

Skills for the 21st Century:

No more wasted opportunities

Policy Discussion Paper

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Generation after generation of young people have left education and training in this country without the necessary skills to enter into sustainable employment and meet the needs of businesses. The net effect has been a skills shortage, lower productivity than our main competitors and increasing social inequality. As globalisation increases and new economic superpowers rise in East Asia, the UK economy will no longer sustain those low skilled jobs that have long provided a safety net for many low skilled workers.

We can no longer afford to continue with our current approach. The costs of failure are increasingly too high. The welfare bill for 16-24 year olds in Kent alone is £74.6million per year. Across England and Wales the estimate is £2.9billion. Rising social inequality is leading to community tensions with increasing national concern about young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). Our inability to produce young people who can meet the high skill demands of the future UK economy is a consistent concern of the business community. The UK will lose ground in an increasingly competitive global market if we do not act.

Local Government is central to meeting the skills challenge. Through its place shaping mandate and leadership role across the public sector, it can act as a key link between education provision and the sub-regional economic demand for young people with appropriate work related skills. We need to address the root causes behind the failure of the education and training system – a narrow focus on the academic approach, the failure to provide applied learning and promote wider employability skills, passive teaching and learning styles which fail to keep young people engaged, a failure to truly develop a coherent apprenticeship model and a Further Education (FE) system focussed on delivering national targets rather than meeting local economic need.

If we are to transform education and training provision we need to tackle these failures. KCC has been in the vanguard of providing reformed and modern education and training provision. Placing the skills agenda at the heart of its corporate vision, it has set about transforming the 14-16 curriculum to enable students to become autonomous learners by designing a curriculum that is both relevant, in content and teaching method, for individual young people in a modern day IT rich society. With an increasingly wide curriculum offer, providing vocational and applied learning opportunities for all young people, greater choice and personalisation of the learning experience is keeping young people engaged in learning, raising their aspirations and broadening their horizons. In some of our most challenging areas we are seeing impressive results, with entire cohorts of 16 year olds moving into positive post-16 education or training provision and staying off welfare benefits.

We firmly believe that the apprenticeships are the key to providing the opportunity for many of our young people to learn applied vocational and technical skills that will benefit both them and their employer. KCC has established its own apprenticeship service, which aims to have 1000 apprentices across the public and private sector in Kent by 2010. Using our procurement power, we are increasingly ensuring that our contractors make a commitment to provide apprenticeship and work based learning. The first wave of our Building Schools for the Future programme will deliver an additional 400 apprentices.

Central to the revolution in skills should be the provision of world class careers advice and guidance. Increasingly evidence shows that poor careers advice and guidance is leading people into wrong choices in regards to their education and training or jobs that fail to make the best use of their abilities or jobs they just

don't want to do. The economic and social loss as a result is a complete waste and it has been estimated that effective careers advice could add 1% to UK GDP. KCC has started to transform its careers provision, using information technology to provide students with accessible information over the curriculum offer and careers options that are available to them. Yet we must do more. Careers advice must be truly independent so young people are presented with the entire range of options available to them at each stage of their learning journey. We need to transform our approach by increasingly teaching career management and life skills so that young people can manage and take charge of their own careers development through the course of their life.

The reform programme set out by the Government for 14-19 education, which increasingly places local government at the centre of the skills agenda, whilst welcome, does not go far enough. We believe a range of measures could further help local government deliver the revolution in skills our young people need. Measures should be based around the following range of suggestions:

- Responsibility for 16-19 provision should be fully devolved to local authorities. New quangos such as the Skills Funding Agency, Young People's Learning Agency, and regional delivery structures will only limit local government's ability to get the job done.
- We need to move towards a single integrated Qualifications Framework covering both vocational and academic qualifications which provides true opportunities for comparison and transfer of credits between qualifications.
- Constant reform undermines confidence in the value of vocational qualifications. Any future reform should be incremental to develop parity of esteem for vocational qualifications with the academic route.
- Assessment for individual students and institutions such as schools and FE colleges should be broader than the current GCSE league table measure. It should be centred around individual student progress, and include a range of measures, such as positive post-participation destination and an assessment of employability skills gained, as well as formal qualifications achieved.
- 14-19 Diplomas, central to the Government's ambition to raise the compulsory participation age of education and training may actually offer less applied learning and a narrower curriculum choice for young people instead of the varied curriculum, innovative teaching and learning methodologies which young people respond to and which Kent has pioneered. This needs urgent attention from Government.
- A single National Diploma that would encompass all the academic and vocational options through the 14-19 curriculum (such as that originally proposed by Tomlinson) would provide a single qualification framework that would bring academic and vocational qualifications into greater alignment with each other.
- Given the importance of careers advice we need to move towards an all-age careers service. In order to ensure a clear link between careers advice and sub-regional economic need, a national all-age careers service should be managed locally (sub-regionally) by local authorities under a national branding and framework.
- The potential benefits, both for individuals and the state, from getting careers advice and guidance right are potentially so significant that we cannot afford not to do it. We need to think about innovative ways of

funding transformed careers provision. One option that we believe should be explored is to front end some of the estimated £2.9billion annual welfare spending on 16-24 year olds on an invest to save basis.

- Kent has proved that local government can run a successful apprenticeship service. The proposed National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) role should be devolved to local government. If the NAS must exist, should be strategic in focus with its operational delivery integrated with local government apprenticeship arrangements to facilitate apprenticeship provision in local authorities' 16-19 commissioning arrangements.
- There should be a huge increase in the take up of apprentices. The public sector must lead the way. Consideration needs to be given as to whether all public sector authorities should be required to consider how they could make provision, through their planning and budgeting arrangements, to provide work-based learning, apprenticeships or sandwich degree courses - relative to the needs and economy of their business.
- Bureaucracy needs to be taken out of the apprenticeship system – especially for Small to Medium sized Enterprises – with the bureaucratic burden falling on local government to facilitate the increase in apprenticeships. Skills brokerage needs to be greatly expanded, to facilitate employer and learner interaction and matching so that we create a win-win situation for employer and learner alike.

Transformational change will deliver enormous benefits in the productivity of the county and has the potential to reduce welfare dependency and its consequent burden on the public purse.

1. FOREWORD - THE NEED FOR CHANGE:

A decade ago the learning experience for young people in secondary schools across the country was generally uninspiring and failing to educate young people for a fast changing technological, and increasingly globalised world. The secondary curriculum was prescriptive and measured by the 'gold standard' of 5 A*-C GCSEs in the pursuit of getting as many young people as possible on the path towards university. Although 65 per cent of young people achieve 5 GCSE grade A*-Cs, what are we doing to support the majority of young people who won't, nor wish to, progress on to higher education?

In Kent over the last eight years, we have been on a journey of secondary school transformation; broadening the curriculum to allow diversity and choice whilst embracing technology to deliver a radical and personalised learning agenda, enabling us to deliver our major goal of ensuring that all young people in the county fulfil their ambition and reach their full potential. Our aim is to create a stimulating learning journey for 14-24 year olds - developing the necessary employability skills fit for the 21st century by giving them real choice and diversity of provision appropriate to meet their ambitions, aspirations and ability.

In addition, Kent has pioneered its own apprenticeship programme (Kent Success) on the basis that work based learning is the appropriate path for a substantial number of young people, providing opportunities to acquire industry relevant skills in the workplace supported by approved training packages. We endeavour to see all our 16-19 year olds either in full-time education or employment and all our 19-24 year olds either in appropriate higher education or full-time employment, contributing to society and not becoming a burden on the welfare state.

In parallel Kent has started to explore new methods and ways to deliver the very best careers advice and guidance, for far too long underplayed and undervalued across the country. How do young people plan and develop career goals? How are they supported? The result is dismal and depressing. The vast majority of school leavers at 16 and 18 have no clearly articulated career paths. 48 per cent choose to enter higher education. Nearly 10 per cent drop out in the first year, while over 20 per cent fail to graduate.ⁱ Of those who do graduate, over 30 per cent go into jobs that do not require a degreeⁱⁱ whilst the same number again regret their choice of degree.ⁱⁱⁱ Far too many adults go through their entire working lives without ever making fully intentional, fully informed career choices. Too many end up in jobs by happenstance rather than through informed choice. They spend at least half of their conscious hours in work that they do not particularly like. The waste of human capital and failed ambition is a crime and the unrealised human potential is vast.

This paper is both about our journey to date, our ambition for the future and the challenges we must all overcome to do all we can to make sure there are no more wasted opportunities for the next generation of young people. This paper outlines our current thinking, and hopefully brings a local perspective to the wider national debate.



Paul Carter,
Leader, Kent County Council

2. WHY SKILLS? WHY LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

Since the publication of the Leitch Review on Skills in 2006 the national debate on skills has intensified, with both the Government and the Conservative Party setting out detailed blueprints of how they intend to achieve a 'revolution' in skills. But the skills gap that exists in Britain is nothing new; indeed, as long ago as 1963, the Newsom Review entitled "Half our Future" highlighted the dangers of an education system that was failing to fully equip half of the population with the skills required to gain access to decent employment with future prospects.^{iv} So why have skills suddenly re-emerged on the political agenda? And why should local government be particularly concerned about this issue?

The global economic challenge:

A significant driver behind the skills challenge is the fast changing 21st century economy. New global value chains, revolutionary information communications technology (ICT) and global production networks are creating markets with further reach and more flexibility. The UK has a flexible market economy particularly linked to market changes and fluctuations, which is simultaneously a strength (i.e. more job opportunities) and a risk (i.e. jobs can go as quickly as they are created).^v The rise of new economic superpowers threatens traditional low skill sectors that have provided many jobs in the UK. By 2020 China will be the second largest economy in the world; it already manufactures 50 per cent of the world's computers and textiles and 60 per cent of digital cameras and mobile phones. Whilst today there are three million jobs in the UK economy that require basic skills, by 2020 it is estimated that there will only be half a million unskilled jobs in the UK economy.^{vi} The job market is dramatically changing and will not provide the significant proportion of low skilled jobs it has in the past.

The essential need to get it right:

The UK lags behind its competitors in the provision of vocational and technical skills that are required to maintain our competitive advantage in the global economy. There continues to be a significant productivity gap between the UK and our competitors such as Germany, France and the USA.^{vii} It is estimated that 20 per cent of the UK's productivity gap with Germany may be accounted for by the relatively low level of skills in the UK. If we want to position ourselves to take advantage of increased globalisation and the benefits that it can bring, we must focus our efforts on bringing vocational and technical skills up to the level of our competitors.^{viii} This will require a radical overhaul of the education and training system to deliver a well skilled population. The impact that this could have on the UK economy could be huge. Implementation of the Leitch recommendations could add £80billion to UK GDP over the next 30 years. The think tank Reform has calculated that the amount of Total Earned Income in the economy would grow by £9billion if the UK had the same skills profile as France, £25billion with the same profile as Germany and £32 billion with the same profile as America.^{ix}

Yet the economic benefit of having an appropriately skilled / educated workforce that meets the demands of a fast changing global economy benefits individuals as well as the nation. The financial gains in relation to applied vocational skills through work based learning are clear. For young men vocational qualifications such as an NVQ 3 achieved through an apprenticeship offer a potential salary of up to 35% higher than those who gained the same qualification earned outside of an apprenticeship.^x

The consequences of failure:

Recent research has concluded that the cost of educating the 3.9 million 16 year olds who took their GCSEs between 1997 and 2007 - but did not reach the benchmark 5 GCSEs grade A*-C including English and Maths - came to £71 billion.^{xi} This fundamental failure of our education system to provide school leavers with basic educational qualifications not only has huge economic consequences, but wider social ramifications. The PISA 2001 study showed that the UK had the greatest association between low socio-economic status and participation in education of all OECD countries.^{xii} Put simply, the UK education system reinforces social inequality rather than reduces it, with the gap in educational achievement between socio-economic groups growing at each stage of the education system, and this trend becoming further entrenched year by year.^{xiii} A vital opportunity to tackle social inequality is being lost through the failure of the UK education system to provide all young people with the best 14-19 education possible.

