

Apprenticeships Select Committee

Terms of Reference and Scope

Introduction

Young people are the future of England and its economy. Raising their aspirations and creating the right opportunities to enhance their skills and attitudes in order to enter sustainable employment are crucial both for their independence and the quality of their lives, as well as for the country's economic recovery and growth.

Addressing the employability of young people is a critical task if we want to contribute to the country's economic recovery as well as provide the best possible prospects for future generations of workers in Kent.

Kent County Council recognises the importance placed upon apprenticeships by employers, young people and government at both a local and national level and has taken a major lead in the progress Kent has made towards increasing the number of apprenticeships, which now stand at around 10,000.

Following the undertaking of the Student Journey Select Committee review over the past year, which explored ways to improve the employability of young people in Kent, it was decided to organise a shorter review which will investigate in greater detail the issue of apprenticeships across the County.

The Apprenticeships Select Committee has been tasked with making recommendations to the Council that can help to ensure that in the future, apprenticeships in Kent will:-

1. Meet the needs of a changing economy.
2. Provide sustainable pathways for young people into jobs via relevant skills acquisition.
3. Consistently achieve professionally recognised high quality qualifications and skills which employers and learners need.

Committee Membership

The Select Committee consists of eight elected Members of Kent County Council:

Rob Bird

Alan Chell

Les Christie

David Hirst

Steve Manion

Michael Northey

Kit Smith (Chairman Designate)

Carol Waters

An additional Member of Kent County Council, Mr Richard Lees, has been co-opted to the Select Committee.

Terms of Reference

1. To explore apprenticeships in Kent within the wider context of the UK and the EU, and to consider how apprenticeships in Kent may evolve in the future.
2. To investigate the demand for apprenticeships from employers and learners in Kent and consider ways in which apprenticeships can be championed and promoted to young people as well as employers.
3. To examine the current quality of apprenticeships in Kent, delivered by a multiplicity of providers, and explore the extent to which successful completion of apprenticeships leads to sustainable employment.
4. To consider the role of Kent County Council in implementing suggestions put forward in the Richard Review of Apprenticeships.
5. For the Apprenticeships Select Committee to make recommendations after having gathered evidence and information throughout the review.

Scope

The breadth and complexity of this topic requires a clear and focused approach, especially when looking to the future. Possible key themes and aspects to be covered by the review are detailed below:

1. To explore apprenticeships in Kent within the wider context of the UK and the EU, and to consider how apprenticeships in Kent may evolve in the future.
 - a. To explore the present landscape of apprenticeships in Kent within the wider context of the UK and the EU.
 - b. To consider how apprenticeships in Kent may evolve in the future.
2. To investigate the demand for apprenticeships from employers and learners in Kent and consider ways in which apprenticeships can be championed and promoted to young people as well as employers.
 - a. To investigate the demand for apprenticeships from employers and learners in Kent.
 - b. To consider ways in which apprenticeships can be championed and promoted to young people and employers.
3. To examine the current quality of apprenticeships in Kent, delivered by a multiplicity of providers, and explore the extent to which successful completion of apprenticeships leads to sustainable employment.
 - a. To examine the suitability of current skills and qualifications provided by apprenticeships within Kent.
 - b. To explore the extent to which successful completion of apprenticeships leads to sustainable employment.
4. To consider the role of Kent County Council in implementing suggestions put forward in the Richard Review of Apprenticeships.
 - a. To consider the implications of the Richard Review for apprenticeships in Kent.
 - b. To explore the ways in which Kent County Council can implement suggestions from the Richard Review in Kent.
5. For the Apprenticeships Select Committee to make recommendations after having gathered evidence and information throughout the review.

Timetable

Please note this timetable is subject to change in order to enable more than the 3 days of 8-11 January for hearings and to allow time for rapporteur reporting by Members. Attempts will also be made to reduce the excessive period from February 4th to March 28th to allow 5 more working days headroom for essential report writing, editing and production of the first draft.

18 December 2012: First meeting of Select Committee, to appoint the Chairman and to discuss and agree the Terms of Reference of the review.

19-23 December: Contact and organise hearings and visits.

8-11 January 2013: Hearings (2 maximum, involving up to 6 interviews).

15-17 January: Committee meets to identify key issues and to make recommendations.

21 January-1 February: Report writing, production of first draft.

4 February: Committee discusses the first draft of the report and suggests amendments. Amendments carried out accordingly.

7 February: Select Committee to share the report with Cabinet Members and Corporate Director(s).

11 February: Despatch for Corporate Board meeting.

18 February: Report considered by Corporate Board

8 March: Despatch for Cabinet. The report becomes public.

18 March: Report presented to Cabinet.

19 March: Despatch for County Council.

28 March: Report presented to County Council.

REPORT CAN NOW BE FORMALLY PUBLISHED AND LAUNCHED

3 months after publication: Scrutiny Committee will receive an action plan from the Directorates setting out how they plan to implement the report's recommendations.

12 months after publication: Select Committee reconvenes to review a report from the Directorates about one-year-on progress on the recommendations. Progress is reported to the Scrutiny Committee.

This first 12 month review marks the end of the process as currently established

Witnesses (oral/written evidence)

Evidence may be requested from the following:

- Statistically valid data and appropriate research methodology.
- Students and young people involved in apprenticeships.
- Employers and organisations representing businesses.
- Representatives of secondary schools and Further Education colleges.
- Representatives of additional external organisations that can contribute with information and evidence to The Apprenticeships Select Committee.
- KCC senior officers, particularly those involved in employment and apprenticeships for young people.
- Representatives of additional external organisations that can contribute with information and evidence to The Apprenticeships Select Committee.
- Academics, professionals, other witnesses who can make relevant contributions.

Members Rapporteur Reporting

It is anticipated that a system of Member Rapporteur reporting could be used to gather evidence from a wide base of apprenticeship stakeholders.

Site Visits

Visits may be organised by the committee as part of the evidence gathering process.

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