**Inspiring Talent Group Meeting Notes**

**Date**: Tuesday 23rd February 2021

**Attendees:**

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| **Name** | **Organisation** |
| Ailsa Sutherland  | FWB Park Brown  |
| Caroline Donald | Edinburgh International Festival |
| Dr Robin Westacott | Heriot Watt University |
| Fiona Forrest-Anderson | Edinburgh Napier |
| Joanne Davidson | Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce |
| Majella Sweeney | Queen Margaret University |
| Phil Ford | SDS |
| Rebecca Neish | Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce |

**Apologies:**

Alan Patterson, Barry Nicol, Fiona MacFarlane, Graeme Davis, Lucy Everett, Michelle Fenwick, Michelle Minnes, Robert Thornburn, Roberta Porter, Steve Haldane, Stuart Cronin

**Agenda:**

1. Welcome and Apologies

2. Update on Chairs

3. Update on the latest labour market figures and employability support landscape

4. Discussion on policy asks

5. Update on Edinburgh Business Resilience Group employability sub-group

6. AOB

7. DONM

**Actions:**

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| **WHAT** | **WHO** | **WHEN** |
| Fiona FA, Majella and Caroline to discuss opportunities for collaboration on recruitment issues  | Fiona FA, Majella and Caroline | By next meeting |
| Asking for feedback on the role of the Talent group in having more of a policy angle and voice | All | By next meeting |
| Chamber update talent group about inspiring stories publicity | Harriet & Joanne | Next meeting |
| Asking for feedback on potential Talent group involvement in May CodeClan event | All | By end of March |
| Employability group and the Talent group to be kept updated on each other | Harriet & Joanne | Ongoing |
| Arrange another meeting for next 6-8 weeks | Harriet | ASAP |

**Meeting Notes:**

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| **Item 1** | **Welcome** |
|  | Robin opens up and chairs the meeting, which is taking place virtually. Welcomes everyone and sets out the agenda for the meeting. |
| **Item 2** | **Update on chairs** |
|  | Ailsa is stepping down from her role as co-chair of the group. Robin will continue as the co-chair representing education, and we are currently seeking a co-chair to represent business. This co-chair relationship helps to model the bringing together of the education and business sectors that this group aims to achieve, and brings a useful perspective from both sectors* Robin – thanks Ailsa for all her work, we wouldn’t have been able to do any of the work we’ve achieved without her. She was especially instrumental in bringing about the event in January
* Ailsa – welcomes new members and wishes the group luck
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| **Item 3** | **Update on the latest labour market figures and employability support landscape** |
|  | Latest labour market figures and support availableJoanne sets out the general landscape in Edinburgh:* Although there are some exceptions in life sciences, financial services, etc., businesses generally are really struggling, especially in sectors with particular economic bearing on the city
* City centre footfall over the past 6 months has been about 48% the levels of the previous year
* Activity at the airport, which is such a vital transport hub for the city, is back to 1995 levels
* Hotel occupancy in December was down 82% on 2019 levels, and forward bookings are down similar amounts over the next 3 months
* Universal credit claimant count has seen huge increases in the region, including from areas where it was very low, e.g. Morningside. Particularly worryingly, 39% of new claimants are currently in work
* Furlough has had a significant impact in delaying the worst of the job losses, but is currently set to end at the end of March – hopefully there will be some announcement in the UK budget, and we are pushing for an extension through British Chambers

Phil gives a presentation on SDS labour market insights* GDP declined 11% in 2020 compared to 2019, and is unlikely to reach previous levels of growth until 2023
* Unemployment expected to reach around 7.5% and may only recover to pre-pandemic levels by 2025
* Some parts of the economy did bounce back over the summer, but declined again when restrictions were reintroduced
* Job postings have increased, but these are mostly not permanent, full time roles
* Social inequalities have been exacerbated, e.g. if you’re under-25, female, or from a BAME background, you’re much more likely to have lost your job

Edinburgh, East and Midlothians:* Edinburgh has held up fairly well, relative to other areas, largely due to the resilience of a few key industries, sectoral diversity, and good digital connectivity
* Unemployment here is 3x higher for young people
* Edinburgh does also have above average numbers of young people in education, training etc.
* 30,100 jobs furloughed in September, and unusually, in Edinburgh more men than women were furloughed
* There were around 62,000 job postings in Edinburgh in December 2020, with skills most in demand including teamwork/collaboration, budgeting, and project management, and the sectors advertising the most jobs included nurses and care workers, and especially digital
* High numbers of future jobs expected to be in retail, health and social work, and accommodation and food services
* The sectors with higher numbers of opportunities now are expected to continue to provide most of the new jobs in future