The cost of 16-24 welfare in Kent:

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Number of Kent 16-24 claiming out of work benefits | = 10,390 |
| Annual out of work benefits bill | = £27.7m |
| Annual council tax / housing benefit cost (max) | = £74.6m |
| Total annual 16-24 welfare bill in Kent | = £74.6m |
| Estimated England & Wales Bill (up scaled) | = £2.9 billion |

There is also a huge national duty financially, as well as morally, to help those who completely fall through THE education and training system reach their full potential. The costs of supporting 16-24 year olds who become welfare dependent are a significant drain on public finances. In Kent, there are currently 10,390 16-24 year olds claiming out of work benefits (Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support or Incapacity Benefit). The annual cost of providing out of work benefits to this cohort of 16-24 year olds is £27.7 million pounds. In addition, many of these claimants will also be in receipt of council tax and housing benefit, which equates to an estimated annual bill of £46.9 million. This adds up to a combined welfare spend on 16-24 year olds in Kent of £74.6million per year (see Appendix for full breakdown of calculations). We can estimate that the total welfare expenditure on 16-24 year olds every year is around £2.9 billion in England and Wales. This figure does not include the productivity and revenue contribution to the nation's economy that would result if this cohort of 16-24 year olds were in gainful employment or training.

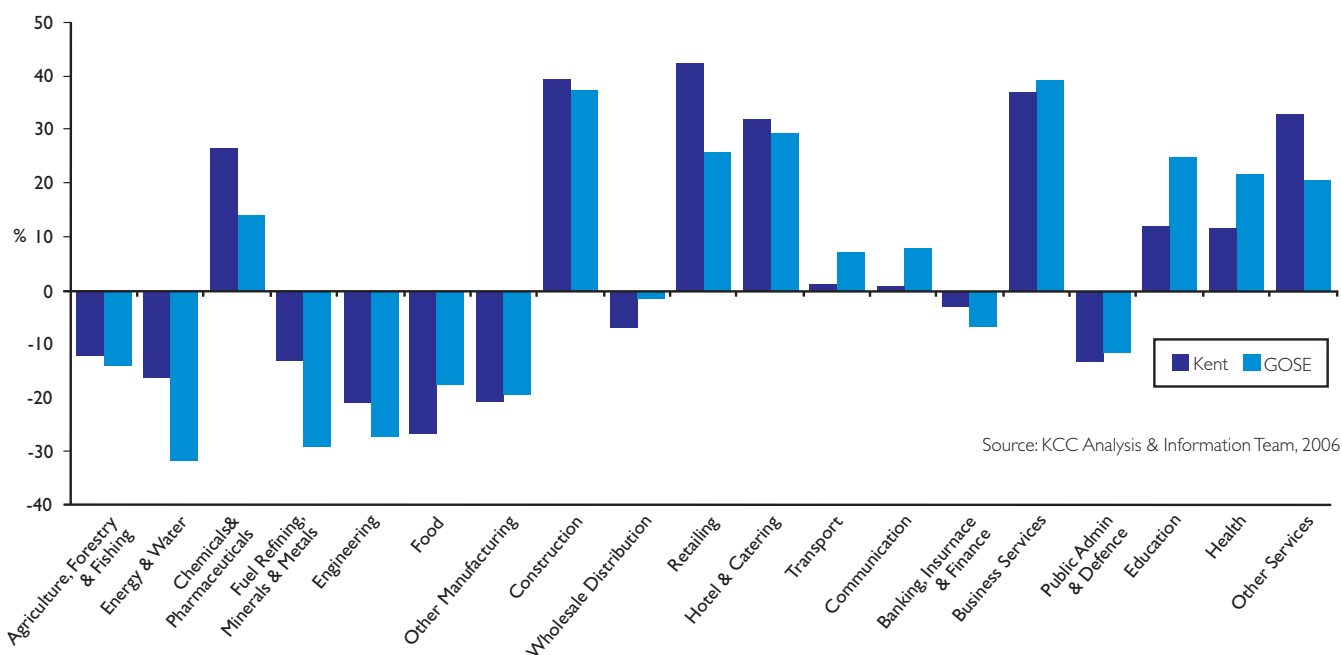
The truth is that the only long-term solution to tacking welfare dependency is to ensure that young people have the right skills to access and succeed in the job market. If we can prevent these young people from entering the welfare system then we can begin to make significant savings for the public purse. If we stopped each new cohort of 16 year olds entering the welfare system tomorrow, over the eight years from 16-24 we could save some £596million. Generation by generation as the welfare roll falls and is no longer topped up with the next 16-24 generation, the compound saving from the national welfare bill would be huge.

Global challenges: local solutions:

So the global economic challenge, the need to close the productivity gap and the economic and social consequences of failing our 16-24 generation are all clear. If we get the national macro education and skills

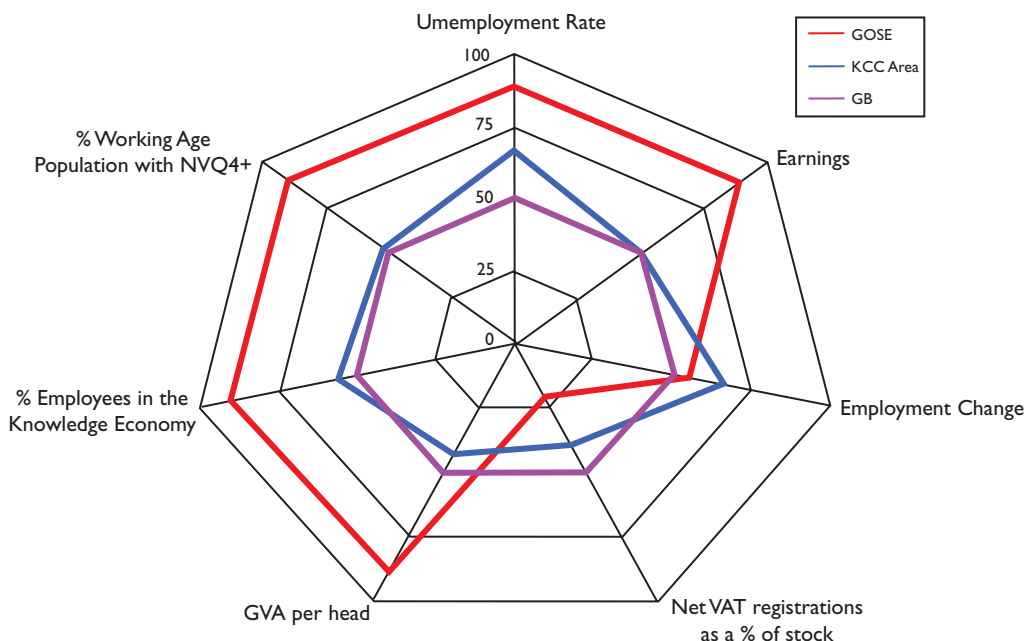
policy right, what role can local government play to ensure the successful delivery and outcomes for young people and for the country. The reality is that global change has its greatest impact at the local level, and local issues and circumstance frame how these global problems affect local communities. For example, figure 1 below sets out the change in the number of jobs in the Kent and South East economy by sector between 1996 and 2004.

Figure 1: Job & Sector Change in Kent and South East Economy 1996-2004^{xiv}



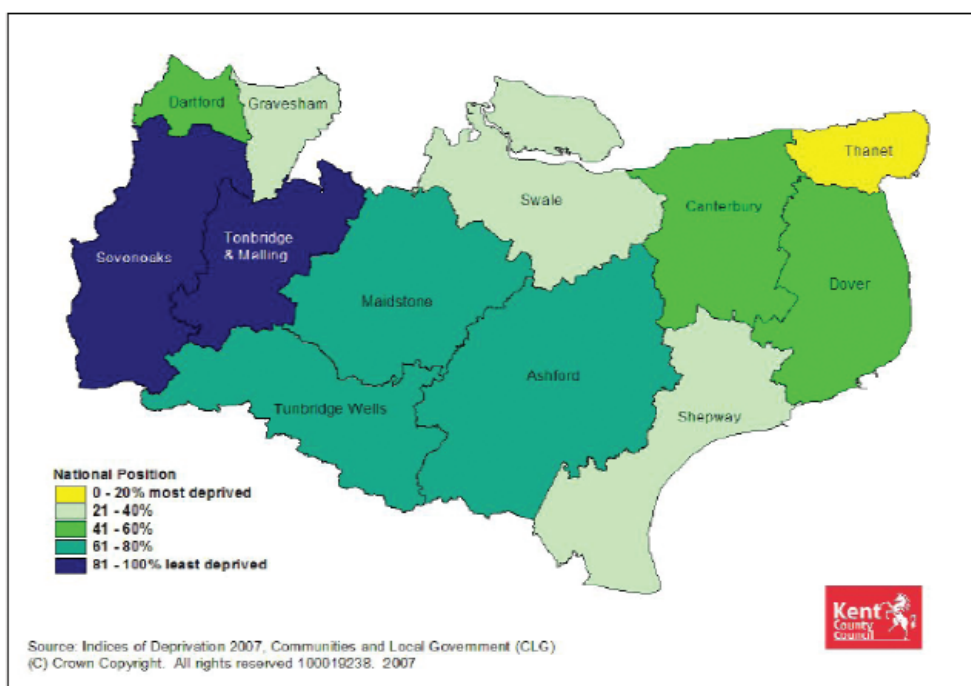
The sheer scale of the shift between all sectors of the Kent economy over a relatively short eight year period is remarkable. The number of jobs in some sectors (retailing, construction and business services) increased by nearly 40 per cent, whilst others (food, other manufacturing) contracted rapidly. Whilst there was a similar trend between Kent and the wider South East area in relation to which sectors of the economy grew and contracted during this period, the extent to which the number of jobs changed in each sector varies considerably. The sheer difference in the Kent sub-regional economy compared to the regional economy of the South East and the national economy is shown in the diagram below, which compares the economies against a number of key economic indicators.

Figure 2: Benchmark of Kent, South East Region and National Economy against key indicators^{xv}



The KCC area is significantly below the South East average in relation to GVA per head, employees in the knowledge economy, percentage of population that is of working age, unemployment rate and earnings, but this varies in similar ways across the county itself. The deprivation rank of Kent districts in the 2007 Indices of Multiple Deprivation illustrates the extreme social and economic differences across the county, with Thanet within England's top 20% deprived and Sevenoaks within England's least 20% deprived (see map).

