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**To:** Economic Development Cabinet Committee  
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**Subject:** Apprenticeships and Job Creation

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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## **Summary**

The purpose of this paper is to outline the activities that are being undertaken within KCC to develop and deliver apprenticeship programmes and lead to job creation for young people in Kent.

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### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to outline the activities that are being undertaken within KCC to develop and deliver apprenticeship programmes and lead to job creation for young people in Kent.
- 1.2 In September 2012 the 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy (the strategy) was launched. One of its four key areas of focus is to improve vocational education, training and apprenticeships. Success will be measured by a significant increase in young people taking up and successfully completing an apprenticeship, including Kent's key sector areas, along with more young people following other vocational pathways that lead to higher level qualifications and a skilled job.
- 1.3 The strategy has reviewed and incorporated the existing Kent Apprenticeship Strategy 2011 to 2014, and all existing KCC lead apprenticeship programmes.
- 1.4 All KCC departments, Kent's business community, employers, FE colleges, work based learning providers, Higher Education institutions and other partners are key to this ambition, as we ensure that learners develop new employment skills and progress to new levels of learning and employment, receiving high quality work experience throughout.
- 1.5 The strategy will be delivered, co-ordinated and monitored by the new Skills and Employability Service headed by Sue Dunn.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 An apprenticeship comprises worked based learning, technical skills training and a job. All apprentices are employed and training at NVQ levels 2,3 and 4. The Skills Funding Agency support pre-

apprenticeship training for young people whose qualifications and experience mean they are not yet job ready. However the objective is always to get them to start a full apprenticeship, which means a job.

- 2.2 Over the last year there has been an increase in apprenticeship starts across all age ranges in Kent (Table 1)

**Table 1: Apprenticeship Starts by age 2011/12**

Age	April 2011	April 2012	Difference
16-18	3394	3736	+ 342
19-24	4565	5567	+ 1002
25+	3073	6372	+ 3299*

\* Increase in number of 25+ Apprentices is mainly due to conversion of exiting staff on to Apprenticeships as Train to Gain funding has been withdrawn and will not be seen again under current legislation.

- 2.3 Table 2 below analyses the number of apprenticeship starts in Kent by district and by key sector areas. Approximately 9% of total apprenticeship starts are accounted for by these sectors. The strategy has a target of increasing these by 10% by August 2015.

**Table 2: Apprenticeship starts by key sectors**

District	Construction	Health/Social Care	Creative/Media	Hospitality	Land Based	Process/manufacture	STEM	Total
Ashford	70	0	0	80	20	0	30	200
Canterbury	30	0	0	40	20	0	20	110
Dartford	40	40	0	60	0	0	10	150
Dover	20	0	0	60	20	0	10	110
Gravesham	10	0	0	30	10	0	10	60
Maidstone	70	10	0	60	20	0	10	170
Sevenoaks	10	0	0	40	20	0	0	70
Shepway	20	0	0	40	0	0	10	70
Swale	110	0	0	40	10	20	40	220
Thanet	60	0	0	70	20	0	10	160
Tonbridge	20	10	0	40	10	0	10	90
Tunbridge Wells	10	0	0	30	0	0	0	40
<b>Kent</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>1450</b>

- 2.4 KCC currently operates three apprenticeship schemes:

- Kent Apprenticeships: facilitating employers, training providers and young people to get jobs and apprenticeships started.
- KCC Apprenticeships: KCC's own internal apprenticeship programme for young people to work within KCC.

- Kent Employment Programme: to support employers to offer apprenticeships to those young people who have been on Job Seekers Allowance for three months or more. Nine hundred grants of £2,000 are available for employers who meet the criteria, with the intention that most of the grants are allocated within an 24 month period. This is funded by Big Society Funding.

All three programmes are now managed from within the Skills and Employability Service where 22.6 FTE staff are involved in apprenticeship development.

- 2.5 The actions that KCC is currently undertaking, and has planned under the strategy, to increase the number of apprenticeships and create jobs, are described in the sections below.

