

Highlands and Islands Skills Investment Plan Programme Board

Progress Report for the Convention of the Highlands and Islands - October 2016

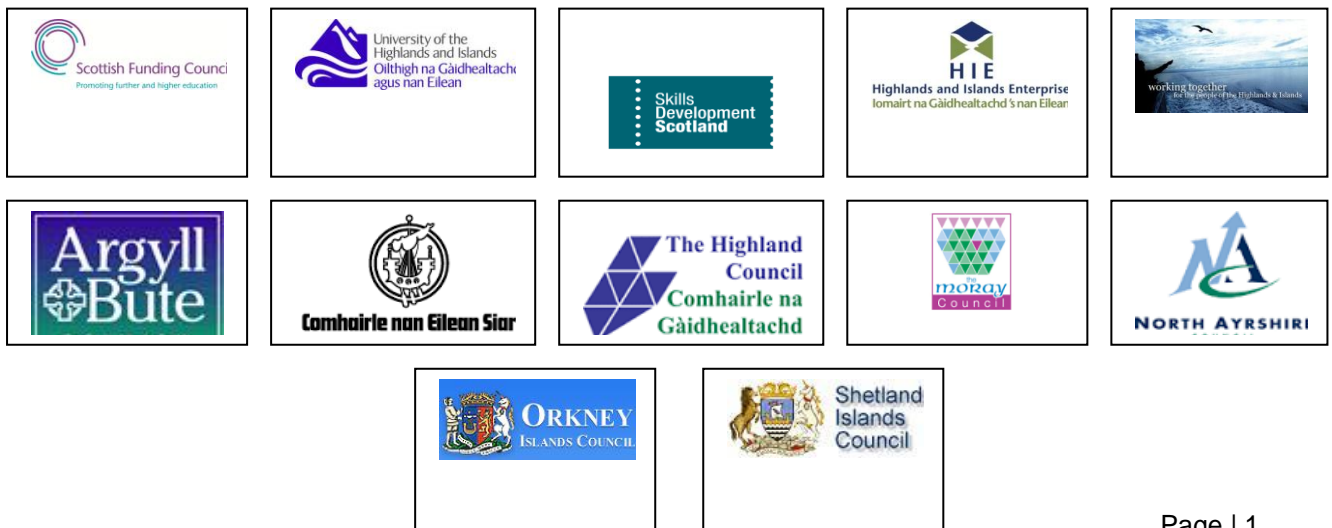


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Introduction by Chair, Programme Board

Developed by partners and published at COHI in October 2014, the Highlands & Islands Skills Investment Plan (H&I SIP) provides a call to action amongst key partners, agencies, schools, colleges, universities, sectors and business communities from across the region to provide a co-ordinated response to the key challenges and unique opportunities in the socio-economic environment.

It identifies a range of actions that offer an opportunity to develop a level of provision and an engagement that will ensure the availability of an inclusive skilled workforce and provide support towards innovation, creativity and economic growth in the lives and livelihoods of individuals, employers and businesses.

Central to implementation of the H&I SIP was the requirement to develop a cohesive, coordinated regional approach to the exploration of skills needs and to develop an effective and planned response to those needs. The H&I SIP Programme Board was formed to provide that leadership and governance. It also aims to lead discussion and activity that develops and shares good practice in skills planning across the region.

The Programme Board is supportive of the development of local authority based skills plans which identify and deliver a flexible and inclusive skills provision to meet the needs of employers and individuals in all communities. We are also committed to a process where skills planning is informed and led by a robust evidence base and have formed the H&I SIP Evidence Advisory Group to lead on that activity. The group will have an overview of current skills data analysis, help co-ordinate the myriad of skills-related research happening across the region and have the ability to fill evidence gaps in a local area or specific sector so that local and regional skills needs are fully understood and addressed.

The 2016 Regional Skills Assessment for the Highlands and Islands presents data analysis on the economic profile, workforce profile, population, skills mismatches and forecasting. Its key findings offer some comfort on a strengthening of the economy including growth in employment above the national average, but there are large variations in growth and economic prosperity across the remote and rural areas of the Highland & Islands. Across the region, wages remain relatively low and there is consistent under representation in professional and scientific sectors. Of most concern is the population profile with many areas of the Highlands and islands experiencing decline and demographics towards an aging population. A significant challenge going forward will be to meet workforce needs in the Highlands and Islands as the size of the working age population is expected to fall, with nearly 80,000 fewer people of working age over the next 20 years.

The need to grow the population, as well as the economy is well recognised by the Programme Board and we welcome the work initiated by HIE to develop a Highland & Islands Talent Attraction Strategy and Action Plan. Agreeing, delivering and monitoring actions on Talent Attraction at local and regional levels will be a key priority for the Programme Board in the year ahead. As well as seeking to attract young people and families into the region, we will look to provide even more opportunities for our young people who are committed to remain and study and work in the region through a co-ordinated effort to promote the Highlands and Islands as a good place to live and work and working with

partners to continue to develop innovative career pathways, through Further and Higher Education and the expansion of Modern Apprenticeships.

MA Expansion in Highland & Islands will aim to increase equality and diversity to address a situation where, in 2014-15, only 46% of MAs were female. The MA Expansion Plan will set out local and regional activity to ensure Apprenticeships will be an attractive offer that young people and adults aspire to enter as a high quality and prestigious path to a successful career. Partners will work to ensure that employers are confident customers of apprenticeship training programmes, which will be developed by training providers who are able to meet the evolving needs of businesses located within the Highlands and Islands

The Programme Board is confident and ambitious for the future of the economy in the Highlands and Islands. We welcome the work being developed through UHI in schools, colleges on Foundation Apprenticeships, college and university curriculum expansion, innovative research and enhancing the student experience. We look forward to supporting opportunity to raise the profile and potential of Gaelic as an economic asset in our communities.

The programme Board does not underestimate the challenges that exist but will not be overwhelmed or distracted from the urgency to be informed, to take action and to work together.

I invite you, through this report, to be informed on the work by the key partners in the Programme Board and our efforts to work together to develop education, learning and training provision that encourages young people and adults to stay, work and/or study in the region, to work with employers to explore and meet their needs and to inspire a new generation of workers and contributors to well being and future economic prosperity of the region

Norman MacDonald

Chair, Highlands & Islands SIP Programme Board

Implementation of the H&I SIP through the Programme Board

Regional SIPs are a key mechanism through which SDS works collaboratively with partners across local authority boundaries to embed an evidence based approach to skills planning, investment and delivery that is aligned to the needs of employers and the economy.

In September 2015, Norman MacDonald (Convenor of CnES) was appointed as chair of the H&I SIP Programme Board and at this time, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) appointed a Regional Skills Planning Lead, to support co-ordination of the implementation of the H&I SIP. Since then, the Programme Board has reviewed its Terms of Reference with a focus on:

- **Strategic Leadership** –developing skills in line with economic need, keeping abreast of key policy developments and ensuring a joined up co-ordinated approach to skills planning for the Highlands & Islands
- **Monitoring progress and performance** - develop and maintain a process for monitoring the SIP actions and performance, reviewing risks and issues and ensuring that the necessary action is taken to ensure that the plan remains on track
- **A robust evidence base** – Ensuring an evidence based approach to planning, utilising existing evidence and agreeing a programme of research to meet gaps
- **Mechanisms for delivery** – To develop and oversee mechanisms for delivery of SIP actions and identifying and securing the resources for delivery
- **Sharing good practice** – Providing a means of sharing good practice amongst stakeholders in the skills
- **Review and evaluation** –themes and actions

This year, Programme Board meetings have been held in Stornoway, Oban, Inverness, Elgin and will hold its December 2016 meeting on Arran

Papers and agenda items have focussed on ensuring a skills intelligence gathering for a robust evidence base (including Regional Skills Assessments), Local Authority local skills plans, developing a H&I MA Expansion Plan, HIE's Young people's perceptions of H&I Research, developing a H&I Talent Attraction Strategy and Action Plan, Developing Young Workforce (DYE) activity across H&Is, partner updates (including UHI ROA 2017-20 and National Gaelic Language Plan)

Membership originally included representation from all 7 local authorities, UHI, SDS and HIE. Since November 2015, membership has expanded to include SCDI, Arran Skills Group, Bord na Gaidhlig and we hope to invite representation from NHS in the near future.

The Programme Board activity is focused on directing partners to target their service delivery and skills development activity to ensure we create and capitalise on opportunities to ensure:

- Our investment in skills aligns with the needs of employers
- Planning for the needs of the future economy
- A region for young people
- Attracting working age people to the region
- Engaging employers in the skills system
- Regional skills planning through robust evidence

H&I SIP Evidence Advisory group

SDS has recently established the H&I SIP Evidence Advisory Group. The Group aims to co-ordinate research and evidence gathering across the region, avoid duplication and prioritise co-commissioning of local and sectoral skills research as required. The group has membership from all 6 LAs and Arran Skills Plan Steering group, SCDI, UHI and HIE.

The Evidence Advisory Group is considering sub level local authority data that will support skills and college provision in Highland, Argyll & Bute and CnES and liaising with Bord Na Gaidhlig and key Gaelic agencies on developing evidence that supports and promotes Gaelic language skills in the workforce.

Regional Skills Assessments

The third iteration of Regional Skills Assessments will be published in November 2016 and will support skills investment planning by SDS, Local Authorities, and UHI. The RSAs will cover a number of distinct geographies within the Highlands and Islands to support regional and local skills planning including:

- A Highlands and Islands level RSA
- A separate RSA covering each of the 7 Local Authority areas
- A composite RSA report for the Islands Councils.

The data coverage within the RSAs has been extended to include detailed analysis of:

- Economic performance, the structure of the business base and employment
- Population, demographics, and the performance of the labour market
- Current demand for skills and forecasts of how the demand for jobs and skills is changing
- Patterns of current skills provision and outcomes in Schools, Colleges, University and through Work Based Learning
- Key implications for skills investment.

The following sections of the document explain the progress being made in developing Local Skills Action Plans, followed by updates from the Enterprise and Skills Agencies.

Local Skills Action Plans

Local Authority Skills Investment Plans (LA SIPs) are a mechanism for local skills issues to be aligned to the key themes and actions outlined in the Highlands and Islands Skills Investment Plan. Through membership of the H&I SIP Evidence Advisory Group, local authorities will gain awareness on the content and implication of current research and have the ability to co-commission additional research that fills knowledge on skills gaps in sectors or a localised skills issue. It is anticipated that LA SIPs will incorporate actions from National and Regional strategies, such as the H&I MA Expansion Plan and the H&I Talent Attraction Strategy to enable a localised response to the challenges and opportunities that have been identified.

'ArranSkills' Plan

"The ArranSkills Strategy & Action Plan was completed in November 2015 and its production was supported by the University of Glasgow's Training and Employment Research Unit (TERU), contracted by SDS. The plan highlighted three specific projects:

- Co-ordination of all activities to respond to Arran's skills needs
- Development of a skilled workforce to meet employer demand
- Support for young people to build careers on Arran

Working with SDS, Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce, Argyll College, Business Gateway, schools and major employers on the island (the Auchrannie Resort and Arran Aromatics), a group was formed to deliver the above.

Each stakeholder has responsibility for the different areas of delivery and have successfully delivered around 75% of the goals outlined above. The remainder will follow through over the next few months.

So far, the group have pulled all skills/training courses etc into one public accessible area – The ArranSkills Facebook page. Promoted through the local newspaper, the Arran Banner, and using the business gateway database of 325 registered businesses on Arran together with "likes & friends" to promote the messages, the group has created a "one stop shop" for all Arran skills, training & development.

In order to engage businesses and potential employees, the group recently held its first event, attracting over 20 local businesses to take part along with senior pupils from the local high school. Presentations were given to the audience on Modern Apprenticeships along with the potential to share apprenticeships between businesses. Three excellent Video Case Studies were shown depicting local young people who had made their careers on Arran, specifically highlighting what was on offer. These case studies will be used by Argyll College shortly in a social media campaign and also uploaded onto the ArranSkills Facebook page for reference. Overall attendance at the event was around 60 people and it was covered in some detail again in the local newspaper.

