

UK Shipbuilding Skills Taskforce (UKSST)
Monday 5 – Tuesday 6 June 2023
Harland and Wolff and Artemis Technologies, Belfast

Day 1 (hosted by Harland and Wolff, Queens Island, Belfast)

Pre-meeting: Tour of Harland and Wolff and conversation with Harland and Wolff apprentices and graduates

- Prior to the meeting, members were invited to have a tour of Harland and Wolff. Members had an opportunity to learn about the innovations being made to facilitate future work with the Fleet Solid Support (FSS) contract, especially with the increasing introduction of automation.
- Members heard from two second-year apprentices, Saul Irvine (Apprentice Mechanical Engineer) and Russell McGuicken (Apprentice Pipe Fitter), and David Schofield (Graduate Project Engineer). They shared their reasons for joining Harland and Wolff and the shipbuilding industry.

Item 1: Welcome and Chair's Business

- Chair welcomed the Taskforce to the 12th Meeting of the Taskforce and the final meeting of the Prioritisation Phase.
- Chair welcomed Ben Murray, Director of Government and Corporate Affairs at Harland & Wolff, and previous CEO at Maritime UK, to the meeting. Ben shared an overview of Harland and Wolff's facilities, operations, and strategic goals.
- Chair thanked members for their continued hard work in the Prioritisation Phase, recognising their efforts to create a set of recommendations ready for the Engagement Phase.
- Chair asked if members were content with the minutes from the May meeting at Prospect. Nick Mansell requested some changes, and the Secretariat agreed to amend the minutes in line with his feedback.
- Chair stated his aim to have impactful photos which capture the collaborative diversity of the UKSST, especially for the front cover of the report. He asked members to send photos which contain an aircraft carrier, and more from leisure, heritage and wider SME supply chain, which members agreed to provide.
- Chair shared with members the meetings he had attended since the last meeting, these were:
 - A meeting with Clive Hickman, Ben Murray, and Richard Powell from the SEG's Task and Finish Groups.
 - An industry roundtable meeting with representatives from adjacent STEM sectors.
 - A meeting with the Maritime Skills Commission which compared the UKSST draft report and a MSC report.
 - A meeting with Rex Cox (NSO SRO) and Tessa Griffiths (DfE SRO) to talk about the Taskforce's industry body recommendation.
- Chair shared with members the following meeting objectives:
 - Decide on a project sponsor for Skills Foresighting.

- Make a decision on the Taskforce's overarching industry body recommendation.
- To get feedback on the tone and text of the draft report.
- At the following day's meeting at Artemis, to look ahead to the final phase of the Taskforce's work, Engagement.

Item 2: Decision on Skills Foresighting

- Chair confirmed consensus that Skills Foresighting would initially focus on advanced manufacturing, followed by clean propulsion. He noted that a consultation with the Shipbuilding Enterprise for Growth (SEG) Task and Finish Group Chairs concurred with this approach.
- Chair stated that the project sponsor needed to be agreed. Paul Feely volunteered, which members agreed to.
- Nick Mansell, Matthew Guy, Linton Roberts, Tahsin Tezdogan and Keith Longman all agreed to support Paul Feely in Skills Foresighting. Chair thanked all for volunteering.

Item 3: Decision on Overarching Industry Body

- Chair shared the progress that had been made since the last meeting regarding the Taskforce's recommendation for an overarching industry body focused on UK shipbuilding skills. He stated that Solution Group 2 had spoken to a handful of organisations that could take the role of being the industry body. All these organisations said they would require additional resource to do so. He stated that feedback received from industry showed concern about the time and cost of starting a new organisation, and the high concentration of organisations that already exist within the sector.
- Chair stated that in his discussions with the Senior Responsible Officers in the Department for Education (DfE) and the National Shipbuilding Office (NSO), a new option had been suggested. The Taskforce could be supported by the NSO to establish a UK shipbuilding skills delivery group under the Shipbuilding Enterprise for Growth (SEG). The Chair suggested that this could harness the existing government and industry collaboration that is facilitated through the SEG, he noted that this group would have the recognition and backing of Ministers, and suggested that the group's links to government would provide a more immediate route to request funding at a future spending review.
- Rebecca Spence from the NSO explained how the SEG was created as part of the National Shipbuilding Strategy Refresh, that it is a delivery focused group, that it is co-chaired by Rex Cox from the NSO and John Howie from Babcock and President of the Society of Maritime Industries (SMI).
- Chair invited views from Taskforce members on his suggestion, explaining that if the Taskforce generally agreed on the overall approach to this recommendation, the details around structure, governance, function, and membership could be subsequently established. The discussion raised the following points:
 - Members felt the SEG needs to better represent SMEs' needs.
 - Members highlighted the need to ensure resource for the industry body.