### **3. Employer engagement and support**

- 3.1 An employer support service been established to take enquiries, visit employers, inform them about apprenticeships and any funding opportunities that might be available to them. The advisor will match a training provider to the employer, support them through the recruitment process where necessary and then provide ongoing, light touch support.
- 3.2 Since June 2011 employer support service has been contacted by 378 businesses, resulting in 259 apprentices being employed under the Kent Apprenticeship programme. This is a conversion rate of 68.5% and there are a further 50 possible apprenticeships that are currently being developed between providers and the employers.
- 3.3 Under the Kent Employment Programme, 295 employers have contacted the team pledging a total of 289 Apprenticeship opportunities to date. 183 employers have been visited and 85 young people have started their employment and a further 16 applications are being processed. The team are working closely with Jobcentre Plus and Work Programme providers to ensure that the processes for employers and young people are streamlined and straightforward.
- 3.4 The employer support service works closely with other apprenticeship Initiatives that partners, such as district councils, run in their own areas. For example two “100 in 100” campaigns that have taken place since June 2011 which have raised the profile of apprenticeships in key target areas and had the following outcomes:
- Swale 100 in 100/ Year of the Apprentice, in partnership with Swale BC, secured 96 apprenticeships within 70 businesses
  - West Kent 100 in 100, in partnership with West Kent Partnership, secured 101 pledges from employers with 69 Apprentices employed in 49 businesses
  - Job Fairs in Thanet, Swale and Maidstone

- 3.5 Kent Apprenticeships had a large presence at Kent 2020 in April 2012, bringing together 18 Training Providers and Colleges in the Apprenticeship Zone. Kent Apprenticeships also organised 40 Apprentices to be at the event supporting organisers and stall holders and being ambassadors for Apprenticeships. Kent Apprenticeships has also sponsored the Apprenticeship of the Year KEiBA in 2012. This year the award attracted 29 high quality nominations and the three finalists have become Apprenticeship Ambassadors.
- 3.6 The materials produced for employers are being reviewed and updated and the new marketing campaign for employers will start in September.

#### **4. Young People Engagement & Support**

- 4.1 Since June 2011, 1196 young people have contacted Kent Apprenticeships. The Kent Apprenticeships team have also been in to schools to deliver workshops and assemblies to pupils. Information sessions have been run for Jobcentre Plus (JCP) staff to enable them to talk to their clients about apprenticeships. Kent Apprenticeships has supported JCP jobs fair events in Dover and Thanet providing up to date information on apprenticeships and local vacancies.
- 4.2 The Skills and Employability Service manage the Kent Choices 4 U website. This is a key communication channel to young people. Last year over 13,000 Year 11 students access their account on the website, and 11,500 made an online application.
- 4.3 The website has been updated and strengthened to enable young people to find out information about apprenticeships as they are making the decisions about their destination post 16. This is an indication of the potential for engagement with young people to encourage entry into apprenticeships. Kent Apprenticeships also attended the KC4U Live event to provide information to students who attended

#### **5. KCC Apprentices and the Wider Public Service**

- 5.1 KCC Apprenticeships, formerly known as The Kent Success Apprenticeship Programme was established in October 2006 and over 500 apprentices have been employed through the programme in KCC and in the wider public sector. Since June 2011 the support service has been reviewed, developed and streamlined to ensure that managers within KCC receive a fast, efficient service when they recruit an apprentice.
- 5.2 Kent Apprentices run a dedicated recruitment service for KCC managers from initial engagement, matching to the training provider, searching for and selection of candidates, supporting the interview process, facilitating the placement to providing ongoing support. In the

past year as the apprenticeship offer within KCC has widened, additional training providers have become delivery partners and we are now working with KEY Training Service, JACE Training, IPS International, KEITS and Hadlow College.

- 5.3 As well as support for managers, the advisors also co-ordinate recruitment service for young people. This includes initial screening with general information about Apprenticeships and KCC, matching candidates to vacancies, supporting the interview process, facilitating the placement, providing ongoing support for Apprentices including job search, workshops and networking opportunities.
- 5.4 In September 2010, Cabinet agreed to a change in recruitment procedures that means that any KR2-4 vacancy should be filled by an apprentice if it is deemed suitable and there are no redeployees. Since June 2011, 52 of these roles have been advertised, 15 vacancies filled by apprentices, 9 were not suitable and the rest were unable to be filled by Apprentices due to lack of suitable candidates or the location of the role.
- 5.5 A pilot programme has been developed and implemented with the Kent Youth Service who employed 12 youth work Apprentices in September 2011 across the County to work in young centres. They also employed 5 Apprentices at Bewl Water to undertake Activity Leadership roles. The Youth Service is currently recruiting the second cohort of youth work apprentices following the success of the pilot.
- 5.6 The KCC procurement policy was agreed by Cabinet in September 2010 and stipulates that in contracts over £1m, for every £1m labour spend 1 apprentice is employed within the programme. Within the Highways contract with Enterprise, a commitment has been made to employ 9 Apprentices and we are currently working with Enterprise to support their recruitment to those posts. KCC is undertaking a joint project with Thanet District Council where empty properties will be bought and renovated. KCC's property team will require support around apprenticeships when drawing up the tender documents for the lead contractor for the project.
- 5.7 Work has begun with the wider public sector with support being given to Dartford Borough Council to recruit and employ 7 Apprentices and Sevenoaks District Council to recruit and employ 3 Apprentices and providing light touch, ongoing support. Work is just starting with Shepway and Thanet District Council to support their recruitment of 5 and 2 Apprentices respectively, the recruitment process is currently underway and KCC will provide ongoing support.
- 5.8 Focused activity will begin to promote apprenticeships in schools. The employer engagement officers will start this targeted work in September. There is a target of 50% of schools in Kent to offer an apprenticeship by 2015.