The next stage in development is the compilation of a "high level skills" database, identifying people who have made their careers elsewhere and now live on Arran, who have capacity and wish to contribute to the community either part time or full time or indeed project based. The idea is to "share" their skills, knowledge and experiences with businesses on Arran who might benefit from this type of insight and intervention.

The development of the plan and local engagement has fostered many new ideas and proposals, drawing on the collective skills and aspirations of the island community.

Argyll & Bute Local Skills Plan

Argyll and Bute Council and partners felt that there was a need to build upon the Highlands and Islands Skills Investment Plan 2014 to look in more detail at specific actions related to and directly relevant to the economic, skills and population issues facing the area. Therefore Argyll and Bute Council in partnership with SDS, HIE and Argyll College UHI (where both SDS and HIE provided financial support to augment that provided by Argyll and Bute Council) commissioned EKOS Ltd to undertake the Compelling Argyll and Bute Study with the following main objectives:

- to undertake a detailed economic profiling and analysis, with a particular focus on skills development issues
- to develop 'compelling' propositions/promotional action plans for Argyll and Bute and each of its four sub-areas
- to examine good practice examples of addressing rural de-population; and
- to prepare promotional action plans, including resource implications (staffing and financial).

The study was concluded in August 2015 and the evidence base fed into the revised SOA Delivery Plans, with a specific focus on Outcome 1 and Outcome 3 Delivery Plans for the Argyll and Bute SOA, 2013-2023:

Outcome 1:

- Improve linkages from the curriculum to economic opportunities in Argyll and Bute linked to growth. Creating career pathways for key sectors: tourism, maritime, food and drink.
- Deliver recommendations to progress Oban as a University Town.
- Define the opportunities in maritime industry sector of Argyll and Bute, and explore the feasibility of locally delivered training, apprenticeships and skills development for the marine industry in Argyll and Bute.
- Explore the potential for an Argyll and Bute Centre of Entrepreneurship.

Outcome 3:

- Develop a range of programmes, courses and qualifications for the Senior Phase to support schools and pupils with course options that reflect local labour market employment opportunities.
- Develop a coordinated and open employer engagement approach between partners on what skills are needed and skills gaps.
- Enhance provision, promotion and participation of Modern Apprenticeships through a partnership approach to ensure implementation of the Highlands and Islands Modern Apprenticeships Expansion Plan in Argyll and Bute.
- Expand the offer of Further Education and enhance strong partnership working between educational establishments and local communities through a mentor programme

The role of partners is essential and key members of the Compelling Argyll and Bute Steering Group were also involved in the SOA Delivery Plan workshops. Review meetings are held with Community Planning Partners to feed back on progress on the actions and all actions have been allocated to a specific person as the lead on that action. Specific skills

issues/actions have also been included in the revised Argyll and Bute Council Strategic Economic Development Action Plan, 2016-2021 and as appropriate within the area-based Economic Development Action Plans, 2016-2021 prepared for each of the four administrative areas within Argyll and Bute.

Eilean Siar – Local Skills Investment Plan

SDS, on behalf of local partners, has commissioned the TERU to support the development of the Eilean Siar Local Skills Investment Plan. This will involve:

- Reviewing of key labour market statistics, benchmarking the Western Isles against the Highlands and Islands as a whole and Scotland.
- Interviewing key stakeholders.
- Interviewing local employers to gather data on their key skills needs
- Gathering the views of Senior Phase pupils and their parents to understand career aspirations, awareness and perceptions of employment opportunities in Eilean Siar
- Reviewing key local, regional and national strategies (including the SOA and H&I SIP) to ensure alignment.
- Developing and agreeing the Eilean Siar Skills Investment Action Plan

Key skills issues emerging from review of key labour market statistics include:

- In 2014, there were just over 11,000 jobs on the Western Isles. The sectors employing the largest numbers were:
 - Human health and social work (accounting for 21.1% of all employment)
 - Wholesale and retail (13.8%)
 - Education (9.7%)
 - Accommodation and food services (7.7%)
 - Construction (7.1%).
- Looking at labour supply, generally the Western Isles perform better than Scotland as a whole – but less well than the H&I. For example:
 - Economic activity rate (81.4%) is below H&I rate (82.1%) but above Scotland rate (77.7%).
 - Employment rate (77.9%) is below both H&I rate (78.9%) but above Scotland rate (73.1%).
 - Unemployment rate (4.4%) is above the H&I rate (3.8%) but below Scotland rate (5.9%).
- The Western Isles workforce is highly qualified with 41.9% having SVQ Level 4 or above qualifications and a further 21.0% having SVQ Level 3 qualifications (compared to 37.6% and 15.7% across H&I as a whole). A smaller proportion than across H&I and Scotland have no qualifications (5.8% compared to 8.4% and 9.0%).
- However, wages are lower than across Scotland as a whole:
 - Median full-time gross weekly wages for residents were £495.80 compared to £527.00 for Scotland as a whole.
 - Median full-time gross weekly wages in Western Isles workplaces were £454.10 compared to £527.00 for Scotland as a whole.

A Steering group is overseeing the Eilean Siar Local Skills Investment Plan and includes representation from the Outer Hebrides Economy and Skills SOA Group which has an overview on skills and training needs in support of sustainable population and economic growth across the Outer Hebrides and report into the Outer Hebrides CPP.

TERU and the Steering Group will work to develop and agree the Eilean Siar Skills Investment Action Plan by November 2016

Highland Council Skills Plan

In Highland, partner organisations (HC, HIE, SDS, NHS Highland, UHI Inverness College/North Highland College/West Highland College/Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, together with the Chambers of Commerce, SCDI, FSB and the DYW local groups) have developed a collaborative response to the Skills Investment Plan and to Developing the Young Workforce.

Seeking to capitalise on best practice within Highland and further afield and the unique strength the region has in its ability to offer its students an integrated tertiary educational pipeline, the partners have organised themselves at a strategic Highland level and locally across its College geographies to progress this work.

A series of workstream action plans are being progressed by lead partners:

- **Broad General Education:** Highland Council – Care and Learning Service
- **Senior Phase/Colleges:** Highland Council - Care and Learning Service
- **Colleges:** North Highland/Inverness/West Highland Colleges UHI
- **Employers:** 3 regional groups led by Caithness, Inverness and Lochaber Chambers of Commerce
- **Talent Attraction:** Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- **Equalities:** Highland Council - Care and Learning Service
- **Apprentices:** Skills Development Scotland

During the development of the Inverness City Region Deal, the Council took the opportunity to secure UK and Scottish Government commitment to the development of a Highland approach to employability and skills. Work is underway with a best practice review and proposals been drafted for how an Highland approach could combine Council and partner services and bring benefits and improved outcomes for individuals and businesses alike. This recognises there are twin objectives: ensuring that businesses get the right people with the right skills for the jobs available; and, ensuring that Highlanders have the right skills to compete for and sustain employment.

It is anticipated that this work will be developed over the coming months with outline and finalised business plans been prepared and agreed.

Moray Local Skills Investment Plan

In Moray, there are a large number of stakeholders that operate in the field of skills, training and employability all of whom have different focuses and mandates, which make it a challenge for policy makers and decision makers to coordinate and resource.

SDS has helped to facilitate more joined up working through the H&I SIP Programme Board and the evidence base offered through Regional Skills Assessments. Moray Council representation has been provided to the H&I SIP Programme Board to undertake work to coordinate skills intelligence and identify overlaps or gaps in skills data available and to develop a talent attraction/retention proposition

As part of co-ordination of skills at a local level, an appropriate governance structure was needed to help direct policy and strategy and to guide operations. Moray Employability

Partnership has been established and beneath this leadership, 3 sub-groups operate; *The Skills Investment Group, Investing in Young People* (DYW Moray) and *Lifelong Learning*.

The Skills Investment Group's remit is to lead and coordinate the enabling actions, plans and projects which will provide the skills, training and educational needs that support the successful implementation of the Skills Investment Plan in relation to the priorities of Moray 2026 and the Moray Economic Partnership.

The Moray Local Skills Investment Plan has been developed by partnership including SDS, Moray College UHI, The Moray Council (Economic Development), the Chamber of Commerce and Highlands & Islands Enterprise.

Key areas for development were identified:

Young People:

- Support the development of Foundation Apprenticeship opportunities
- Support an increase in the number of Modern Apprenticeships
- Contribute to improving infrastructure to provide more robust information on school leaver destinations by formalising info sharing agreements
- Support the development of graduate level apprenticeships

Lifelong Learning:

- Support the development of an annual Jobsfayre
- Support an increase in the number of employers offering work experience opportunities- info on placements to be shared on a database used by schools
- Provide data on key growth sectors & employer vacancies to influence the development of employability provision
- Source funding opportunities for employability provision

Meeting Employer Needs:

- Support the scoping of local industry training needs
- Development of Employer CPD provision aimed at key growth sectors
- Identify potential funding opportunities in relation to STEM

The Moray Employability Partnership reports into the Moray Community Planning Partnership on outcomes and performance indicators relating to *Moray 2026; A Plan for the Future*. It also feeds into the Moray Economic Partnership and reports on progress against the actions identified in the H&I SIP and the Local Skills Plan.

The Moray Council is at the early stage of developing a City Deal/Area Growth bid aiming for Heads of Terms during 2018. The bid will likely include support for skills development of the workforce, skills attraction & retention.

Orkney Local Skills Action Plan

SDS, on behalf of local partners has commissioned the University of Glasgow's Training and Employment Research Unit (TERU) to support the development of the Skills Action Plan for Orkney. This has involved:

- Interviews with key stakeholders

- telephone surveys of local employers, alongside interviews with key local business representative organisations and sectoral groups
- A series of focus groups with pupils, college students and graduates and young people currently being supported by employability services
- Reviewing key local, regional and national strategies (including H&I SIP) to ensure alignment.

Key skills issues identified included:

- Challenges in attracting individuals to roles:
 - In growth sectors – including health and social care, engineering (renewables), marine economy and construction.
 - In less attractive sectors/roles – for example, food processing.
 - On more remote islands.
- Lack of awareness amongst residents (especially young people) of:
 - Employment opportunities on Orkney – and routes into them.
 - Modern Apprenticeship opportunities.
 - Qualifications and experience needed to return to higher quality jobs on Orkney.
- Linked to this, cautiousness (especially amongst parents) over non-traditional routes.
- Need to develop business and entrepreneurship skills (as many individuals are self-employed).
- Succession planning, given ageing of workforce.
- Low unemployment – but those not currently in employment often have significant barriers.
- A number of factors can make accessing employment and training opportunities difficult including:
 - Availability, cost and reliability of public transport.
 - Availability of suitable accommodation with a particular challenge around accommodation for college students from outer isles.
 - Lack of good quality broadband can limit ability to use online learning in some areas.

The Steering Group that has been developing the Skills Action Plan for Orkney and to date workshops have focused on developing a common understanding of the evidence base and agreeing the mission, strategic outcomes and areas for action for the Skills Action Plan.

Strategic vision – By 2022:

- Orkney employers are able to recruit, retain and develop individuals with the skills and experience they require to be successful
- Orkney residents are able to access high quality employment and training opportunities that enable them to achieve their career aspirations and make a valued contribution to Orkney
- Young people and those that influence them (including parents) have a good understanding of the employment opportunities available on Orkney and how to access these

Shetland Local Skills Action Plan

Key partners in Shetland recognise the long term importance of investing in the skills of young people – “Our Workforce of the Future”. A number of key organisations in Shetland work in partnership to this end, including (SDS, Shetland College UHI, NAFC Marine Centre UHI, Shetland Islands Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise) to create a cohesive and practical framework for the development of our young people. Those organisations have held recent discussions to agree the role and remit of a Skills Investment Group. This new

group has examined those which currently exist and which may have a role in the development of young people, to ascertain the gaps and the overlaps.

These existing groups include the following

- Shetland Learning Partnership *
- Employability Working Group (Chair – Shetland SDS)
- Occupational Segregation Working Group (Chair – HIE)
- Developing Scotland's Young Workforce Group (Chair – SIC Education)
- Community Learning and Development Partnership (contact – June Porter, SIC)
- Shetland Tertiary Education, Research and Training Review Project *

*Effectively project boards with limited lifespan

The Chairperson of this new Group will be SDS's Area Manager for Moray, Orkney and Shetland. This group will in turn report to the Shetland Partnership Board.

