

GROWTH, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITIES CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, Maidstone, on Thursday, 13 January 2022.

PRESENT: Sir Paul Carter, CBE (Chair), Mr N Baker (Vice-Chairman), Mrs R Binks, Mr C Broadley, Ms M Dawkins, Mr M A J Hood, Mr J A Kite, MBE, Mr S C Manion, Ms J Meade, Mr J Meade, Mr D Robey, Mr M J Sole, Mrs S Hudson and Mr H Rayner

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P Oakford, Mr D Murphy, Mr P M Hill, OBE, Mr S Holden and Mr J Wright

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Smith (Director of Economic Development), Mrs S Holt-Castle (Director of Growth and Communities), Mr M Dentten (Democratic Services Officer) and Mr S Jones (Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

35. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 2)

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr Holden and Mr Webb.

Mrs Hudson was present as a substitute for Mr Holden and Mr Rayner as a substitute for Mr Webb.

Mr Holden and Mr Wright were in attendance as guests.

36. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda

(Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

37. Minutes of the meetings held on 21 September and 17 November 2021

(Item 4)

1. The Chairman requested an addition to Item 23 of the 21 September 2021 minutes – and the following paragraph was added to point 2 of that item:

“The low uptake of 16-25 year olds taking on an apprenticeship, the significant barriers faced by them and the importance of increasing this number. Members agreed this would become a regular item at future committee meetings with focus on progress and what the Council and other parts of the public sector could do to ensure more young people enter apprenticeship programmes.”

2. Matters arising from the 21 September 2021 meeting included an update on the Swanscombe Peninsula and Mr Murphy said the site had been confirmed as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.
3. Mr Meade requested Item 2 of the 17 November 2021 minutes – *Declarations of Interest by Members in Items on the Agenda* - be corrected to:

“Mr Meade declared a non-pecuniary interest, in Items 5 and 6 on the agenda, as the County Council’s representative on the planning committee of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation.”
4. It was RESOLVED that, subject to the above amendments, the minutes of the meetings held on 21 September and 17 November 2021 were a correct record.

38. Verbal updates by the Cabinet Members and Corporate Director
(Item 5)

1. Mr Hill, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services, gave a verbal update on the following:
 - (a) The public engagement for the new library strategy – *Let’s Talk About Kent Libraries* - had received a good response. Mr Hill thanked those who had responded and invited Members to take part in a workshop session.
 - (b) Mr Hill congratulated previous Corporate Director for the Council, Barbara Cooper, on receiving an MBE in the Kent New Year Honours List for 2022, along with librarian, Darren Smart, from Libraries, Registration and Archives who received a BEM for his long service to public libraries.
 - (c) The John Downton Award for Young Artists, held virtually for the second year running, received 342 entries from 31 schools. The entries were of a high standard and the winning items were hung in Turner Contemporary.
 - (d) The Positive Wellbeing Service for vulnerable people suffering from loneliness and isolation had to date provided 40 people over the age of 65 with one-to-one support. The service had been nominated for a national and international social prescribing award.
 - (e) Plans to install Changing Places toilets for visitors with disabilities, like those at Shorne Woods Country Park, were underway at Lullingstone Country Park and Brockhill Country Park.
2. Mr Hill responded to the following questions from Members:
 - (a) Asked about referrals to the Positive Wellbeing Service Mr Hill said a large number of referrals came from GP’s and referrals also came from community and voluntary sector services.
 - (b) Asked about the geographical spread of the pilot Mr Hill said it focused on four areas within Maidstone, Swale, Folkestone and Hythe, and Thanet.

3. Mr Murphy, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, gave a verbal update on the following, about which there were no questions:
 - (a) The Department for Environmental Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) had invested to date just under £12million for the development of the Dover Port Health Authority generating approximately 200 jobs for local people.
 - (b) Mr Murphy, along with Officers, had met with The Aylesham District Community Workshop Trust regarding an application to the Kent and Medway Business Fund to build 28 commercial units.
 - (c) A presentation to 50 entrepreneurs took place at the Coachworks at Ashford at the end of 2021 regarding co-working and renting out space to SME businesses.
 - (d) Mr Murphy paid tribute to Visit Kent who had worked hard in signposting businesses within the hospitality industry to the government's Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant.
 - (e) Discussions had taken place with Damian Collins, the MP for Folkestone and Hythe, about the future and utilisation of Dungeness Power Station and a meeting with Rolls Royce was planned to discuss the potential for Dungeness Power Station to be a preferred site for their fleet of modular mini nuclear reactors.
 - (f) The Kent Broadband Scheme was progressing and BDUK had been instructed to enter phase 3 of the roll-out. Meetings were taking place in February 2022 with mobile companies who had expressed an interest.
4. Mr Jones, Corporate Director for Growth Environment and Transport, then gave a verbal update on the following, about which there were no questions:
 - (a) The Library, Registration and Archives service had ensured facilities stayed open throughout the pandemic and Mr Jones specifically recognised the Registration Team who had worked hard to keep death registrations up to date and to ensure ceremonies took place.
 - (b) In December 2021 the government announced a further allocation of Covid-19 funding.
 - (c) The Public Protection Group had been sharing information with the public regarding scams, counterfeiting illegal goods, doorstep crime and the Trading Standards Checked scheme. So far this year there had been 11 billion views of their information.
 - (d) Mark Rolfe, Head of Kent Scientific Services, had been seconded to head up Hampshire's Trading Standards Service for two days a week, signifying the quality of the Council's Trading Standards Service.
 - (e) The service had been working with government to understand when The Levelling Up White Paper would be produced and what it would involve.

- (f) The service was awaiting announcements regarding the Shared Prosperity Fund, and Officers had been working with district and borough colleagues in preparation of it becoming active.
 - (g) Work with National Highways had been underway regarding the Lower Thames Crossing and an economic element would be included in the plan going forward.
5. The Chair emphasised the usefulness of briefing papers for Members of the cabinet committee ahead of changes taking place and white papers being released.
 6. It was RESOLVED that the verbal updates be noted.

39. Decisions taken between Cabinet Committee Meetings

(Item 6)

1. Mr Hill introduced the report, about which there were no questions.
2. It was RESOLVED that the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee noted that decision 21/00125, Kent Country Parks Playpark Equipment was taken between meetings of the Cabinet Committee in accordance with the process set out in the Council's constitution.

40. Draft Ten Year Capital Programme, Revenue Budget 2022-23 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2022-25

(Item 7)

1. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, Mr Oakford, introduced the report published on 5 January 2022 and said the 2022-23 and medium-term budget proposals had been developed against the background of considerable uncertainty and volatility. The capital programme had been enhanced to show a 10-year horizon covering 2022-32 which would ensure a more realistic capital programme with less slippage. Mr Oakford said it was vital that additional borrowing was minimised to avoid unaffordable pressure on the revenue budget. Mr Oakford said the Council was required to set a balanced revenue budget for the forthcoming year (2022-23) which meant the net spending should equal the available funding raised from council tax precept, retained business rates growth and grant settlement from central government. Mr Oakford said the Council was facing exceptional spending demands for the forthcoming year from a combination of the longer term impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic which had significantly changed demands and costs for key services leading to additional spending associated with latent demand, increasing complexity, and changes in social and working lives, as well as economic impact from rising inflation.
2. Mr Jones highlighted the challenges the Growth, Environment and Transport (GET) directorate was facing including market inflation, scarcity and price rises on contracts. The budget reflected the changes in demand and recognised the need for continued investment. Mr Jones highlighted some headline figures from a capital perspective, the majority of which derived from external funding including match funding from developer contributions.

3. Mr Hill said community services had experienced a difficult year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the exit from the European Union. Country parks had suffered damage from increased traffic, the Libraries, Registrations and Archives division had worked hard to deal with increased demand and Community Wardens had proved to be invaluable supporting vulnerable residents. Mr Hill thanked all staff for their sustained effort over the year. Mr Hill was confident the community services budget would provide the resources needed to deliver community services to Kent residents. Mr Hill highlighted a small number of changes in the budget including the rolling programme for country parks, Public Rights of Way (PROW) and sports facilities. Mr Hill highlighted some savings including the first year savings from Digital Autopsy and a saving from Kent Sport. Finally, Mr Hill spoke about pressures including the removal of one-off savings introduced last year (2021 – 2022).
4. Mr Murphy gave an overview of the economic development budget and highlighted a one-off cost allocated to economic development for a service re-design to accommodate the economic recovery plan which would come off the budget for 2022 – 2023. Mr Murphy said there were not any new capital schemes for 2022-2023 but the No Use Empty Scheme, Kent and Medway Business Fund and the Broadband Voucher Scheme would continue. Mr Smith said a lot of the Economic Development Team's work was self-financing (including the recycling of funds).
5. The Chair asked for a briefing note to be circulated on the specific projects where the recycling of loans had been used, how the system worked and prospects for the future.
6. Mr Oakford, Mr Murphy and Mr Hill responded to comments and questions from the committee, including the following:
 - (a) Asked about the new reserves that had been established Mr Oakford said the Strategic Reset Reserve was linked to the Strategic Plan. This was a new reserve which had been formed to support the work of the Strategic Reset Programme and insecure funding such as the income from traded services had been included. Mr Oakford said the budget was in draft and awaiting feedback from the scrutiny process and the public consultation. Mr Oakford said financial sustainability was key and the Council's debt to reserve ratio was high. Mr Oakford recognised the need for the Council's overspend to come back in line by the end of 2022 and money from the reserves would be required to balance the budget. Mr Oakford highlighted the importance of risk reserves for financial security to cover any shortfall during next year's budget process for 2023-24.
 - (b) The Chair asked for assurance that reserve information would be included in the budget at the County Council meeting on 10 February and Mr Oakford said there would be more detail in the final budget.
 - (c) Asked whether the budget for PROW (Public Rights of Way) was enough to provide improvements and cover the backlog of work Mr Hill said he was confident the budget would allow a continuation of work. Mr Hill reminded the committee that there were 4,000 miles of PROW.