## **6. Specialist and Bespoke Apprenticeship Schemes**

- 6.1 A key aim of the strategy is to target support for vulnerable young people. The Vulnerable Learner Apprenticeship Project started in September 2010 and in Phase 1, 69 young people have been employed. 62 of those undertaking an apprenticeship – either Level 2 or Level 3 – and 7 young people undertaking an apprenticeship style Opportunity – a bespoke training and employment programme that KCC has developed for young people with learning disabilities.
- 6.2 A phase 2 is currently being implemented, the model having been adapted where possible to incorporate the lessons learnt from the first phase. With the funding available for this phase there are 35 places available; 10 disabilities (5 ASO), 5 care leavers, 14 young offenders and 6 young adult offenders (through the Probation Service). To date, 19 young people have been employed in phase 2 as an Apprentice with employers being sought for the remaining young people. It has been very challenging to find employers to participate in the second phase, perhaps indicative of the current economic climate.
- 6.3 Initial work is also underway with HMYOI Cookham Wood and HMYOI Rochester to look at what support those in custody need in order to access Apprenticeships when they are released. We are looking at what provision is delivered within the prisons and also what opportunities there might be for those released on temporary licence (ROTL).
- 6.4 In September 2011, Danish Oil and Natural Gas company (DONG) worked closely with the Swale Skills Centre to recruit nine new apprentices to train at Level 3 in wind farm maintenance and operations. These are the first such apprenticeships in the UK, and therefore DONG energy staff are undertaking a new nationally accredited qualification designed and delivered by staff at the Centre. This is a model for the development and delivery of apprenticeships with large employers from any key sector.

## **7. National Developments**

- 7.1 Through the ambition of the strategy, and the resources committed through the Skills and Employability Service, KCC is well placed to exploit national initiatives as they develop. These include:
- 7.2 **Youth Contract.** Announced in December 2011, the Youth Contract is the flagship support programme for 16-24 year olds. It has 6 Key Elements to support the re-engagement of NEET young people and reduce youth employment. These are summarised in Table 3 below.

**Table 3:**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
1	Wage incentive of £2,275 for business to employ an unemployed 18-24 year old for at least 26 weeks	Work Programme Providers
2	Work experience of 2-8 weeks for every unemployed 18-24 year old	JCP
3	Sector based academies which help businesses fill a vacancy, offer fully funded pre-employment training for the applicant, work experience and a guaranteed job interview for unemployed 18-24 year olds.	JCP
4	Apprenticeship wage incentive offering SMEs £1,500 to take on their first 16-24 year old apprentices (up to 10)	National Apprenticeship Service
5	Additional support to young people via enhanced access JCP adviser service and National Careers Service interviews	JCP
6	Flexible, bespoke training support for disengaged 16-17 year olds with low qualifications into sustainable education, training or employment with training	In Kent lead provider is Skills Training UK,

7.3 KCC already works closely with JCP so that SME's taking on apprenticeships via the Kent Employment Programme can also benefit under elements 1 and 4 of the Youth Contract, giving them a potential subsidy of £4275 in total.

7.4 **Employer Ownership of Skills Initiative.** In December 2011, DBIS m made available £250 million nationally to support employers to:

- Increase the impact of work readiness, workforce development and Apprenticeships activity
- Secure the training they need by having the influence they require over quality and content and can shape training provision to meet their needs
- Collaborate to address cross-sector or supply chain skills challenges is increased
- Increase employer leadership, commitment and investment in skills including the involvement of employers who do not have a track record of investing in skills.