The Skills Investment Group, along with these others listed above, will ensure that the following activities are taken forward:

- To implement the recommendations from the Developing the Young Workforce report;
- To ensure more intensive, industry influenced focus on employability within Curriculum for Excellence;
- To develop clearer vocational pathways, starting in the Senior Phase of school leading to industry recognised qualifications, alongside academic qualifications;
- To develop foundation and modern apprenticeship opportunities for young people;
- To ensure post 16 education includes a college system fully focussed on employability and responding to industry's skill needs at regional and national level;
- To advance equalities and actively target equalities groups to ensure early intervention and targeted support where required;
- To co-ordinate, monitor and report on the activity of partner agencies, using Shetland's Strategic Employability Pathway;
- To co-ordinate applications for external funding on behalf of Shetland Partnership e.g. ESOL funding;
- To ensure that performance information is contained within, and reported through, the Local Outcome Improvement Plan;

To provide a route for groups and organisations involved in Employability to communicate with the Development Partnership, Performance Group and Shetland Partnership Board.

Partner Updates

Skills Development Scotland

Highlands and Islands Modern Apprenticeship Expansion

The Scottish Government (SG) has increased the current SDS annual target of 25,000 MA starts to a target of 30,000 MA starts by 2020. They are keen to see the increase achieved in MAs at Level 3 and above and in STEM and key sectors. SDS has begun the process of increasing the starts with incremental increases forecast each year to 2020.

To consider this within the context of the Highlands & Islands, SDS is currently developing a Highland a H&I Modern Apprenticeship expansion Plan which will be delivered across the region 2017-2020.

In April 2016, a H&I wide consultation event was held in Inverness with representation from local Authorities, UHI, HIE, SCDI, Regional DYW groups, Bord na Gaidhlig and the Forestry Commission. This workshop considered the current level of MA's and what external factors may influence growth. The existing quality and capacity of colleges and private providers was discussed as well as widening access and gender balance.

It was agreed that SDS would arrange further meetings with stakeholders from each of the Local Authorities to enable more detailed discussion to take place in relation to 'local' priorities and ambitions. These will inform and shape the targets and outputs across the local authorities and highlight current areas of good practice and innovation which can be shared. To date, local consultations have been held in Caithness & Sutherland, Eilean Siar, Inverness and Central Highland, Shetland and Argyll and Bute with the plan to be finalised by November 16.

Work Based Learning

1. Foundation Apprenticeships

SDS have developed Foundation Apprenticeships (FA), which were introduced in 2014/15, providing work-based learning opportunities for secondary school pupils in S4-S6. Based on existing Modern Apprenticeship frameworks, they support the Curriculum for Excellence and the Scottish Government's Youth Employment Strategy.

Foundation Apprenticeships present an opportunity to tackle existing under representation in certain sectors of the economy by increasing participation from young women, young people from minority ethnic backgrounds and young disabled people. They also offer an opportunity to save a year in the learner journey, providing greater potential for routes into employment or Modern Apprenticeship at the end of S5.

Many colleges and schools across the Highlands and Island have responded positively to delivery of Foundation Apprentices with new provision being offered in Shetland, Lews Castle, Inverness, West Highland, North Highland and Argyll College across a variety of pathways including Business Studies, Civil Engineering, Engineering, Social Services and Healthcare, Children and Young people, ICT Software and Hardware Development.

2. Graduate Level Apprenticeships

Over the past year, SDS has worked with industry, and Scottish universities and colleges to pioneer a new approach with employers to create a structured work based learning offer for

higher education in Scotland. This consultative and collaborative approach has helped us to shape the principles and criteria for our new Graduate Level Apprenticeships (GLA).

GLA's are accredited work based learning programmes at SCQF levels 8 to 11. They lead to degrees or to degree level, professionally recognised, qualifications and provide a mechanism for supporting non-traditional entry to university, particularly for those whose aspirations have not previously been to enter full-time degree programmes.

UHI developed and piloted the first Graduate Level Apprenticeship in Scotland with 14 Graduate Apprentices in Civil Engineering. The students are all employed and have progressed from a Modern Apprenticeship at SVQ Level 3 and are now working towards their HND and SVQ level 3 at Inverness College UHI.

Employers across the Highlands and beyond are supporting this pilot Including Balfour Beattie, Morrison Construction, Mott MacDonald, Morgan Sindall, RJ McLeod, Allen Gordon, Springfield Properties, John Gunn & Sons, The Highland Council and AECOM.

UHI is also currently involved in several development programmes related to new Graduate Apprenticeship Framework developments..

3. UHI Work Based Learning Hub

The work based hub was established in October 2015 by the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) supported by funding from Skills Development Scotland (SDS). In September 2015 UHI seconded a Principal from one of the Academic Partner colleges to lead the initiative on a part-time basis and subsequently appointed a project manager in January 2016.

The aim of the Hub is to establish and support a consistent approach to work based learning across the region and initially introduce Foundation Apprenticeships in the senior phase. The Hub also aims to work with SDS, employers and Sector Skills Councils to develop work based learning pathways from school to Graduate Level.

The Hub is working effectively across a range of agreed activities, while also supporting each Academic Partner's own developments. Hub partnership activity is underway in the region and the Hub has a growing profile both within UHI, partner organisations, Schools and employer groups.

One of benefits already realised by the Hub has been the opportunity to bring together Further Education subject teams from all partners to discuss curriculum development and delivery methodology on a regular basis. The hub builds on the collaborative work of the Academic Partners which should in the long term enhance the offer within the region and opportunities for young people.

This year UHI is leading on contracting with SDS for the submission of one Foundation Apprenticeship bid across the region for the next round of FA delivery, including new FA's in creative digital media and Laboratory skills.

This approach enables a consistent regional approach to be developed utilising the resources of the colleges and university most effectively whilst supporting local delivery. This approach will also be taken with Graduate Level Apprenticeships

My World of Work

SDS's award-winning Career Information, Advice & Guidance web service My world of Work, offers a unique mix of tools, features and job information designed around the Career Management Skills (CMS) Framework of Self, Strengths, Horizons and Networks, it empowers users to make informed decisions about their future.

My World of Work complements face-to-face services provided in schools and careers centres as well as meeting the needs of those who are able to use self-directed support. We have recently re-launched this service on a new and more interactive platform, continuing to respond to customer insight and aligning our digital services with our new service offers.

My World of Work Live!

My World of Work Live! is a Skills Development Scotland programme designed to engage and inspire young people to consider careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths. The MyWoW Live! offers a series of interactive exhibits and inspiring activities designed to engage and inspire young people in STEM. The audience focus is young people in P7-S3. All activities are designed to provide a short, sharp burst of STEM inspiration and signpost to connected activities locally.

MyWoW Live! activities are currently delivered in four sites across Scotland: Glasgow Science Centre, National Museum of Scotland Edinburgh, Mareel Centre Shetland, and Church Street in Inverness.

The Inverness offer comprises two key elements:

- **Digital Studio**

The digital studio is a flexible learning environment for young people to undertake interactive groupwork activities. Schools choose from a current menu of 8 groupwork sessions, which typically last for around 90 mins. Groups of up to 30 young people can be accommodated.

Groupwork sessions use different technology platforms to cover a wide range of subjects including: robotics, renewables, medical tech, space, coding, environmental science, cyber security and video production.

Activities are delivered by an experienced STEM communicator. All activities are mapped to Curriculum for Excellence and the Career Education Standard.

The Digital Studio commenced piloting delivery in late August 2016, with a target of 1,700 young people engaged in Yr 1.

- **Careers Lab**

The Careers Lab is a high tech facility open to young people and adults with six STEM career stations that can be accessed on a drop by or booked in basis. Sessions can be user led or facilitated by SDS staff. Activities include Game Learning, Creative Space, Makers Space, Virtual Reality, and a Minecraft Careers World

Fit-out of the Digital Lab is complete with activities and programmes being finalised and piloted.

My World of Work Live! - Shetland

SDS has also appointed a part-time co-ordinator based on Shetland to develop delivery of My World of Work Live! inspiring STEM activities to P7-S3 pupils, teachers and parents across the Shetland Islands network.

Outreach delivery will ensure every P7 – S3 pupil will take part in at least one activity throughout the school year. School delivery started in Autumn .

Sector Development

Digital Skills - Highlands & Islands

Digital World

Digital World is a multi channel marketing campaign developed by SDS in partnership with industry and education partners, to promote technology as a career of choice. The campaign has included TV advertising, social media, outdoor advertising, PR and events all of which have been anchored around www.digitalworld.net, which has been developed to inspire individuals about technology careers. The key target audience groups for the campaign messaging:

- Young people at subject choice/transition points
- Parents and influencers
- Girls and young women

A key focus of the campaign has been to promote real life case studies about people working and studying in the sector across Scotland. This has also included showcasing successes at school such as Wick High Schools winner of Apps for Good.

Digital World Champions

To support the reach and sustainability of the Digital World campaign SDS has established a network of 32 Digital World Careers Champions within their Careers Information Advice and Guidance team. These champions are located across Scotland in each of the local authority areas. This approach will ensure that careers staff can be kept up to date about digital career opportunities and sector research. In particular champions are integral in supporting the delivery of regional Digital World careers events.

Digital World Event Attendance

The Digital World exhibition stand has been travelling around Scotland to attend events such as Higher Education Conventions where they can speak to young people and their influencers. Over the course of autumn 2016 Digital World, with support from local employers and Digital World Champions, will have attended 12 careers event including in Shetland, Orkney and Fort William.

Discover the Digital World

Discover the Digital World is a series of interactive technology careers road shows designed to bring technology to life for young people (s1-s3), their teachers and parents. SDS worked with Young Scot, HIE and Education Scotland to deliver these events in 10 locations across Scotland including Inverness and Oban. In addition 2 live online interactive events were

delivered to reach young people who were unable to attend due to the locations or dates of the events.

The key objective from these events was to facilitate improved engagement and collaboration between the technology industry and education at a regional level. Subsequent to the events a series of resources have been developed which have now been made available. Overall the event series reached in excess of 2000 young people and were considered to be a great success - www.youtube.com/watch?v=YYVp_NO_wDk. Due to the success of these events discussions are currently ongoing to replicate this event series across Scotland in 2017.

Digital Xtra

Digital Xtra is a partnership project delivered with support from SDS, HIE and ScotlandIS. The purpose of Digital Xtra is to develop a joined up, coordinated approach to the funding of digital related extra curricular activities which are aimed at young people, by centrally holding and disbursing private and public sector funds. Currently extra curricular organisations receive funding from employers and the public sector often on an ad-hoc, first come first served approach which can result in inconsistent provision being available across Scotland.

The Digital Xtra fund launched on 19th May and will support more young people into digital careers by widening access to extracurricular and enrichment activities that bring technology to life. The total value of the fund is 250k with each maximum award being no more than 50k. Robust guidelines and application process have been developed with a focus on prioritising sustainable and innovative approaches as well as ensuring that where possible we can ensure a broad geographical spread, and reach under represented groups. There were 98 applications received for funding and these were reviewed by a panel of 10 industry experts, including an ex pupil from Wick High School Pupil, and representative from Sitekit and Fujitsu. Inverness College UHI was one of the twelve successful projects which were awarded funding – www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/news-events/2016/august/digital-dozen-awarded-funding-to-get-young-people-into-tech/.

A second round of Digital Xtra funding has been announced in October 2016 and plans are currently underway to ensure that the fund can become an annual opportunity.

Digital Schools

Digital Schools is a partnership project which is being led by Skills Development Scotland and Education Scotland, with support from Scottish Government and other public sector and industry partners. The driver behind this project is to ensure that schools are fully equipped to support young people with the computing science and wider digital skills experiences which they need to be able to take advantage of the 11,000 Scottish job opportunities in the sector each year. Digital Schools will address issues related to connectivity, infrastructure and kit, teacher professional development and leadership. This will be achieved through 4 inter-related elements of work

1. **Baseline Research:** Undertake research to understand the baseline position of computing science and digital education delivery across schools.
2. **Digital Schools Framework:** Utilise the research to make recommendations about a Digital Schools framework which will provide guidance on what is required for effective development of digital skills in schools (computing science and digital literacy) in the context of wider education and economic priorities.
3. **Pathfinder Digital Schools Development:** Developing a plan of regional and national pathfinder projects which will support schools in making changes and improvements, and test the framework.

