

From: **Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director for Education, Learning and Skills**

To: Scrutiny Committee 3 April 2014

Subject: Update report on the Apprenticeships Select Committee and Action Plan

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Electoral Division: All

Local Members: All

Summary: This report identifies the initial outcomes of the actions to implement the Apprenticeship Select Committee recommendations and the further actions planned.

Recommendation(s): the Scrutiny Committee is asked to

- (i) *Endorse* the Apprenticeship Report and Action Plan, and
- (ii) note the significant National policy changes that have occurred which will impact on the Apprenticeship Select Committee recommendations

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Apprenticeship Select Committee review was established in March 2013. The committee chaired by Mr Kit Smith describes the purpose of the committee in the report as;
- 1.2 Following last year's Student Journey Select Committee review, which explored ways of improving the employability of young people in Kent, it was decided to organise a shorter review to investigate in more detail the issue of apprenticeships across the county.
- 1.3 The Apprenticeships Select Committee was tasked with making recommendations to the Council that can help to ensure that, in the future, apprenticeships in Kent will:-
 - Meet the needs of a changing economy.
 - Provide sustainable pathways for young people into jobs through the acquisition of relevant skills.
 - Consistently achieve professionally recognised high quality qualifications and skills which both employers and learners need.

2. Terms of Reference

The Committee established the following terms of reference

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- To consider the role of Kent County Council in implementing suggestions put forward in the Richard Review of Apprenticeships.
- For the Apprenticeships Select Committee to make recommendations after having gathered evidence and information throughout the review.

2.1 On 15th January the Apprenticeship Report and Action Plan is to be presented to The Scrutiny Committee. The Report and Action Plan identifies work completed to date against the recommendations. The Action Plan is attached at Appendix 4.

3. National Policy Changes

3.1 The apprenticeship landscape has significantly changed over the last 12 months. The current arrangements for Apprenticeships are under review by Government. KCC has responded to three consultations;

- The Richards Review
- Traineeships
- The Future Funding of Apprenticeships

3.2 In October 2013 'The Future of Apprenticeships in England' implementation plan was published. This document outlines the following changes;

- In future, Apprenticeships will be based on standards designed by employers to meet their needs, the needs of their sector and the economy more widely.
- Companies (including small business) will need to be involved in the development of the new standards.
- An apprentice will need to demonstrate their competence through rigorous independent assessment, focused primarily on testing their competence at the end of their Apprenticeship
- Apprenticeships will be graded - pass, merit and distinction.
- 'Trailblazers' in a range of sectors will develop new Apprenticeship standards and the high-level assessment approaches that sit alongside them. Leading employers and professional bodies will be involved in this process.

3.3 The implementation of the reforms will start during 2015/16 and 2016/17. The aim is that all new Apprenticeship starts will be based on the new standards from 2017/18. As the new standards are developed and agreed, Apprenticeship funding under the current frameworks will cease.

3.4 In March 2014 The technical consultation for Apprenticeship funding was published to seek views from employers on how PAYE may be better utilised to support the further increase in apprenticeship recruitment and retention. KCC are responding and the closing date is the 1st May.

4. Apprenticeship Numbers (starts)

4.1 Data Published by the National Apprenticeship Service for the year 2012 / 2013

	Kent LA			National			Statistical Neighbours		
	2011/2012	2012/2013	change	2011/2012	2012/2013	change	2011/2012	2012/2013	change
16-18 Starts	2,696	2,524	- 172	126,335	111,659	-14,676	1,629	1,392	-237
19-24 Starts	3,385	3,734	+349	156,321	161,219	+61,219	1,908	2,072	+164
25 + starts	4,787	5,004	+217	219,865	222,220	+2,355	2,585	2,721	+ 136
All ages	10,868	11,262	+394	502,521	495,098	-7,423	6,124	6,186	+ 62

4.2 Kent is performing well. We have outperformed our statistical neighbours and the national indicators. At present the number of 16-18 apprenticeship starts is down by -172 in Kent but this is better than our neighbours -237. The removal of some apprenticeship frameworks and a clamp down on poorly performing training providers by the Skills Funding Agency has contributed to this. Kent has continued to increase its recruitment of apprentices year on year between 2005 – 2013. We have recruited over 11,262 apprentices of all ages during this period. (See Appendix 1).

