

Towards a Virtual Skills Academy for Southend

What?

- This paper proposes the formulation of a “Virtual Skills Academy”. This is a tripartite agreement between local partners to **ensure that a sufficient local workforce is available to meet the future workforce requirements of upcoming regeneration projects.**
- There are three stakeholders groups critical to the project, with which we are consulting:



Consultation Status:

Body	State
South Essex College	Providing feedback on initial paper
Southend Adult Community College	Providing feedback on initial paper
SEEVIC	Not yet consulted
Procat	Not yet consulted
Anglia Ruskin University	Not yet consulted
University of Essex	Not yet consulted
Henry Boot plc	Not yet consulted

Why?

At present Southend Borough Council is implementing and planning a number of significant regeneration projects that will revitalise and improve the built environment across the borough, to be implemented over the next 20 years.

- These include:
 - Southend Airport Business Park (6500 Permanent, FT posts)
 - The Better Queensway Project (2500 Temporary Construction posts)
- SBC has prioritised the development of ‘skills projects’ and improving the opportunities on offer to Southend residents – seeking to close the skills gaps. Specific resources have been dedicated in this area.
- SBC has a responsibility to ensure that local residents have access to the opportunities that stem from the regeneration projects taking place in the borough.

Roles of the Key Partners

- In order to close the potential skills gaps, all of the partners involved need to be willing to share a greater level of information.
- We propose that the initial roles and responsibilities detailed within the VSA agreement include, but are not limited to:

Partner	Role	Input/Responsibility
- Southend	Lead Partner for the	- To work to identify and define the

Borough Council	Better Queensway and Airport Business Park Projects	<p>employment opportunities that will be generated through development of projects and communicate these through the Virtual Skills Academy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To utilise procurement policies and practises, wherever possible, to ensure that benefits for local residents are maximised through contracting & purchasing (to support local upskilling)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - South Essex College - Southend Adult Community College - SEEVIC - Procat - Anglia Ruskin University - University of Essex 	Local Skills Delivery Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To provide education and training provision, wherever practicable, to meet the employment needs of the Virtual Skills Academy. - To facilitate employment links between suppliers, contractors and the students graduating through locally provided courses. - To increase student awareness of local projects and the associated employment opportunities, via co-ordinated partnership work with other stakeholders.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development Partners (tbc) - Henry Boot Plc 	Developer/Contractor/Delivery Partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To inform and advise the VSA on the forecasted employment opportunities/skills requirements involved in the delivery of the project (For example Carpenters, Plumbers, Electricians, Site Officers, Energy Consultants, Heating and Cooling System specialists) - To work with local partners and the VSA to ensure employment opportunities are advertised locally and made accessible to local people, wherever practicable. - Wherever practicable, to facilitate the progress of Southend residents into jobs within the focus industries, for example through the use of practice interviews, and liaison with the partner education/training bodies.

When, How, Who?

Item	When	How
1	August 2016	Queensway Project Board
2	August 2016	Drafted "Towards a Virtual Skills Academy" paper

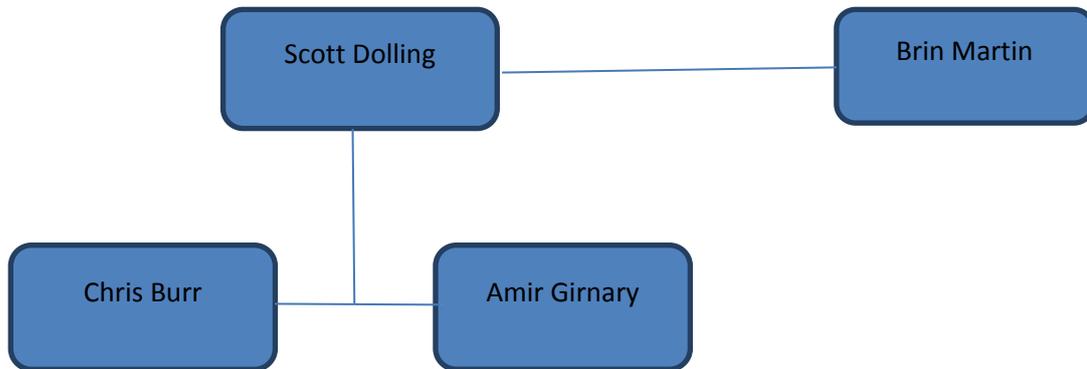
3	September 2016	Initial light touch consultation
4	September 2016	DMT Meeting
5	October 2016	CMT Meeting
6	October, November and December 2016	Detailed consultation: (a) workshops and (b) Interviews
7	January 2017	Draft Agreement
8	February 2017	Statement of Intent produced
9	March 2017	Document signed by all parties
10	April- June 2017	Marketing/Communications of the initiative, to the wider community.

The Virtual Skills Academy is one of a range of new pilot initiatives being developed by the Economic Development Team, in partnership with the Learning Team, to facilitate a skilled local workforce capable of meeting the needs of local businesses.

Once the Virtual Skills Academy is in place, we plan to explore the potential for similar initiatives targeting other sectors and organisations.

Who

Project Team



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