Figure 3: National position of local authority districts in Kent based on the average of LSOA scores – ID 2007 Local Authority Summaries^{xvi}



This highlights that Kent has very specific economic challenges that vary from the national or even regional base. Nor is this sub-regional variation only applicable to Kent. Research undertaken by the Local Government Association (LGA) has highlighted that most economies are sub-regional in nature.^{xvii} This is a critically important point. If as a country we are to be effective at meeting the skills challenge, and we accept that the education and training system needs to be matched to the needs of local economies to benefit students and employers alike, then it is abundantly clear that the education and training framework needs to be shaped on a sub-regional basis to match sub-regional economies. National or regionally imposed solutions that do not reflect the real sub-regional economy will not work.

The Government has acknowledged in the Sub-National Review (SNR) that economic development can only be achieved through devolution from the centre to localities. It needs to do the same with skills. Upskilling of the workforce is vital to improve the economic performance of the UK economy and local government needs to be equipped with the levers to make this happen.

3. SYSTEM FAILURE: TOO MANY WASTED OPPORTUNITIES

We know the education and training system has been failing for far too long from two key indicators. The post 16 education, employment and training participation rate has not increased leading to an increased focus from Government on NEETs (those Not in Education Employment or Training) – whilst there have been numerous statements from the business community that young people entering employment, at all levels, don't have the employability skills that employers are looking for (see box)

Generic Employability Skills – broadly defined*

Fundamental skills – such as literacy, using numbers and technology skills.

People-related skills – such as communication skills, interpersonal skills, influencing skills, negotiation skills, team-working skills, customer service skills and leadership skills.

Conceptualising/thinking skills – such as managing information, problem solving, planning and organising skills, learning skills, thinking innovatively and creatively and reflective skills.

Personal skills and attributes – such as being enthusiastic, adaptable, motivated, reliable, responsible, honest, resourceful, committed, loyal, flexible, well presented, sensible, able to manage own time and deal with pressure.

Skills related to the business world – such as innovation skills, enterprise skills, commercial awareness, business awareness.

Skills related to the community – such as citizenship skills.

**Source: The Teaching, Learning and Assessment of Generic Employability Skills, Centre for Developing and Evaluating Lifelong Learning, Feb 2007*

Post-16 participation rates and the policy focus on NEETS:

The Government claims that the number of young people aged 16-18 now in education and training is the highest ever;^{xviii} but there has been very little progress in increasing the percentage of young people in post-16 education. As noted by Stanton, participation rates as a percentage of the 16-18 year olds is actually lower now than in 1994.^{xix} This has led to widespread concern about the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training based on two key assumptions. Firstly, an increasing awareness of the wider social impacts - such as increased crime and anti social behaviour - that are increasingly being attributed to the increased numbers of NEETs. Secondly, the low educational achievement of NEETs at Key Stage 4 means that this cohort becomes rapidly dependent on welfare provision, burdening the public purse with significant costs.

Indeed, the shared level of concern at government and local level to reduce the number of NEETs is reflected in a national strategy launched in late 2007^{xx} and the most common target within Local Area Agreements recently signed by Government and 115 of 150 top-tier councils.^{xxi}

Lack of work relevant skills – school, FE and HE:

Survey after survey highlights concerns from the business sector that the education and training system does not provide young people leaving the education system, at either 16, 18 or at graduate level with the appropriate skills they need to ensure their businesses thrive in today's economy. A recent survey for the Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC) found that 82 per cent of recruiters believe the education system fails to prepare students with the relevant skills for the workplace, with 73 per cent of recruiters unsatisfied with the work ethic of students who, it claims, are increasingly looking for a comfortable working environment where they are 'mothered'.^{xxii} The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) claims that 53 per cent of firms are concerned that they may not be able to find a sufficient number of skilled individuals to meet their future recruitment needs and only 35 per cent of employers describe their skills base as good.^{xxiii} Furthermore, businesses increasingly require employees with generic employability skills such as teamworking, self-management and problem-solving skills; 86 per cent of firms identified generic employability skills as their priority.^{xxiv}

This concern about the skills base does not only apply to those with lower and intermediate qualifications, but increasingly graduates. According to a Manpower report on graduate skills in the workplace, only 37 per cent of employers are satisfied that new graduates have the right skills for the job.^{xxv}

But why has this happened? What is wrong with the system that fails to keep many young people engaged post-16 and fails to provide them with the skills required to enter the work environment, damaging business competitiveness and the wider economy? We believe that there are four issues that have been prevalent in the system: a narrow and out of date curriculum and old fashioned, uninspiring teaching styles that do not relate to the real world; assessing institutions rather than individuals; poor understanding of business needs; failing to make apprenticeships work; FE provision focused on national targets not local needs. We also consider careers advice and teaching career management skills to be central, but given its importance that is addressed separately in its own section.

Narrow curriculum focus and traditional teaching styles:

We have, for too long, been placing all of our young people through an education system that, by and large, measures academic ability over individual aptitude and potential, progressing cohort after cohort through to age 16 and trying to give them the basic skills purely through an academic model. The prevalent mode of learning in secondary education has for too long been the model of one of a single teacher and 30 pupils, focussing on the teacher as the imparter of knowledge and students as passive recipients, where the teacher teaches what they wish or what the system tells them to teach.

This producer-oriented approach belongs to another age. The dominant dynamic of the 21st century is one of increased choice, greater personalisation and a consumer-orientated approach. Unsurprisingly a passive 'chalk and talk' approach to learning is alien to today's young people and fails to impart the desire, appetite or skills young people need to become proactive learners. The truth is that young people are all different, stimulated by a variety of learning styles according to individual aptitudes, needs, personality traits and

preferences. The failure of a standardised education system to make the learning journey a personal one and give young people control over their learning journey has led to widespread disenfranchisement and disengagement.

Crucially, this traditional narrow curriculum and the passive learning model adopted in British education ignores the development of wider skills, such as employability skills - initiative, team working and communication skills - which come to the fore in a revised modern learning and teaching environment. This problem transcends vocational academic provision and goes well into Higher Education provision, where employability skills are all too often secondary to the development of academic knowledge and understanding. However, as identified earlier, whilst academic knowledge is important, it is those key employability skills that employers actually need.

Assessing institutions rather than individuals:

The problem has been exacerbated by the blunt tools used to hold schools to account for their performance – with national targets set against the standard benchmark test of secondary education that is 5 x GCSEs at grade A* - C. Despite attempts by the Government to factor in ‘valued added’ criteria to league tables, GCSE results have become the key driver behind school accountability. Yet 5 x GCSEs at age 16 is an inadequate method to measure many students’ progress, aptitude or potential. Sheer common sense tells us that standardised testing for all pupils, at the same time, cannot be the best assessment of individual student progress. Yet we continue to use an academic benchmark that is inappropriate for many young people, and wastes millions of pounds in the process. As the Centre for Economic Performance (CEP) noted:

“What is it about five GCSEs anyway....other countries with a more socially equitable distribution of educational achievement, for example the Scandinavian countries, do not set a formidable hurdle at 16. Denmark and Sweden have lower average scores on PISA than the UK...However, a far higher proportion subsequently gain a level 3 qualification.”^{xxvi}*

This is a critically important point. PISA* showed that Britain was one of the best performers internationally on tests of practical literacy at age 15, with the UK ranked in the top 8 internationally, yet against OECD measures of the proportion of the population reaching level 3 qualifications in the UK falls to 22nd place. In accounting for this discrepancy between literacy skill set and the wider achievement of intermediate qualification, the Centre for Economic Performance concluded that:

“In other countries, those whose performance at the PISA tests at 15 places them at or below PISA level 2 improve attainments in the years between 15 and 25. The most common route is through, for example, apprenticeship programmes or extended upper secondary education, usually with a vocational bias.”^{xxvii}

National policy has for too long concluded that the dividing line between success and failure will be set at age 16. The opportunities to bridge that gap throughout the subsequent 16-24 years have traditionally been extremely limited. Many other OECD countries, with a more flexible approach to learning and qualifications use this period as an opportunity to bridge the attainment gap that is inherent within most cohorts of 16 year olds. This pragmatic approach on behalf of our competitors means that they overtake the UK in

* Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) ran by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

providing a higher number of their young people with intermediate level 3 qualifications. Britain's failure to develop a more progressive assessment regime, combined with a rigid league table framework for schools, has a knock on effect of condemning too many young people to be labelled as failures at an inappropriate stage of their development, against a benchmark that, for at least half of them, will always be inappropriate.

Poor understanding of business needs:

Reform of the education and training sector has been underpinned by a need to match vocational qualifications to the needs of businesses. Despite the rhetoric that suggests this has been achieved, however, there are several problems with this approach. Firstly, national employer representatives via the Sector Skills Councils play a key and leading role in developing the curriculum for vocational qualifications. Yet to what extent can national representative bodies realistically provide an assessment of the skills needs in their entire sector when sector needs vary considerably across local sub-regional economies? Moreover, the representatives on these bodies generally come from large national level organisations, yet the majority of businesses in the UK and within each sector are formed from small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). The Institute of Directors has noted that *“some Sector Skills Councils could face a real challenge in ensuring that the new qualifications meet the needs of employers from small and medium size enterprises.”* ^{xxviii}

Indeed, an excellent example that raises serious concerns over the extent to which the Further Education (FE) system truly considers business needs is the issue of reducing the number of vocational qualifications from the 4000 qualifications in the National Qualification Framework. It is often stated by the Government that there are too many vocational qualifications which confuse the business sector and preclude real engagement with the private sector. For this reason the Government is seeking to reduce the number of qualifications available, but, according to research from the Institute of Directors (IoD), the business sector can actually navigate the qualification system quite easily. A research survey in 2005 found that 66 per cent of Directors were familiar with the range of vocational qualifications in their business sector, whilst 53 per cent thought that there was the right number of vocational qualifications in their sector.^{xxix} Indeed, as the IOD notes:

“The UK is a modern capitalist market economy, with 4.3 million businesses, where employment is increasingly specialised and where there are many different types of jobs. Accordingly, it is hardly surprising that there are a variety of awarding bodies offering many different vocational qualifications. This is good. A market in vocational qualifications should result in awarding bodies competing to develop and offer courses and qualifications that meet the needs of employers and learners”^{xxx}

The current level of business engagement must be questioned if the current agenda is to reduce the range of qualifications on offer is not based on the available evidence from the business community itself.

Failing to make apprenticeships work:

For too long we have failed to provide an apprenticeship system that truly provide a real option for young people to learn applied skills in a real work environment whilst they can earn a wage. Instead, the apprenticeship brand has been devalued through the increased use of programme led apprenticeships, which are primarily classroom based, whilst the focus on apprenticeship levels has shifted from level 3 down to level 2 whilst the national apprenticeship system that has been delivered from a top down approach in a bureaucratic supply side approach by the LSC.^{xxxi} The apprenticeship take up rate is far too low.

Apprenticeships are available in just 10% of the country's employers, with just 130,000 businesses hiring apprentices each year, or around 10% of VAT registered businesses.^{xxxii} Provision for apprentices in the public sector is even worse. The public sector accounts for 20% of national employment but provides less than 10% of all apprenticeship places.^{xxxiii}

Why has the national system failed in such a way? Partly it is a result of lack of information and marketing of the apprenticeship programme and the benefits to businesses e.g. exemption from minimum wage. A significant barrier to business take up is the high levels of bureaucracy, red tape and form filling which have been central to the apprenticeship provision. Even the head of Tesco, one of the largest employers in the country has complained about the level of bureaucracy associated with taking on an apprentice.^{xxxiv} If large scale multi national firms struggle with the bureaucracy around apprenticeships, it is hardly surprising that many small and medium sized enterprises will not even countenance the idea. A very significant problem has been the failure of the education and training system to provide young people who are work ready, with the employability skills, motivation and maturity to enter a real work environment, whilst not developing an effective and intelligent skills brokerage system that would match young people's skillsets to employers which require them.