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- Members shared concerns about the potential of a change of government, and the impact this may have on the group.
- Members expressed concern about whether the SEG had capacity to take on new work. The Chair explained that the skills delivery group would be a new group with additional members, so would not take resource from existing SEG members.
- There was discussion about whether existing Taskforce members would make up the proposed delivery group. Charlotte Govan stated that recruitment into this new group would need to be approached fairly, with members having to reapply to join.
- Kerry Hourihan asked for clear links between the Maritime Skills Commission (MSC) and this new group, arguing that collaboration would avoid duplication.
- Hannah Prowse stated concern about the SEG's ability to communicate with the sector and drive delivery.
- There was also a query about whether the SEG was too close to government and therefore unable to be critical of policy.
- In conclusion, and after considered debate, members agreed that this was ultimately the most pragmatic step to take now but wanted to be open to establishing a new body at a later stage.
- Hannah Patterson and Charlotte Govan from the Department for Education explained that DfE would not be able to fund the creation of a new body, and there was no clear mechanism to fund this activity at existing industry organisations. They therefore argued that creating a delivery group under the SEG would allow ongoing work to be resourced. Hannah reiterated that it was up to the Taskforce to decide what to recommend.
- The Chair confirmed that the Taskforce was content to recommend that a delivery group should be aligned with the NSO and initially established under the SEG to act as the shipbuilding skills body. He agreed with members that the report should outline a set of stipulations from the Taskforce. These were that the group must:
 - Represent skills needs in all four UK nations and regions within them.
 - Embed a strong SME voice.
 - Represent all aspects of the sector.
 - Be effectively resourced.
 - Be aligned with other groups, such as the Maritime Skills Commission.
 - Be able to speak independently of government.
 - Have clear Terms of Reference.
 - Have clear ownership and governance.
 - Have a credible profile and be able to communicate effectively with the sector.

Item 4: Finalising the UKSST's report.

- Chair thanked members for their continued feedback on the report. He explained that amendments needed to be raised by the end of the week, after which a near

final draft would be re-circulated w/c 19th. After feedback was received, the unpublished report would then be shared across government for clearance and Ministerial sign-off.

Industry Feedback

- Bryony Danks updated members on the feedback received from industry on the Taskforce's recommendations, stating it was overwhelmingly positive. There were some recommendations, such as the industry narrative and the careers pathway toolkit, that received 100% support from the 34 people who responded. She stated that members had a chance to review more detailed feedback previously within their respective solution groups, and it was important to utilise this when establishing SMART action plans to underpin the recommendations.
- Members asked if they could see the list of people and organisations who responded. The Secretariat stated that this was not possible as this data was not collected but stated that the list of people contacted had previously been shared with members.

Report

- Chair invited members to reflect on the updated draft report they received in the meeting papers.
- Rachel Kitley asked if there was an intention to ensure educators are a target audience of the report and recommendations, as they are currently not addressed in an equal way as government and industry. Hannah Patterson stated that a call to action for educators could be added.
- Chair asked officials from Devolved Governments if they felt the report incorporated the skills needs from their respective nations. Both Gordon McGuinness from Skills Development Scotland, and Chris Hare from the Welsh Government stated they were content. Susan Logan (Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland) and Sharon Cousins (Invest Northern Ireland) stated there were some gaps for Northern Ireland but agreed to send additions over to the Secretariat to ensure they are incorporated.
- Hannah Prowse stated that there needs to be a paragraph which states the importance of technical education at schools. Chair asked if Hannah Prowse could send a proposed paragraph to the Secretariat.
- Sarah Dhanda stated that the structure needed to be made clearer, and that the group should decide on a 'snappy' title. She also stated that a section listing various skills products should be put into the appendix. She asked if delivery action plans could be included.
- Hannah Patterson explained that there was not enough time for the Taskforce to establish delivery action plans before the report needs to be completed, but these could be developed over the summer and used to support engagement on the report.
- Linton Roberts said it was important that the report stayed focused on skills, and that all issues raised must be explicitly linked to skills.