- (d) Asked about highway maintenance funding Mr Jones said the Department for Transport funding had fallen by £9million which would have a negative effect on the services provided to clear potholes. Mr Oakford said the issue had been acknowledged at Cabinet and discussions would be had regarding allocation of funding.
 - (e) Asked about additional staff resource to maximise funding for Section 106 Developer Contributions Mr Murphy said the team structure, additional training and liaison with districts was being reviewed.
 - (f) Asked about the £600,000 funding for Faversham Bridge Mr Jones said it related to design development and tendering costs including stakeholder management.
7. It was RESOLVED that the draft capital and revenue budgets, including responses to consultation, be noted, and the draft be presented to Cabinet on 27 January 2022 and full County Council on 10 February 2022.

41. Growth, Infrastructure and Planning Reform *(Item 8)*

Ms Sarah Platts, Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Manager, was in attendance for this item.

1. Ms Platts introduced the report and said much of the data underpinning the Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework (GIF) would now need updating, since it was published in 2018. Ms Platts highlighted the current workstreams which were currently in place, gave a summary of the Council's response to the Planning White Paper and an update on the Council's resourcing to maximise the level of infrastructure funding.
2. Ms Platts responded to comments and questions from the committee, including the following:
 - (a) Asked about the timeframe on national planning reforms, Ms Platts said there may be a government update in spring/summer 2022.
 - (b) Asked about the National Infrastructure Levy and the differences in value of land across the county Ms Platts said she felt the reform lacked in detail in respect of the infrastructure levy and Officers had raised this in response to the White Paper consultation. The Chair raised the need for continued lobbying and presenting a case for change to government.
 - (c) Members commented on changes within government policy and the pressures on two tier authorities in comparison to unitary authorities. Members spoke about the advantages of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) including how funding was released and distributed. Members noted the importance of the Council working with district colleagues to ensure that infrastructure was properly funded.

(d) Asked about the methodology used to determine housing need and whether the population figures were accurate, Ms Platts advised that the methodology and numbers were set at a national level.

(e) The Chair asked that Officers keep the committee informed on planning developments.

3. It was RESOLVED that the Growth, Infrastructure and Planning Reform report be noted.

42. 21/00120 - Further Investment of Getting Building Funding (GBF) in third-party projects

(Item 9)

Mr Chris Seamark, GBF Programme Manager, was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Seamark introduced the report providing a summary of the Getting Building Funding (GBF) government funding, the Southeast Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and the Kent based third-party projects, about which there were no questions.

2. It was RESOLVED that the decision proposed to be taken by the Leader of the Council to:

- Agree that the Getting Building Funding (GBF) will be used to support the Kent based third-party projects that are awarded GBF by the Southeast Local Enterprise Partnership's Accountability Board.
- Act as the accountable body for third-party projects within Kent's administrative boundaries that are selected by the SELEP to receive GBF grant funding.
- Delegate to the Section 151 Officer the authority to sign on KCC's behalf a grant agreement or equivalent, where this is required to draw down funds following business case approval.

be endorsed.

43. Kent Scientific Services Update

(Item 10)

Mr Mark Rolfe, Head of Kent Scientific Services, was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Rolfe introduced the report and outlined the work of the Kent Scientific Services function. Mr Rolfe said the laboratory had remained fully operational at full capacity throughout the pandemic and paid tribute to staff who had adopted significant changes in ways of working. The Service used apprentices up to degree level and they had proved extremely successful in bringing fresh enthusiasm and ideas to the service. Mr Rolfe highlighted the recent media and public interest in the work of the laboratory and specifically the detection of undeclared allergens in food and related safety implications.

2. Mr Rolfe responded to comments and questions from the committee, including the following:
 - (a) The Chair asked about the importing of food as a result of Brexit and Mr Rolfe said he was hopeful it would be a commercial opportunity due to the commencement of new border control points in July. Mr Murphy said, with reference to the Dover Port Health Authority, that Defra had suggested a significantly higher volume of import items would need to be checked. Prior to leaving the European Union one job role existed at Dover and this had increased to one hundred with further recruitment planned.
 - (b) A Member asked about engagement with Kent based universities and Mr Rolfe said the apprentices were Kent students who attended the Medway campus of Greenwich University.
 - (c) Asked whether capital investment in the service could lead to greater revenue and service expansion Mr Rolfe said there were areas of work that could be considered within existing skillsets, but significant investment would be required to increase the capacity of the laboratory. Insurance work could be considered with the development of additional skills.
 - (d) Mr Hill paid tribute to the entrepreneurial efforts of the service and the committee congratulated the service on its performance.
3. It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

44. Enabling Access to Employment - Presentation *(Item 11)*

Mr Ross Gill (SQW) and Mr Allan Baillie, Skills and Employability Manager – Adult Skills, were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Gill and Mr Baillie presented a series of slides which are attached to these minutes.
2. Mr Baillie said the Skills White Paper published in January 2021 concentrated mainly on intermediate skills (including higher qualifications level 4 and 5) and further education reform. The production of the Workforce Skills Evidence Base enabled Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce to apply to the Department for Education for Local Skills Improvement Plan funding. Mr Baillie said this was a short term piece of work, focusing on three sectors – engineering, construction and agriculture/horticulture – to produce a strategy for the future of further education provision in the county.
3. Mr Baillie said the skill levels, particularly 3 and 4, in the county were below the national average and significantly behind the rest of the South East, and highlighted the need to bridge that gap by developing the pipeline, the existing work force and economic opportunities. There was a need to train, re-train and retain the existing workforce.
4. Mr Baillie and Mr Gill responded to comments and questions from the committee, including the following:

- (a) Asked about the future of retraining to retain stability and growth Mr Baillie said it was important to instil the concept of lifelong learning and adaption to need within the workforce. Mr Baillie highlighted the importance of employers providing upskilling and retraining opportunities.
- (b) Members discussed the need to connect the output of the education and training with what the economy needed on a sustainable basis ensuring apprenticeships and other vocational programmes were recognised with high esteem and desirability.
- (c) Asked about university student figures Mr Baillie said Southampton University produced a report on the destination of graduates and whether students worked in the city, near their home, or near the university they studied at, and most graduates gained employment near the university they attended.
- (d) Asked whether careers advice in schools was adequate and whether local colleges offered training courses for jobs that were in demand Mr Baillie said the education system was demand led meaning students did a combination of what the school could provide (in terms of cost and resource) and what the students themselves wanted to do.
- (e) Mr Smith explained this was an interim report to the committee and an action plan incorporating an economic strategy would come to a future committee meeting.

5. It was RESOLVED that the content of the presentation be noted.

45. East Malling Research and Development Programme - Presentation (Item 12)

Dr Nicola Harrison, Programme Director, Growing Kent and Medway, was in attendance for this item.

- 1. Mr Smith introduced the item and said an investment of £18million had been awarded by the government's UK Research and Investment Programme to fund Growing Kent and Medway (GKM) and support growth in technology-driven horticulture, fresh produce packaging and food and drink processing and its supply chains.
- 2. Dr Harrison presented a series of slides which are attached to these minutes. Dr Harrison responded to comments and questions from the committee, including the following:
 - (a) Asked whether government arrangements ensured that GKM was industry led Dr Harrison said consultations were carried out with industry and partners worked closely with businesses daily. Dr Harrison said the programme was co-developed with industry and the project was business led.
 - (b) Asked where GKM sat nationally and whether other local GKM existed Dr Harrison said the National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB) led on the GKM programme and GKM was building a global reputation in the food sector

with the ambition to create global recognition for Kent as a centre for food research.

(c) Asked about engagement with local schools to promote GKM and encourage interest in research Dr Harrison said GKM was committed to engaging with the community and a social value framework had been developed to identify how this could be done.

(d) Asked for clarification on the research of alternative proteins Dr Harrison said the focus was on crop proteins, fermentation proteins and algae proteins.

3. It was RESOLVED that the content of the presentation be noted.

46. Performance Dashboard

(Item 13)

Ms Rachel Kennard, Chief Analyst, was in attendance for this item.

1. Ms Kennard introduced the Performance Report for Quarter 2 of 2021/22 and said there had been no significant changes since the Quarter 1 2021/22 report.

2. A Member noted the percentage increase of disabled people participating in the Kent Active Partnership and thanked Officers for their work in achieving this.

3. It was RESOLVED that the performance report for Quarter 2 of 2021/22 be noted.

47. Work Programme

(Item 14)

It was RESOLVED that the Work Programme 2021/22 be noted.



