

Future Skills Requirements Workshop

Collaborating to enable effective asset and project performance

Following on from a lively kick-off session in London in February, the second in the Construction Innovation Hub's series of Future Skills workshops was held in Bristol on 12 March 2020. A highly engaged audience, which included representatives from industry, education and the public sector were asked the question, "what are your future skills needs for project and asset performance?"

Andrew Carpenter, Director of Constructing Excellence South West welcomed everybody and introduced the speakers. The Construction Innovation Hub's, Skills and Training Lead, Dr Robert Illes outlined the well-known construction industry skills problems as well as some of the positive work to address these challenges, such as the CITB development work in the areas of skills for offsite and digital. Andreea Vihristencu, Researcher in Skills and Training, presented the Hub's Value Framework for construction, including a description of the 'Five Capitals Model' of value, which was well-received and an extremely useful preamble to the subject. 'Value', is one of the core themes of the Hub's transformative programme, alongside 'Manufacturing', 'Assurance' and 'Digital'.

Participants were split into themed tables of 'quality', 'whole-life value' and 'assurance and compliance'. Two activities followed in which the audience were asked to first examine, add to and prioritise a number of potential new training ideas, and then explore their top priorities in more detail and set out indicative learning objectives and other requirements for potential new training content.

New skills and training priorities identified by participants comprised the following:

- **'Quality assurance is for everybody'**: recognising the urgent need to embed into all aspects and stages of construction projects, for all roles.
- **'Get it right first time'**: learning from failures, being open and honest, banishing the culture of snagging but also instilling a 'no blame' culture. What a task!
- **Whole-life value for all construction**: applying an expanded but flexible value framework to all stages of construction projects and asset management as a golden thread.
- **Assurance culture**: how to develop at leadership level and in all roles.

A deeper dive later on in the workshop revealed a number of deeper concerns amongst the participants, which the Hub will also use to influence its development of some open-source training materials and other content. Workshop participants all agreed the inevitable interlinks between the three themes examined today:

- **Embedding quality and assurance into our DNA**: in the same way that health and safety has become embedded, how can we do likewise to create a positive quality and assurance culture in the industry? Does this need to come top down, or could it possibly grow organically? The scope of concepts in the theme of assurance and compliance is perceived as vast, but not insurmountable.
- **Skills for leadership**: how do we reach leaders/clients, or those unconverted on the need to embrace innovation and change? Identify and discuss the problems that are relevant to them or business critical to them is a start.
- **What is value?** Where does it begin and end? No single application of value fits all. Weightings will shift according to environment, budget, project type and phase. Therefore, can any value framework be agile enough to adopt these changes and still be a meaningful golden thread?

In view of the current situation, Constructing Excellence and the Hub are reviewing how best to conduct ongoing engagements, and hope to keep up our conversations via digital channels in the interim. We really hope you can continue to participate, in order that we can further deepen our knowledge, develop some really robust content in these areas, and influence the government agenda.



L-R: Andrew Carpenter, Dr Robert Illes, Andreea Vihristencu



Fostering collaboration: industry, education and public sector engaging and debating the hard questions about future skills requirements for project and asset performance and the well-known construction industry skills problems



Debating the finer points of 'Assurance and Compliance'