4. Pathfinder Digital Schools Delivery: Implementation of regional and national activities.

The intention is that Digital Schools develops an ambitious, coherent and robust programme of work through regional pathfinders which have the capacity to deliver transformational change, and to lever support from industry partners. The regions for these pathfinders are still under discussion and it is hoped that there will be a Pathfinder in the Highland and Islands. The development of Digital Schools is being supported by resource from the Scottish Government's Digital Scotland Business Excellence Partnership which has provided funding to support the implementation of the Digital Technologies Skills Investment Plan.

Food and Drink

- SDS is working with Highlands and Islands Enterprise to support the development of an Aquaculture 2030 strategy. A meeting has taken place with key stakeholders to identify the scope of the new strategy and its ambition. A research and consultation programme is planned that will map the aquaculture sector and its supply chain to :
 - Assess current and forecast employment and skills within the sector
 - Review current skills provision including MA's, FE and HE with a view to identifying potential gaps or areas of development
 - Develop and implement a workforce planning strategy to ensure the sector has the supply of skills required to support future growth
- SDS is working with Moray and Inverness Colleges to engage with the craft brewing sector to explore opportunities for the development of a new apprenticeship pathway. A Skills Survey has been sent to businesses in the region to gain an insight in to the specific challenges they are facing. A facilitated meeting is planned for November to engage with the sector, review the survey findings and plan appropriate support and interventions.

Forestry

- SDS is working with the Forestry Industry Leadership Group (ILG) to develop a Skills Plan for the Forestry Sector. The Forestry School at Inverness College has played a key role in providing a skills audit of the sector. An Action Plan is currently being implemented with key tasks including :
 - An FE curriculum review to ensure its meets the needs of the sector
 - Explore opportunities for Shared Apprenticeship Models
 - Career Awareness activity including additions to My World of Work
 - Creation of a new Ambassadors Network
 - New marketing materials to promote Modern Apprenticeships

Construction, Energy and Engineering

- SDS, have arranged a workshop with Jacobs to discuss opportunities, arising from the A9 Dualling project. This includes opportunities for awareness raising, training and apprenticeships.
- SDS engaging with CS Wind (Campbeltown) to discuss future workforce and skills needs.
- SDS engaging Atlantis Resources to address skills and employment opportunities related to the Meygen project, and also the Islay Tidal project.
- SDS continue to work with EDPR (EDPR is the main developer for Moray Offshore Renewables windfarm and is the world's 3rd largest wind energy company) on assisting them with their Supply Chain Skills Plan for the Moray offshore wind project, including

work with Scottish Fishermens' Federation and local colleges to look at future training needs to support offshore renewable projects.

- SDS working to develop a Manufacturing Action Plan and working with the Energy Skills Partnership in putting together a map of manufacturing skills provision across Scotland, including the Highlands & Islands region.
- SDS are continuing to support the Shared Highland Apprentices in Construction Ltd (SHAC) which was established in partnership with the Highland Council. There are currently 11 Modern Apprentices in employment with a new cohort currently being recruited for a January 2017 start.

Creative Industries

- New self-employed MA pilot with Harris Tweed & Western Isles Council for 7 places launched in March 2016 and scope for a further 7 in 2017/18. Designed to bring new looms into Community Trust leases and create new skills capacity and succession planning by developing up to 14 self-employed weavers via MA in Fashion & Heritage Textiles at Level 3.
- New shared model of Modern Apprenticeships in Crafts Business at Level 3 with Applied Arts Scotland, the leading crafts practitioner association. Aimed at up to six young people with additional needs and under-represented in the current crafts workforce, the model seeks to establish shared apprenticeships in Shetland, Inverness, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow across two to three micros/SMEs in each location. The pilot is running successfully in Edinburgh, with plans for Dundee and Lerwick. The model is important as it could evidence a new means of working with creative micros and practitioners on work-based learning and address rurality issues.
- SDS Key Sector Manager for Creative Industries is in discussion with MG Alba to discuss interaction between the SDS Gaelic Development Plan and MG Alba's strategy Leirsinn 2020. This will seek to strengthen the My WOW Gaelic content, develop local joint activity in social media in Gaelic and discuss delivery of new Foundation Apprenticeship in Creative Digital Media in Gaelic for 2017/18.
- The BAFTA Scotland & SDS Creative Careers Close Up Series featured Factual Editing with Bill Gill at Inverness as part of Xpo North, particularly his work on BBC Highlands: Scotland's Wild Heart. This is a ten part seminar programme aimed at recent graduates to give them insight into the career pathways and challenges featuring significant practitioners across film, TV, digital and games and is taking place across Scotland. A key component is that some of the sessions are recorded and posted on the BAFTA Scotland portal for free view.
- Developing proposals for MY WOW Live to extend programme of Digital Studio activity to include Xpo North 2017 & HIE Creative Industries Networks.

Early Learning and Childcare

- SDS's Skills Planning Team is coordinating the development and delivery of a Skills Investment Plan (SIP) for the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) sector in collaboration with key partners to:
 - Clearly articulate a statement of skills needs facing the sector
 - Identify the skills priorities that support the sector to achieve its goals
 - Develop a framework for better alignment of skills supply with industry articulated demand through the action plan
 - Have a national and strategic focus
- The SIP activity will include an examination of the skills evidence base for the ELC sector and will include consultation with a range of national and regional

employers/industry/associations and key stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of skills issues, key skills gaps and shortages facing the sector.

- The SIP is expected to be published in 2017 and will set out the skills challenges facing the sector and include a three year action plan. Inverness based Care and Learning Alliance (CALA) have been invited to be part of the SIP Steering Group. CALA is the largest third sector early learning and childcare organisation serving Highland and Moray.

Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG)

Our CIAG service has changed markedly since 2008, drawing on international best practice, customer insight and service design principles. The Career Management Skills (CMS) Framework and Career Education Standard (CES) have also influenced the redesign and expansion of our service in schools over this time. Our offer to school pupils has been transformed from a service that was provided to all, irrespective of need and predominantly delivered to leavers, to one that now targets service intensity according to individual needs.

For the 2016/17 academic year, for the first time we are extending our digital offer into primary schools, with pupils as early as P5 being supported to think about their future career choices through the provision of digital tools and co-designed teacher resources. We now introduce young people to face-to-face CIAG support at the transition point from primary to secondary school, as well as providing specific support for pupils making crucial subject choices in S2 or S3, and their parents/carers. We have extended our targeted coaching support to pupils in S3 to ensure those who need the most support receive it at the right time. This is in addition to our continued targeted support available to pupils in the senior phase of school (S4-S6) as they prepare to transition into further learning or employment.

Post-school CIAG services are provided from the customer-facing SDS centres and community venues located across the Highlands & Islands. A presence in all local authority areas allows us to reach key customer groups, helping them to access our services and build on their skills to manage their career. Support is delivered online, by telephone and face-to-face, and includes targeted support for those who need it most; with particular emphasis on unemployed 15-19 year olds, those with additional support needs and care experienced young people.

16+ Data Hub and Participation Measure

On the supply side, we have worked with partners to strengthen intelligence on young people's destinations and career aspirations. The 16+ Data Hub (Figure 5) is an innovative solution reflecting the requirement for data sharing contained in the Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013.

Data from all regional colleges, all Local Authorities (including schools), SFC, the Student Awards Agency Scotland and the Department for Work and Pensions is imported through a secure gateway and held in a shared data set so that reports based on combined intelligence can be compiled. The combined data set allows us to track the destinations of school leavers, through a process which combines regular data input from partners, with direct input by our staff following contact with young people. Previously known as the School Leaver Destination Return or SLDR, this follow-up process is now undertaken regularly throughout the year, ensuring up to date intelligence on the destinations of our school leavers.

The data is also used to produce the annual Participation Measure, introduced by SDS in 2015, to report on the learning, training or work status of all 16-19 year olds in Scotland. This measure provides a wider picture of young people's activity than the traditional school-leaver destinations, and is to become a key policy outcome measure in Scotland Performs in 2016.

Participation Measure 2016 for the Highlands and Islands present a positive picture overall on young people participating in education, skills and training.

Local Authority	Total 16-19 yr cohort	*%Participation*	**%Non – Participation	***Unconfirmed status
Scotland	222,580	90.4%	4.0%	5.6%
Argyll & Bute	3,624	94.2%	3.1%	2.7%
Eilean Siar	1,136	95.8%	1.7%	2.6%
Highland	10,449	93.4%	2.3%	4.3%
Moray	4,236	91.0%	3.6%	5.4%
North Ayrshire	6,193	89.9%	3.1%	7.1%
Orkney	929	94.1%	2.4%	3.6%
Shetland	1,116	97.4%	1.6%	1.0%

***Participation** – in secondary or tertiary education, FE/HE, employed (inc MAs) & training

****Non- participation** – unemployed and seeking employment, economically inactive and unemployed not seeking

*****Unconfirmed** – no status information available. The majority are aged 19 yrs and may be in employment but at present HMRC does not share information with the Datahub

DYW Regional Groups Update

Overview

In line with recommendations from the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, Scottish Government and SDS is working with the 7 regional DYW groups within the Highlands and Islands. The focus of these employer-led groups is to support closer relationships between employers and education, linking learning to the world of work, and encouraging employers to recruit more young people.

Inverness & Central Highland, North Highland, West Highland, Moray and Ayrshire (covering North Ayrshire) are all established and have their local chamber of commerce as a lead partner. They worked with employers and local partners to develop bids which included individual key performance indicators which were agreed with the Scottish Government. The groups all have similar KPIs relating to increasing MA recruitment, promoting liYP, School / college partnerships, work experience, improving positive destinations and a range of targeted interventions aimed at parents, teachers and employers. The approved regional group proposals by Scottish Government can be accessed by the following links:

[North Highland proposal \[PDF, 1583.2 kb: 08 Oct 2015\]](#)

[Inverness and Central Highland Proposal \[PDF, 1213.6 kb: 27 May 2016\]](#)

[West Highland Proposal \[PDF, 727.6 kb: 27 May 2016\]](#)

[Moray Proposal \[PDF, 613.4 kb: 01 Mar 2016\]](#)

[Ayrshire's Proposal \[PDF, 8669.0 kb: 08 Oct 2015\]](#)

Future Developments

Argyll & Bute, Shetland, Orkney and the Western Isles DYW groups are at varying stages of development with proposals to be submitted to the Scottish Government and DYW National Board. The absence of a local Chamber of Commerce or any lead employer partner (for example FSB presence or sizeable membership) has impacted on private sector leadership on DYW activity. Local authorities have actively taking the lead in identifying public sector partners and working to increase their understanding of DYW. Work is currently underway in the development of KPIs and securing long term ownership of Regional DYW activity.

Chairs for these groups are being identified from the private sector but ongoing employer buy in will have to be monitored and supported by partners. With Regional DYW groups all at different stages it is important that learning is shared between groups. The 3 groups within the Highland Council Region are already all working well together and SDS is encouraging collaboration and sharing of best practice between all DYW groups in the Highlands and Islands.

To support the regional groups that are still under development, a meeting was called by the Scottish Government to discuss the development of DYW regional groups in rural areas in August. This meeting was attended by Local Authorities, SDS, DYW National Group Members, HIE, Scottish Chambers of Commerce Federation of Small Businesses and UHI, It was agreed that the next steps would be further individual discussions with each of the regions to cover the following:

- Vision: Further clarification from each area on the vision they have for young people.
Building on employer groups that in place to consider if they are suitable?
- Identifying the challenges to get the Regional Group established and operational.
- Private Sector Leadership – The groups need a commitment from SG that in order to get the groups going the bid can be Public Sector led, with an agreed timescale of responsibility being transferred to Private Sector Leadership.

Conversations are ongoing with Argyll & Bute, Shetland, Orkney and the Western Isles with the aim of all groups being approved this year:

Shetland - a Developing Young Workforce Regional Group has been established at local level, comprising representatives from local employers, employer bodies, local authority, Skills Development Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Third Sector and social enterprise.

The DYW Group recognises that Shetland has a very high percentage of young people moving from school and college into the workplace (39%) but appreciates that more has to be done, both in meeting employers' needs, but also more specifically in meeting the needs of some of the more vulnerable young people.

