>Meeting Record produced by:</b>	Caitlin Murphy (SZC)
<b>Next Meeting Date:</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> January 2026

### Summary / Key Discussion

#### Meeting Notes:

##### Safety message

- Group emphasised the importance of building strong relationships by being a supportive ally to colleagues and stakeholders, fostering collaboration and positive partnerships at work.

#### Open Actions raised during previous meetings:

Date Raised	Ref.	Description	Lead	Date Due
04/04/2025	1	Group to discuss how to better emphasise and communicate expectations for deadlines associated with ASEC fund Eols	ESEWG	Closed
04/04/2025	2	A discussion will be held at the next informal ESEWG session to address the risk register and the process for formalising it into an official document	ESEWG	Next meeting
26/06/2025	3	GH to coordinate the content for the data monitoring and supply chain workshops, while JC will manage the scheduling	GH & JC	Next meeting
26/06/2025	4	Group to schedule ESEWG meetings in the calendar for post-September 2025	ESEWG	Next meeting

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26/06/2025	5	JC to investigate and commit clear action plan for Major Infrastructure Forum	JC	Next meeting
26/06/2025	6	Group to finalise communication strategies within the informal ESEWG to address ASEC Fund applicants' concerns about lead times	ESEWG	Closed
26/06/2025	7	Group to begin populating a rolling 12-month lookahead for the ESEWG plan extending beyond September	ESEWG	Next meeting
05/09/2025	8	Future workshop to be arranged to lift the lid on what we are asking contractors to report on, how we are doing it through the portal and how we are doing it alongside ESG	ESEWG	Next Meeting

### Review of Previous Actions:

- Action 1: closed. Will be covered in this meeting
- Action 2: ongoing
- Action 3: ongoing
- Action 4: ongoing
- Action 5: ongoing
- Action 6: closed
- Action 7: ongoing
- Action 8: ongoing

**Action – SZC to share contractor skills requirements. GH to bring this into the working group, including the evaluation and monitoring framework for ASEC deployment and outreach fund**

### ESEWG Forward Plan Review

- ASIP is nearing approval; the forward plan will be aligned with and informed by the content of the ASIP.

### ASIP Discussion

- Work is underway to finalise the ASIP for approval this year and progress it to the ERG.
- The ASIP now includes expanded content on the Regional Skills Needs Framework, with a clear workflow for assessing skill areas and gathering or generating evidence as needed. This shift toward a more dynamic, on-demand investigation model is intended to reduce bottlenecks.
- Deliverables and actions linked to the ASIP have been consolidated to improve transparency, with plans to prioritise and set quarterly targets for the year ahead.
- A strengthened look-back/look-forward section has been added to capture learning from previous ASIP versions and inform priorities for the coming year.
- JC Shows key priorities for 2025 & 2026, and asks group for feedback:
  - The group highlighted the need to link identified needs to outputs, outcomes, and KPIs. A reporting framework is required to show how statements of need translate into measurable action, with delivery partners reporting on outputs, outcomes, and social value.
  - JC noted the challenge of aligning planned activity with KPIs. A key quarterly task will be prioritising ESEWG-led actions and determining what data is needed to monitor deliverables, what information is already available, and where gaps need to be filled.
  - The group agreed that, for each identified need, it must be clear what outcomes have been achieved and how the need is being addressed, including the contribution of ASEC.

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- An action was agreed to develop a reporting format that sets out each quarter: the need identified, how understanding of it has been strengthened, and the actions being taken through DoO. This will support clearer demonstration and reporting of progress against needs.

### **Action – Group to determine what ASIP reporting framework will look like, showing how statements of needs translate into measurable action, with delivery partners reporting on outputs, outcomes, and social value**

- FM suggested groups like the Strategic Skills Forum take a more proactive role in responding to the ASIP, rather than only receiving updates. Greater engagement from colleges is needed to ensure shared ownership and accountability.
- National developments (e.g. CTEC) could influence regional priorities. Future ASIPs should reference these opportunities to maximise benefit.
- JR proposed periodic reviews or addendums to the ASIP if required.
- JR highlighted timing and prioritisation for the year, particularly: (1) mobilisation of ASEC investment, and (2) improving regional needs data to support ASEC bids. MG noted deliverables should be prioritised within the year.
- Regional needs data should be emphasised in the plan. JR noted that the level of detail provided by colleges affects ESWE's ability to make informed investment recommendations. MG acknowledged the need for clearer decision-making while ensuring progress continues.
- JP noted that ownership of the data workstream should be clarified. MG agreed this requires further consideration.
- FM highlighted that colleges already have strategies addressing regional needs, which ESWE should incorporate into planning. MG confirmed college input will support identification of broader regional needs.
- The ASIP should reflect areas for further development, particularly regarding fund mobilisation and regional needs decisions. These can be captured in the 'lessons learned' section to clarify responsibilities and next steps.
- GH noted colleges are already taking outward-looking approaches. MG added the key consideration is the level of certainty required for ASEC decisions.
- MG proposed reviewing the lessons learned section to ensure gaps are clearly identified, with agreement via email on responsibilities and timing.

