

By:	Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Education, Learning & Skills Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director for Education, Learning & Skills
To:	Education Cabinet Committee – 12 September 2012
Subject	Draft 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy
Classification:	Unrestricted

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Summary:	This report informs the Education Cabinet Committee about the draft 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy, which is intended for final approval by Cabinet in November following consultation with stakeholders.
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1. Introduction

1.1 The ambition of the 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy is for all young people in Kent to become better qualified and more employable; to be able to participate and achieve success in education and work based training at least until the age of 18; and to ensure more 18 to 24 year olds can access higher learning or sustained employment that is appropriate to their needs and relevant to the local and national economy. It is also to improve the Kent economy by ensuring there is a better skilled workforce and employers are more engaged in the design and delivery of new training programmes for young people. The strategy incorporates many of the recommendations of the KCC Select Committee Report, the Student Journey.

1.2 Key success indicators for us with this strategy will be more effective partnership working, through a new Kent Skills and Employment Forum, that delivers lower youth unemployment, better systems for local employers and learning providers to work in partnership and the higher levels of skilled young people we need, with every young person being helped to participate in learning or training until the age of 18, with a good outcome.

1.3 Under the Raising the Participation Age (RPA) regulations the local authority has a responsibility to ensure all young people's education or training can be tracked until age 18. We recognise that effective tracking and monitoring begins much earlier as young people approach the age of 14 and make decisions about their future pathways. An agreed approach to doing this in Kent, in partnership with schools, colleges, employers and work based training providers is a priority for the 14-24 Strategy.

1.4 The draft strategy will be consulted on during October and early November, with a range of key stakeholders, including schools, colleges, employers, work based learning providers, higher education, young people and other partners. The strategy will be amended in the light of responses to the consultation and will be presented to Cabinet for final approval in late November 2012.

2 Strategic Priorities

2.1 The key priorities for the 14-24 Learning and Skills Strategy are to:

- *Ensure all young people participate in learning and training to age 18 by 2015*
- *Ensure the 14-16 curriculum provides vocational options for young people that lead to higher qualifications and better progression to post 16 vocational learning and training*
- *Ensure more young people achieve five good GCSEs including English and mathematics at age 16, and more 16 to 19 year olds achieve level 2 and level 3 qualifications especially those from low income backgrounds*
- *Develop curriculum pathways and progression for 16-19 year olds so that those who do not follow an A level pathway have high quality options that deliver a good outcome and access to skilled employment*
- *Increase the take up and completion of apprenticeships, and ensure there is better progression to higher level apprenticeships for all 16-24 year olds and expand other vocational options that lead more directly to work in the Kent economy*
- *Develop young people's employability skills as an essential part of the curriculum*
- *Improve access to high quality information, advice and work experience and young people's understanding of the labour market and FE options*
- *Ensure disadvantaged young people get good quality work experience and more support for progression towards further education and work, so that achievement gaps narrow and unemployment for this group is not disproportionately higher*
- *Ensure more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds go to university and more young people can advance from advanced level and higher apprenticeships to higher education*
- *Improve early intervention, support and pathway planning for young people most at risk of becoming NEET and rapidly reduce the NEET figures*
- *Develop an integrated youth support programme so that all young people at risk of poorer outcomes have tailored support to improve their well being, to participate in learning, training and other positive activities and are helped to access employment*
- *Develop employer engagement in education, more opportunities for young people to have contact with, and careers advice from employers*
- *Improve 16-24 learning and employment opportunities, and outcomes, for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities*
- *Ensure new courses and pathways 14-19 are more responsive to the needs of local skills sectors and are better integrated with the needs of the local economy, as well as being supported by local employers' investment and engagement*
- *Develop effective tracking and monitoring of all young people from the earliest years of secondary school and more particularly from age 16, so that all young*

people's needs can be addressed and they are supported to participate and succeed to age 18

