

# Backing Young Suffolk

Suffolk  
14-19  
Strategy



## 14-19 STRATEGIC CONFERENCE **BACKING YOUNG SUFFOLK** 15<sup>TH</sup> June 2010 • Trinity Park, Ipswich **14-19 CONFERENCE REPORT**

### PREFACE



*This is the report  
from the 14-19  
Conference on  
15<sup>th</sup> June 2010*



**The Overview** (Section I) provides a brief summary and commentary of the event supported by Sections II, III & IV on the workshops and delegate feedback.

The 'Next Steps' section sets out the Calendar of Events that has been proposed for the next nine months culminating in a 14-19 summer conference organised by young people for employers, educationalists and county officers on jobs, skills & talents of the future. As the conference report clearly shows the young people from Sudbury 'stole the show' and the 2011 Conference could be a great opportunity to put more of the young talents in Suffolk on show.

We hope that this report helps to publicise the steps we are taking to join up education and skills more closely in Suffolk under the banner of '**Backing Young Suffolk**'.

We hope too that our proposed 'Next Steps' programme for 2010-11 will help move the overall county strategy forward, alongside the rich variety of skills & employment events currently being planned throughout Suffolk.

We look forward to working with you again in the near future as we seek to bring together employers and school/colleges from across the County in promoting and supporting jobs and skills for the future for young people in Suffolk.

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### SECTION I: CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

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#### **The 14-19 Conference 2010, with a focus on jobs and skills for the future**

proved to be a notable success:

- o as a Conference in itself and
- o as a First Step to progressing an Employer Engagement programme for Suffolk

Feedback to-date has been very positive; delegates were very keen to be involved in future developments and the workshops produced an 'explosion' of ideas and comments, for example: 'thought provoking' and 'challenging perceptions'.

Undoubtedly it was the **young people** who 'stole the show' not only through the DVD; "Give 'Em a Chance" which highlighted the issues young unemployed people face, but through the way in which they presented the theme. They brought the conference to life and demonstrated the wealth of young talent there is in Suffolk although, as their DVD showed, much of it goes untapped!



The first **Keynote Speaker, Ian Pearson**, set the initial challenge of the day with an opening address on the Economic and Social Future in which new technology will revolutionise work, communications and social relationships as we move from a post industrial and information society to a caring one in which machines do all the low skilled work– as the population ages!

This presentation provoked a range of responses from the audience and led to a number of questions around the implications of such developments for life in the future. We even learned that the 'yoghurt pot of the future' will have the intellectual power to win Mastermind...now there's a thought!



**Judith Mobbs** as the newly appointed Assistant Director for Skills for the Future at Suffolk County Council then brought Ian Pearson's 'blue-sky' thinking down to earth. She outlined the framework being developed within Suffolk to increase skills in the County, particularly in the economic sectors that will be important for economic growth, the sectors' potential value to the economy and the future job opportunities. This input gave delegates a strong sense of direction and the

opportunity for them to get involved in the emerging Skills for the Future strategy. Judith set the audience a series of questions to help inform future policy and the delegates' responses are summarised in Section II.

The session before lunch, however, really 'ignited' the conference as three young people from Sudbury – Dan, Claire and Nat - took the stage and took the conference by storm.

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They played a DVD of a film they had produced themselves which brilliantly illustrated their experiences, and those of other young people, in trying to find work – or even work experience opportunities! Their plea **'Give us a chance'** caught the imagination of the audience and their responses to questions from the delegates showed just how much they had to offer. They were confident, articulate and witty. Through the amusing scenario of setting some older adults a competition in texting, they also illustrated how their competence with new technology put their generation ahead in engaging with learning and communication in the global era.

They rightly received a spontaneous round of applause and provided much food for thought over the lunch break.

Certainly, their ideas on employability and their capacity to lead discussion and to communicate - with both professional audiences and with their peers - was amply illustrated and will need to form a centrepiece for future strategy.

What also struck many delegates was that, if these bright and articulate young people could not secure employment, how much young talent is out there untapped in a county such as ours?

**The Workshops** following lunch focused on the topic of **Jobs of the Future** and the 14-19 Curriculum in each of the three areas in Suffolk – North, South and West. Discussion was lively and constructive with a range of ideas, initiatives and proposals arising, captured in Section II.



Despite a late start due to the challenges of Network Rail, **Professor Mick Waters** brought the conference to a warm and entertaining conclusion. His 'stand-up' presentation on *Learning Today and Tomorrow*, peppered with anecdotes about personal experiences and amusing insights into educational policy thoroughly engaged and entertained the audience. It left the Conference Chair with the easy task of sending delegates away interested and informed after a very enjoyable day and with a first taste of the debate to come, in response to the following questions:

***"How do we as Educationalists and Employers back Young Suffolk in a more effective and collaborative way?"***

***"How do we support and prepare young people in Suffolk more effectively for the jobs ahead?"***

***"How do we realise the full range of their talents and help them to help us staff the areas of growth emerging in Suffolk?"***

So the 14-19 Conference set the scene for a 'step-change' in education-employers relationships, set out the initial agenda ahead and offered the audience an opportunity to take the Suffolk strategy forward into the 21<sup>ST</sup> century – supported (and led) by young people.