- 7.5 In the first round of funding KCC is aware of one successful bid being submitted from Denne Construction, and an unsuccessful bid by “Visit Kent” in the hospitality and catering sector. Round 2 will be announced in the autumn.
- 7.6 **Skills support for the unemployed/redundant.** Funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), FE colleges and providers can draw down funding to offer training programmes to the unemployed or redundant on a roll on/roll off basis that gives personalised skills training that meets the needs of employers and the local labour market, to maximise employment progression. Accredited units and qualifications must be included in the offer along with a definite sector based careers path for the individual. Providers must demonstrate that courses meet local employer needs. Once employed candidates can move onto an apprenticeship.
- 7.7 **DWP Innovation Funding.** In May 2011, the Government announced a new ‘Innovation Fund’ of up to £30 million over 3 years from 2012 to support social investment projects that help disadvantaged young people and those at risk of disadvantage. The Innovation Fund (IF) was commissioned in two rounds. The first round of the IF focused on 14-24 year olds and provision started in early 2012. The geographical areas supported were very limited and Kent was not part of these.
- 7.8 The second round focused on disadvantaged young people, and those at risk of disadvantage, aged 14 and 15 years to reduce prospects of them being or becoming long term NEET. It was launched in January 2012. Round 2 projects will engage disadvantaged young people when they are 14 or 15 years of age. Projects can work with these young people for up to three years and claim outcomes during this period.
- 7.9 Shortlisting has taken place and providers who can cover Kent have been selected, including A4e, Groundwork Trust, Shaw Trust and Working Links (Employment) Ltd. KCC will need to work with the providers who are ultimately successful to focus any provision in Kent.

## **8. Strategic Developments**

- 8.1 Delivery of apprenticeships in Kent has been significantly strengthened by the development of a close working relationship with the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), KATO and KAFEC under the Kent Apprenticeships Partnership. Priorities have been aligned and NAS have put additional resources in to Kent to support the work that the Partnership undertakes. Providers are now willing to work together under the Kent Apprenticeships Partnership where previously they stood alone. JCP is firmly on board with referrals made to the Kent Employment Programme and linkages made to the Work Programme. This has meant a joined up approach to apprenticeships in Kent resulting in increased opportunities for employers and young people.



- 8.2 A key focus in Kent is the progression from Intermediate to Advanced Apprenticeships with the opportunity to then move on to higher levels of apprenticeships and so initial discussions have taken place with NAS and providers to look at progression to ensure career progression through the apprenticeship route.
- 8.3 Members of the Skills & Employability Service have been trained as Apprenticeship Ambassadors to support the delivery of training to organisations such as JCP, CXK, Work Programme Providers as well as going in to schools to provide information to young people. This is a partnership project with NAS and KATO.
- 8.4 In September 2012 there will be 5 Employer Engagement officers working in the Skills & Employability service. Their priority will be to drive the uptake of apprenticeships across Kent by supporting employers to recruit increased numbers of apprentices, through the range of different programmes available both nationally and locally.

## **9. Conclusions**

- 9.1 KCC has made good progress in raising the awareness of the value of apprenticeships in Kent, supporting businesses in Kent to offer apprenticeships to young people and supporting young people in applying for and undertaking an apprenticeship.

## **10. Recommendations:**

- 10.1 Members are asked to note in order to deliver the targets within the 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills strategy to 2015, the Skills and Employability Service will:
- Integrate all apprenticeship work undertaken by KCC into the “Kent Jobs for Kent young people” campaign.
  - Develop further the strong relationships with partners, including NAS, KATO, KAFEC and JCP, and any training providers that cover Kent through national funding programmes.
  - Develop a delivery model of the Skills and Employability Service to promote an all embracing “Apprenticeship Advisory Service” that supports all employers and all young people to access apprenticeships.
  - Continue to work closely with district councils, and other organisations that are promoting apprenticeships, to ensure a consistent message is given to young people and employers about the value of apprentices.
  - Develop a closer link with employers and training providers that offer apprenticeships within the KCC key sectors, and link them into sector conversations and other KCC sector actions.

- Take a strategic lead on the development of apprenticeship pathways through the growth in provision of Higher Apprenticeships in partnership with NAS.
- Develop employability programmes to equip all young people to be ready to access an apprenticeship. This will include regular work experience for all young people studying post-16.
- Be more proactive in identifying national funding opportunities that can add value to KCC apprenticeship work, and ensure we link in with existing initiatives.

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### **Background documents:**

None