FE provision focussed on national targets rather than local needs:

Learning and Skills Council (LSC) priorities have focussed on national targets set through Public Service Agreements with the Treasury, which have in turn have been central to shaping FE provision over recent years. In particular, targets to raise the participation level of young people and increase the number of 19 year olds achieving level 2 qualifications against a 2004 baseline have dominated their approach. At a headline level it would appear that the approach has worked, with success rates in FE and work based learning increasing in recent years from 53 per cent in 1997-98 to 77 per cent in 2006-07. The proportion of young people completing apprenticeships has more than doubled since 2003-04 to reach 63 per cent in 2006-07.^{xxxv}

But has the increased success rate come at a cost? It could be argued that the problems generated by basing provision around these centrally determined targets outweigh the benefits.

Firstly, the targets focus on the inappropriate level of achievement relative to the future needs of businesses. Most employers argue that to meet their future skills requirements they need employees who are qualified up to level 3 (intermediate qualifications). Therefore the extent to which FE provision has been orientated around the needs of business must be seriously questioned if it is setting its sights on achievement that is one stage too low than business says it requires.

Moreover, nationally prescribed targets provide perverse financial incentives for colleges and providers to recruit students without reference back to local economic need or circumstance.

Funding for courses is based on the number of students recruited. Schools and colleges are often under pressure to compete for students and in many cases students are not recruited to courses matched to their aspirations or needs. This leads to vast sums of money being paid to colleges to retain their current courses rather than offer more work relevant qualifications. The LSC funding formula focuses funding on level 2 provision, but by also factoring in success rates for each course into future funding calculations^{xxxvi} it gives perverse incentives for FE providers to focus provision for students that are most likely to complete a course.

Whilst clearly intended to provide an incentive for FE providers to increase the quality of teaching and improve success rates overall, the formula actually encourages providers to maximise their funding by limiting provision for students who lack basic skills and who might require more intensive support and basic level 1 qualifications. The result is a significant cohort of young people who are in need of basic skills provision being disenfranchised from FE provision, when research shows that it is they who are least likely to engage with and most likely to drop out of FE provision^{xxxvii} and become the next generation of welfare dependents. The FE funding setup is clearly an inappropriate use of public funds when it fails to deliver even the basic skills required for those young people most in need.

Whilst it is right and proper to focus on increasing intermediate qualifications, we cannot do this at the cost of further disenfranchising those who need basic skills. The extent of the problem led Sir Michael Bichard - who was central in the establishment of the LSC - to comment that “this is personally very disappointing. Because the simple fact is that the council is not treating seriously or equitably this most vulnerable group.”^{xxxviii} Indeed, and we wonder why there is such a crisis over the number of NEETs.

4. OUR LEADERSHIP & INVESTMENT IN SKILLS

KCC has long recognised that the education and training system is not adequately delivering for many of our young people, their future employers or the local economy. Local Government's primary duty should be to tackle this deficit. We believe that applied learning, in both the vocational and academic spheres, is central to developing business relevant skills that can meet the needs of local economies. To succeed we must keep young people engaged and ensure they are stimulated by their learning journey, opening their eyes, broadening their horizons and aiming high.

To deliver this, Kent has started to transform its curriculum within Government restraints so that it is increasingly tailor-made to individual needs, interests and aspirations of young people, equipping them with applied skills and knowledge to prepare them for employment or higher education. Our approach has placed Kent at the vanguard of education reform and modern training provision, and we are starting to enhance the quality of our careers advice (see next chapter). We believe our approach has clear lessons for central government, local government and the wider public sector.

Put education and skills at heart of our core provision

KCC has placed improving skills at the heart of its corporate vision, *Towards 2010*. This commits KCC to transforming the 14-24 learning journey by broadening the curriculum choice of high quality vocational education and training so that all our young people can enter the world of employment equipped with work-ready skills.

The targets set out in *Towards 2010* (see box) go well beyond the statutory performance framework set out by the Government and Audit Commission. These are our local priorities and performance against them is intensively managed and scrutinised across the entire County Council. This means that all members and officers, no matter which part of the business they work in, are clear as to what our priorities are, whilst the public have a clearly defined target by which to hold us to account

The 2010 Skills Targets:

- **Raise the expectations and aspirations of our young people by giving all 13-19 year-olds the very best careers guidance and by providing master classes presented by businessmen, entrepreneurs and professionals.**
- **Expand our pioneering vocational 14-16 programme to more than 4,000 students, offering real choice in a diverse and stimulating curriculum tailored to the needs of students and relevant to the real world.**
- **Double the number of participants on Skill Force-type Programmes.**
- **Introduce a Kent Apprenticeship scheme, offering at least 1,000 apprenticeship opportunities across the private and public sectors.**
- **Introduce the Kent Community Programme, building teams of apprentices to participate in community projects.**
- **Build strong business-education partnerships that benefit both employers and schools**

The need for a cross cutting driver for skills:

It is clear, however, that transformation of the education and skills agenda cuts across many aspects of both the public sector and private sector. That is why KCC established the 14-24 Innovation Unit in 2007 which acts as a key vehicle for the delivery of our skills agenda, providing coordination and leadership and a clearly identifiable link and access point for strategic partners including schools, FE colleges, Higher Education (HE) providers, Connexions, vocational education providers, the LSC, skills brokers, employers and the business community. The unit has responsibility for the delivery of professional skills and training, developing Education Business Partnerships, careers guidance, vocational programmes, apprenticeship programmes and supporting individuals into long-term employment. This will ensure that our young people - the workforce of tomorrow - bring economic success to Kent.

The County Council has broadened the age remit beyond 14-19 (when the Government moves provision for 'young people' into 'adult' provision) and supports the county's young people up until the age of 24, seeing them through the crucial stages of transition, leaving school, college or university. This enables extra help for more vulnerable young people who fall through the net and find themselves on benefits. Our view is that the cut-off point at 19 is too early for many young people who still need the intensive support, guidance and provision that is necessary to improve their skills levels and see them into sustainable long term employment.

Transforming the 14-16 curriculum:

In Kent, we recognise that to significantly raise skills levels we need to develop highly motivated autonomous and creative learners who are equipped for life and work in the 21st century. Our vision is for students to have more control over how they learn and what they learn, so they find education exciting and relevant to their ambitions, keeping them engaged and motivated whilst encouraging young people to become life-long learners through self motivation and discipline. To facilitate this, we have developed an education system that enables students to become autonomous learners by designing a curriculum that is both relevant, in content and teaching methods, for individual young people in modern day society, who are accustomed to both choice and an IT rich environment.

By redesigning the curriculum to provide a wide ranging academic and vocational offer a student can develop a particular focus such as the arts, humanities or sport and more vocational options, developing practical skills through applied learning on vocational courses as well as following the academic route. Teaching is also being transformed, changing group sizes to suit the subject and the learner cohort, using large 'master classes' as well as small groups and more one-to-one support to enable greater teacher support for those pupils who have learning difficulties or other needs. Increasingly greater emphasis is placed on structured project-based learning that emphasises and promotes the acquisition of skills such as independent learning, critical thinking and analysis, group social skills and a work ethic. The very skills that employers increasingly say they need in the 21st century economy.

We have pioneered new and stimulating methods of delivering vocational opportunities for 14-16 year olds in Kent, which provide tailor-made courses relevant to the needs of the labour market. Students can choose subjects as wide ranging as construction, engineering, social care, hospitality and catering, retail & business and IT. Although the pre-vocational curriculum may provide progression into vocational skills training post-16, it is not intended to provide a restricted vocational pathway, but instead enrich the traditional curriculum through applied learning for all students aged 14-16. We have invested substantially in pioneering a vocational

curriculum with over 4000 14-16 year olds enrolled in vocational courses in the 2007/2008 academic year – achieving the *Towards 2010* target two years early. The demand for our vocational course outstrips supply, demonstrating the clear demand from learners and parents alike for vocational education. Indeed, the *Towards 2010* target has now been revised to meet demand and enable 7000 students to enrol on vocational courses, but meeting this latent demand will require significant additional investment.

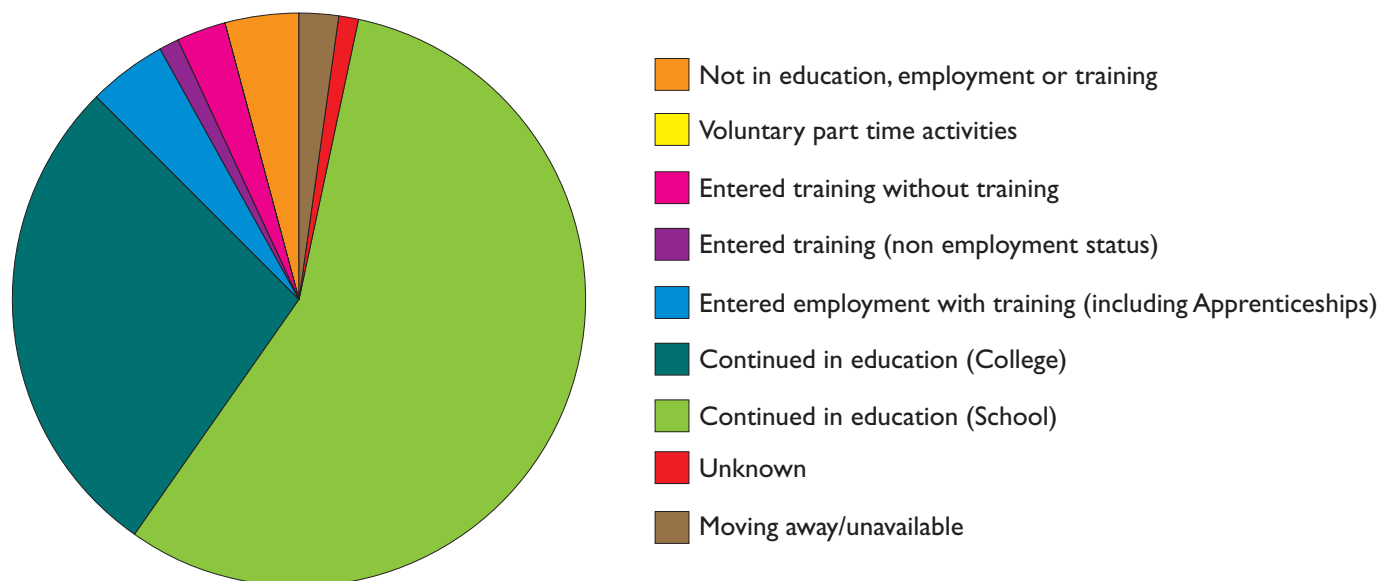
We know that for work related applied learning to be effective, it needs to be provided in a learning environment that truly reflects and replicates the real work environment. That is why over the last two years JCC has committed a significant capital resource of £13.1million to provide 21 new high quality state of the art specialist workshops and facilities for vocational learning. All of our Skills Centres are newly built or refurbished and provide practical, hands-on, industry related vocational training for 14 to 16 year olds, 16 to 19 year olds and adult students in a variety of subjects. The flagship £1.5million Thanet Skills Studio offers training in construction, engineering, motor vehicle, retail sectors and hospitality and catering. Around 400 students in Years 9-11 from Thanet secondary schools attend the Skills Studio one day a week as part of their GCSE option or vocational course. The centre can cater for 500 students at maximum capacity and works with a range of employers such as Peugeot and Jamie Oliver's Fifteen Foundation. It is not enough to increase the quantity of vocational education, however, it must also be excellent vocational education, and central to this is having the right facilities available coupled to inspired teaching and coaching. As a recent inspection noted *"New, purpose built provision, for example in vocational learning centres, has helped to transform the range and quality of courses on offer."*^{xxxix}

As noted earlier, the skills required by future employers are not just academic or vocationally related, but include 'employability skills' such as team working, collaboration and communication skills. As part of the curriculum offer innovative courses have been developed with Skills Force, which enable young people to develop team building, problem solving and communication skills that aid and promote discipline, motivation, self respect and resilience, especially for those who are at risk of disengagement. The attributes learned on Skill Force courses are central to developing employability skills. Instruction and mentoring is provided mainly by ex-armed forces personnel, who develop a close working relationship with individual and groups of young people, building a culture of respect and mutual support. 400 students benefit from Skills Force tuition and we intend to double the number of schools with which it works. The initial pilot phase of the programme was externally evaluated by the Institute of Education, University of London and was deemed a success with a reduction in the number of exclusions, improved behaviour, attendance and better attitudes towards education and attainment, whilst students gained a range of practical, vocational qualifications.