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We all look forward to the next stage in this 'Big Conversation' and Section IV sets out the draft schedule of events and activities planned for 2010-11.

We hope that you can join us and we all look forward to the journey ahead in realising the skills and jobs for the future and the talents of the future that this conference so amply illustrated.

#### **Finally – a big vote of thanks to**

- o the Conference Chair, **Pat Rockall**, for skillfully moving the programme forward so fluently from speaker to speaker
- o the keynote speakers who so generously gave of their time and expertise in setting the scene and the challenges ahead –
  - **Ian Pearson, Judith Mobbs and Mick Waters**
- o The Young People – **Claire, Dan and Nat** – not only for their presentation and DVD but for providing the insight and inspiration for a new approach to engaging older adults in such a critical debate
- o The **Facilitators and Scribes** who led and supported the workshops
- o **Kim Brown and her colleagues** from Boleyn Events Ltd for organising the event so professionally on behalf of the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
- o **Jane Sneesby** for the design and compilation of the Conference Pack and materials which so effectively stimulated and supported workshop discussions.
- o **John Dugmore** and the Suffolk Chamber, **Susanne Anderson** from the County Council Skills Team and **Pauline Henry** from the Connexions Service for designing and developing the Conference and **Steve Skeet** from Connexions & **Paul Press** from Offshoot Films for encouraging and supporting the young people from Sudbury.

**A great day and a good start to the debate on Backing Young Suffolk (14-19) and developing the skills of the future.**



***Suffolk has Talent – and as Claire, Dan and Nat illustrated – more than it knows!***

*Martin Slattery  
14-19 Strategy Manager Suffolk*

## **SECTION II: CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS**

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### **MORNING WORKSHOPS**

Groups of educationalists and employers were set three key questions which provoked a rich response briefly summarised below.

#### **Question 1**

***“What actions are needed, and by whom, to make sure that our young people understand the range of employment opportunities in new and growth sectors in Suffolk – jobs they have never thought of?”***

This question provoked a range of responses including:

- Improvement in the quality and range of IAG (Information, Advice & Guidance)
- More structured and strategic engagement with employers
- Publication of an analysis of future jobs and opportunities emerging in Suffolk
- Clear and coherent communication strategy on 'Jobs of the Future' with young people, parents, governors and the media.
- Clear analysis of employability skills needed for their future and the way they can be developed through the curriculum
- Challenging traditional stereotypes of future jobs and identifying inspiring role models.
- Engaging employers with young people early on in their school career
- Promoting parity of esteem between academic and vocational pathways
- Restructuring the school curriculum to promote Work Based Learning and business liaison
- Using Jobs of Future to raise aspiration and promote clearer pathways
- Need to move to more 'skills-oriented' school curriculum
- Notion of employer compacts and/or partnerships 14-19

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### **Q**uestion 2

***“What do we need to do to make sure that as many young people as possible have the generic employability skills that employers need – as this is a constant concern expressed by our businesses?”***

- Need to define term employability skills possibly through employer survey
- Need to restructure work experience and make it more meaningful
- Need to get learners to be more self-analytical and able to identify their key strengths
- Involve employers directly in school community
- Need for business to have a clearer understanding of the 14-19 Curriculum
- Drive and leadership through Suffolk County Council
- Raise profile and opportunities for industrial placements for teachers
- Increase opportunities for Business mentors and use of young graduates as role models
- Potential of SEBUSEC (Suffolk Education and business Collaboration) and Backing Young Suffolk strategy to lead and co-ordinate Employer Engagement
- Need for greater support for more disadvantaged young people.

### **Q**uestion 3

***“What are the three most significant transformational actions we could take to achieve Suffolk’s 2028 ambition for skills?”***

- Improve quality of work experience
- Improve quality of IAG (Information, Advice & Guidance)
- Develop notion of Curriculum of the Future incorporating
  - employability skills
  - enterprise academy
  - technical academy
- Communications strategy on Jobs of Future with young people and parents
- Use of new technology to promote Jobs of the Future (e.g. You Tube)
- Incentives for employers to engage
- Development of skills pathways and employability diplomas or Portfolio
- Stronger and more direct engagement with young people and their ideas / vision of the future

## **SECTION II: CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS**

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### **AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS**

The afternoon workshops sought to take the discussions in the morning forward and to look at:

1. Jobs of the Future and their relationship to the 14-19 Curriculum
2. Skills, Qualities and Qualifications young people need to access these new jobs
3. How Work-Related Learning might be promoted and strengthened

The Workshops inspired an extensive and quite intense debate and below are a range of the responses from across the three discussion areas.