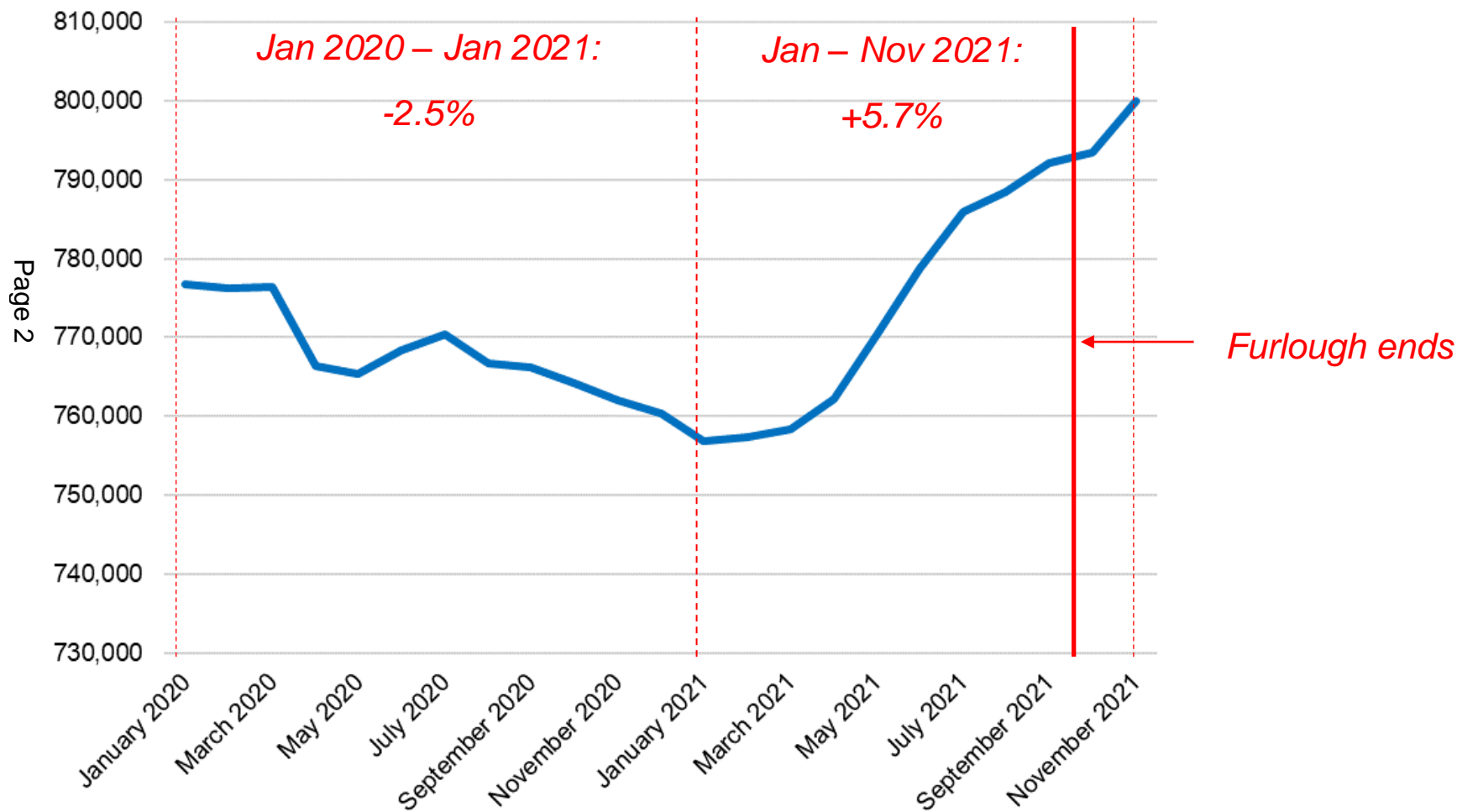
Page 1 Enabling access to employment

The changing labour market and future strategy
development

Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee
January 2022

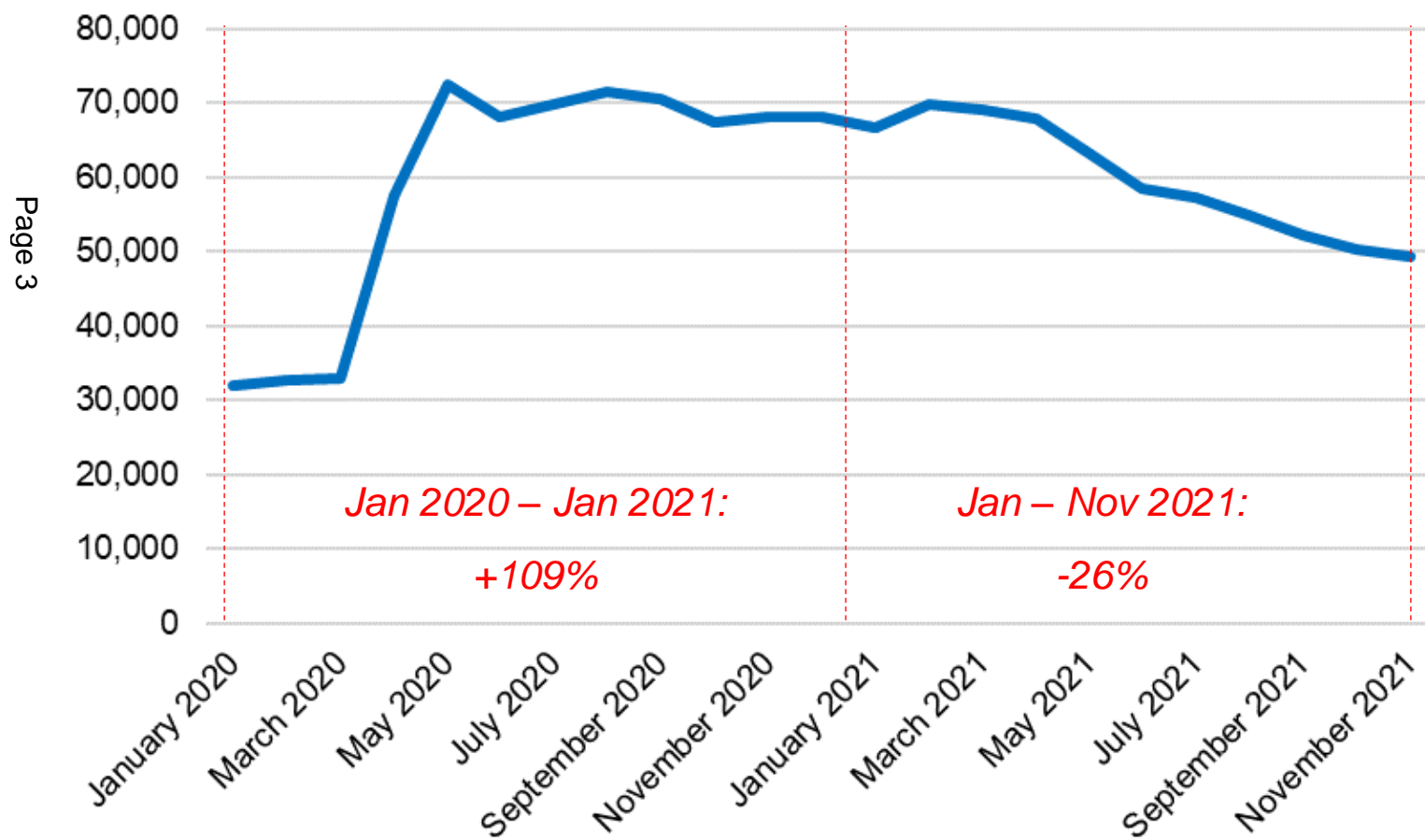
Employment has 'bounced back'

Payroll employees, Kent and Medway



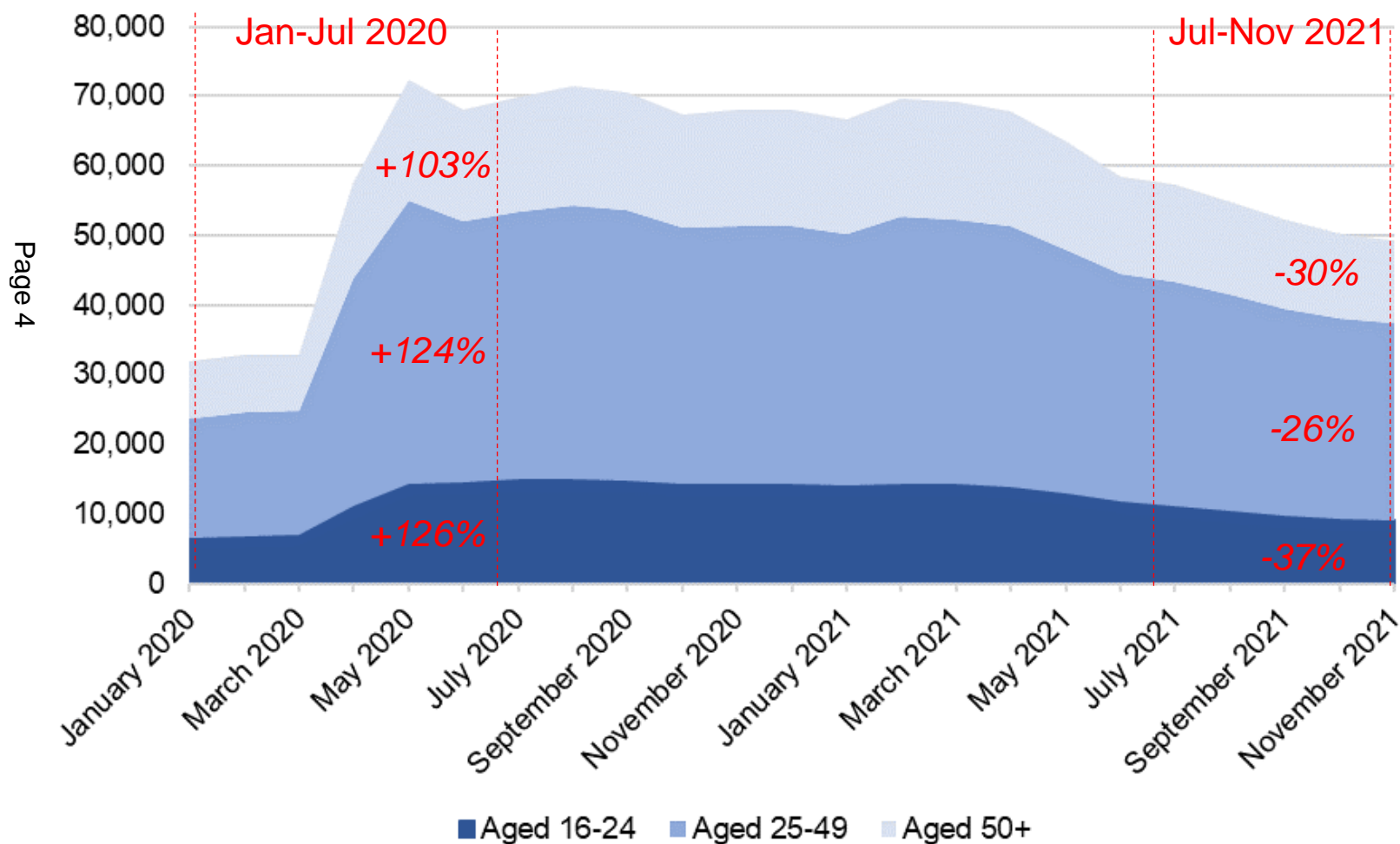
Unemployment has fallen (gradually)...