Post-16 provision:

We believe that the transformation of the 14-16 secondary curriculum is delivering real benefits for all students in Kent. As we can see from the table below, which sets out the destination of school leavers in Kent in 2007, the vast majority (85.3 per cent) continue in education either in sixth form or college. As stated earlier, it is our firm belief that the best route for a significant number of students is easy access to work based learning, providing an opportunity to learn on the job and earn a wage. Often the best route is an apprenticeship, but the proportion of school leavers in apprenticeships and in employment with training is just 4.4 per cent. KCC is committed to a huge expansion of apprenticeships within Kent in both the public and private sector. A key challenge is to get FE colleges on side as such an expansion of apprenticeships may consequently reduce the number of full time students at traditional FE colleges.

Figure 4: Kent School Leavers by Destination, 2007 ^{x1}



Our own apprenticeship scheme - Kent Success:

Kent Success provides school leavers with an opportunity to take up an apprenticeship at KCC. Launched in the autumn of 2006, the County Council and its partners provide apprenticeships that enable young people over 16 to achieve an accredited qualification in a supported work placement across a wide range of vocational skill areas. KCC currently has apprentices undertaking placements in the Youth Service, Adult Social Services, the Learning Disability Team, Legal and Democratic Services and Environment and Waste. Apprentices have a contract of employment with KCC and complete an NVQ level 2 course plus a technical certificate and, where appropriate, move to an Advanced (Level 3) Apprenticeship. Currently KCC has 130 apprentices within the organisation and our target is to have 250 KCC apprentices by 2010. Through the Kent Partnership (our Local Strategic Partnership) KCC is also actively working across the public, private and voluntary sector to promote the employment of apprentices through the Kent Success scheme and meet our Towards 2010 target of 1000 apprentices in Kent.

Using our procurement strength to promote apprenticeships and work based learning:

KCC is the largest local authority in the UK with a gross revenue budget of £2.1 billion, a capital budget of £1.2bn and Kent has a totality of 9.7bn public expenditure. 45 per cent of our non-schools budget is delivered through the private and third sectors. The real strength of the contribution made by local government to the economy goes well beyond direct employment, but lies in our procurement and contracting power. The public sector itself presents a huge opportunity to meet – and lead - the skills and workforce development agenda by taking on more apprentices and work based learners. All too often, however, this huge opportunity is missed by local government and the wider public sector.

In KCC we believe that using our purchasing power is absolutely critical to the delivery of the skills agenda. Increasingly the County Council requires its contractors to commit to developing young people’s skills by employing apprentices. We have embarked on the largest Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Programme, a

£1.8 billion series of contracts that will transform the physical infrastructure of our school estate. Developed in partnership with the National Skills Academy, KCC will specify the number of apprentices and work based learners it expects each contractor, and sub-contractor, to employ during each stage of BSF contracts. Over just the first phase of our BSF programme, it is expected that 400 apprenticeship placements will be made available for young people.

Our success

The approach taken by Kent has been extremely successful. Recent surveys of learners, parents and teachers involved in the 14-16 vocational curriculum show that:

- 95 per cent of parents are either very satisfied or satisfied with the vocational provision provided for their child.
- 92 per cent of learners and 91 per cent of teaching staff unanimously agree that vocational courses are having a positive impact.
- 98 per cent of learners stated a preference for skills centre work to school work or found them both about the same and acknowledged that the vocational course had improved their personal and social skills.
- 80 per cent of parents rated the organisation of the vocational course as either excellent or good.
- 78 per cent of learners reported plans to progress onto further education, employment with training or apprenticeships.

This is where the Kent approach is starting to pay off. Many of those students who in the past would have become disengaged from learning, put off by the academic curriculum and the chalk and talk teaching style, are now actively engaged in a curriculum that offers them real choice and shows there is a different route they can take which meets their ambitions and desires. We have started to break the cycle of disengagement that leads to young people becoming NEETs, languishing without the right skills or approach to find sustainable employment. In Whitstable and Maidstone, where pupils have had access to a vocational curriculum, the entire first year cohort moved on to FE, employment with training or an apprenticeship on completion of their vocational curriculum with not a single one becoming a NEET.

Comments on the 14-16 vocational curriculum:

"I am always learning new things" (Learner)

"It helps with core subjects e.g. Maths, English, Science and my hobbies" (Learner)

"I am always learning new things, being challenged, which is helping me to decide my career" (Learner)

"He is 100per cent committed to the course and thoroughly enjoys it. It also teaches him about health and safety issues and how to be responsible and mature" (Parent)

"I can't speak highly enough of the vocational course; my daughter does not see her vocational teacher as a school teacher, which has a positive effective" (Parent)

"The teacher who runs it is excellent and treats him like an adult" (Parent)

"Brilliant – it is inclusive, teachers make a great effort and there are presentations at awards evenings" (Parent)

5. THE BURNING ISSUE: WORLD CLASS CAREERS ADVICE

At the heart of the debate on skills is the often overlooked issue of careers advice and guidance. It can be overlooked no longer. Indeed, we believe that it is fast becoming the burning issue central to ensuring that future generations develop the skills they need to keep up with economic and technological changes.

It is clear that as a country we have not given careers advice and guidance the priority that it requires or deserves. Connexions, the agency formed from the Careers Service charged with providing advice to young people, has a broad mandate to provide advice covering a range of issues, such as welfare and health, rather than a specific focus on careers advice.^{xli} Provision across all ages is fragmented by multiple providers.^{xlii} It is unclear as to which provider is responsible for advice to which audience with some provision clearly overlapping,^{xliii} while individuals and businesses find it difficult to navigate their way through the system.^{xliv}

The cost of the wrong career:

The cost of failing to provide appropriate careers advice and guidance is an emerging area of research but initial findings from around the world are disquieting.

In the USA, research has suggested that 65 per cent of adults think they are in the wrong job, 70 per cent are not fully engaged and 51 per cent consider changing jobs at any time.^{xlv} In Canada, 64 per cent of workers say they would start again if they could, while over 50 per cent of workers admitted they ended up in their current job through chance or the advice of others.^{xlvi} In the UK, research for the Skills Commission showed that 21 per cent of people felt they were in a job that did not make best use of their skills, and 41 per cent have been in such a job in the past. The UK research also calculated that the average person spends 4 years 10 months in jobs not utilising their skills, with a combined total of 132million working years lost in Britain by people being in the wrong job.^{xlvii}

Neither is choosing the wrong career path based on the level of qualification achieved or whether an academic route is chosen over a vocational path. Evidence shows that nearly 20 per cent of those who go to university do not graduate,^{xlviii} while 30 per cent go into jobs that do not require a degree.^{xlix} The loss of productivity as a result of this mismatch between skills and jobs is huge; it is estimated that better careers advice leading to more people being employed in jobs that fully utilise their skills could lead to a 1 per cent increase in national Gross Domestic Product.¹ In Kent alone, this would amount to an additional £230million to its annual GDP. But it is perhaps the social consequences to the individual and local community that are as profound as the economic – with unfilled employment leaving people unhappy in what is the most significant part of their life after their family – as the National Life / Work Centre in Canada notes:

“Too many Canadians are simply not enjoying happy and fulfilling lives....They are so unhappy with the way their lives and careers have unfolded that they will end their lives or neglect their health, possibility abusing one substance or another to escape their reality.. This isn’t just the individual’s problem. It profoundly affects his or her relationships with family and community. Families, communities and Canadian society all lose when individuals are unable confidently and effectively to manage their lives and careers.” ^{li}

It is clear that we can no longer afford to get careers advice wrong. Reforming the education and training provision to provide young people with the right skills will be for nothing if we do not provide the guidance that allows them to achieve their ambitions. Making the wrong choices, or worse, no choice at all, allows young people to drift into various sectors of work by happenstance – with the subsequent economic and social impacts that follow as a result.

The need for intelligent consumers of skills:

We need intelligent consumers of skills not just at age 16 but throughout an entire lifetime. Individuals who understand what employment opportunities exist in the local economy, what skills are required to access those opportunities and how they can go about getting the skills needed. It is increasingly recognised that the best way to develop these intelligent consumers of skills is through the provision of careers advice and guidance.^{lii} Yet it is not just advice and guidance per se that is critical, but our entire approach to careers advice needs to change to reflect the realities of the 21st century economy. Traditionally, careers advice has tended to be related to the ‘matching model’ where careers advisors matched an individual’s competencies and skills to sectors of the economy where such skills were required. The matching model is very much based on the economic realities of the 20th century, where a career could be plotted in a single occupation or sector of the economy for an entire lifetime. However, in an economy which is increasingly flexible to the global market demands, individuals are likely to change careers and employment sectors a number of times throughout their career, with estimates that individuals will now have an average of thirteen jobs across three separate careers^{liii} as economic sectors shift and change to new market realities. Given this, it is evident that the matching model is clearly no longer fit for purpose.

The need for a paradigm shift in careers advice:

In many other countries the importance of shifting from the “matching model” towards a more dynamic approach has been recognised. The approach successfully developed in countries such as Canada and Australia is based around the Blueprint for Life/Work skills framework. Blueprint is fundamentally a response to the paradigm shift in the economy of the 21st century and the failure of the matching model. Instead of providing career advice at specific points of time, careers advice needs to shift to provide individuals with the skills to manage their own career. In other words, people need career management advice. Built around eleven core learning and work competencies across three domains of ‘personal management’, ‘learning and work exploration’ and ‘career building’, Blueprint can be used to make individuals think about how they want to manage their career across their entire lifetime from primary education through to adult employment. It is designed to develop skills, knowledge and, perhaps most importantly, an attitude that places personal responsibility at the heart of their own career choices.^{liv} Neither is the Blueprint approach just about employment skills required to enter the job market, but gives people a sense of responsibility and the skills to manage their own careers.^{lv}

Our approach in Kent:

Young people increasingly have to make decisions about their futures at an early age. The decisions taken as they enter Key Stage 4 (14-16) on what subjects they will study influences their ability to progress into further sectors later on in education. The truth is that getting careers advice and guidance in place at an early stage is essential as remedial action later is often time consuming and disruptive. Research has shown that poor quality careers advice and guidance is partly responsible for increased drop-out rates post-16.^{lvi} That is why Kent has committed considerable resources to developing innovative approaches to careers

advice and guidance in schools for all young people, with particular focus on the key transitional ages of 14, 16 and 18.

