



2010 Regional Skills Assessment: Project Highlight report - October 2010

Overall project status: **Green**

This paper, which outlines completed activity, progress to date and next steps, has been prepared for the project board members to keep them up to date on progress. It will also be circulated to the RSP data group members for information.

1 Progress to date

A project board has been established to provide overall direction and management. The members are Andy Phillips (Project Manager), Pat Jackson (AWM), Sherman Wong (West Midlands Councils) and Geoff Hyde (REDOG). Stephen Howarth, the Observatory's Deputy Chief Executive, has replaced Rosie Paskins, who left the Observatory on 22nd October, as chair. The first meeting took place on 23rd September.

A project initiation document has been finalised after consultation with key partners, notably the AWM Skills Team, RSP Executive Group and the Regional Economic Development Officers Group. The document proposes that this year's Skills Assessment focuses on informing the work of 'task & finish' groups set up by the RSP to take forward key issues highlighted in the statement of strategic skills priorities and the strategic thinking and priority setting of the new Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). It was originally envisaged that five briefing papers addressing key issues would be produced to inform these activities in a timely way

1. The impact of public sector job cuts across the region
2. The skills which will be required to achieve transformational change and support greater growth in GVA and jobs?
3. Where additional GVA and new jobs be created across - and the skill sets employers will be looking for?
4. The extent of skill gaps and deficiencies in the workforce and their underlying causes
5. The extent to which the new jobs created will be sufficient to meet demand across the West Midlands

At the September Project Board meeting it was agreed to merge papers 2 and 3 to consider the overall implications of transformational change for job growth and skill needs.

Paper one has been completed. A draft was circulated to the Project Board and the WMSP Data Group for comment in September - with particular emphasis on conclusions and policy implications. A final version was published on the Observatory website at the end of September. The report has attracted significant media coverage - notably in the BBC's Politics Show, BRMB and BBC Radio Hereford & Worcester and the Birmingham Post and Coventry Evening Telegraph.

A new paper two (a merger of the original papers 2 and 3) is complete in draft and is accompanied by a set of six sub-regional profiles. These have now been circulated to the Project Board and the WMSP Data Group for comment at their meetings in November 2010. Again we are looking for a particular emphasis on conclusions and policy implications in any feedback. They will be finalised and published on the Observatory website by the end of November.

Re-numbered paper three (skill gaps and deficiencies in the workforce and their underlying causes) and paper 4 (the extent to which the new jobs created will be sufficient to meet demand across the West Midlands) will be completed in draft by Friday 19th November 2010. They will be circulated to the Project Board and the WMSP Data Group for comment at their meetings in early December 2010 and finalised and published on the Observatory website by the end of December. This represents a slight slippage in the original timetable (these papers were due to be completed in draft by the end of October). This delay is due to:

- The additional work required to create the new merged paper two and the six sub-regional profiles
- A re-prioritisation of the team's time in late September and early October to assist AWM colleagues in urgent work to complete a paper on measures of success that was submitted to the Department of Business Innovation and Skills

2 Next steps

The Project Board and WMES Data Group should:

- Provide the Observatory with comments on paper two in terms of both the content and conclusions and policy implications at its November meetings
- Provide the Observatory with similar comments on papers three and four at its December meetings

The Observatory will incorporate comments, finalise and publish these reports as follows:

- Paper two by the end of November
- Papers three and four by the end of December