Claimant count (Kent and Medway)



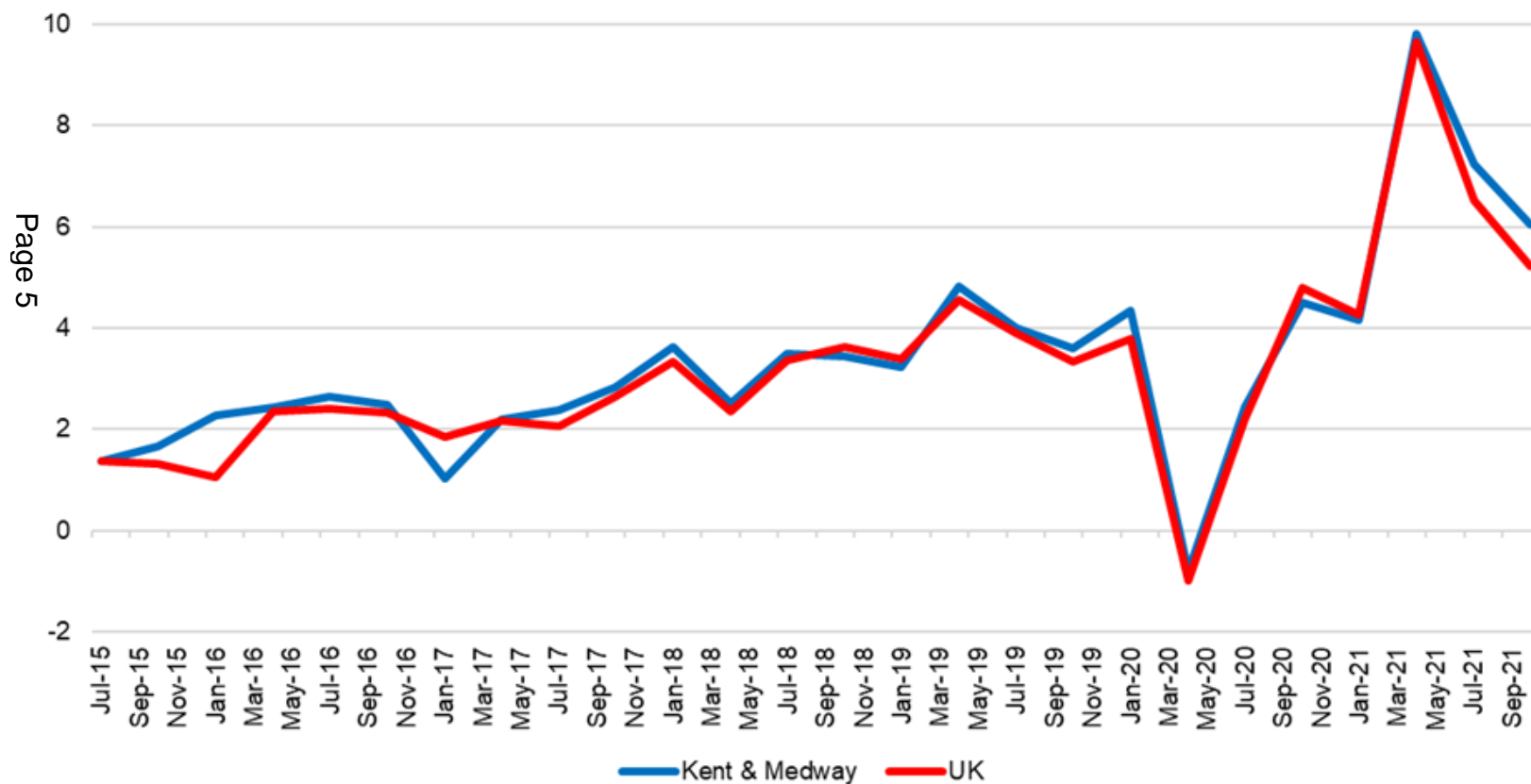
Younger workers were hardest hit, but have (re)entered employment quickest

Claimant count by age group (Kent and Medway)



Wages have risen, but pay growth now falling

Median monthly pay growth (Kent and Medway, year on year, %)



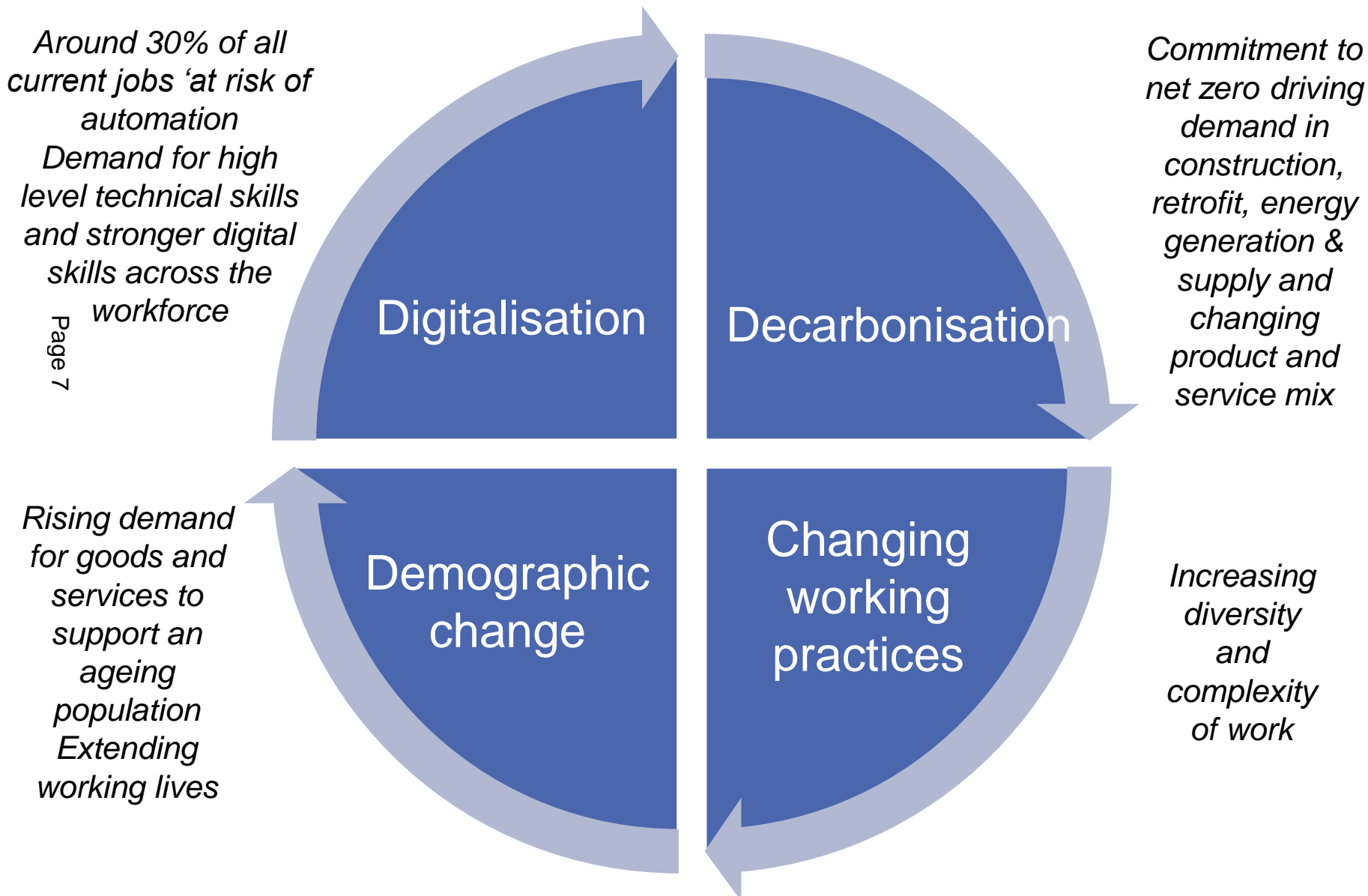
Looking to the longer term...

