
By: Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills
Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning and Skills

To: Governance and Audit Trading Activities Sub Group – 1st March 2013

Subject: EduKent Progress Report

Summary: To report on the development of EduKent during 2011 and 2012 and to present the governance arrangements put in place.

UNRESTRICTED

INTRODUCTION

1. This report updates Governance and Audit Trading Activities Sub Group on EduKent's current position, its achievements so far and the key issues for further development. In July 2012, the Governance & Audit Trading Activities Sub Group received a report on EduKent which made recommendations on how best to ensure it can be successful and sustainable. The Sub Group noted EduKent's progress with a provision that an update be submitted at the earliest opportunity, setting out the proposed Governance arrangements.
2. The report structure is as follows:
 - Background information on the schools/academies market
 - The Governance arrangements for EduKent
 - EduKent's Strategic Intent
 - Update on EduKent's progress during 2011 and 2012

BACKGROUND / THE MARKET

3. The exact size of the market is not known but given KCC's expertise and the knowledge that schools, for the present, want to continue their existing beneficial relationships with KCC, we believe there is significant potential for the services EduKent provides.

It is important to note that schools have increasing freedoms to commission services from an expanding list of suppliers. The market for school improvement is becoming increasingly competitive with national and multi-national organisations competing with EduKent for business in line with national policy to increase choice.

EDUKENT GOVERNANCE

4. In addition to formal reporting to groups such as Corporate Board and the Governance & Audit Trading Activities Sub Group, Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director for Education, Learning and Skills has established the EduKent Board where he serves as Chair, with the following Officers as regular members:

- Keith Abbott, Director of School Resources
 - Peter Bole, Director of ICT
 - Amanda Beer, Corporate Director of HR
 - Sue Rogers, Director of Education, Quality & Standards
 - Rebecca Spore, Director of Property and Infrastructure Support
 - Ian McPherson, Managing Director of Commercial Services
 - Kent Association of Head Teachers representatives (TBC)
5. An immediate focus of the EduKent Board is to ensure the delivery of the Business Plan for 2013-14. It will also put in place a reporting framework where Heads of Service for all services that trade with schools are accountable to the Board as well as to their own Directorates.
 6. Additionally, the EduKent Board, in liaison with the Corporate Director Finance and Procurement, will ensure that the appropriate accounting procedures and costing models are applied to all EduKent traded activities. The accounting procedures will result in full 6-month (as well as 12-month) financial reporting.

STRATEGIC INTENT

Bold Steps for Kent: 'KCC will shape its school support provision so that it is competitive and attractive'.

7. The Strategic Intent with respect to EduKent was set out in 'Bold Steps for Education' as part of the overall 'Bold Steps for Kent' strategy. EduKent is a customer-led unit to support schools and this was clearly spelt out in January 2011 at Head Teacher briefings. The aim is to ensure that EduKent can provide school support services, using our trading experience and expertise to offer a competitive package of services to educational settings in Kent and beyond at no cost to the taxpayer.
8. From the outset EduKent has been kept distinct from Commercial Services as the aims of the two organisations are different: Commercial Services has a clear focus on delivering profit to the County Council from sources beyond its borders, whilst EduKent is focused primarily on delivering sustainable services within Kent, to its schools and Academies. This ensures that KCC retains a strong, strategic relationship with the complete family of Kent educational settings, with any profits generated reinvested in improvements to services to schools.
9. EduKent does not provide services itself but acts as the sales and marketing function for KCC's schools services and provides their route to market. EduKent makes use of its position at the centre of KCC to add value to all its services by developing relationships with larger customers (for example, school consortia, Academies Trusts, other LAs and Dioceses) that many individual services have not been able to develop or serve on their own.
10. In addition, if Kent is to support school improvement then a key priority for EduKent is to develop its status as a broker of services for schools. Even with

33 service providers, EduKent is canvassing the views of its customers and is procuring new products to meet future needs.

EDUKENT DEVELOPMENT DURING 2011 AND 2012

11. To raise the general profile, improve accessibility and increase sales, an overhaul of the EduKent brand and visual identity was required. Following a tendering process, a creative agency was appointed, with the remit to design an updated website and brochure.
12. The launch of the new website and brochure was at the EduKent EXPO and Conference on 27th September 2012 at Detling Showground. This had been run for the last three years as the Schools' Finance Conference & Trade Fair. The event in 2012 covered a much broader school support services theme, incorporating issues other than Finance.
13. EduKent has attended the Academies Show at Olympia and had more than 100 leads from interested Schools and Academies from Sussex to the Midlands. EduKent will be in attendance at the same show in April 2013 and other events throughout the year.
14. EduKent is working jointly with Commercial Services to develop business beyond Kent. Initial pilot services have been launched with Kent Teach and Horton Kirby Environmental Education Centre.
15. EduKent will seek to develop strategies to enable access to a single process or measure for Quality Assurance (QA). One benefit of this QA approach will be its contribution towards Customer Service Excellence (CSE) accreditation, which will add value to the business for individual Service Providers and customers alike.

RECOMMENDATIONS

16. Governance and Audit Trading Sub Group are asked to note for assurance:
 - The development of EduKent during 2011 and 2012
 - The EduKent Governance arrangements

Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director

Keith Abbott, Director

February 2013