Central to our approach is using ICT as a central and accessible platform from which young people can access independent information which empowers them to make their own choices about their future. For those entering Key Stage 4, the entire curriculum offer provided by Kent is now online through an online 'area prospectus'. This allows young people to consider the pathway they want to take and what provision is available to them both vocational and academic. Careers advice and guidance is provided through a user developed website called 'myrightturn', which has been designed and developed by young people for young people, and links through into wider careers advice provided through Connexions. Critically, young people will also have access to an online portfolio, where they can save information about the curriculum offer and careers advice, and provides a record of all curriculum and career related information gathering that they have undertaken. Critically, this information can be interrogated centrally to give high level statistical information on what careers advice and curriculum areas young people are accessing – this will place Kent in the unique position of having access to real time data about students preferences for future provision and will become central to effective local authority commissioning of FE provision envisaged under the Government reforms for FE (which is explored in the next chapter).

In order to facilitate the use by students of the IT resources, the 14-24 Innovation Unit is preparing a Teachers Resource Bank of information that will aid the development of teachers promoting the use of the IT resources, whilst KCC has employed nine (one for each education planning area in Kent) careers management professionals to provide expert advice and guidance to schools and teachers across the county. We know that we have only just started to scratch the surface in relation to careers advice and guidance, but we are committed to taking it much further.

We believe that delivery of tailor-made careers guidance for all young people should become a national priority. However from the above, it should be obvious that real transformation of careers advice and guidance will come at a considerable cost and we are going to have to think of innovative ways to fund enhanced provision. This should be a national priority and the savings in welfare budget and increase in national GDP will more than cover the cost in the medium and long-term.

6. DELIVERING BETTER SKILLS: CHALLENGES TO REFORM

We are understandably proud of our success in Kent, and we believe that this places us in the best position to take on more responsibility in developing a strategy for 14-19 education and training, especially for the FE sector. Our experience shows that local government can deliver innovative solutions to meet the needs of all young people. We believe our approach has clear lessons for central government, local government and the wider public sector. In this chapter we draw out those lessons, based on our vision of reformed 14-19 education and training provision transforming the skills agenda.

The Government's approach to reform:

The Government has set out an ambitious reform programme to meet the skills challenge built around a commitment to raise the compulsory age of participation in education and training to 18 by 2015. Other proposals include expanding the range of options available for all 14-19 students through the provision of a national entitlement for every young person to either a foundation learning tier (for young people who need further support towards level 1 skills), 14-19 Diplomas, an apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship, GCSEs and A Levels.

Local Authorities (LAs) will be responsible for provision of this entitlement in their areas, taking on a new role as strategic commissioner of 16-19 provision, with FE funding devolved to local authorities from the Learning and Skills Council. Local authorities will be responsible for raising quality, increasing participation and achievement and reducing the number of NEETs. Local authorities will be responsible for commissioning provision from FE and Work Based Learning (WBL) providers identifying any gaps in provision, enhancing strong provision if needed and terminating weak provision if necessary. The overall aim is to make the 14-19 education and training sector more responsive to local economic and learner needs. At the same time the Government has launched a significant reform of how technical and vocational qualifications are developed, reviewed and awarded through the reform of the National Qualifications Framework.

There is much merit in the Government's overall intentions. We especially welcome the decision to place local government at the heart of 16-19 provision as a strategic commissioner. However, there are still significant gaps and issues that need to be addressed – as well as opportunities to be seized - to make the system work better.

Making the FE Commissioning System Work:

Funding and function for 16-19 provision should be fully devolved to local authorities, new quangos, regional structures and retained capital funding will limit local government's ability to act as a local strategic leader.

Whilst we support the Government's move to place local government at the centre of 16-19 provision through its new role as the strategic leader, we are concerned that the proposed delivery structure will limit local government's ability to do the job by spreading responsibility for 16-19 provision across a bureaucratic model that will still have significant central direction and that will impede delivery.

The Government plans to abolish the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and replace it with three new agencies. The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) will be responsible for adults (post 19) and will also manage the new National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), whilst the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) will be responsible for the 14-19 programme. It is unclear how the creation of three new quangos where previously there was one amounts to a streamlining of the education and training system and doesn't bode well for neither transparency nor accountability.

Neither do the proposals devolve post-16 FE provision to local authorities unconditionally. Only when the Government, through the YPLA are happy with the arrangements for sub regional governance will local authorities be empowered to plan and commission at a sub regional level. Moreover, the YPLA will retain capital funding, making its own decisions as to how capital expenditure can enhance commissioning decisions of local authorities. The decision to maintain a national funding formula, rather than provide bloc grant to local authorities further limits their ability to target funding according to their assessment of need, whilst local authorities' commissioning plans will require sign off by a superfluous regional structure, which cannot account for sub regional economic variation. In sum, the Government's reforms are focussed around unitary authority-sized solutions that do not easily transfer to their larger county council counterparts, whilst the rhetoric of devolution to local authorities comes with significant caveats.

If local government is truly to be the commissioning leader for 16-19 provision, then central government must trust local government to make difficult decisions and develop arrangements which address the specific needs of its own area. Without that trust, the ability of local government to deliver the Government's ambition for future 16-19 provision will be significantly curtailed.

To make sure FE commissioning works, up to date information is required on students post 16 preferences. This will require significant investment but can be tied into the development of enhanced careers provision.

The Government's ambition to reform 16-19 funding to one that follows the learner makes it essential for those who will commission provision (local authorities) to have up to date information on student preferences, so they do not have to rely on previous year's learner preference data. This is causing considerable concern as to how local authorities will be able to gain access to any such data. The way that Kent is utilising ICT in its enhanced careers provision (see previous chapter) opens up a possible solution. Commissioning decisions could be based on emerging learner preferences as identified through the access and investigation of the curriculum offer that each individual student will undertake. Analysis of learner profiles will give real time information on emerging student preferences, allowing commissioning decisions to be made against the preferences of each forthcoming cohort of 16 year olds rather than the previous. We believe that further investigation of this solution may also provide a further sound rationale for future investment nationally in transforming the careers advice and guidance.

A better qualifications framework:

We need to move towards a single integrated Qualifications Framework covering both vocational and academic qualifications which provides true opportunities for comparison and transfer between qualifications.

The reform of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) aims to closer align vocational and academic

qualifications to allow for easier comparison between levels and types of qualifications for learners and employers. Whilst reform of the NQF has been a good attempt to match vocational and technical qualifications all the way up to level 8 (the highest level associated with PhDs in the academic sector), this has failed in one key area. There is still a separate, Higher Education qualifications framework. This means that it is extremely difficult to transfer qualifications from FE to progress or follow along an academic path if required. Currently complicated arrangements are being considered that would allow Higher Education to link to the NQF, but an easier solution would be to have a truly national, single qualifications framework that would more easily bridge the divide between vocational and HE qualifications.

The move to base qualifications on a credit based system through the Qualifications Credit Framework is also to be welcomed given that it should allow for greater transfer of previous learning across sectors and providers (such as between apprenticeships and 14-19 Diplomas). However a significant practical hurdle is that previous credit is not always transferable across the same level of qualification if it does not include key aspects of learning i.e. Technical Certificate or qualifications. The importance of having a true credit transfer system cannot be overstated, as it would expand choice and allow individuals to move across vocational sectors more easily – something which will be increasingly required in the future economy. Therefore where credit is not transferable across the same level of qualification because technical requirements are different – there needs to be far greater consideration as to how we can bridge that gap through the provision of short intensive courses that allow quick time development of those technical skills to allow greater transferability between vocational qualifications and sectors.

Boosting the value of vocational qualifications:

In order to develop parity of esteem for vocational qualifications with the academic route there needs to be continuity in the vocational curriculum. Constant reform undermines confidence in the value of vocational qualifications, and any future reform should be incremental.

Continual reform of vocational qualifications has led to vocational qualifications not being as valued as academic qualifications. Incessant change to vocational provision implies that the qualifications themselves do not deliver the skills young people require – whilst the comparative stability of A-levels only reinforces this perception. The primary need of businesses, students, parents and FE providers is for greater stability in the Government's approach to vocational qualifications. That is not to say no change at all, but that change should be increasingly incremental and based on available evidence of any need for change, an approach that has underpinned the Government's approach to reforming A-levels, where the curriculum has been broadened but the core A-level 'brand' has been maintained. Stability and incremental reform would allow the esteem of vocational qualifications to build up over time.

We need to move towards a different form of assessment, one that doesn't judge all young people against the academic standard. This is implicit in increasing the participation age to 18 and the broader curriculum offer. Assessment should be based on a broader range of measures - such as positive post-participation destination and an assessment of employability skills gained - as well as formal qualifications achieved (whether technical or vocational).

A revised assessment framework will end the current approach where judgments of success and failure are made at age 16 against a single assessment method (i.e. GCSE) that does not test the ability of all of our young people. This is not to say that student assessment should not be used to hold individual institutions -

such as schools and FE colleges – to account for their overall performance. However, first and foremost the assessment framework should be based around the individual learner. We need to develop a smarter, more intelligence-led system for holding institutions to account which flows from the assessment of individuals learners. Taking advantage of the increase in the participation age, we believe that any assessment system should become far broader in nature, to include an outcome-based element which measures the progression of students from post compulsory participation (i.e. into higher education, apprenticeship, work based training, employment etc) as well as the type and level of qualification gained. A broader basis for assessment would also allow employability skills to be increasingly monitored.

14-19 Diplomas:

The 14-19 Diplomas are a key part of the Government’s plan to raise the participation age and provide a more diverse curriculum. However, applied learning could be limited and Diplomas may not provide the varied curriculum, innovative teaching and learning methodologies which young people respond to and which Kent has pioneered. This needs urgent consideration.

One of the key platforms for the Government’s proposals is the creation of 14-19 Diplomas which are aimed at charting a middle course between vocational and academic learning. Devised along 17 different lines or subjects of teaching, they will be offered at three different levels: Foundation (level 1), Higher (level 2) and Advanced (level 3). All Diplomas will require a minimum of 10 days’ work experience with an employer in the relevant sector.^{lvii}

The move towards increasing the education and training age to 18 is principally designed to raise the post-16 participation rates.^{lviii} Given this we would expect that any proposed reform of the curriculum would be specifically tailored to meet the needs of those 16-18 year olds who currently drop out of the education system – especially given that Department for Children, Schools and Families statistics show that the 95% of those gaining 5 or more GCSEs grade A*-C stay on post-16. However, in aiming to be the bridge between vocational and academic route, Diplomas have been designed with focus primarily on parity with the academic route. What post-16 Diploma students are likely to need is a very specific product tailored to their needs that present them with a range of different learning options to reach at or below level 2 qualifications.