- *Deliver increased youth employment through support for apprenticeships, internships, work placements, re-training opportunities, targeted work with those out of work for more than 6 months and engagement with employers and other agencies to promote wage and training incentives*
- *Develop an effective system of local 14-19 learning and employment partnerships that engage schools, colleges, work based learning providers, employers and Jobcentre plus in delivering planned coordinated improvements in young people's skills, qualifications and employability*
- *Develop more intensive and integrated programmes of support and provision, providing highly targeted interventions and investment in new learning and training opportunities, in the areas of Kent with the poorest outcomes and prospects for 14-24 year olds.*

3. Success by 2015

3.1 If this strategy is successful we will achieve the following outcomes by 2015. We will monitor performance against these measures and report progress and improvements on an annual basis.

3.2 Key stage 4 attainment will be amongst the best for our statistical neighbours and improve to at least 70% of pupils attaining 5 good GCSEs including English and mathematics

3.3 The achievement gaps at key stages 4 and 5 will be less than the national gap figures and students from low income backgrounds, looked after young people and students with special educational needs and disabilities in Kent will be achieving better progress and outcomes than similar groups nationally. Advanced level performance in Kent will be above the national average on all measures.

3.4 There will be full participation in education and work based training for all 16-18 year olds following year on year reductions in the NEET figures and all 16-19 year olds will be able to access and succeed in following an appropriate pathway for education or employment with training to age 18. The NEET figures will decrease to below 1 % and the number of young people from low income backgrounds aged 16 with skills below level 2, to achieve a level 2 qualification and progress to level 3 by age 18 will increase by 20%.

3.5 The employability skills of 19 year olds will have improved, especially in English and mathematics, so that level 2 attainment at age 19 is above the national average. The outcomes for 19 year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds will be above the national average and the achievement gap between this group and other students will have reduced by 10%. There will be fewer young people who achieve no improvement in qualifications between the ages of 16 and 19, so that this number reduces to less than 5%.

3.6 We will have an established a successful pre-apprenticeship and level 1 programme for 17 year olds who are unable to achieve a level 2 apprenticeship. The number of apprenticeships overall will double and level 2, 3 and 4 apprenticeships offered in Kent key sectors will increase by 10%. In addition the uptake of level 2 and 3 vocational training in skills shortage areas will increase by 10%. The Kent Success

apprenticeship scheme will continue with at least 88 apprentices taken on each year, totalling 350 successful apprenticeships delivered by KCC by 2015. At least 50% of schools will have provided one or more apprenticeships which have been taken up successfully by young people. There will be double the number of apprenticeships for 16-24 year olds in Kent and successful completion rates will improve to 80%.

3.7 There will be a significant impact on unemployment among 18-24 year olds so that current levels reduce by 4000 to below 2008 levels. The number of assisted employment opportunities for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities will increase by 10%.

3.8 Each district in Kent will have effective partnership working for 14-19 year olds, involving KCC, schools, colleges, work based learning providers, employers and other agencies. There will be effective collaboration between groups of schools and with local FE colleges and employers, delivering a clear vocational curriculum offer, progression pathways and work based training for 16-19 year olds.

3.9 There will be fewer than 50 permanent exclusions and all young people permanently excluded will be supported to access learning and participate to age 18, and there will be an integrated youth support service providing more targeted and personalised support to all young people at risk of becoming NEET.

3.10 The Kentchoices programme will have expanded to provide high quality information about learning options and employment with training, as well as providing support for schools in delivering impartial careers advice and guidance.

3.11 Youth Employment and Learning Zones in Thanet, Swale, Shepway, Gravesham and Dover will reduce unemployment for 16 to 24 to below the national average.

5. Conclusions

5.1 This strategy represents one of Kent County Council's top priorities. It is intended to make a significant contribution to improving the local economy, increasing youth employment and raising educational and skill levels and qualifications. Its success will mean life changing benefits for many young people.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Members are requested to comment on the proposed draft strategy (attached) and give their views about the priorities, prior to Cabinet considering the strategy in late November 2012.

Background Documents

None

7. Contact details

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