**Q1 Given the unknown nature of many future jobs and the turnover of companies (and even industries) how might we more closely align learning and jobs of the future?**

- Identification of 'sectors of the future' rather than specific jobs
- Opportunities associated with specific dates, events or 'sexy sectors' e.g. 2012/2020, Olympics, Energy)
- Industrial placements for teachers needs a much higher priority especially if they are teaching the new diplomas or work-based learning.
- The school curriculum needs to be restructured to accommodate work based learning and work experience so they are integral to learning not 'bolted on'
- Strong support for Suffolk Chamber and the EBP (Education Business Partnership) to provide the network for employer – school engagement and for SEBUSC to be the strategy for driving it
- Important to more clearly interlink the Suffolk County Council Economic Plan with the 14-19 and school curriculum

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#### **Q2 The key qualities perceived as needed for the future included:**

- Collaborative and partnership working
- Good communication and public speaking skills
- Strong functional or basic skills
- Innovative and entrepreneurial thinking
- Leadership skills (as displayed by the young guest speakers)
- Lateral thinking and new ways of working
- A number of proposals were put forward for accrediting and displaying young people's skills including
- Employability Portfolios or Diploma
- New types of CV including DVD and video
- Essex project on employability

#### **Q3 A wide range of ideas for improving work related learning were put forward including:**

- New approach to all year round work experience to support new applied and vocational courses
- Notion of Job Boards in all schools to promote and co-ordinate work projects and career opportunities
- Inspirational industrial speakers with links to 'live' work situations (e.g. oil rigs)
- Future leaders programme for young people
- Progression mapping from courses to jobs and 'pen' pictures of career pathways of local business leaders
- Young graduates mentoring model
- Targeted support for most vulnerable or disengagement, e.g. NEETS (Not in Education, Employment or Training)
- Concept of 'Employer Compact' for each 14-19 Partnership supported by the SEBUSC (Suffolk Education and Business Collaboration) Employer Champion
- Concept of pre-apprenticeship programme as work-based learning pathway to full apprenticeship route
- Idea of Business Internships within schools
- Opportunities for Young Chamber to support employer engagement

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- Notion of Ambassadors (including young people) for
- Apprenticeships
- STEM (*Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics*)
- Health
- Need for clearer incentives to engage employers especially small to medium enterprises
- Notion of 'try before you buy' work placements to engage employers, especially small to medium enterprises

***As a result of the input gained from educationalists, employers and young people at this event, we understand how important it is to fully engage both the young people and employers in face-to-face dialogue and follow-up activity and our Next Steps calendar of activities will seek to reflect this approach.***

### SECTION III: CONFERENCE FEEDBACK

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Below is just a sample of delegate comments on what proved to be a very productive and engaging day:

*"Very good – well organised with good mix of speakers"*

*"Good try and worth progressing / repeating"*

*"Good"*

*"Good discussions"*

*"Very inspiring"*

*"Good - buzzy atmosphere - a lot of stimulating debate"*

*"Extremely well organised and stimulating"*

*"I was very impressed by the focus, scale and running of the event. Well done and thank you!"*

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### SECTION IV: **NEXT STEPS**

The aim of the June 2010 Conference was to launch the 'Backing Young Suffolk' banner as a way of:

- Bringing together the vast array of school/colleges and work-based initiatives under one framework
- Developing a more coherent strategy for engaging education and employers in partnership in promoting jobs of the future for young people in Suffolk and developing the work and skills plan for the county

Below is a draft programme of events between now and next summer designed to develop this strategy and create the 'one-stop' shop to support employers and 14-19 partnerships in developing new opportunities for young people in work experience, work-based learning and apprenticeships.

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#### Calendar of Events 2010-11

Date / Term	Event title	Event theme	Organisers
<b>Autumn 2010</b>			
14 September	<b>Big Conversation</b>	To promote work experience / work placement opportunities for the future	Business in the community
<b>Spring 2011</b>			
Jan/Feb	<b>Employer Engagement &amp; the Future</b>	Launch of 14-19 SEBUSC strategy, 'One-Stop' Shop Bureau and Work Placement Unit	14-19 Strategy Team & EBP
March	<b>Suffolk's Skills for the Future Strategy</b>	Suffolk's Skills for the Future Plan produced	Skills for the Future team Suffolk County Council
May	<b>Apprenticeships: Public &amp; Private</b>	Apprenticeships for the future in the public and private sectors	Skills for the Future Team, NAS & 14-19 Team
<b>Summer 2011</b>			
June	<b>14-19 Conference</b>	Backing Young Suffolk Conference designed and run by young people of Suffolk, their ambitions & talents for the future	14-19 Team & Young Chamber

This draft calendar will be up-dated and maintained throughout the year on:  
[www.backingyoungsuffolk](http://www.backingyoungsuffolk)