

**UK Shipbuilding Skills Taskforce (UKSST)**

Monday 13 November 2023, 09:30-15:45

*Cowes Enterprise College, Isle of Wight*

**Item 1: Welcome and Chair's Business**

- The Chair welcomed the Taskforce to its penultimate meeting and reiterated his thanks for members' sustained engagement and commitment. He thanked Rachel Kitley for hosting and commended her on the work she had done on the Maritime Futures Curriculum.
- Chair stated that the purpose of the meeting would be:
  - Share updates on Taskforce member engagement around the UK.
  - Finalise a letter from the Taskforce to the Shipbuilding Skills Delivery Group (SDG) and comment on draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the SDG.
  - Gather feedback on the draft 'new narrative' for shipbuilding.
  - Explore Enginuity's career pathway tools.
  - Get an update on the Taskforce communications strategy.
  - Engage stakeholders, focusing on employer/educator relationships.
- Chair asked the group to confirm they were content with the minutes from October's Taskforce meeting. There were no objections, so the minutes were approved and will be published on gov.uk.

**Item 2: Engagement Phase update**

- Chair invited updates on Taskforce members' engagement across the UK. These included:
  - A focused visit on shipbuilding skills from the Princess Royal to City of Glasgow College
  - MakeUK's annual Defence Summit
  - Promoting the Maritime Futures Curriculum to more schools
  - UKNEST's membership meeting
- Taskforce members noted the ongoing challenge of college staffing levels and suggested including recommended action on this in the Taskforce's letter to the SDG.
- Paul Feely provided an update on Skills Foresighting, explaining that the Taskforce had agreed to focus the first cycle on robotics and automation, and the specific focus within that would be welding, jointing and inspection in tight/dangerous/difficult-to-work spaces. Taskforce members were content with this.

**Item 3: Boatbuilding at school**

- The Taskforce were impressed by their visit to a practical Design Technology lesson at the school, where year 7 students were building model boats. This lesson was part of the Maritime Futures Curriculum.

**Item 4: NSbS update**

- Chair invited an update on the National Shipbuilding Strategy Refresh (NSbS) from Rear Admiral Rex Cox, CEO of the National Shipbuilding Office (NSO).
- Rex shared progress on various procurements within the 30-year shipbuilding pipeline and delivery of the Shipbuilding Credit Guarantee Scheme. He stated that NSO's ongoing priorities were to deliver on its NSbS commitments, support the offshore energy sector, and develop the next phase of the NSbS ahead of the upcoming election and spending review.

- Rex touched on the Shipbuilding Enterprise for Growth (SEG) and the SDG, which will sit underneath it. He noted that SEG membership would be refreshed and Taskforce members could put themselves forward to join.
- Bob King said he was concerned the SDG would not have enough influence. He also asked how to ensure more of the 30-year pipeline would be built in the UK. Rex agreed that the SDG must be able to deliver and said he shared Bob's ambition to build more of the future shipping pipeline in the UK.

#### **Item 5: Shipbuilding Skills Delivery Group**

- Rue McIlmoyle (NSO) noted that draft ToRs for the SDG had been shared with the Taskforce. These had been edited further to feedback from members in the previous meeting, including on regional representation, accountability, and how the group would track its progress. Rue presented a timeline for recruitment of a Chair and members, stating the aim was for the SDG to hold its first meeting in spring 2024.
- Suggested feedback from Taskforce members included:
  - Strengthening wording on the group's aims to be more specific and active.
  - The SDG should take over ownership of the ongoing Shipbuilding skills challenge.
  - Clarifying the group's primary objective as delivering the Taskforce's recommendations; it is not starting from scratch.
  - Adding more acknowledgement that SME needs must be represented, but SMEs will not have as much resource to participate. The group agreed that trade associations could play a role in representing SMEs and resourcing the SDG.
  - Members queried whether SDG would have or could leverage in sufficient resources.
- The NSO agreed to consider the wording of the document again in response to feedback and recirculate for information.
- Rue thanked Taskforce members for sharing feedback via email on the draft priorities letter from the Taskforce to the SDG. The group agreed to suggest any further edits and bring a final draft to the last Taskforce meeting in December, where members would sign it. **Action: Taskforce.**