However, it is unclear if the 14-19 Diploma, as currently designed, can meet that specific need. The ambition for Diplomas to meet the needs of a wide variety of different learning learners raises the question as to whether they are too broad to be effective. This issue was raised by the Association of Head Teachers in their evidence to the House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee when they noted that:

“Diplomas are intended to be a solution to several different difficulties and run the risk of addressing none of the needs adequately. There is considerable confusion about their purpose and it is unreasonable to expect the same qualification to address, simultaneously, issues of parity of esteem for vocational and academic routes, university discrimination and disaffected young people”^{lix}

Moreover, the level of applied learning in the curriculum of the current Diplomas is concerning. Practical off-site learning is likely to be merely a minimum of 10 days work experience. Analysis of the curriculum of two 14-19 Diplomas at level 2 in comparison to alternative BTEC qualifications found that Diplomas concentrated on the understanding of the relevant industry and how it operated whilst the BTEC emphasised acquisition of

particular skills.^{lx} Crucially Wales has decided not to progress down the Diploma route precisely because of these concerns:

“We do not wish to advocate the adopting of the Diplomas as they currently exist, where there is greater emphasis on classroom learning about the world of work, rather than on the practical learning and real experience. This should not be acceptable: we need instead to enlarge the current vocational and practical learning choices...in a manner appropriate to Wales.”^{lxi}

Much emphasis and effort has been expended by Government on the success of the 14-19 Diplomas to make the increase in the participation age a success. Yet the fear remains that rather than providing the varied curriculum offer and applied learning approach that we have successfully moved towards in Kent, they will be a step back towards classroom based ‘chalk and talk’ approach that has failed in the past. Should evidence arise from the implementation of the Diplomas that this is the case – then reform must become a priority.

Ideally a single National Diploma that would encompass all the academic and vocational options through 14-19 curriculum (such as that as proposed by Tomlinson) would provide the single qualification framework that would bring academic and vocational qualifications into greater alignment with each other. We must ensure that the continued separation of the vocational from the academic does not reinforce or increase this divide.

Of course, Diplomas have not been without a difficult birth. Adapted from the Tomlinson Review into 14-19 curriculum reform, they are in effect just one stage of the approach that Tomlinson suggested, rather than the broader package of reform that he originally proposed across the entire vocational and academic spectrum. His vision for a unified framework for 14-19 learning, with 14-19 Diplomas covering both the academic and vocational route, replacing GCSEs, A-levels and vocational qualifications with a single award, provided a more coherent framework for a wider and truly varied curriculum offer that mixed academic with vocational skills, underpinned by applied learning.^{lxii}

Instead, the piecemeal approach to reform taken by the Government leaves open the risk that the 14-19 Diplomas reinforce and expand the division between vocational and academic learning, with even greater emphasis increasingly placed on pushing students down a perceived ‘gold standard’ academic route of GCSEs and A-Levels. This concern has been raised by the Centre for Learning study, which noted:

“... secondary schools with strong academic ethos – especially those with sixth forms – will not engage in the direct or indirect delivery of the 14-19 vocational education – including subject and vocational 14-19 Diplomas – or will pay lip service to 14-19 vocational provision and continue to shape learner choices towards GCSEs/ A levels / IBs.”^{lxiii}

We cannot allow the divide between the academic and vocational to be increased, and if evidence emerges that this is occurring then we should consider returning to the original, and widely well received proposals, suggested by Tomlinson for an integrated 14-19 learning framework.

Transformed Careers Advice and Guidance:

To avoid the risk of an increased divide between the vocational and academic route, the need for careers advice and guidance to be truly independent becomes critical to the education and training system – so young people are presented with the entire range of options available to them at each stage of their learning journey, and not those preferred by specific providers.

There is a significant and growing body of evidence which shows that the career advice young people get also tends not to provide students with the entire range of options that are available to them but instead is biased in favour of what schools can provide – especially when they have a financial incentive to keep students on post-16. This appears to have a particular impact on careers advice given in relation to work-based learning and apprenticeships, which often requires the student leaving school or college. According to a survey on careers advice, two thirds of respondents were advised by their teachers to remain in full-time education, most to study A levels, whilst only 1 in 5 were advised to apply for apprenticeships. 83% were given little or no information on apprenticeships.^{lxiv} World-class careers must be delivered independently from providers such as schools or colleges. Instead, a professional cadre of careers advisers who are managed centrally (ideally by an all-age careers services – see below) will be ideally placed to point young people in the right direction.

We need to transform our approach to careers advice and guidance by teaching career management skills that can be developed and utilised at all stages of a person's career, rather than providing point in time advice. A Life/Work skills Blueprint approach should be adopted as the founding basis for teaching career management skills and also provide a single national career management framework.

With individuals having increasingly varied careers reflecting changes in the global economy, careers advice needs to be transformed from merely providing point in time advice to equipping young people with career management skills so that they can identify career opportunities, the skills they need and qualifications they require to succeed. We would encourage the development of a national careers management framework centred on an English version of the Blueprint for Life/Work Skills model. One of the key advantages identified by the Australian trial of the Blueprint model was that it is transgressed providers and various initiatives but complemented them by providing a framework in which they could position their own services and products and make it easier for users to understand what they were offering.^{lxv} The Blueprint approach is therefore applicable whether England moves towards an all-age careers or continues with the current fragmented approach with multiple providers.

Given the importance of careers advice throughout all stages of the person's career, we need to move towards an all-age careers service. In order to ensure a clear link between careers advice and sub-regional economic need, an national all-age careers service should be managed locally (sub-regionally) by local authorities under a national branding and framework.

There is an urgent need to address the fragmented approach to careers advice and guidance in England. The approach that has been allowed to develop in England contrasts sharply with the more coherent strategies developed by the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales, which have all-age careers services under the brand of Careers Scotland and Careers Wales. These agencies have begun to promote career management skills under a single recognisable brand.^{lxvi} There is no reason why England should not follow their lead. We have already argued that the distinction put in place at age 19 between youth and adult

provision is hugely artificial for many young people, but, more importantly, given the fundamental changes that people will face in a rapidly changing global economy, it is strikingly clear that people of all ages will need access to careers advice and guidance in the future.

But just as there is a clear sub-regional economy, and a clear need to link the provision of post-16 education and training to the needs of the local economy, the provision of careers advice and guidance should also be linked to local training provision and local economic demand so a locally developed bespoke service can be provided. Local authorities, either acting on their own or collaboratively, should be given the responsibility for coordinating and delivering all careers advice and guidance within their local area under the branding and framework (ideally Blueprint) that would be set out by an all age national careers service. Such a move would reduce the cluttered landscape of multiple providers, improve accountability and responsibility, and better link provision with those responsible for the education and training provision, making the system more transparent for users and businesses.

The potential benefits both for individuals and the state from getting careers advice and guidance right are potentially so significant that we cannot afford not to do it. However, it will be expensive – we need to think about innovative ways of funding transformed careers provision.

The cost of transforming careers guidance will greatly exceed the current levels of investment provided for its provision, although the benefits that could accrue from having individuals make the right choices for their future from an early age could far outstrip the direct costs. Estimates of the amount of funding needed vary; the Confederation of British Industry has argued that £120m of new funding is required to upgrade careers advice.^{lxvii} Conservative proposals to provide an all-age careers service and place a careers advisor in each secondary school are estimated to cost £285 million.^{lxviii} The real costs may be much higher and finding the funding to pay for such a service on an ongoing basis - at a time of financial restraint and contraction - may prove extremely challenging.

One option that we believe is worth further exploration, is that the welfare budget for 16-24 year olds could be devolved to local government, where they would be free to front end spending on transforming careers advice and guidance as well as developing innovative options for education and training provision on an invest to save basis. Local authorities would still meet the costs of welfare provision for current 16-24 year olds, taking on the fiscal risk from central government, over time we would expect those welfare costs to fall significantly as the benefits of a transformed curriculum and training provision provided young people at risk of benefit dependency with the skills required to enter employment, whilst world class careers advice guided young people into the right path to meet their aspirations and keep them in employment.

Meeting the apprenticeship challenge:

It is our belief that applied learning through an apprenticeship is the best way to provide young people with applied skills that businesses need whilst gaining a relevant vocational qualification. This provides the best financial returns for the individual and society.

Evidence shows that the best return from intermediate qualifications (up to level 3) is achieved when vocational qualifications are undertaken through apprenticeships or work based learning. Whilst the development of 14-19 Diplomas represents an attempt to better link employer needs to the education curriculum, we already actually have a long standing mechanism to achieve this through apprenticeships.^{lxix}

Apprenticeships provide a better means of employer engagement with vocational learning that they can actually guide young people towards the specific skills they require to support their business, rather than the 'generalist' approach of informing the vocational curriculum through the Sector Skills Councils 'aggregate' view of the what skills are required across their entire sector. Given the concerns that Sector Skills Councils cannot adequately reflect the needs of Small to Medium Sized Enterprises, apprenticeships offer the best opportunity to engage real employers direct in the training of young people.

Kent has proved that the local government can drive and manage apprenticeship provision in their local area, and therefore we are concerned at the approach adopted by government in developing a national and regionally focussed National Apprenticeship Service.

Whilst the Government's focus on the creation of more apprenticeships is welcome, the creation of a National Apprenticeship Service, managed through the Skills Funding Agency and with a regional delivery infrastructure, could simply recreate the problems of the supply side approach that has failed in the provision of wider Further Education provision managed through the LSC. As we have shown, the reality is that economies are sub regional in nature, and regional and national delivery structures fail to have the required local intelligence, flexibility or links to local businesses - especially Small-Medium Sized Enterprises (SME) - necessary to make the system work and provide the huge increase in apprenticeship numbers we wish to see. Ideally we would like to see the role, function and budget of the National Apprenticeship Service devolved to local government who is far more ideally placed to meet the apprenticeship challenge.

However, should a National Apprenticeship Service be necessary, then it should primarily be strategic in focus, concentrating on high level leadership and strategy, whilst its operations should be co-located, if not fully integrated, with local authority apprenticeship arrangements so that there is no duplication of effort and that apprenticeship provision can be factored into the 16-19 commissioning process.

