

To: Customer & Communities Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee

From: Mike Hill, Cabinet Member, Customer & Communities
Amanda Honey, Corporate Director, Customer & Communities

Date: 18th November 2011

Subject: Apprenticeship Strategy Update

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

This paper outlines the progress made in the Apprenticeship Strategy. The Strategy can be found in the appendix.

Members are asked to NOTE and COMMENT on the Apprenticeship Strategy.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Cabinet agreed the Kent Apprenticeship Strategy 2011 -2014 on 20 June 2011 – please see Item 8 Appendix.
- 1.2 The vision outlined in the strategy is:
To make apprenticeships the skills option of choice for young people and employers.
- 1.3 Our objectives in achieving this vision are to :
- Raise awareness of the value of apprenticeships
 - Support the businesses of Kent to offer apprenticeships
 - Support young people in applying for and undertaking an apprenticeship
- 1.4 One of the biggest challenges faced is that of getting enough employers to offer apprenticeship opportunities to young people. Five areas of strategic focus were identified in the strategy in order to focus action in these areas, these are :
- Employer Engagement & Support
 - Young People Engagement & Support
 - Kent Success & Wider Public Sector
 - Specialist Delivery
 - Strategic Development

This paper will detail progress in each of these areas.

2. Employer Engagement & Support

- 2.1 As mentioned above, the key to growing the number of apprenticeships delivered in Kent is to increase the number of employers willing to offer opportunities. The strategy outlines the need to, in particular, focus support on SMEs.
- 2.2 A pilot support service (outlined in section 2.1 of the strategy) has been developed and has been operating in a limited capacity since last September to coincide with the launch of the Canterbury 100 in 100 Campaign. This service has been promoted through all of our work, including further 100 in 100 campaigns in Swale and West Kent and through our presence at Kent 2020. So far the service has met 223 employers, resulting in 106 apprenticeships which have already started. A further 143 are in development and working with a training provider. This gives a conversion rate of apprenticeships per meeting of 112%, and fully justifies delivering a personal service to SMEs.
- 2.3 The three 100 in 100 Campaigns were started at different times of the year but so far progress is as follows :
- Canterbury 101 apprenticeships secured in 100 days
 - Swale 75 apprenticeships secured in 58 organisations
 - West Kent 103 opportunities secured in 53 companies
- 2.4 These campaigns have seen the Supporting Independence Programme team developing strong working relationships with local partners, in particular the economic development teams in the 5 districts covered. We are also in the process of developing a project with Shepway, supporting them to deliver their economic development aims.
- 2.5 In addition to the support service the unit have been busy promoting apprenticeships to business through a variety of events including the 100 in 100 campaigns mentioned above, the Apprenticeship Zone at Kent 2020 (this was featured on BBC S.East), the introduction of the Kent Apprenticeship of the Year (as part of the KEiBA Awards – which was won by Ellora Scriven), and attendance at business events and networking events.
- 2.6 We are currently in the process of letting a marketing contract that has three key aims :
- To promote apprenticeships to business
 - To promote apprenticeships to young people and their influencers
 - To promote the service that Kent Apprenticeships provide to SMEs
- 2.7 It is intended that this marketing arrangement will drive up the number of referrals to the support service, whilst resources are available to increase the number of business support officers.

3. Young People

- 3.1 The marketing contract mentioned above will target young people and ensure they can access advice and guidance on apprenticeships.
- 3.2 Since the strategy was agreed the unit has been active promoting apprenticeships directly to young people through the following avenues :
- Organising an event for employers with apprenticeship opportunities to meet young people in West Kent (70 young people attended, 8 employers and training providers)

- Apprenticeship Master Class (in conjunction with 14-19 Unit)
- Representation at West Kent, and Romney Marsh Skills Fests
- Talks on apprenticeships given at 4 schools
- Learner event in Swale
- Talks to Job Centre Plus staff so that they can advise their clients on apprenticeships
- Job Centre Plus apprenticeship event in Dover

4. Kent Success and Wider Public Sector

- 4.1 The performance of Kent Success (KCC's internal apprenticeship programme) was detailed in a report to this committee on 8 July 2011. The latest figures since the launch of Towards 2010 show 466 young people have started apprenticeships in KCC and 88 are currently studying for their apprenticeship.
- 4.2 Within the strategy there is an action to develop career pathways attached to apprenticeships, and this is being delivered as a pilot through the development of 12 Youth Work apprenticeships, one in each district. These opportunities are currently being recruited to. This has seen the unit identify a specialist training provider that is able to deliver according to the needs of the Integrated Youth Support Service.

This pilot will be evaluated with the intention of expanding the approach to other career pathways within the council, as identified in the strategy.

- 4.3 As detailed above we have developed strong relationships with district councils through our promotional work and have supported them in increasing the number of apprenticeships within their districts, and also within their own organisations. We will be expanding this through support for Shepway going forward.
- 4.4 We will shortly be meeting with colleagues from the Health service to discuss how we can support them to expand the number of apprenticeships they deliver.

5. Specialist Delivery

- 5.1 This focus is currently being delivered through the Vulnerable Learner project which is the subject of a separate paper on the agenda.

6. Strategic Development

- 6.1 Strong progress has been made in two parts of this focus area, namely:
- Opportunities for External funding
The unit has lead on an Interreg European Funding bid, pulling together a partnership from four countries to work together to grow the number of apprenticeships. We have bid for £500,000 of funding to cover a two year period. If we are successful this funding will allow us to expand the support service for SMEs, the marketing work, and the support for young people. A decision on our bid will be made in November.
 - Promotion of KCC work to national/international audiences – during the past year three members of the team have spoken at separate national

conferences, whilst our work has featured on regional television news on two occasions. The SIP Manager is supporting Katherine Kerswell in her role on the ACEVO (Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations) Commission on Youth Unemployment, ensuring that the good practice we have developed is being fed into potential national solutions to this challenging area. Kent Success has also featured in a European study into flexible employment systems.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Since the apprenticeship strategy was signed of in June there has been considerable progress towards achieving the actions outlined in the associated action plan. We are well on the way to achieving our overriding first year objective of building a strong platform for future growth in apprenticeships.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 POSC Members are asked to NOTE and COMMENT on the progress to date.

Director: Angela Slaven
Title: Director of Service Improvement
Phone Number: 01622 221696
Email: angela.slaven@kent.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Wayne Gough
Title: Interim County Manager – Supporting Independence Programme
Phone Number: 01622 221877
Email: wayne.gough@kent.gov.uk