- In the Employment Plan, the Task Force said: *“we will commission a new edition of the Kent and Medway Workforce Skills Evidence Base, setting out a qualitative and quantitative assessment of future workforce needs. This will take account of technology and structural changes in the past few years, as well as key projects and new investments, to inform the next stage of strategy development.”*
- ... drawing on industry focus groups, data analysis and wider insight.

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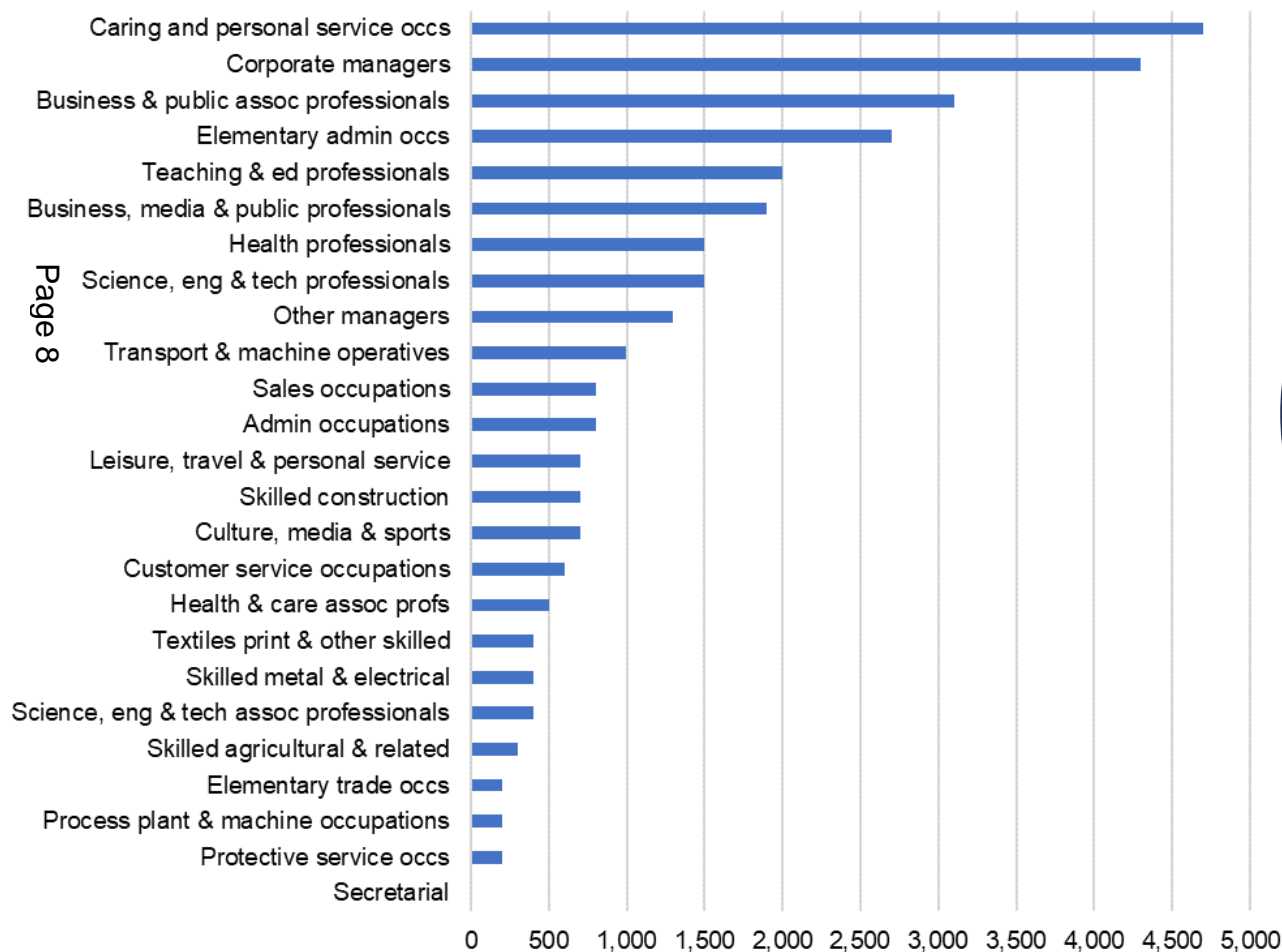


Future challenges and opportunities...



.... But demand across a wide range of occupations

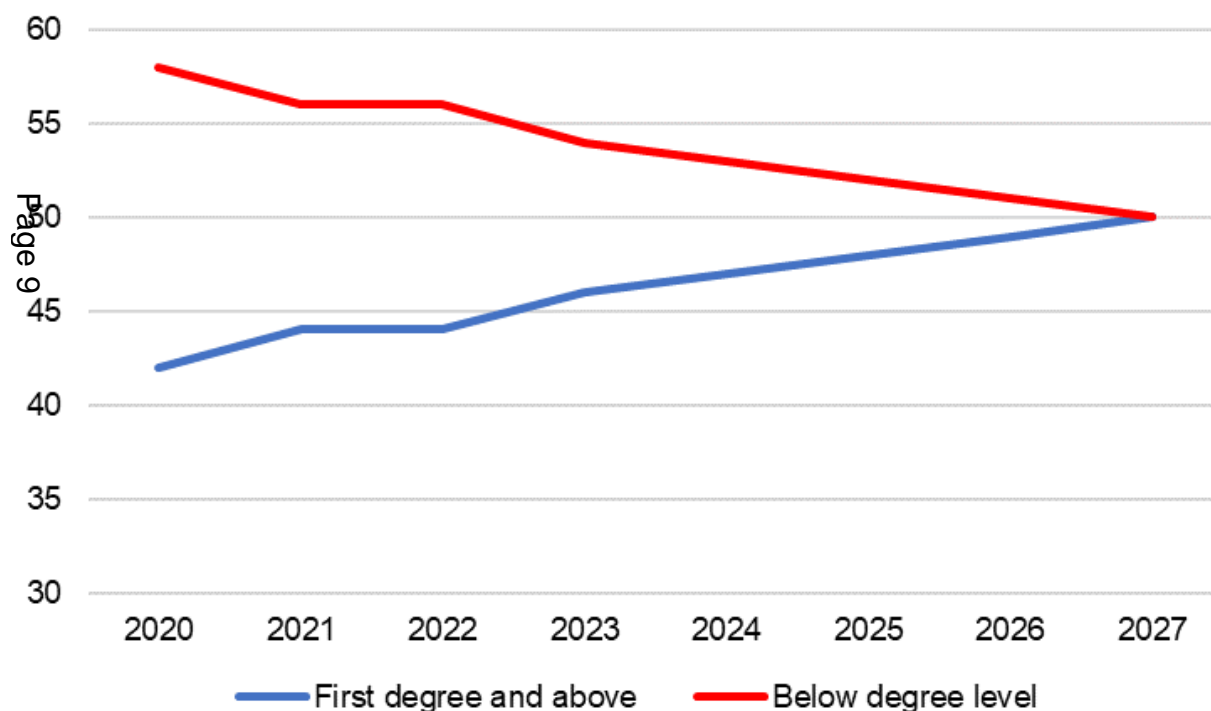
*Net annual demand, Kent and Medway
(replacement demand + expansion demand)*



28,400
net annual
demand 2020-27

Generally, rising demand for higher qualifications...

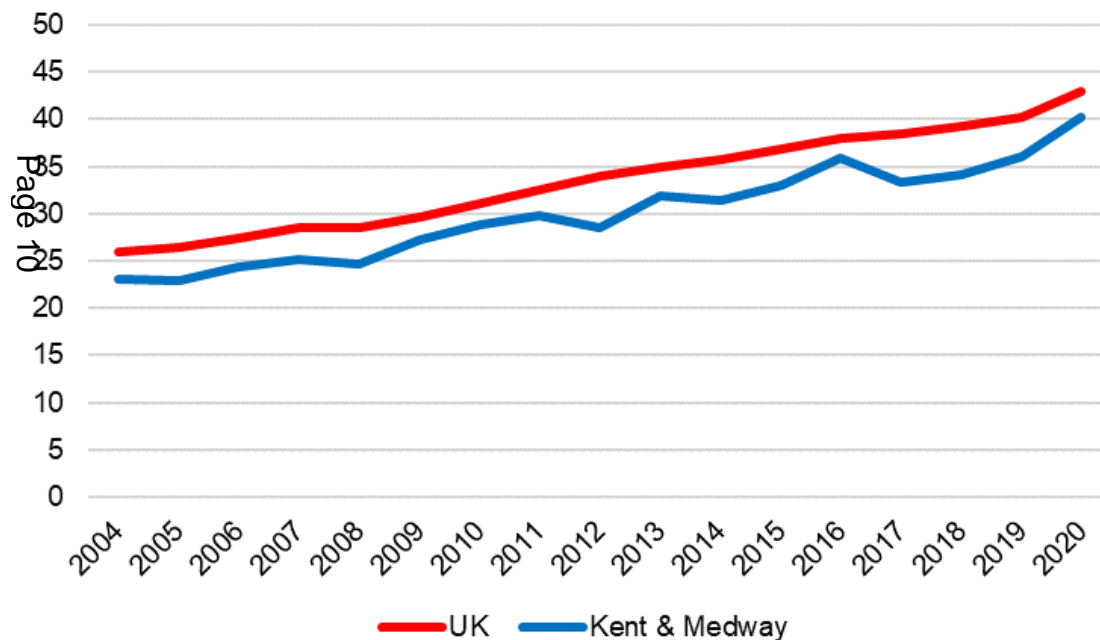
Qualification requirements (% total jobs)