The Group plans to submit their bid for funding to the National Developing Young Workforce Group in early December, with these objectives being central to that bid.

Shetland DYW Group will also oversee the continuation and expansion of the very successful Shetland Learning Partnership. Two Foundation Apprenticeships were offered for the second year to those young people in Secondary 5 – Engineering, and Health and Care with a third Foundation Apprenticeship also on offer in the Built Environment. These

opportunities are delivered through both the Shetland College and the NAFC Marine Centre – evidence of the strong partnership working which exists, and which is necessary, in Shetland.

Argyll and Bute - The Argyll and Bute Council DYW Regional Bid, a revised bid is to be submitted by the 31 October 2016 - Aileen Goodall, Opportunities for All, Education and Fraser Durie, Principal Argyll College UHI leading on this along with the private sector, in particular Jane MacLeod, Interim Chair. It is hoped that the formal presentation to the Scottish Government will take place on 6th December and will be approved.

Orkney – work to develop DYW and its business plan are being progressed through discussion with young people, parents, employers and key partners through the development of the Orkney Local Skills Plan

Western Isles – bid is currently being written. The employer base is disparate across the island communities but it is hoped that an emphasis on enterprise and the mixed economy will be supported through DYW activity. The local authorities are planning an Employer event in November with around 100 businesses invited and keen to capitalise on digital platforms to address issues of scale and distance in supporting employer engagement with schools

SDS offer to support DYW

SDS has a secondee now working with the Scottish Government on DYW Regional Groups and have committed to having a single contact for each regional group. SDS are also providing a consistent release of data to all groups and have provided groups with a high level summary of MA starts region as well as details on individual employers who have recruited MAs at Level 3 and above. In the Highland area, SDS has disaggregated data to postcodes that are aligned to the three DYW groups to allow for more localised in depth and accurate analysis that will aid targeting and monitoring of outcomes and impact. New data on School Leaver destination and participation measures were provided to groups to help identify young people who have dropped out of a destination and require support towards a new opportunity

SDS is also working to align its products and national campaigns and provide further intelligence to groups from National Surveys, Skills Investment Plans and Regional Skills Assessments. We are also looking at enhancing existing online platforms to support groups engage with employers, schools and young people. SDS's worked with regional groups on developing and implementing a Highland & Islands Modern Apprenticeship Expansion Plan. Many groups have KPIs for increasing the number of MA's as well as targets for tackling gender inequality as these have been explored further against the available evidence base and are inform any agreed plans.

Marketplace project

The Commission into Developing the Young Workforce highlighted the need to improve the quality of experience and level of engagement between the business world and education. Edinburgh, Midlothian and East Lothian DYW Regional Group and Skills Development Scotland determined that there could be mutual gain in working together to find a solution that works nationally and locally by leveraging the existing SDS national digital solution. The Marketplace provides educators and students with a database of career education and

insight opportunities offered by local employers, such as in-school activities, work placements and on-site visits to companies. These activities aim to improve the employability skills of young people.

This is currently being piloted in Edinburgh, Midlothian and East Lothian and will be offered to other regional groups, starting in November. Marketplace can be accessed via [Our Skillsforce](#).

Highlands & Islands Enterprise

Since the last formal update to CoHI in October 2015, HIEs activity against the priorities of the Highlands & Islands Regional Skills Investment Plan is detailed as follows. For HIE, our interest in the youth and skills agenda centres on addressing demographic imbalances, developing and retaining our young people to become economically active and be able as a region to promise an education and skills system that can and will satisfy the labour needs of business and social enterprises to support growth across all sectors and subjects now and in the future.

Our priorities to strategically and operationally link our proactive attention towards skills development both within HIE and alongside our partners include;

- the continued and consistent promotion and positioning of the youth employment agenda with and amongst our partners and clients to create the conditions for a region for young people
- influencing the evidence base, strategy development and planning system
- producing a Talent Strategy for the region
- ensuring our account management system is fully integrated and aligned with skills
- pick up on the various sectoral actions and engagement with the National SIPs
- assist in the development of Workplace Innovation and what it means for HIE and our client base businesses
- work alongside our social enterprise colleagues to assess community capacity building needs
- Improving the presence, relevance, capacity and provision of UHI
- Growing further and higher education student numbers in the region
- The creation and impact of the Science Skills Academy around STEM/D
- Digital – teaching, learning, skills provision

Our Progress

Evidence Base

The 2016/17 RSAs are now in development and HIE is part of both the National and Highland Steering groups. We have contributed £15K towards a £190K National programme alongside other public partners to ensure we have a say in how the evidence base continues to improve. Through intelligence gained from interacting with the HIE Area teams and established DYW groups, we are now considering the possibility of extending the H&Is RSAs beyond LA level, to include sub LA levels where specific areas in the region are challenged

by geography and a disperse population for example Caithness and Sutherland and Argyll & Bute.

The evidence base is not contained to solely the RSAs. Our involvement in the Sectors SIPs and other HIE research has also developed and we have started to investigate how we can extract and record pertinent information on labour market needs, skills shortages and equal opportunities to tie back in to the DYW process.

Our continued position within the RSIP Programme Board keeps us informed on the development of school and college education. In turn, information from HIE on industry and sector observations and ambitions closes this strategic circle. Any proposed refresh of actions in the regional plan will be built from information taken and supported by the RSA and the Highlands and Islands Skills Investment Plan Evidence Advisory group and our intention is to be able to support that process by having developed HIEs account managed client data in skills and workforce development to feed into context and actions.

HIE Key Account Management, Sectors and Subjects

We have developed our thinking in how we influence the account management proposition to include:

- Integration of skills and workforce development (regional/national agenda) in account management
- How to get the youth and wider skills message out
- How can the jobs we help create support youth employment
- How we can use AM's intel
- How we get the AM intelligence to inform the Regional Skills Assessment evidence base - SE has historically provided top level AM information around numbers of business in AM, across sectors and within their respective LA areas. We have now provided the same information to create the H&Is first year base line and balance the national position
- How can our approach to youth employment and DYW support Inclusive Growth

Working with the Regional Head of Client Management we will be presenting a joint paper to our Leadership Team at an appropriate juncture recommending a direction of travel for the inclusion and treatment of youth skills and workforce development, our clients' young person readiness and the encouragement of the participation of HIE KAM business in DYW local groups.

We continue to create a collaborate approach to skills and sectors within HIE, providing a consistent link with SDS. In addition to specific sectors we are also working on STEM, Digital and the Manufacturing Action Plan. As with AM, the HIE sector data, intelligence and ambition will be fed back into the RSA and RSIP to provide regional context.

Digital

HIE continues to be closely involved in the Digital Scotland Business Excellence Partnership (DSBEP) skills group which is charged with delivering the actions of the ICT and Digital Technologies. HIE's Head of Finance and Business Services leads on this aspect of our

work. A number of DSBEF projects are now active nationally and regionally. Digital World the marketing vehicle for communicating all things digital to young people is now active. Regional information and case studies are included.

- Codeclan (Digital Skills Academy) - HIE's Head of FBS is working with colleagues to evidence demand and explore ways of attracting a version of the Codeclan model to the area.
- Developing is the Digital Xtra Fund - to encourage more young people to access digital skills activities especially in areas like H&I where there are few if any existing activities.
- Existing DSBEF projects led by Education Scotland currently being delivered in Highland Council area continue to be delivered and this area will also be included in a further Digital Schools project currently being developed.
- One strand of DSBEF's work involves researching the gender imbalance which currently exists throughout the digital sector. HIE's Equalities Manager has represented HIE on this workstream and will continue to be involved in the project design and delivery stage.

Science Skills Academy

The Science Skills Academy is shaping up and being accelerated with the aid of the City-Region Deal funding. In terms of the Youth/Skills agenda, the SSA will support it by increasing the number of young people that are interested in, and have skills in, science and digital technology, which will directly impact on our key sectors, particularly life sciences, energy and creative industries. The way in which the activity is co-ordinated and the facilities (Centres, Hubs) are equipped and managed is now being considered in the developing business plan, and will be partly determined by the degree of industrial support we can attract. By way of an update, here are the key activities associated with the City-Region Deal funding which is effectively a large scale pilot initiative for the SSA:

- STEM modules
- Primary Teacher Development
- Senior phase (S5/6) practical workshops
- Extra-curricular activity
- Facilitation, coordination and catalysis
- Attracting investment
- Baseline data and evaluation

Inclusive Growth

The youth and skills agenda is included in internal discussions and emerging propositions around workplace innovation and equalities and further collaborative papers will be presented on these subjects in due course.

Talent Attraction

We have progressed with our key task within the RSIP to lead on Talent Attraction and we are now in the process of creating a Highlands & Islands Talent Attraction Strategy and

Action Plan, with the RSIP Programme Board partners working alongside us. We have commissioned EKOS Ltd to help us do this.

This piece of work will produce a complete picture, profile and proposition for the whole of the region, across all public sector partners and will include all aspects of the enablers and investment needs to support the Highlands & Islands being a Region for Young People.

With the agreement and endorsement from SDS, the LAs, Education partners and the intelligence given to us through our Young People and the Highlands and Islands; Attitudes and Aspirations research workshop, we will be addressing;

- An understanding of talent attraction cycle; attracting, developing, retaining.
- An understanding of the different types of talent, their drivers and expectations of education (at all levels), the workplace, location and what makes them mobile. What are the pull and push factors that could affect out-migration and equally draw new people to our region.
- A regional Talent Attraction plan (which also allows for localised needs and actions) including;
 - Talent Attraction
 - Talent Reception. Integration and Reputation
 - Talent Retention
- An understanding that skilled mobile individuals are looking for centres of excellence and the presence of other talented people, international environments, inter-cultural experiences and globally competitive career opportunities.
- Condition based attraction, H&Is USPs
- Building on locally based plans that collectively lead to a regional response capable of fitting in to a national response
- Challenges and opportunities matched to the themes of the Highlands & Islands Regional Skills Investment Plan.

Looking at education and skills development, developing Scotland's young workforce and the retention of young people; the connections between talent attraction and other key areas of strategic importance for e.g.; student residences, student population, work-based learning, developing enablers within the sector (e.g. H&I Science Skills Academy, H&I Care Academy), UHI (as a credible university of choice) and the need to look closer at Higher and Further Education provision and the opportunities post degree, will also be covered within this strategy and plan.

The regional talent attraction plan will be flexible to allow the balancing of micro and macroeconomics and the ability to respond to predicted and unpredicted rises in unemployment or sectoral opportunities at any given time at a local authority/regional level.

This work is currently in development with expected completion by the 30th November 2016.

The RSIP Programme Board will agree the final draft and HIEs role thereafter will be to progress key regional development actions and localised Talent Attraction plans with partners and within our own agency for example, Area Teams, Inward Investment and Key Sectors.

University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI)

Since the last formal update to CoHI in October 2015, UHI has continued to develop its further and higher education curriculum and research activity, addressing its key strategic themes (from its Strategic Plan 2015-2020) which link strategically and operationally with skills development needs across the Highlands and Islands region (as outlined in the Highlands and Islands Regional Skills Investment Plan) and with the key priorities of our partners.