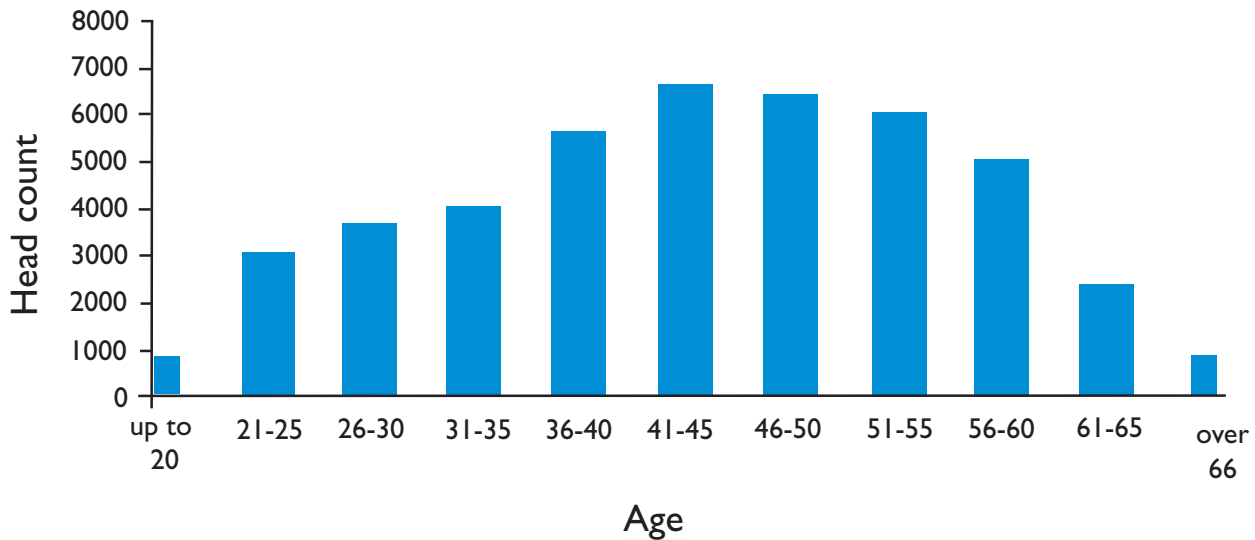
We need a huge increase in the take up of apprentices. We believe that the increase in apprenticeship provision could far exceed that proposed currently. The public sector must lead the way, especially given the skills gap / age profile that it faces.

We need a huge increase in the number of apprentices far beyond what has been suggested – especially as we move towards an increase mandatory participation age in education and training. The Government has predict that growth in work based learning and apprenticeships for 16-17 year olds will increase from 93,000 in 2005/6 to 145,000 in 2015/16. However, when aggregated downwards, that would probably only lead to roughly 1,500 apprentices per year in Kent. We believe the scope to increase apprenticeship provision far exceeds such rather limited ambition. Indeed, as figure 4 showed earlier, a target of 1,500 could be achieved in Kent today through focussing on tackling NEETs, moving all work based learners and those in employment without training into some form of apprenticeship. This is even before we have considered those who would have proceeded into colleges and school sixth forms who might otherwise be attracted to an apprenticeship if they were aware of the benefit it offered through enhanced careers advice and guidance.

The public sector needs to lead the way in meeting the apprenticeship challenge. Local government in particular faces a huge risk that the age profile of its workforce, increasingly middle age, will leave it without the skills profile it needs to provide services. This effects on KCC as an example can be seen in figure 5. This is one of the principle reasons that KCC moved to create its own apprenticeship scheme. Given the traditional difficulties local government has in recruiting graduates and transferring professionals from other

sectors of the economy - unless we increase our cohort of young people recruited, then we are likely to face significant skills shortages in the future – which may impact on future service delivery.

Figure 5: Age profile of all staff in Kent County Council ^{lxx}



In order to promote the take up of Apprenticeships, consideration needs to be given as to whether all public sector authorities should be required to consider arrangements in their planning and budget preparations - relative to the needs and economy of their business - to make provision for young people to undertake work based learning, apprenticeships or sandwich degree courses.

Essential to the role out of expanded apprenticeship programme is a close relationship with the employers, both public and private, to ascertain their needs. This requires a significant increase in skills brokerage. We need to think about how we can take the bureaucracy out of the provision of apprentices – especially for Small to Medium Enterprises – and provide them with incentives to take on apprentices.

To succeed in massively expanding apprenticeship provision, the objective should be very simple. We need to remove the risk that many small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) have in relation to the recruitment of apprenticeships and ensure that the returns are felt by employers far earlier than they currently are.

Through an expanded vocational provision we believe that the education system can provide more work-ready young people who would be able to develop and thrive in a workplace through an apprenticeship scheme. However, central to encouraging any system to work is the development of an effective skills brokerage service, that can build relationships with local employers, understand their skills needs and match appropriately skilled young people to employers who need their skill set and can help young people develop. Moreover, an enhanced skills brokerage service would be best placed to alleviate SME's from the bureaucratic burden that they find themselves encompassed in at the moment.

Lessons can be learned from other policy areas. One of the primary drives behind bureaucracy relates around

payments of public money, but in other areas the County Council is using innovative approach to remove such bureaucracy. The funding social care services is increasingly undertaken through the Kent Card which enables payments to be made directly to individuals without the need for a bank account or complicated record keeping. KCC load the card regularly with an agreed amount. Set-up of the card is easier than Direct Payments, as there is no need for new accounts to be opened and paperwork is minimal. Once ongoing, auditing of expenditure is much less complicated. Approaches such as this could be used to fund SME's who take on apprentices and take a huge chunk of bureaucracy out of the system.

It is clear we also need to find ways to incentivise SMEs to take on apprentices. The Conservatives have proposed that SMEs who take on apprentices could be granted a £2000 bonus,^{lxxi} whilst the Government has hinted at incentives for some businesses.^{lxxii} This would certainly help. However, if we are to see the huge increase in apprenticeships that is necessary, the bill for such bonuses or incentives, year on year may increase substantially. This payment should not come from normal operating costs of the apprenticeship programme, and again, some of the money from the 16-24 welfare budget could be front ended to meet this requirement.

7. CONCLUSION

In this discussion paper we have set out our analysis of the need for a transformation in the provision of skills to young people – so we can begin to deliver the generational and transformational change required to close the skills gap, increase productivity and improve social equality that is required in our country.

KCC has begun to deliver this transformation through the provision of an increasingly wide curriculum offer for all young people, offering real vocational qualifications and learning applied skills in state of the art modern facilities that replicate the real work based environment. Through our ICT enabled careers advice we are providing students with access to a wide range of independent information that they need to make their own choices about their future direction, ensuring they remain engaged and interested in learning that stimulates them. We want to spread our innovative approach to post 16 – and we welcome the move made by central government towards placing local authorities at the heart of 16-19 provision.

But if this approach is to work, central Government must trust local authorities to deliver. We believe that Kent has proved that local government can deliver real transformational change across the learning and training landscape – but we must be set free to deliver it – free from Quango bureaucracy, regional delivery structures and half hearted devolution from Whitehall. If the suggestions set out in this paper were adopted, we are confident that the opportunity inherent in our young people will no longer be wasted by a failing system.

Whilst in this paper we have specifically focussed on education and training, it is but one aspect of our broader vision to ensure that the lives of young people are not wasted by failing policies and inept systems that failed to meet their needs. This includes our approach to providing specific support for 16-24 year olds who become welfare dependent and development of third sector and social enterprises as vehicles to tackle ingrained dependency and low social mobility in some of our most challenging neighbourhoods.

This will be the focus of our next discussion paper.

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APPENDIX: 16-24 WELFARE BENEFIT CALCULATIONS IN KENT*

16-24 Subsistence (JSA, IS and IB) Spend in Kent

| District | Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) | Weekly JSA cost (£) | Lone Parents (LP) Income Support (IS) | Weekly IS cost (£) | Incapacity Benefit (IB) | Weekly IB cost (£) | Total JSA, IS & IB claimants | Total weekly JSA, IS & IB cost (£) | Annual JSA, IS & IB cost (£) |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Ashford | 240 | 12,024 | 290 | 18,282 | 290 | 11,476 | 820 | 41,783 | 2,172,715 |
| Canterbury | 330 | 16,502 | 230 | 14,154 | 350 | 16,346 | 910 | 47,001 | 2,444,062 |
| Dartford | 240 | 12,024 | 270 | 16,940 | 220 | 8,375 | 730 | 37,340 | 1,941,658 |
| Dover | 360 | 18,005 | 260 | 15,760 | 270 | 10,860 | 890 | 44,624 | 2,320,462 |
| Gravesham | 330 | 16,502 | 300 | 17,761 | 260 | 9,855 | 890 | 44,118 | 2,294,126 |
| Maidstone | 270 | 13,528 | 310 | 18,246 | 320 | 13,322 | 900 | 45,095 | 2,344,921 |
| Sevenoaks | 120 | 5,980 | 140 | 8,331 | 210 | 11,457 | 470 | 25,768 | 1,339,935 |
| Shepway | 330 | 16,502 | 250 | 15,148 | 290 | 14,288 | 870 | 45,938 | 2,388,755 |
| Swale | 520 | 26,010 | 420 | 25,060 | 420 | 16,600 | 1,360 | 67,670 | 3,518,822 |
| Thanet | 560 | 28,036 | 460 | 29,501 | 490 | 21,356 | 1,510 | 78,893 | 4,102,435 |
| Tonbridge and Malling | 150 | 7,483 | 170 | 10,244 | 180 | 9,314 | 500 | 27,041 | 1,406,139 |
| Tunbridge Wells | 120 | 5,980 | 160 | 9,976 | 260 | 11,802 | 540 | 27,758 | 1,443,410 |
| Kent | 3,570 | 178,575 | 3,260 | 199,404 | 3,560 | 155,050 | 10,390 | 533,028 | 27,717,440 |

16-24 Council Tax & Housing Benefit in Kent

| District | Total IB, IS, JSA claimants aged 16 - 24 | Housing & Council Tax Benefit (H&CTB) Cost / unit / week (£) | Total cost/week H&CTB (£) | Annual H&CTB (£) |
|-----------------------|--|--|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Ashford | 820 | 84.23 | 69,069 | 3,591,567 |
| Canterbury | 910 | 86.48 | 78,697 | 4,092,234 |
| Dartford | 730 | 89.09 | 65,036 | 3,381,856 |
| Dover | 890 | 83.56 | 74,368 | 3,867,157 |
| Gravesham | 890 | 85.22 | 75,846 | 3,943,982 |
| Maidstone | 900 | 86.11 | 77,499 | 4,029,948 |
| Sevenoaks | 470 | 89.10 | 41,877 | 2,177,604 |
| Shepway | 870 | 85.84 | 74,681 | 3,883,402 |
| Swale | 1,360 | 91.70 | 124,712 | 6,485,024 |
| Thanet | 1,510 | 85.00 | 128,350 | 6,674,200 |
| Tonbridge and Malling | 500 | 82.88 | 41,440 | 2,154,880 |
| Tunbridge Wells | 540 | 93.11 | 50,279 | 2,614,529 |
| Kent | 10,390 | 86.86 | 902,475 | 46,928,721 |

16-24 Total Welfare Spend in Kent

| District | Annual JSA, IS & IB cost (£) | Annual H&CTB (£) | Total 16-24 Welfare Bill (£) |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Ashford | 2,172,715 | 3,591,567 | 5,764,282 |
| Canterbury | 2,444,062 | 4,092,234 | 6,536,296 |
| Dartford | 1,941,658 | 3,381,856 | 5,323,515 |
| Dover | 2,320,462 | 3,867,157 | 6,187,618 |
| Gravesham | 2,294,126 | 3,943,982 | 6,238,107 |
| Maidstone | 2,344,921 | 4,029,948 | 6,374,869 |
| Sevenoaks | 1,339,935 | 2,177,604 | 3,517,539 |
| Shepway | 2,388,755 | 3,883,402 | 6,272,157 |
| Swale | 3,518,822 | 6,485,024 | 10,003,846 |
| Thanet | 4,102,435 | 6,674,200 | 10,776,635 |
| Tonbridge and Malling | 1,406,139 | 2,154,880 | 3,561,019 |
| Tunbridge Wells | 1,443,410 | 2,614,529 | 4,057,939 |
| Kent | 27,717,440 | 46,928,721 | 74,646,161 |

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