*...but
qualifications at
all levels needed
in several rapidly
growing
occupational
groups*

... against an ongoing 'deficit' in Kent and Medway

% 16-64 population qualified to NVQ4+



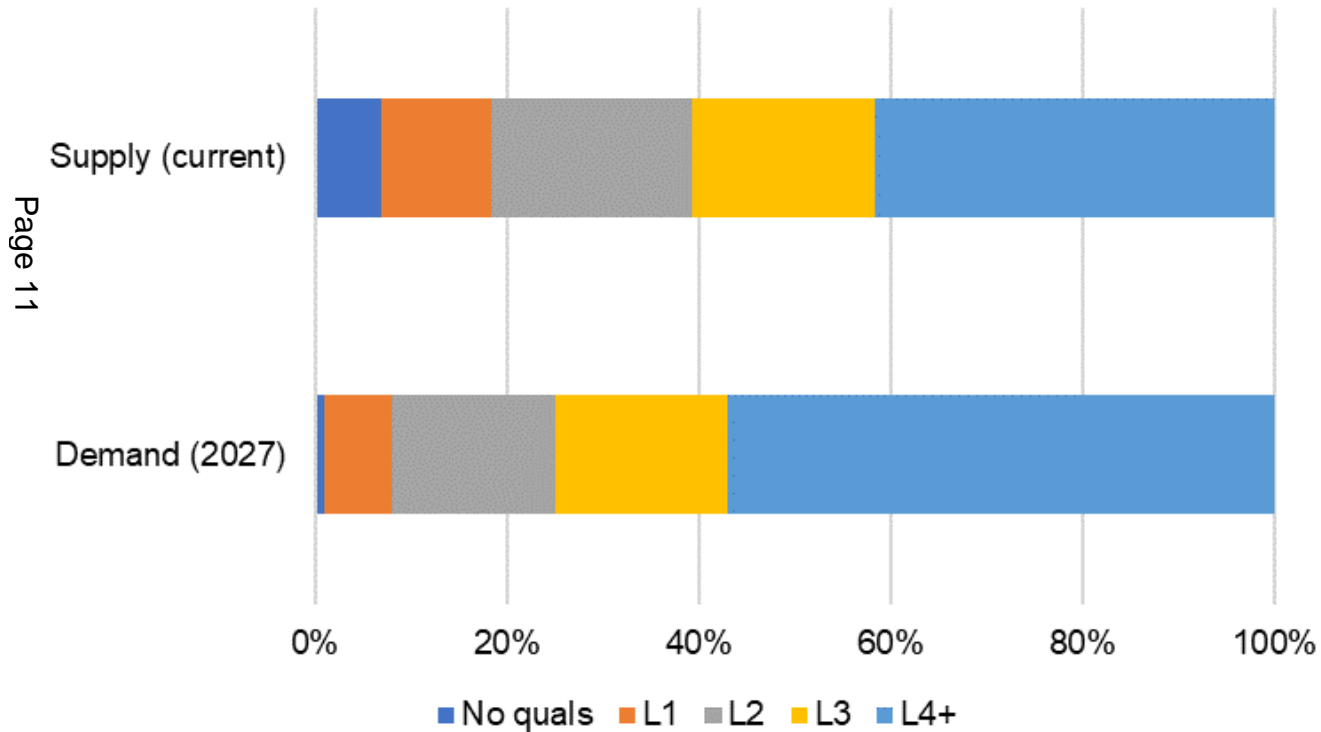
% 16-64 population qualified to...

	GB%	Kent%
Level 4	43.1	39.9
Level 3	61.4	58.1
Level 2	78.2	78.2
Level 1	87.7	89.2
No quals	6.4	6.6*

* Working age adults with no qualifications = 61,900 individuals

... matched by rising employer demand...

Current 'supply' vs. anticipated demand in 2027



... but industry demand not just linked with formal qualifications

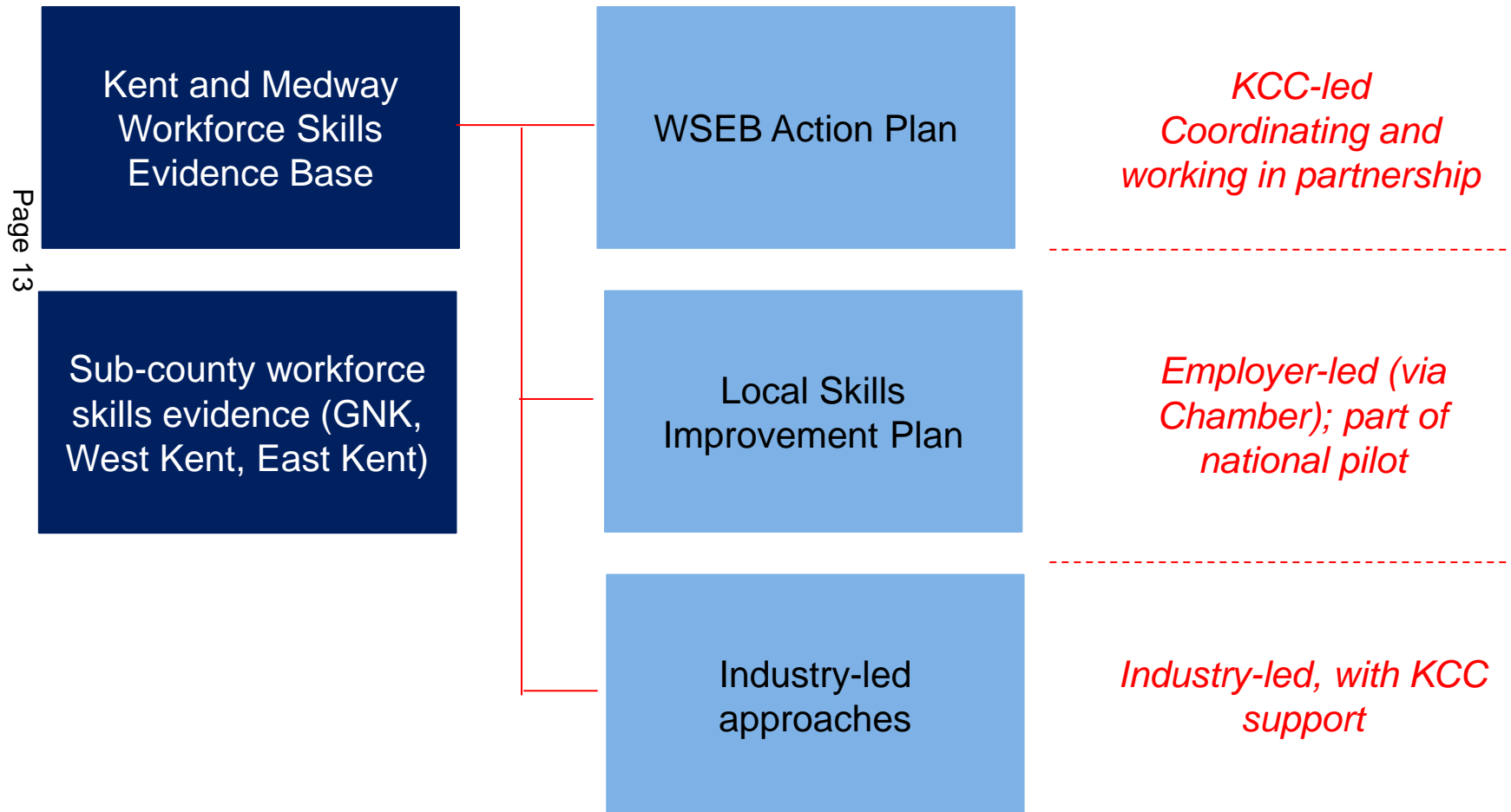
Agriculture & horticulture	Manufacturing	Development & construction	Retail & wholesale	Transport & logistics	Visitor economy
Finance, prof & business services	Health & social care	Energy, utilities & env tech	Life sciences	Creative & cultural industries	Digital technologies

