

By: Rosalind Turner, Managing Director, Children, Families and Education Directorate

Sarah Hohler, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education

To: Learning and Development Children, Families & Education Policy Overview Committee

Date: 16 September 2010

Subject: Planning and Commissioning 16 to 19 (24) Provision

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report responds to the review undertaken by POSC into the Planning and Commissioning 16-19 provision.

1. Introduction

(1) This report provides officer responses to the review undertaken by the Learning and Development POSC into post 16 activities.

(2) The committee visited Vocational centres and colleges and received evidence from interviews with students, employees, FE College principals and KCC officers from the 14 to19 Entitlement team in relation to the planning & commissioning of post-16 provision.

(3) At its meeting of 20th May 2010 the Committee made suggestions and agreed that the Chairman formalise the recommendations to support 14 to19 developments across the County, particularly the planning and commissioning of 16 to 19 (24) provision.

(4) POSC is asked to note that the planning & commissioning of 16-19 provision became the statutory responsibility of the County Council on the 1st April 2010. Prior to this time these responsibilities were with the Learning and Skills Council.

(5) The Local Authority and Young People's Learning Agency will now plan and commission and fund all post-16 provision from September 2011. This work started in June of this year by undertaking an analysis of data which produced an interim commissioning statement for planning post-16 programmes. Further to recent announcements from Michael Gove in July. The YPLA will with

immediate effect, directly fund FE & WBL, but the strategic planning lead remains with the Local Authority.

(6) POSC is asked to note the following report highlights the recommendations arising from the POSC review and subsequent actions, into this new area of work for the County Council.

2. Recommendations from Students and employers

(1) Every 14 to 19 year old learner to be given at least three 1:1 relevant consultations on information, advice and guidance and that this activity be monitored and reported annually to POSC.

Response

Supporting and delivering impartial high quality Information, advice and guidance is a key activity for the 14 to 19 team. The responsibility for this activity is vested in schools, colleges and the Connexions Service. To promote the need for high quality information advice and guidance the 14 to 19 team has implemented the most successful Area Wide Prospectus in the country, which has the highest number of learners & schools engaged, and the largest website in use. This system, gives learners impartial information on all post 16 courses. There are a range of other activities including 1 to 1 support which schools and colleges and the 14 to 19 team deliver. The Connexions service also provides significant support for all learners but targets much of their resources at vulnerable learners. Many schools also provide quality support services to learners to enable them to make informed choices at age 16, 17 and 18, including personalised sessions.

The recommendation of three 1:1 sessions would be difficult to monitor and has major resource implications. The future of the Connexions service is under review by national government and there will be discussions on budget reductions in line with all public services. Further reports on the future developments of information, advice and guidance will be brought to the committee, when the national picture is clear.

(2) Tracking progression and destinations of all 14 to 19 learners

Response

This is work in progress within the 14 to 19 team and Connexions service will be a major focus for the newly appointed Planning and Commissioning officers. Currently the unit is tracking 4,000 learners. This is a pilot programme before it is rolled out across all 14 to 19 year olds. Data on the tracking of these learners can be provided to the committee upon request.

(3) The development of a new certificate of employment to prepare learners for the world of work.

Response

This is already being developed by the 14 to 19 team with the Institute of Education. The final report and evaluation on this work was shared with the 14 to 19 team in August and will be reported to the 14 to 19 Strategic Forum and CFE SMT to agree the next steps. An update can be brought to a future POSC.

(4) Present programmes for apprenticeships and targets to be reviewed across directorates in light of the economic climate

Response

These targets are reviewed on a regular basis by the Apprenticeship Steering Group and the Learning and Skills Board. Action is then taken where required by Directorates. However, the biggest challenge is the demand for apprenticeships from learners outstrips the placements available within industry. An update can be brought to a future POSC.

(5) Report into the retention of talented people in Kent and progress update on the Graduate Gateway.

Response

The retention of graduates in Kent was a 2010 target which was achieved by the 14 to 19 team. Many of these activities are ongoing, particularly developing alternative routes into Higher Education and the development of level 3 apprenticeship programmes. This work is done in conjunction with Economic Development. The Graduate Gateway is managed by Personnel Services who will bring updates to this committee as required.

3. Recommendations from FE interviews

(1) Agreement of shared timetables as in Canterbury City to be extended to other localities.

Response

The planning of post 16 provision with all providers will be the responsibility of the new 6 Planning and Commissioning Officers, which will include the development of common and shared timetable across a range of providers. However, it will be for local areas to agree the best way to deliver the area wide provision to ensure high quality progression routes.

(2) KCC to examine the inequality of funding across post 16 providers in order to provide best value for learners.

Response

Funding for post 16 provisions is set by a national formula over which the authority has little control. However, KCC can make recommendations to the YPLA to make changes. In respect of transport, there is a post 16 KCC transport policy that is reviewed annually.

(3) Prevent the retake of qualifications and poor progression post 16 for vocational learners.

Response

Developing high quality progression routes and addressing the issues regarding lack of progression for vocational learners is a key objective for the next academic year.

A report will go to the 14 to 19 Strategic Forum at the end of September to seek agreement from the planning forums to engage in focused activities to significantly improve progression routes for all learners. Further updates on this work will be brought back to this committee.

4. Strategic Recommendations

(1) Cross Directorate agreement on the importance of skills, education and training becoming a priority in order to fulfil Kent's Economic, Social Environmental and Regeneration aspirations.

Response

The 14 to 19 team works closely with all other KCC Directorates in particular Communities and Economic Development. The unit's delivery plan reflects the priorities set out in Unlocking Kent's Potential. There are also strong links through the Learning and Skills Board and the Kent Economic Board, and there has been direct input into the council's proposal for Local Enterprise Partnerships, which are currently under development.

(2) Planning and Commissioning for a vibrant and sustainable business network for at least 6 specialist sectors of the Kent economy so this network informs the planning and commissioning of post 16 provision.

Response

There are 5 priority sectors identified in the Regeneration strategy, Low carbon. Land Based, Construction, Creative media, and Health and Social Care Industries. The 14 to 19 unit is currently in the process of writing 5 Skills Strategies based on the regeneration framework, these will be completed by

December 2010 with direct input and endorsements from the business community. The sustainable energy industries skills matrix is complete and is now being used to plan 16+ provision in Swale and Thanet to support the wind farm developments.

(3) KCC to continue to explore and develop innovative approaches to the planning and commissioning of post 16 provision.

Response

This work is being developed in the new planning forums areas, supported by new data sets which will underpin this work. More detailed reports on these activities will be brought back to this committee as required over the next year.

Summary

The POSC may wish to receive further reports on the following areas as these activities are integral to the annual cycle for planning post 16 provision.

1. An overview of the 16+ commissioning statement which is used to plan provision and agree programmes for all post-16 learners in Kent: October
2. Progression and attainment of post-16 learners in Kent: December
3. Skills strategies to inform planning decisions: January
4. Careers Education, Information Advice & Guidance, and the use of the Area Wide Prospectus & Common Application Process: February
5. NEETs at 16, 17 and 18: March

5. Recommendation

Members of the Learning and Development Children, Families and Education Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

Note the officers' responses to members' recommendations arising from the review and that more detailed reports on 16 to 19 Planning and commissioning strategic developments, will be brought back to the committee as a part of the annual planning cycle.

Sue Dunn

Head 14-19 Entitlement Team
01622 694322
sue.dunn@kent.gov.uk

Background Documents: YPLA bulletins

Other Useful Information: None