#### • Funding

- MG highlighted the need to clarify the approach to funding allocations.
- Outreach and bursary funding: Allocations are clear, with transfers expected to proceed automatically in line with the ASIP.
- ASEC funding: This group can make recommendations on transfers before submitting them to ERG for support. Clarity was sought regarding whether ERG is responsible for approving ASEC funding allocations. NOTE: ESWE determine funding, ERG does not have to approve these. While a phased transfer approach was proposed, the group will need to agree what should be transferred based on the ASIP. As ASEC projects are signed off, the group will gain a clearer understanding of funding requirements.
- JM can provide detailed forecasts and breakdowns to ensure clarity and avoid ambiguity.

### **Action – JM to share detailed forecasts and breakdowns of ASIP funding to ensure clarity**

- Next steps: Approve outreach and bursary funding transfers. Reserve ASEC funding decisions until project sign-offs, with recommendations to be made by this group and formal approval by ERG.

### **Key Decision – The group approves the ASIP in principle, subject to any interim updates**

#### **2024/2025 ASIP Updates**

##### **Quarterly Update**

- ASIP Objectives for the Year:

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- Ensure consistency with the second ASIP
  - Skills development and enhancement
  - Funding allocation and management
  - Partnership and collaboration
  - Monitoring and evaluation
  - Employment opportunities
- Key Achievements:
  - Preparation and development of the ASIP
  - Development of the Regional Skills Needs Framework
  - Progression of ASEC applications
  - Integration of the Regional Skills Coordination Function (RSCF) into the NSIP Planning Process
  - AP Group integration with SZC EAU and CWA
- Discussion on AP Group Integration:
  - GH raised that the RSCF should ensure equal opportunities across colleges and providers, acting as a bridge for engagement.
  - JC noted that curriculum planning documents can strengthen provider participation in AP groups and CWA projects by clarifying offerings and engagement channels. He also emphasised the need for a clear engagement plan to define RSCF roles and responsibilities.
  - MG suggested enhancing collaboration between RSCF, alliances, and the supply chain, with RSCF engaging directly at the supply chain level.
  - JR highlighted the need to align with the SZC supply chain and East Suffolk business and investment programs to support broader coordination.
  - FM added that there should be a balance between RSCF's impartial coordination role and supporting proactive provider engagement

### Wider Governance Updates

- Strategic Skills Forum
  - FM noted the meeting provided colleges with updates on ASEC and ASIP.
  - There is a need to consider how to leverage the new CTEC announcement while respecting each college's individual priorities within any emerging structure.
- AP Group
  - Monthly meetings have been established, incorporating EAU and CWA, with a focus on curriculum planning.
  - Connectivity with the Strategic Skills Forum could be strengthened, with the AP Group acting as a delivery channel for actions or communications arising from strategic discussions.
  - The group is functioning well, with monthly meetings continuing

### Fund Updates and Key Decisions

#### ASEC

- Three applications have reached the full application stage; discussion focused on whether sufficient information is available to meet program expectations and allow progression. These applications address both regional and project needs.
- ASEC remains open to additional applications and is actively working with two EOIs.
- Decision-making processes for ASEC applications need to be clarified.
- ASECI: Linked to earlier discussions on relationships with projects, the supply chain, and external investment.

#### Outreach

- The outreach specification is with the thematic group for review.
- The program will run as a grant program, with operators bidding based on their proposed interventions. This approach allows providers to shape the delivery and design of outreach activities.

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- The specification will clarify who is supported and impacted by the outreach program.

### **Bursary**

- One payment has been completed, and another is in progress. A further application has been drafted.
- Once an outreach provider is confirmed, a network will be established to support decisions on bursaries outside the college profile.
- Implementation is progressing at pace

### **SZC Commitments and Updates**

- GH reported a key meeting on commitments to the local college and building a skills legacy in energy and infrastructure, including discussions with potential investors.
- Additional DCO-linked investment was highlighted, aiming to support both project-specific needs and broader regional skills development.
- Planning applications for the college and skills centre are progressing, with construction and operations planned once approvals are in place.
- The skills centre will engage with stakeholders; the first ASECI investment has been made.
- Focus remains on maximising local employment through outreach and home-based participation.

### **ESEWG Forward Plan Updates**

- JC noted the need to schedule ESEWG meetings in line with ERG, and to capture any key dates for discussion.

#### **Action – The informal ESEWG to populate the ESEWG forward schedule with key dates**

- The group needs to review the list of deliverables and prioritise them across the 12-month period.

#### **Action – Group members to flag any additional items to be included in the ESEWG Forward Plan, including priorities for the next quarter**

### **Actions agreed in meeting:**

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18/09/2025	1	SZC to share contractor skills requirements. GH to bring this into the working group, including the evaluation and monitoring framework for ASEC deployment and outreach fund	GH	Next meeting
18/09/2025	2	Group to determine what ASIP reporting framework will look like, showing how statements of needs translate into measurable action, with delivery partners reporting on outputs, outcomes, and social value	ESEWG	Next meeting
18/09/2025	3	JM to share detailed forecasts and breakdowns of ASIP funding to ensure clarity	JM	Next meeting
18/09/2025	4	The informal ESEWG to populate the ESEWG forward schedule with key dates	Informal ESEWG	Next meeting
18/09/2025	5	Group members to flag any additional items to be included in the ESEWG Forward Plan, including priorities for the next quarter	ESEWG	Next meeting

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