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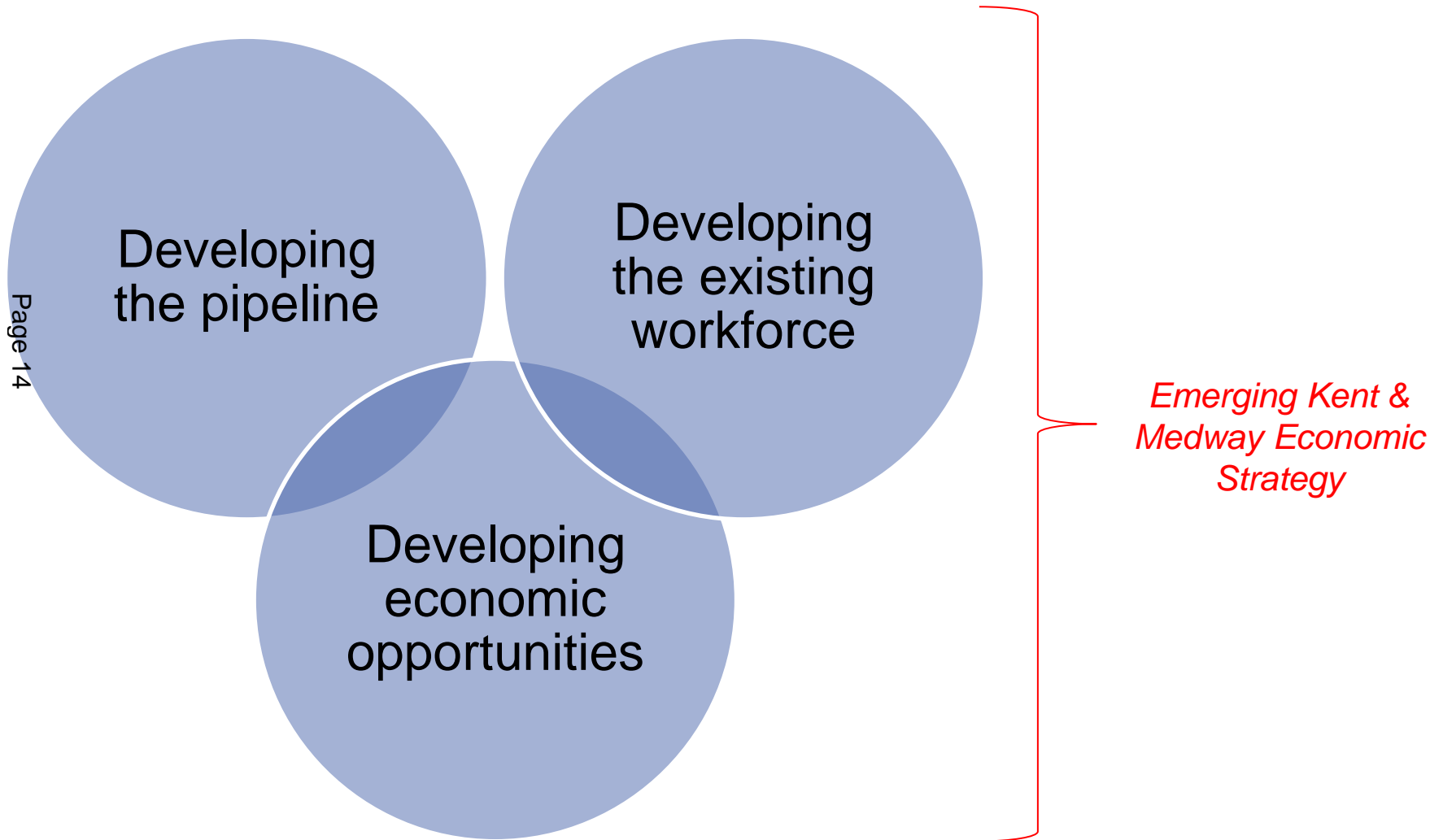
- Need to improve perceptions of career opportunities, including better engagement by employers
- Need in some sectors to manage talent pipelines collectively
- Demand for newer skills reflecting long-term trends such as decarbonisation and digitalisation
- For new entrants to the labour market, better alignment between curriculum and employer needs
- Need for a wide range of transferable 'soft skills', personal attributes and behaviours

Translating the evidence base into action

Skills White Paper and the national context



Linking supply and demand....



Next steps

WSEB Action Plan

*Currently underway
Draft in March*

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Local Skills
Improvement Plan

*Currently underway
Draft in February*

Industry-led
approaches

*Currently underway
Draft by end March*

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A world-class research, innovation and enterprise cluster

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Innovation-led development in the horticultural and food supply chain

Dr Nicola Harrison, Programme Director

Growing Kent & Medway



Growing Kent & Medway (GKM) is funded by the Strength in Places Fund.

Strength in Places is a UKRI programme that helps areas of the UK to build on existing strengths in research and innovation to deliver benefits for their local economy.

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It aims to:

- support innovation-led regional growth
- enhance local collaborations involving research and innovation.



GKM Partners



GUSBOURNE



RH GROUP



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GKM Enterprise Cluster

Growing Kent & Medway is a world-class research, innovation and enterprise cluster supporting growth in:

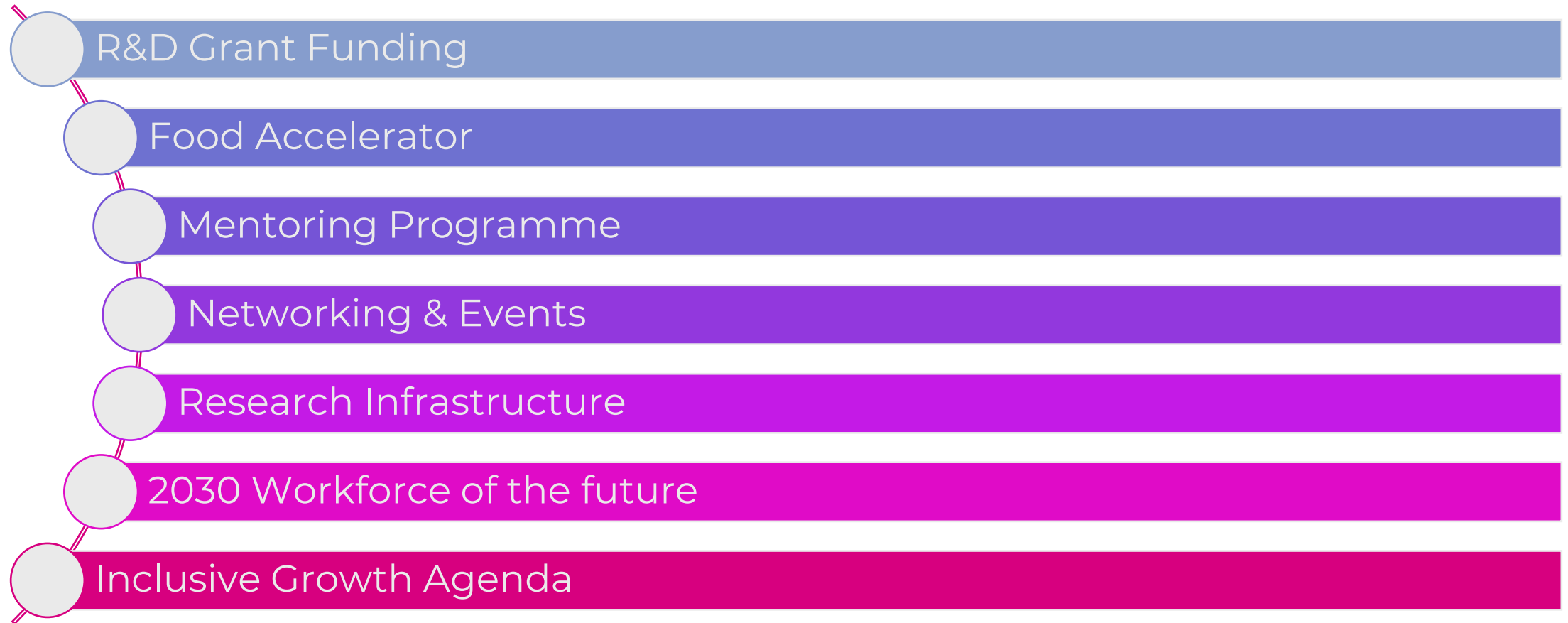
- technology-driven horticulture,
- fresh produce packaging,
- food and drink processing and its supply chains.

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Business Innovation and Growing Kent & Medway Cluster

Page 21



Collaborative Research & Innovation

- Raising investment for industry-driven research and innovation
- Accelerating the commercialisation of new technology
- Awarding grants for research, development and innovation:
 - Large-scale collaborative R&D grants
 - Small-scale innovation & prototyping fund for early-stage R&D or feasibility studies
 - Technology demonstrator fund for showcasing emerging agrifood tech innovations in practice





Grant funding trailblazers

GKM is making up to £5 million available to support research, development and business innovation.

First round of the **GKM Large-scale collaborative R&D grant competition** opened in September 2021. Successful projects will be announced in Spring 2022.

There is more to come....

Funding competition

Growing Kent and Medway Development

UK registered businesses can apply for funding to support their food supply chain.

Competition opens: Monday 6 September 2021

Competition closes: Wednesday 23 September 2021



This competition is now closed

[Start new application](#)

[Summary](#)

[Eligibility](#)

Investment in flagship infrastructure

Green Tech Hub for Advanced Horticulture

- Plant growth rooms, wine innovation centre, research glasshouse & meeting space
- NIAB EMR, East Malling
- Completion March 2022



Medway Food Innovation Centre

- Food processing, product development & packaging
- University of Greenwich

Biotechnology Hub for Sustainable Food & Drink

- High-value compounds from plant materials, controlling pathogens and improving quality, flavour & aroma
- University of Kent



Food Accelerator & Mentoring

- For start-ups and all stages of businesses in plant-based food & drink space
- Connect with industry leading experts
- Access to state-of-the-art facilities and technical expertise
- Mentorship
- Helping to raise investment and grant funding
- Guidance on leadership, strategy & market development
- **Launching Spring '22**



Events

Business Innovation Masterclasses

Overcoming barriers to accessing new technology and funding innovation

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- Providing tools & knowledge to implement change
- Hosted by business support organisations in region, e.g. legal firms, banks, investors
- Example topics;
 - Tax credits and R&D
 - Protecting intellectual property
 - How to write an innovation strategy
- Monthly virtual meetings



Free GKM Membership Network

- Connect with specialists & businesses
- Find funding opportunities
- Industry and sustainability insights
- Access facilities and experts
- Discover new markets
- Book on to events & courses
- Launched late autumn '21



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Growing Kent & Medway

A world-class research, innovation and enterprise cluster supporting growth in technology-driven horticulture, fresh produce packaging, food and drink processing and its supply chains.