Jobs and employability support:* Support for individuals includes enhanced careers advice, Pathway Apprenticeships to provide skills and experience to under-19s, a £25m National Transition Training Fund, etc.
* Support for businesses includes Skills for Growth advice for businesses on upskilling or reskilling teams, various grants around apprenticeships, a Digital Catalyst Fund etc.
* The extension of the CJRS gave more time to bed in these measures

Ailsa – surprised to see how low the predicted demand for jobs was in life sciencesPhil – there can be a bit of a lag in the predictions, and some of the growth areas in what we may think of as life sciences might be classed differentlyFiona – the 16-24 demographic make up the bulk of Napier’s students. Their students are very concerned about their futures, and sometimes not even able to look because they feel there’s nothing out there. She’s working on offering help with employability skills, careers advice etc.Phil – mental health is a particular challenge* They’re working on assessing the scale of groups leaving education each year and working out how many of those are then looking for work
* They’re looking to try and show students where the jobs are, and advise those who can’t find jobs in the areas they had wanted to work in
* We need to get better at mapping out on a regional basis where the jobs are and share information better amongst the sector

Caroline – from an industry point they’ve been thinking about future-proofing, and how they can introduce more entry-level positions to help build expertise in the sector, and in all sorts of areas, e.g. project managing, digital, hospitality etc.* Wondering how we can work together to create these opportunities for new graduates
* If the festivals get to go ahead there will be opportunities for recruitment in hospitality etc., and perhaps they can work with others in this group to communicate these opportunities
* Fiona FA, Majella and Caroline to discuss these issues separately – ACTION
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| **Item 4** | **Discussion on policy asks** |
|  | Joanne – the Talent situation is so acute currently, and at the Chamber we’re keen to push more in terms of policy levers we’d like to see used at local and national levels to address these issues * Real need for support not only for job seekers, but also support for businesses to help them create jobs, and to perhaps start thinking differently about their recruitment and what they look for in a candidate
* This group could have more of a policy angle to our discussions, do more to be that voice, and publicly have an opinion on these issues, e.g. when the Chamber get asked to comment on these things, members of this group could be that voice instead
* Asking if we are happy to do that, and if so, how might we go about it? – ACTION

Ailsa – agrees that this would be a good role for the group to take Robin – as previously discussed in this group, issues like sustainability, corporate social responsibility etc. are things people want to see from their employers – perhaps this is an area we can look into further Joanne – a quick update on the Inspiring Stories event – a couple of members of this group, and Chamber staff have met with someone who does some publicity work for the Chamber, to discuss publicising the stories. He has narrowed it down to two in particular that he’s going to write up and try to get them published in papers etc. * When they do get published, the Chamber will let the Talent group know, and we can use our collective networks to amplify these stories – ACTION

Ailsa – we could perhaps use these as a policy pivot point, make asks and start discussions based off this messaging |
| **Item 5** | **Update on Edinburgh Business Resilience Group employability sub-group** |
|  | Joanne – the Edinburgh Business Resilience Group was set up in November and has convened about 60 businesses and organisations to work on the Covid recovery and more long-standing Edinburgh issues, looking at a very strategic level at the growth and resilience of the city. * Within this, we’ve formed 5 Task and Finish groups, tied to the principles of the Council’s recovery strategy (Business Support, Culture and Festivals, Employability, Infrastructure and Investment, and Innovation)
* The Employability group is chaired by Audrey Cumberford from Edinburgh College, and is trying to come up with asks of policymakers, but also offers of what the business community can do to work collaboratively on issues in this area
* It’s important that the Employability group and the Talent group keep updated on each other – this will be a standing point in the agenda for these meetings – ACTION
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| **Item 6** | **AOB** |
|  | Harriet – CodeClan, who work around digital skills etc., are planning an event with the Chamber, on the 12th May, looking at the issue of digital skills. The event will be looking at how to grow your business using data, but also at how businesses can enable their team to support business growth, focusing on digital skills and unlocking opportunities* There may be scope here for the Talent group to get involved, particularly around the issue of enabling workforces to upskill and reskill in digital – if anyone in the group has any thoughts, get in touch – ACTION
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| **Item 7** | **DONM - 1.30-2.30 on Tuesday 20th April** |
|  | We’ll arrange another meeting in 6-8 weeks’ time - ACTION |