A key focus within the Regional Skills Investment Plan is Talent Attraction to the Highlands and Islands, and the university's progress on the objectives of its key strategic themes should align with those of the Highlands and Islands Talent Attraction Strategy and Action Plan, currently being progressed by HIE. Through the ongoing development and effective implementation of these objectives and themes, the university will be a key enabler, working alongside its regional partners in terms of:

- Talent Attraction
- Talent Reception, Integration and Reputation
- Talent Retention

The university's priorities for the year ahead again relate to its key strategic themes, and in summary these are:

Students

- Work with all marketing teams across the partnership to ensure that marketing is effective and coordinated for undergraduate and taught postgraduate provision to ensure complete marketing of the partnership offer including school recruitment activities
- Work with schools within the Highlands and Islands region to raise expectation, achievement and progression to higher levels of education and training, including curriculum in schools (senior phase) and schools' recruitment activities, including more collective working with Directors of Education and Head Teachers
- Further develop more scalable models of delivery including distance learning
- Complete analyses of projected student demographics and future learner demand/expectation, including providing market intelligence for agreed priority areas
- Further develop the Further Education Curriculum Development plan
- Liaise with SDS to ensure the implementation of the Wood Commission/Developing the Young Workforce proposals by working in a tripartite relationship with industry and schools to further develop Foundation, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships via the university's work-based learning hub
- Deliver to first UHI cohort in 2017/18 following transfer of pre-nurse registration contract for Highlands and Western Isles from University of Stirling
- Development of the School of Health
- Complete growth strategy and action plans for further and higher education student number targets specifically including areas of sustainable undergraduate development (including health/allied health); revitalised post graduate taught curriculum; online/distance provision to meet specific recruitment targets
- Implement mechanisms to share further education curriculum development across academic partners as identified in 2015/16 review
- Secure existing workstreams and further develop activity to co-ordinate cross partner VC timetabling service

- Ensure that all students are adequately supported in their preparation for employment or further study, including refreshing and embedding graduate/student skills in curriculum planning and review

Student Experience

- Ensure that student feedback, and actions taken, arising from the National Student Survey and other quality mechanisms is gathered, reviewed and disseminated appropriately
- Implement the new National Survey of Student Satisfaction and Engagement for further education students in colleges across the partnership
- Plan and agree positive interventions to encourage higher student recruitment in both further and higher education from SIMD and fragile areas and areas of rural deprivation
- Enhance reporting, analysis and action planning processes around student protected characteristics
- Continue to expand the availability of the online student counselling service
- Review further education approaches to academic and pastoral guidance

Employer and Community Engagement and Benefit

- Develop a regional staff development programme focussed on external stakeholder engagement, including a regional 'back to industry' programme of engagement for academic staff where appropriate
- Implement the new national SFC Further Education Destination Survey in relevant colleges across the partnership
- Develop a regional report on existing participation in Community Planning Partnership mechanisms across the partnership identifying good practice and obstacles to effective engagement

Focussed Research

- Increase engagement with national and international research partners to enhance opportunities for funding and publication by developing the professoriate as a leadership body across the partnership
- Enhance cross-partner co-operation across the 'research clusters', established in 2015/16, including grant opportunity monitoring, application and optimisation of publication strategies
- Improve rate of recorded publication at levels appropriate for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2019/20, compatible with a 25% increase in submission size and an enhanced quality profile
- Develop research exchange between university researchers and employees in public or voluntary sector
- Develop plans for the best use of the University Innovation Fund which replaces Knowledge Exchange Grant and Knowledge Transfer Grant from 2016/17

Enterprise

- Develop a collective understanding of employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship skills through the development of staff development materials

- Produce a regional report on enterprise and entrepreneurship provision across the region, identifying good practice and obstacles to development
- Develop cross-partnership system for formulating initial concept and business cases

Internationalisation

- Embed internationalisation in curriculum planning and delivery
- Review existing portfolio of programmes suitable for international delivery and develop new curriculum targeted at international student recruitment
- Implement approved university-wide international strategy
- Promote the benefits of internationalisation to both staff and students
- Assess the impact of the EU referendum result on our ability to develop key EU partners for the delivery of priority transnational activities and maintain contacts with European stakeholders
- Develop an inclusive international university marketing plan
- Ensure staff have access to and attend appropriate CPD opportunities to ensure up to date with compliance requirements
- Ensure compliance with external regulation and expectation (specifically academic quality and student welfare) in line with Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Guidance
- Further develop an inclusive international strand within the university curriculum and research development plans (linked to curriculum growth strategy; identifying curriculum for promotion outside the region and developing programmes for international delivery and student recruitment)

Recognition, Reputation and Brand

- Build on the now established university brand by developing marketing campaigns and creative concepts to better reflect our stage of development and our future aspirations

Infrastructure

- Complete phase 2 of the university's student residences - new phase 1 student residences operational for 2016/17 at Inverness College UHI and West Highland College UHI - the longer term plan will see the development of such residences at each partner college, which in turn is and will continue to help develop a campus lifestyle and enhance the overall student experience and attract more learners from the region and beyond
- Progress estates strategy
- Implement phase 2 of the phones project including progressing collective purchase of calls and lines and complete the migration to the new voice mail platform
- Roll out new wide area network and complete LAN investment

People

- Ensure we collectively attract and retain talented staff
- Enable a modern and dynamic workforce through effective and sustainable processes
- Ensure staff have access to and attend appropriate CPD opportunities

(Specific details of new curriculum development, industry-led provision, DYW approaches, STEM activity and international links are provided in the attached Appendices).

Scottish Funding Council

Theme One - Our investment in skills must meet the needs of employers

Use the Highlands and Islands Regional Outcome Agreement to align provision with employer demand using the evidence base in the SIP.

In Academic Year 2015/16 SFC invested £80.7m in HE and FE and an additional £2.9m for research to UHI which is monitored and negotiated through the outcome agreement to identify the impact of the funding within the region. SFC's Outcome Agreement (OA) process is intended to support and complement an institution's own strategic ambitions in response to Scottish Government priorities. The OA details the institutions baseline position, current progress and future ambitions against Government priorities and SFC utilises these to support and evidence institutions progress against national measures. Within the OA institutions are asked to:

- Ensure that colleges use the information from Skill Investment Plans (SIPs) and Regional Skills Assessments (RSA's) as well as their own engagements with local employers to assess the need for provision and map existing provision.
- Provide detail of the level and scope of employer engagement within curriculum areas and outline how this engagement impacts on student experience and employability.
- Adjust and adapt their curriculum in response to evidence of current and future skills needs of employers and the economy, particularly those of priority sectors (e.g. ICT/digital and low carbon sectors)
- Evidence how the institution meets the needs of current and future skills requirements of employers as outlined in the Sector Skills Investment Plans, other available labour market information, and through their partnerships with employers.
- Institutions should detail the level and extent of employer engagement within curriculum areas and outline how this engagement impacts on student experience and employability.

We are now in a new phase of Outcome Agreements and UHI are working with the Outcome Agreement Manager (OAM) to develop an OA for 2017 – 2020. As part of the development SFC would like to evidence how funding is utilised at local sub regional level and the impact that funding has within the region.

In addition SFC has provided an additional 2500 funded student places over the period 2012 – 2016 linked to employer demand outlined in the SIP. This has enabled UHI to respond to both student and employer demand by refocusing and extending the academic portfolio in key areas. There is broad synergy regarding the key sector priorities for development between the Scottish Government, SFC, SDS and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, these priorities will continue to be used by the university to identify areas for development.

This has supported new curriculum development and alignment in Energy / Engineering, Life Sciences, Creative Industries, Sustainable Tourism, Financial and Business Services, and Health.

Theme Three - A region for young people

Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce

The Highland and Island Region delivered nine Foundation Apprenticeships programmes in four of the regional colleges in 2015/16 utilising core funds from SFC for delivery and £1.3m of wrap around funding from SDS. The University is now leading a Regional Hub for work based learning and the use of core funds to deliver this programme is part of the OA process. In addition SFC provided £105k to the region to support the implementation of FA's and develop a STEM strategy for the region. (For further information on STEM activity, see the Appendix item about UHI activity in this area.)

Increase the pool of available talent by ensuring an attractive range of vocational, further and higher education options to encourage young people to remain in the region.

SFC has provided an additional 2500 funded student places over the period 2012 – 2016 has enabled UHI to respond to student and employer demand by extending its academic portfolio. New courses introduced for AY 2015/16 included Joint masters in aquaculture, environment and society; Range of PDAs related to the health and social care sectors; BA(Hons) Interactive Media; HND Technical Theatre; BA (Hons) Marine and Coastal Tourism; BA (Hons) Professional Golf; BSc (Hons) Adventure Performance and Coaching. In addition SFC facilitated the transfer of nursing places from the University of Stirling to UHI.

SFC also invested in new college facilities to provide opportunities for young people to study in the region including £102m over 25 years for Inverness College; & £2.2m for Phase 1 of SMO's Kilbeg campus. SFC also provided additional funding to North Highland College for remoteness to ensure that classes in various curriculum areas are sustainable. Additional investment in West Highland College linking curriculum to the skills needs of the area, ensures young people can study locally and progress to employment.

Theme Four - People Attraction and Place Attractiveness

Inverness Campus opened May 2015 and new Inverness College UHI building operational from August 2015. The new environment marks a step change in student experience in Inverness and the wider region, with state of the art, modern, tertiary facilities available to students across many disciplines and abilities.

This will be the first step in a continuous process of investment and enhancement at the Campus, with new research facilities due to be completed later in 2015 serving both UHI and SRUC, to be followed by enhanced sports & leisure facilities over time.

SFC funded the Student Representation Project through Strategic Funds to design and implement a new framework for student representation across the UHI academic partnership. The output from the project was the formation of the Highland and Island Student Association (HISA) which commenced operation in academic year 2015 /16.

SCDI - H&I SIP Progress report for CoHI

Over the period of SCDI's participation on the H&I SIP Board we have participated in both the Evidence Advisory Group and the Talent Attraction Group in order to feed in to these work streams. Both of these work streams are key if we are to understand what and where skills are required and to develop a strategy for how we ensure that the right talent is nurtured or attracted into an area to meet skills needs.

As an organisation with member businesses and organisations spanning the whole region, our involvement has been useful in feeding in some of the challenges employers have, but also helping employers to understand the steps that are being taken to support them in gaining the skilled staff they need to grow and improve their productivity.

In December 2015 SCDI published *From fragile to agile: A blueprint for growth and prosperity*, highlighting policy priorities, much of which aligned with the Scottish Government's own priorities, and highlighted the key challenges facing the economy and the need to tackle low productivity, improve innovation, and support more internationalisation.

Through SCDI's involvement in the SIP Board, and from discussions with businesses in every part of the region, there continues to be a challenge and disconnect between the problems of access to labour and the need to improve productivity and address the low pay nature of many roles in the region. SCDI hope that through our involvement on the Board and other groupings we will have continued dialogue to look at how we overcome those challenges.

In addition to H&I SIP Board SCDI sit on the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal Programme Board, The Inverness and Central Highland DYW Board, the Highland and Cairngorms Economic Forums, and the Moray Economic Partnership.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig -H&I SIP Progress Report Update

Bord na Gàidhlig is currently involved in preparing the third iteration of the National Gaelic Language Plan, which will run from 2017-22. Being part of the Skills Investment Panel for the Highlands and Islands has been extremely positive and useful as part of this process.

In line with our partners on the Highland and Islands Skills Investment Plan (H&ISIP) Programme Board, Bòrd na Gàidhlig believes that the focus of the H&I SIP should be to attract and retain young people and meet the skills needs of employers. As home to approximately 50% of all Gaelic speakers and all of the communities where more than 20% of people speak Gaelic, the economic and social vitality of the Highlands and Islands is vital to the growth of Gaelic.

Further work is undoubtedly needed to fill some gaps in our knowledge of the Gaelic labour market in its widest sense, but we do have access to some key facts which give us an insight as to where efforts should be focussed in the medium to long term. Bord na Gaidhlig welcome the proposed inclusion of Gaelic Provision data from Scottish Funding Council (SFC) in the 2016 Regional Skills Assessment and the opportunity to work with the H&I SIP Evidence Advisory Group to develop a proposal with SDS, SFC and Bord na Gaidhlig, in order to scope the work required for resourcing evidence relating to demand for Gaelic language skills. This will take into account work undertaken through Economy

Workshop as part of the Gaelic Gathering in Argyll and Bute and will explore engagement with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, MG Alba and other key Gaelic agencies.

The economic and social value of Gaelic as a unique asset for Scotland was the focus of a pioneering study, published in 2014, entitled 'Ar Stòras Gàidhlig'. The primary conclusion of the study – that the potential economic value of Gaelic as an asset to the Scottish economy could be in the range of £82m to £149m a year – has highlighted a significant, and as yet only partially realised, potential that the language offers to the economic and social wellbeing of communities and of the nation as a whole. The study pointed to sectors including creative industries, heritage, education/learning, community, tourism and food and drink as key sectors with potential to grow Gaelic as an asset.

Gaelic broadcasting has also been shown to have a significant economic impact, both nationally and locally. In television alone, a study of MG ALBA's activities in 2014-15 showed that 290 FTE jobs, £8.4m of employee income and around £12.5m of GVA (Gross Value Added) were generated across the country, the majority from television production contracts. The impact in the more economically challenged islands was even more significant at 100 FTE jobs, £2.6m income and over £3.4m GVA.