Growing the GKM cluster

- **181** signed up members
- **Newsletters.** Average open rate of **49%**.
- **229** Twitter followers. **7.1k** tweet impressions in last 28 days
- **100** LinkedIn followers. 761 post impressions in last 30 days





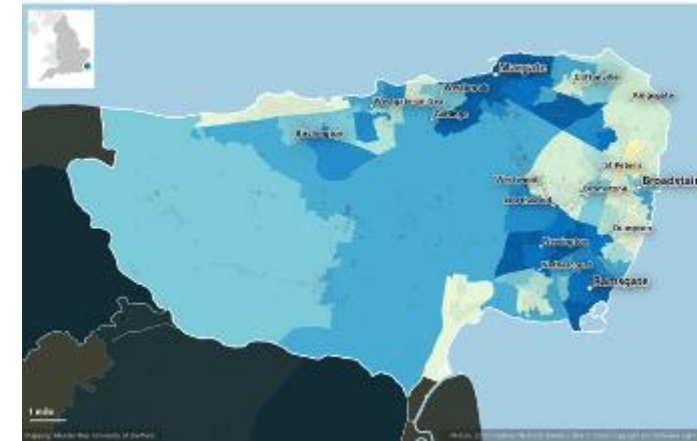
Inclusive growth

Kent & Medway has some of the widest social inequalities in the UK. This is a barrier to achieving prosperity and well-being

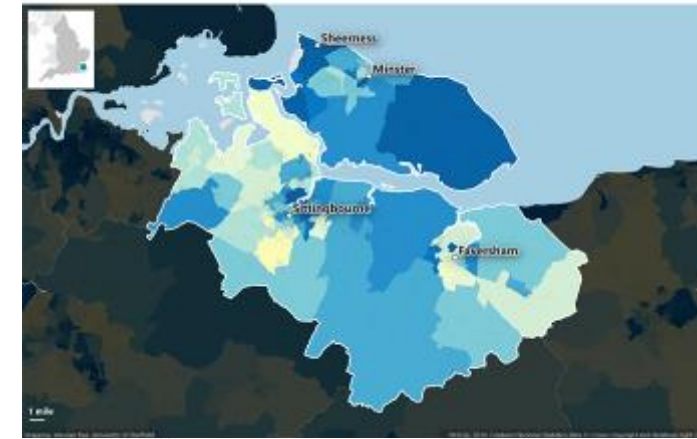
GKM is supporting groups that are under-represented in enterprise and business innovation activity:

- Young people (18-30 years), including young parents
- Women
- Areas with significant prosperity gaps or particular vulnerabilities to the economic impacts of Covid 19.

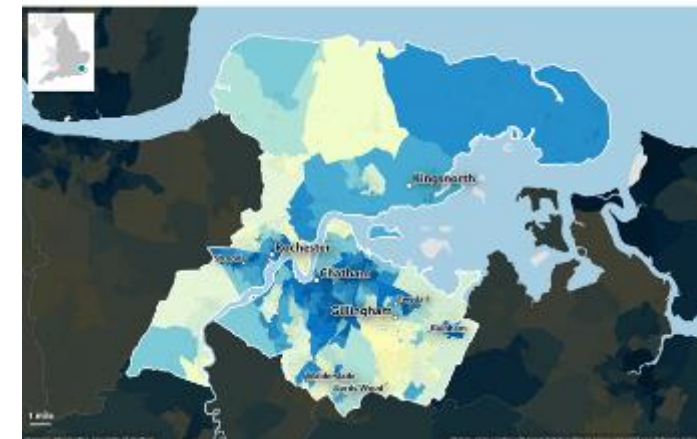
THANET



SWALE



MEDWAY



New Activities and Collaborations

Innovation Park Medway
incubator support for high-value engineering, technology and manufacturing

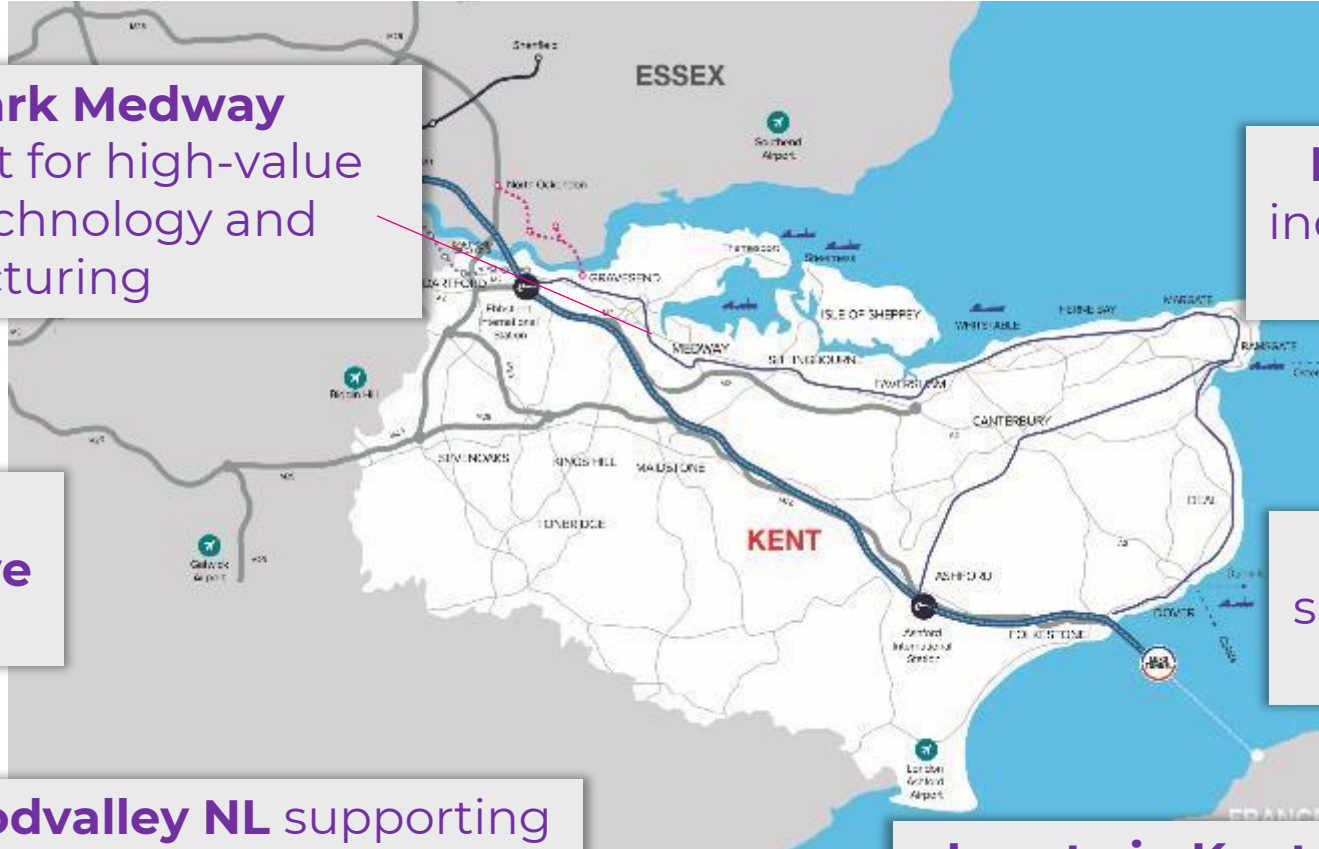
EDGE Hub supporting industry 4.0 and 5.0 in the South East

GKM Special Focus: Alternative Proteins

Produced in Kent supporting local food and drink industry

Foodvalley NL supporting innovation and transition in the global food system

Locate in Kent supporting inward investment activity e.g. Israel, Canada.



Adding value

GKM is raising the profile of the region as a powerhouse in its sector.

Greater levels of collaboration between partners are helping to attract or add impact to other regional investments:

- **Local Growth Fund** and **Growing Places** success at NIAB EMR (e.g. Wine Innovation Centre, Advanced Technology Horticultural Zone)
- **South Coast Biosciences DTP** (UoK and NIAB EMR)
- **UK Food Systems DTP** (UoG and NIAB EMR)





Attracting investment

Community Renewal Fund success:

Community Kent and Medway Partnership for Enterprise, Food and Health.

Building partnerships to grow, process and use healthy food at affordable prices.

Medway Together. Developing people, businesses and organisations to improve opportunity for persistently unemployed niche groups.

Growing Green. Upskilling and enabling micro- and SME businesses to innovate and respond to the economic and commercial opportunities of a net-zero economy.





Stimulating growth

GKM is investing in:

State of the art infrastructure and expertise to increase access to research and demonstration facilities to support business innovation.

Collaborative research and innovation to stimulate technology commercialisation, new product development and business growth.

Enterprise support to foster a vibrant, supportive environment for business innovation and growth.

Developing a **strategic framework for upskilling and professionalising** the future work force of the sector.





Achieving critical mass

- Spring 2022 launch of the full range of GKM services (e.g. Mentoring, Accelerator, Events, Innovation Growth Managers)
- Develop and open new GKM funding competitions
- Continue to build the team across the region
- Complete our baselining and start to measure impact
- Exploit new opportunities (e.g. alternative proteins, levelling up and sustainability agendas, investment, BREXIT challenges)



Get in touch

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