- Keith Longman stated that the recommendation on 'leveraging the skills system' needs to make clearer that the current usage of the skills system is not working effectively for the sector.
- Nick Mansell said he was pleased that the report had incorporated elements of his previous feedback on the impact of procurement policy. He argued that the report still needed to go further, and call for government investment to match international equivalents, as well as ask for the following:
 - Guarantee that the 30-year pipeline would be built in the UK.
 - Consolidate government procurement of ships under the NSO; and
 - Reduce the proportion of wider Ministry of Defence procurement from overseas.
- The Chair asked members if there was consensus on Nick's requests.
- Matt Bolton agreed that the report should be more forthright on procurement.
- In response to Nick and Matt, Linton Roberts stated that he would be reluctant to include strong asks of government that go beyond the scope of skills. Paul Feely agreed, stating that it is imperative to link skills into all aspects of the report. Sarah Dhanda suggested finding a middle ground that explains why these issues matter for skills and the workforce.
- The Taskforce agreed to include points on international investment comparisons and increased delivery of the shipbuilding pipeline in the UK, with a clear link to skills, in the report. The Taskforce decided not to include a call for consolidating procurement under the NSO or a reference to wider MOD procurement.
- Eddie Corbett asked if there could be more weight on diversity and inclusion within the report. He agreed to send the Secretariat some suggested edits.
- Matt Bolton stated that the infographics that had been developed would offer good resources for handouts and social media posts. Matt also asked if the report could be clearer when talking about apprentices and graduates.
- Taskforce members agreed to provide suggested wording on the edits they requested, and the Secretariat agreed to incorporate these into an updated draft.

Day 2 (hosted by Artemis Technologies, Titanic Quarter, Belfast)

Item 5: Commencing the Engagement Phase

- Chair welcomed the Taskforce to Artemis and thanked Dr Iain Percy CEO for hosting.
- Chair welcomed members to the Engagement Phase of the Taskforce's work. He expressed the importance of utilising members' professional networks to promote the Taskforce's recommendations.
- Hannah Patterson facilitated a presentation which introduced the Engagement Phase and asked members how they felt it should be structured. Hannah gave a recap of the purpose of the phase, as stated in the Terms of Reference. Hannah proposed that to achieve these, three things should happen:
 - Each monthly Taskforce meeting should engage with the regional network of the location via a roundtable.
 - Keith Longman and Rachel Kitley would do a 6-week sprint over the summer to create a toolkit for employers and educators, including a set of pledges, to

- establish a tangible product that can be shared during the launch of the report and other engagement activity. Bryony Danks would support this activity.
- Solution Groups would create action plans for their recommendations, which would inform the structure and order of activity during the phase.
- Hannah stated that support from the Secretariat would look different from 'workstreams' and 'solution groups' due to the nature of the work being different in the Engagement Phase. Hannah also acknowledged the feedback from the previous transition was greater member input into how the phase should be structured.
- Members asked questions around priority, immediate asks of members and about the continuation of solution group formation.
- Members stated that slide packs and other resources will be needed to support engagement. The Secretariat agreed to create some resources.
- Keith Longman and Rachel Kitley stated that their toolkit would be a quick, impactful win. Members raised questions about the purpose and aims of the toolkit, and asked if it should be the priority. Keith and Rachel explained it would be able to bring together some of the other recommendations, and that it will also be a resource that can be used to help facilitate engagement.
- Chair asked members to establish a set of Engagement Phase deliverables by creating action plans in their Prioritisation Phase solution groups, after which those groups will disband.
- The Chair asked solution groups to create their action plans following the meeting. The Secretariat would then use these to create a structured proposal for the Engagement Phase.

Item 6: Next Steps and AONB

- Hannah Patterson updated members on the plans for the launch of the report at London International Shipping Week (LISW). There will be a ministerial roundtable hosted by the Department for Transport, as well as a formal industry launch event on board the Trinity House Lighthouse Vessel, Galatea. This will be followed by a careers fair hosted by Maritime UK, and Taskforce members were invited to participate with their respective networks at the careers fair to promote career opportunities in shipbuilding.
- Chair informed members that the next meeting will be hosted by Tahsin Tezdogan at the University of Southampton on Friday 14 July.
- Chair thanked Eddie Corbett and Harland and Wolff for hosting the meeting on day one and thanked Artemis Technologies for hosting on day two. The Chair then handed over to the Dr Iain Percy OBE, CEO of Artemis Technologies. Iain introduced Artemis Technologies, and members were invited to have a tour of the company's facilities.