Future needs

Our ambition is that the skills and enterprise sector across the region are aligned to ensure that we are creating enough skilled Gaelic workers to meet the needs of employers, but also to grow the use of Gaelic across the economy and in support of community sustainability.

Our work to date on developing the National Gaelic Language Plan 2017-22 has identified the following key needs within the Gaelic employment market across the Highlands and Islands and in support of the Highlands & Islands Skills Investment Plan:-

1. Early Years

The proposed expansion of early years provision from 600 to 1,040 hours for all 3 year olds by 2020 creates excellent opportunities for more Gaelic speaking staff and to improve the language skills of young people. Discussions are already underway with partners – training providers, private operators and public authorities - to progress actions to achieve this. It is important that schools, colleges and universities are prepared to meet this challenge in the future, with the needs of the Gaelic community embedded from the outset.

2. Schools

There is evidence that the demand for Gaelic education across Scotland will continue to grow, with the Gaelic provisions of the 2016 Education Act set to accelerate this further. Growth in the overall number of Gaelic speaking school staff at primary and secondary levels – teachers, classroom assistants and administrators - will be needed to match the demand. Thought will also be needed with regards the training of more specialists to work across the sector e.g. additional support needs.

A great deal of work has been done in recent years to extend the routes into Gaelic teaching, particularly allowing more people to train within their local communities and

through teaching Gaelic skills to existing teachers. Other innovative approaches are being discussed with training providers to further extend the range of options.

Schools are also significant in signposting opportunities for Gaelic speaking pupils beyond this stage of their lives. Initiatives such as My World of Work and Developing the Young Workforce need to be linked to opportunities within the Gaelic economy and this will be very important for the language. A good example of how this can work is the Crofting Connections programme which has highlighted opportunities for young people to access food and drink production, tourism and renewable energy through crofting.

3. Modern Apprenticeships

The proposed expansion in the number of modern apprenticeships in Scotland to 30,000 by 2020 offers a fantastic opportunity for Gaelic in two ways. Firstly to expand the availability of modern apprenticeships through the medium of Gaelic to support the language generally and secondly, to provide bespoke pathways into areas in need of more Gaelic staff e.g. within public authorities in support of their Gaelic Language Plans or for specialised roles such as translating and proof reading. This second aspect could help significantly with resolving “succession planning” gaps and more work is required by Bòrd na Gàidhlig and our partners to find out in more detail where these will exist.

4. Further and Higher Education

The Highlands and Islands has always been a significant exporter of young people to further and higher education outwith the area. The University of the Highlands and Islands has gone a long way to address this historic trend and is retaining and attracting young people in the area. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and Lews Castle College has been very successful in this regard, with Gaelic as a significant focus.

Not all of the ambitions of every young person will be satisfied within the region, but every effort should be done to ensure that the courses on offer match the needs of the local economy in the recognition that high quality Gaelic posts exist for graduates. All that can be done, should be done to ensure that students stay locally to train, or are attracted back to further their careers.

5. Social factors

It is clear that efforts to grow Gaelic in the Highlands and Islands must be embedded on a strong economic and social foundation. In order to attract and retain young people a number of key social factors have to accompany the skills and employment agenda; affordable housing available in support of economic opportunities, access to high speed broadband, high quality and affordable child care, access to schools and health care and access to reliable and affordable transport. The mix of these factors, along with access to jobs will be the key to attracting and retaining young people and will therefore require a partnership approach across agencies.

Case Studies

Argyll College UHI: Luisa West, NC Agriculture 2015-16 - FE Work Placement Case Study

Campbeltown student Luisa West gained lots of confidence from her work experience at Rhoin Farm in the Mull of Kintyre during her NC Agriculture studies. As the only girl in the class, Louisa admits that at first she allowed the boys to take the lead when tackling practical tasks. It didn't take long though, before her common sense approach came through and she began competing against the lads

Tutor Catherine Ralston commented 'The male students soon realised that although not physically as strong, Louisa could outshine them time and time again.'

Louisa spent one day in college learning about agricultural theory and a day and a half on the farm where she learned about arable and livestock farming. Luisa excelled herself at lambing time where she assisted in delivery and kept a keen eye on new-born lambs and their mothers.

'I've always loved animals and the work placement part of this course was really fantastic – working on the farm, being out in all conditions gave me a wonderful insight into agricultural life. It was hard work but it helped me gain confidence in myself.'

Inverness College UHI: Civil Engineering Foundation Apprenticeship 2nd Year Student - Caroline and Steven

Caroline and Steven are in the second year of the Foundation Apprenticeship in Civil Engineering at Inverness College UHI. The pupils undertake a mixture of theoretical and site based learning and completed a two-week period of work experience over the summer holidays with Mott MacDonald and Global Infrastructure.

This year the group are going to be working on an exciting live land based engineering project in collaboration with Inverness College UHI Scottish School of Forestry, based on the outskirts of Inverness. This will be an opportunity for the pupils to work collaboratively with our specialist Forestry team.

Caroline told us "I was looking for something 'Techy' before I came on to the Foundation Apprenticeship course. My Guidance teacher suggested it to me and I wasn't quite sure what to expect but I gave it a try. We're in our second year and I've really enjoyed the mixture of being in the classroom and working outdoors.

Looking forward I now have clearer ideas of what I want to do and the choices I need to make. I'm deciding between Construction Management and Civil Engineering and I've already made my University choices with UHI being one of them, depending on which career option I go with. I'm also writing letters to employers to widen my options"

Classroom work is varied and comprehensively fast paced, using a mixture of lecturing and visual examples to bring the sessions to life for the senior phase learners, which are then consolidated with on site and practical learning. The programmes include all aspects of Civil Engineering including construction and design and understanding climate change and its impact on the industry and our amenities. The projects are fun and interesting to study or

participate in such as the infrastructure developments in the A9 duelling, the A96 Duelling for the Inverness West Link road, renewable energy hydro and wind and investment in improving the Highlands through the City Deal.

Our Lecturer, Carrie Higgins, explained “There’s a commonality to all the projects and case studies we undertake on the FA Civil Engineering course, and this is that the end products are for sustainable use”.

Inverness College UHI is committed to supporting and promoting the underpinning values of Foundation Apprenticeships and their direct relevance to the industry and the vision it gives young people to imagine themselves in the world of work.

Steven was also somewhat unsure of the journey he was undertaking when joining the Foundation Apprenticeship Civil Engineering programme saying “I also didn’t really know what to expect but I was interested in Engineering Science and my Guidance teacher suggested this as possible way forward. I’ve enjoyed it and I like all the activities but prefer the practical tasks to report writing”

Steven has had time to reflect on where this might take him and currently sees himself pursuing a Modern Apprenticeship when he leaves school saying “I want to get an apprenticeship after this but I also might like to take a year out before that to pursue some other activities including Hockey, which I play regularly, but I’ll decide on that later”

Some of Stevens motivation to pursue a Modern Apprenticeship may have been inspired by the success his fellow course member, William Watts, who has secured an apprenticeship with Morgan Sindall. William’s enthusiasm and determination shone out during his work placement and he was very quickly offered a Modern Apprentice position. William is now currently working out in the field and is returning to Inverness College in November to begin his first block of study as a Modern Apprentice. William was a keen ambassador for Foundation Apprenticeships and instantly recognised the value to himself and others of the opportunity to progress through to graduate level. Because of his commitment to his Foundation Apprenticeship and willingness to advocate the opportunity to others we asked William to feature on some of our Foundation Apprenticeships promotional material.

Inverness College UHI now offer the full family of apprenticeships for Civil Engineering , from Foundation Apprenticeships up to Graduate Level Apprenticeships enabling individuals to progress to the highest level of professional qualifications while in employment.

Orkney College UHI: Mark Shearer - MA Level 2: Hospitality Services - NHS Orkney Balfour Hospital

Born and brought up Kirkwall, Mark lives with his parents and older brother. A naturally quiet boy, Mark has always been a gentle person who cares about the feeling of others. Mark’s dad owns his own business but Mark knew from a young age that construction wasn’t for him and after helping a hospital patient to their car as a teenager, Mark began to think about care as a possible career option. Mark enjoyed school and did well in his exams, but it was only after being advised to take a care course at Orkney College during third and fourth year, and doing a work placement at NHS Orkney, that Mark started to think he wanted to be a hospital porter. In his spare time Mark is a keen darts player and as a child hoped one day he would be a professional player. This is a goal that Mark has not yet realised but he does play with a local team and in the singles league. Mark also has an interest in football and follows Celtic Football Club.

On leaving school Mark started at Orkney College on Stepping Stones in order to help improve his employability skills in the hope that this would lead to employment. Towards the end of his year at college some of the college staff got together and began to discuss the possibility of the college running a Modern Apprenticeship in Health Care Non-Clinical. Although it quickly became apparent this could not happen, an alternative was found in Hospitality Services. Following some negotiation with the Human Resources Dept. at NHS Orkney, Mark found himself being offered the opportunity to work full time at the Balfour Hospital, whilst studying a Modern Apprenticeship (MA) on day release at Orkney College. Mark was then on his way to becoming a hospital porter, a job he had wanted to do since Skills Development Scotland (SDS) staff first spoke to him at schools about doing his care course and getting the chance of a work placement at the hospital.

Mark is enjoying his MA and likes the fact that you attend college as well as being at your work. Mark feels that this really helps in his understanding of why things are done in a particular way. However, when challenged on his responses to questions, Mark did confess that he would prefer to be able to do his MA by being at his work all the time, but added that he still likes going back to work and putting into practice what he has learned in college. The MA in Hospitality Services means that Mark works on a two week rotation going between being a porter, kitchen assistant, switchboard operator, domestic and working in the laundry. Mark particularly likes this aspect of his MA, as it means he gets a lot of variety in his job so is never stuck doing the same things every day.

Mark would recommend MAs as they really give you an insight into the job that you do, whilst allowing you to see your learning in action when you are at work.

NAFC Marine Centre UHI: Prestigious Award for NAFC Apprentice

9 March 2016 - NAFC Marine Centre apprentice Martin Mladenov received a prestigious CARAS award at the LANTRA Modern Apprenticeship awards last week.

Martin is employed by Scottish Sea Farms Ltd. at their salmon farming sites near Burra Isle. Over the last couple of years he has completed both Level 2 and level 3 of the Modern Apprenticeship in Aquaculture through the NAFC Marine Centre.

The award, granted by the Council for Awards of Royal Agriculture Societies (CARAS), recognises distinguished achievement in agriculture and related industries (including aquaculture). The awards ceremony, in Dunblane, was organised by Lantra Scotland, the sector skills council for the land-based, aquaculture and environmental industries, to recognise the efforts of trainees, Modern Apprentices, students, pupils, teachers, tutors, training providers and schools involved in the rural sectors.

Martin's trainer at NAFC, Stuart Fitzsimmons, commended his achievement, commenting "Martin has shown outstanding commitment and enthusiasm throughout his Level 2 and Level 3 studies, and thoroughly deserves recognition for his efforts". Stuart also thanked Scottish Seafarms staff and his site Manager Robbie Coutts for their support for Martin's on-site training.

Martin's award follows outstanding feedback for NAFC's Aquaculture Modern Apprenticeship Programme from the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) which commended the Centre's "robust system of delivery, assessment and internal verification of their work-based awards through a highly qualified and dedicated team."

The Modern Apprenticeship programme (with financial support from Skills Development Scotland) is aimed at aquaculture husbandry staff and helps them to obtain qualifications

that are relevant to and recognised by the aquaculture industry in Shetland and Orkney. The programme, which started in 2013, recently passed a significant milestone when the number of students enrolled passed 100.

In response to the high demand for training from the aquaculture industry the NAFC Marine Centre is now delivering new courses in Fish Farm Containment; Fish Health; Biosecurity; and Water Quality Awareness. The Centre also plans to introduce a new Modern Apprenticeship at Level 4 in 2016/17, aimed at senior aquaculture staff and management. All these new courses will complement the existing Modern Apprenticeship in Aquaculture at Levels 2 and 3.

DYW Case Study – Daviot Group - Developing the Young Workforce award winners at the Highland Business Awards

Inverness-based civil engineering firm Daviot Group recently picked up the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) award at the Highland Business Awards in recognition of their tailored training and qualifications programmes, which are structured around each employee's personal goals.