#### **Item 6: New shipbuilding narrative**

- Chair introduced Sally Brown and George Cleary from NSO, who presented NSO's plans to develop a 'new narrative' to change perceptions of shipbuilding and positively promote the many exciting career opportunities within this with a campaign.
- George and Sally explained they would take a three-tiered approach: 1) develop the 'new narrative', to be owned by industry; 2) a targeted communications campaign, to be owned by the NSO, with help from the SDG and industry; 3) specific PR and communications activity, owned by a combination of industry and the NSO, like careers fairs. NSO has drafted an outline narrative and needs industry input to ensure it is authentic and representative. George and Sally have created a survey for the Taskforce to provide feedback on this. NSO is also working to understand shipbuilding's value proposition and specific audiences to target.
- George and Sally invited feedback, which was as follows:
  - Careers events should be regional and work with existing partners like Maritime UK and regional clusters.
  - Having unified careers materials to promote the sector will be useful.
  - Colleges and Universities will also be keen to be involved with careers events.

- Hands-on experiences like model boat racing competitions help engage young people.
- In preparation for the campaign, NSO should build a network of communications leads within the sector.

#### **Item 7: Career pathways framework**

- Chair introduced Sarah Dhanda and her colleagues Nick and Mike from Enginuity, who gave a presentation of its skills framework, skills comparator tools, and STEM resources.
- Nick outlined Enginuity's Skills Framework, which provides a common skills language that can be used across engineering and manufacturing. He demonstrated a role explorer tool, which allows users to explore different occupations, job families and job roles (at a granular level) using the Skills Framework and understand demand for different skills.
- Mike demonstrated Enginuity's skills comparator tool, which can help users understand the skills needed within different roles and the potential to transfer between roles with similar skills.
- Mike and Nick presented Enspire City, a digital resource aimed at children aged 8-12, which aims to inspire young people to go into engineering. Enspire City has different zones for engineering sectors such as aerospace and is used like a game. Enginuity can create zones for different sectors, like shipbuilding, with industry funding.

#### **Item 8: Taskforce communication strategy**

- Chair asked Kerrie Forster to update on the Taskforce communication strategy.
- Kerrie explained that a group of Taskforce members have refined the spreadsheet presented in September into four specific documents and requested that members undertake three actions against them. The four documents are:
  - 1) a spreadsheet for the SDG, recommending key audiences for the new group to engage.
  - 2) a survey for all Taskforce members to fill in with contact details for key people in their networks so information can be shared with them.
  - 3) a case study on how Eddie Corbett has engaged his network, with a request that all Taskforce members replicate this.
  - 4) a document on the Taskforce's communication priorities before the end of the year.
- The group agreed to these actions and that December's final Taskforce meeting would include an agenda item for all to update on their progress.
- Taskforce members agreed that a final newsletter should be sent to the Taskforce mailing list, rounding up the project and asking subscribers to agree to their contact information being transferred to the SDG.

#### **Item 9: Next steps and AONB**

- Hannah Patterson (Department for Education) noted that Maritime UK was organising an AI discovery session, which Taskforce members were invited to.
- Chair brought the meeting to a close, noting that the next would be the final Taskforce meeting. Chair encouraged everyone to attend, explaining it would be a historic and celebratory opportunity and ministers would be invited.

**Item 10: Stakeholder engagement**

- Education and industry stakeholders from the Isle of Wight and wider Solent region attended a roundtable with the Taskforce on how to build closer relationships between educators and the shipbuilding industry. Key points included:
  - The boom-and-bust nature of the industry makes it difficult to attract people to its jobs. It was acknowledged that the NSO is seeking to mitigate this, and growing exports from UK yards can also play a role.
  - The title 'shipbuilding' could put people off, as it doesn't indicate the variety of roles, albeit in a contracted shipbuilding sector.
  - Industry must forge closer links with educators to help them promote the range of opportunities in the sector and ensure vocational training is relevant to industry practice. The toolkit created by the Taskforce aims to help facilitate this.
  - STEM opportunities still a mystery to most parents
  - The Maritime Futures Curriculum is helping engage students with maritime opportunities from a young age. This is a good example of industry/educator partnership as it builds on the national curriculum and what is already taught in schools.