This award was sponsored by all three regional DYW Groups established in the Highlands, Inverness & Central, North Highland and West Highland DYW. Daviot Group were selected overall winners from three excellent regional finalists who also included Dounreay Site Restoration Ltd (North Highland) and BSW Timber Ltd (West Highland).

Daviot Group has a number of young people and modern apprentices employed throughout its workforce ranging from working on the site, in the garage, HR, commercial, compliance and finance.

For Daviot, developing its own workforce through apprentices is a key ethos of the company driven by the owner and the senior management team. Paul Adam's director at Daviot said: "Young people are the future of our company, in five years' time we want our current successful young employees to be the ones who are supporting and developing the young workforce and continuing to drive the commitment to the young workforce. We want to become known as a company that young people want to work for and our young workforce will be the best example of attracting more young people."

"Daviot provides young people with opportunities to gain experience, to learn in a real life environment and provides the chance to develop learning through further education/qualifications."

Amongst those benefitting from the programme is twenty four year old Lewis Elder, an Inverness native who has been with Daviot Group since May 2015. Lewis was working towards his HNC in quantity surveying and grasped the opportunity to supplement his studies with in his chosen industry with Daviot Group after being given the opportunity to study towards a BSc in quantity surveying whilst working full-time with the company.

Day-to-day, Lewis enjoys a varied role. He is closely involved in tendering and estimating processes and the cost management of live construction projects. He has also dealt with historic contracts, taking the lead in negotiating final accounts and closing projects – a

position with a high degree of responsibility that in turn has helped build Lewis' confidence and abilities.

Speaking of his experience, Lewis said: "This opportunity has helped me carve out a career in construction – something I always set out to do. Daviot Group has given me the support and freedom to learn by practicing my skills as I study, offering the perfect blend of theoretical understanding and real experience."

Twenty one year old Megan Whitecross, who has been with the company since the beginning of 2016, is another young person benefitting from Daviot's approach. Her title of HR administrator encapsulates a broad range of duties, from the issuing of staff contracts and processing of holiday requests to liaising with recruitment agencies and conducting staff inductions.

Since joining Daviot Group, Megan has been enrolled in a number of professional development training courses and qualifications, all supported and funded by the company. She is currently studying toward a CIPD diploma in HR practice which she hopes to complete by next year. The qualification will build upon Megan's existing knowledge, having already completed the ACAS HR for Beginners course which immerses trainees with no previous experience in the world of HR.

Based on her own experience, Megan encourages employers to support young employees through formal qualifications. She said: "Putting employees through professional courses and providing on-the-job training helps employers develop an experienced, knowledgeable and loyal workforce. Daviot Group has helped me get back on track with my career goals and I am committed to improving my skills as a member of the team."

One of their fitters, Steven Reid, won the Apprentice Civil Engineer of the Year award 2015 and received his award at a ceremony at Holyrood at the end of 2015 and was further recognised at the national CECA dinner for this achievement. Steven has undertaken all of his training and development through the company. They work closely with Skills Development Scotland and in February took part in Scottish Apprenticeship Week. Paul Adams, director of Daviot swapped roles with one of the apprentices for the week.

Appendix One: STEM Activity at UHI

Overall

Positives

UHI APs are generally closer to schools and some industries than most universities, provide true lifelong learning opportunities and really buy into the concept of learner journeys. This is particularly important in the STEM subjects where 'difficult' subjects can be tackled when the students are ready which is not always when they at school.

Challenges

H&I schools really struggle with STEM teachers – hard to attract, hard to keep and cannot be afforded in many cases. The university is developing increasingly effective ways of supporting / supplementing school's capacity in these areas (ahead of most Scottish universities I would say) but pressure on schools and resourcing are major constraints.

In relation to Further Education, the main aim of the university's Work-based Learning Hub is to continue to develop and promote its portfolio of Foundation Apprenticeships and other programmes across the H&I colleges for senior phase pupils from the region's secondary schools in line with the Scottish Government's agenda for Developing the Young Workforce.

- Perth College offers Electrical Engineering, Access programmes to Science, Technology and Health degrees. Moray College delivers programmes in Maths, Engineering Practice and Engineering Systems. Lews Castle College's provision includes Electrical Engineering, Fabrication Welding and Engineering Maths.
- A number of STEM-related Foundation Apprenticeship programmes are offered to S5/S6 pupils including Civil Engineering at Inverness College, Engineering at NAFC Marine Centre, and Built Environment at Shetland College.
- DYW funding provided to date to Shetland College UHI has been used to develop capacity for employer engagement in the curriculum development of Level 6 NC The Built Environment, which although not a prescribed SDS Foundation Apprenticeship, meets the needs of local industry locally in Shetland (instead of the Foundation Apprenticeship in Civil Engineering). This programme includes elements of technology and maths, thereby helping to enhance STEM provision within the islands, and provide an appropriate articulation route to further study, Modern Apprenticeships and employment for pupils who opt to undertake this programme. Effective school/college partnership-working ensures that timetabling arrangements tackle inequalities, making it possible for pupils from secondary schools in any part of Shetland to attend this 2-year programme. The programme is strongly supported by the local construction industry, and CITB-related work placements, with payment for each pupil organised by the local authority, have been secured throughout the programme for both participants, and are undertaken during school holiday periods.

Work placements on the other Foundation Apprenticeship programmes operate in a similar manner.

- North Highland College UHI has agreed a programme of work with Caithness & North Sutherland Partnership (CNSRP) which they believe will have the biggest impact in the future economy of the area when Dounreay decommissioning is complete. This programme consists of six major projects, packages of work that will directly deliver, or support, the delivery of jobs. The other half of the programme is key enabling activities. These are projects of work that are necessary to create the right environment for business to flourish in the future.
- One of the main enabling activities of the CNSRP is to address the skills shortage in the area, and to ensure the area has the skills it requires for future projects. Many, but not wholly, of the skills required will be in STEM disciplines.
- The STEM Ambassador network is strong in the Caithness area with currently 74 ambassadors registered with a mainland KW postcode. Many of the activities listed below, undertaken by industry and/or STEM Ambassadors meets the aim of the DYW agenda.
- CREST Star Investigator Award Scheme - STEM Ambassadors spend five months of the academic year taking pupils through the scheme which supports teachers in completing the large number of outcomes required by the Curriculum for Excellence in the areas of forces, materials and sound.
- Greenpower Goblin Electric Cars - Four Dounreay owned car kits are loaned to primary schools to build a sit-in car, with the help of DSRL and Rolls Royce Vulcan Apprentices. The pupils learn about team working and fund raising along with mechanical/electrical theory and design. The successful project results in attending the Scottish final.
- Junior Saltire Prize - A team of STEM ambassadors work with Primary 7 pupils at a local primary school to build a model of a device to extract energy from the waves. This project could lead to the pupils attending the final against other Scottish schools in Edinburgh University.
- Caithness International Science Festival - this is an annual event which takes place in schools across the county in March. It's supported by a range of STEM Ambassadors by supporting the professional presenters throughout the week long event including involvement in robotics, molecule modelling, knex, rocket cars and astronomy and electricity generation.
- Caithness Science Fair - this annual event is held at the end of the science festival, providing an opportunity for parents and children to come along and enjoy some of the activities the children have undertaken during the festival. STEM Ambassadors support this event by manning the various stands and promoting the activities.

- NHC construction and engineering employability summer programme - this five-week programme aims to help young people into employment by providing essential training that will give candidates the knowledge, skills and certification to progress into sustained employment within the engineering/construction sector. The programme helps young people who are looking to move into employment either through a modern apprenticeship or other recognised route to be more work ready from the outset. The programme has been agreed locally with engineering and construction employers to ensure relevance. It directly supports the needs of local employers ensuring that young people can enter the labour market with aspiration, skills and experience.
- Rocket Car Challenge - A rocket car that could go from Land's end to John O'Groats in under an hour is the subject of a STEM project in local schools. In addition to this North Highland College UHI with the support of STEM Ambassadors participated in the Bloodhound Rocket Car Challenge with S3 pupils from four secondary school.
- The colleges will continue to work in partnership with local employers to ensure that young people from across the region are able to access these opportunities, thereby tackling inequalities. At a local level across the region schools, colleges, parents and employers will continue to work together to improve employability outcomes for young people. Effective partnership-working is the key to enabling this to happen.

North Highland College (Energy and the Environment)

All the normal college STEM activity (as outlined above) plus two highlights:

Engineering, Technology and Energy Centre (ETEC)

- Delivers FE and HE engineering programmes including modern apprenticeships in partnerships with employers in an up to date, practical setting with excellent industrial facilities.
- ETEC based in approximately 3,600 square metres of purpose build engineering facilities, dedicated to the engineering and renewable energy sector. The Engineering Skills Workshop consists of: a **Mechanical Zone**, a **Rig Zone**, **Welding Zone** and an **Electrical Zone** all of which provide realistic environments for students to acquire 'work ready' skills, knowledge and experience.
- The Centre also has a large **Education Zone** dedicated to teaching space and fully-equipped with modern video conferencing and multimedia teaching aids, including computer workstations giving students access to a full range of industry standard engineering software applications.

Environmental Research Institute (ERI)

- The ERI is a centre of aspiration that seeks to be internationally recognised for distinctive and innovative environmental science.
- ERI is based both in the stunning old Victorian School House (offices, three laboratories and a conference room with VC facilities) and in Centre for Energy and the Environment (CFEE). The latter is a £3 million purpose built centre equipped with office space, conference rooms, workshops and laboratories for teaching and was rated as the most sustainable higher education building in the UK (2009).
- ERI is a base for applied environmental research (energy, carbon capture and aquaculture for example) and also of environmental education and training at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Inverness College

- Inverness College does not have the same sort of physical centres as such other than the Rivers and Lochs institute and the Scottish Schools of Forestry. The latter is a fantastic new facility and shows applied STEM at its best with craft, FE, HE and research clearly linked to industry and careers in applied STEM.
- What Inverness College does really well is the learning journey (to be honest so do most of our APs) and I think that someone like Liz Barron would be able to provide an impressive demonstration of how the college links with schools, employers, FE and HE which allows the young and not so young learners to 'up-skill' at FE and HE level in applied sciences.
- I would think that Graeme Martindale could do something similar for computing.
- Architectural technology (Ross Cairns) has an impressive suite of high end CAD machines and is producing some equally impressive graduates.
- Inverness College has some good engineering facilities and their work on apprenticeships including developing advanced apprenticeships would be worth discussing

An Lochran

A new facility being used to enthuse children about science from an early age has been developed within An Lòchran, the Enterprise and Research Centre on the Beechwood Campus, immediately adjacent to the new Inverness College UHI building. The UHI STEM Hub, brought together by HIE, UHI, the Highland Council and Skills Development Scotland, will extend the strong emphasis of sciences, technology, engineering and maths, a major priority at both school and higher education level through the coordination and delivery of a wide range of STEM promotion activities with regional school pupils. The facility benefits from the presence of new UHI and SRUC Research facilities very visibly located in the same building, and colocation with UHI's Educational Development Unit and Learning Lab advancing new, technology supported, approaches to educational delivery and teaching practice." The latter include – remote labs (energy, engineering and dentistry), accelerated degrees and STEM in the community.

- A visit to the STEM-hub perhaps when there is a coder dojo or robot programming challenge going on would be good - Dr Sam Bright is the key contact
- It might be worth bringing in Andrew Johnston of the Science Skills Academy to discuss his project to help coordinate STEM activities but he will need to be briefed beforehand to keep on message

Area for Development

Computing in schools – there is an issue which the university can help with but not alone, there is a real dearth of computing teachers in the region, we could develop an accelerated focussed programme to turn numerate graduates into computing teachers, we can and do go into schools with others to get children to have hands on robotics, programming etc BUT many of our schools cannot find, retain or afford computing teachers (I have this from the

Council representative on the Science Skills academy board). So we raise hopes through STEM (that we includes UHI central and APs, SDS and others) and the children cannot follow through as the up to date and enthusiastic teachers are not there. We could help join the dots but it needs a focused 3-5 year intervention which could have a transformational impact – perhaps consideration should be given to a mini Gaelic Plan for Digital and Computing?