4.3 There is still a concern over the small number of higher apprenticeships being recruited. Kent's contribution has improved with a growth from 46 starts in 2011/12 to 181 starts in 2012/13. There are very few frameworks at this level and we are working with all providers and key partners to ensure that apprenticeships are seen as a strong employment and learning pathway for young people with higher levels of skills and prior attainment.

4.4 Traineeships started in September 2013. There are approximately 15 providers in Kent but initial investigation has shown that take up is very low. Providers see this as high risk as the young people may not complete the programme which will affect future funding. We have asked KAFEC to lead on this to ascertain the present position and develop new provision. We have amended KPI 15 of the Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy to encompass the delivery of 500 level 1 pre apprenticeships by 2017. This is to recognise that there is a gap in provision for learners below level 2 who wish to access an apprenticeship

5. Our Services (see Appendix 2)

KCC Apprenticeships

- 5.1 The KCC Apprenticeship Programme is now working with 42 departments (35 in 2012) and has placed 363 apprentices in KCC to date. Our annual target of 88 apprenticeships was exceeded with 107 starts last year. We are confident that we will exceed the 2016 target of 400 apprentices and therefore we have set ourselves a higher target of 700 by 2017. The KCC programme now has a robust salary policy and clear entry routes into the organisation (appendix 3). We have secured funding from Learning and Development to provide additional training and we are about to launch our document guides for managers and apprentices themselves. HR has agreed to process all applications in line with KCC recruitment policy.
- 5.2 Apprenticeships are becoming very popular. Since September 2013, 32 apprenticeship vacancies have been advertised with 373 applications received. We have 6 Advanced level apprentices in the organisation which will increase next year with our expansion of level 2. Advanced apprenticeships are mandated to have modules which show supervisory skills. The increase should create a talent pool of managers for the future. Higher apprenticeships are the next focus as we work and we will be asking for some departments to pilot higher apprenticeships on behalf of the organisation.

Kent Employment Programme (KEP)

- 5.3 The Programme has engaged with over 900 businesses across Kent to promote the value of apprenticeship and the services offered by the Skills and Employability Service. This has resulted in over 600 visits by our Engagement team to talk about apprenticeships and the funding available to them through KCC and other Government funds. This has resulted in the recruitment of 590 young people to start an apprenticeship across a wide range of roles from Glass blowing to Farm stockman. We currently have 38 live vacancies which we are being recruited across the county.
- 5.4 The team has established strong working partnerships with Job Centres and Work Programme providers across Kent, as well as various training providers and colleges.

Assisted Apprenticeships

- 5.5 Formerly, the Vulnerable Learners Apprenticeship project, the Assisted Apprenticeships programme has placed 37 people from a target of 35 during phase 3 and has now set an ambitious target of 60 placements for this year. The project now targets 6 cohorts: young parents, care leavers, young offenders, home educated young people, people with disabilities and those from troubled families. Each category has an identified champion who works with the young people on our behalf. Since September 11 young people have been placed.

Schools

- 5.6 The National Apprenticeship Service funded the Apprenticeship Information Ambassador Service led by KATO to train Providers and members of the Skills and Employability Service to run Information Sessions to schools. This service is able to offer guidance to Years 10 – 13 students, advisors, teaching staff and

parents/guardians. It is raising the profile of Apprenticeships across schools in the county. These will explore apprenticeships in greater depth and give information on the best routes into certain sectors.

- 5.7 Schools are starting to understand the range of apprenticeship frameworks that are available to them and our schools brochure has provided key information. As a result, schools are asking us to recruit apprentices for their schools as lab technicians, grounds staff, teaching assistants and security apprentices. This is a significant change from administrative and premises staff who have been recruited historically.
- 5.8 We are piloting a 2-1-2 model to develop work experience and pre apprenticeships within schools post 16. We have 4 pilot schools with another 3 starting in the New Year. The principle of the scheme is that 2 days will be in school focusing on maths and English, 1 day in college or training provider studying for a vocational qualification and 2 days work placement.

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- 5.9 We have a strong careers education and advice and guidance network with a coordinator in each area. There are regular meetings to share practice and discuss issues. It is at these meetings that we deliver training for Kent Choices 4 U. We recently held separate Careers and Work Experience conferences with nationally renowned speakers. The theme has been progression and relevant pathways for young people. Apprenticeships have featured as a key discussion point. Both conferences had over 75 attendees and KCC was praised for having such strong networks which are lacking in many other local authorities.

Troubled Families (TF)

- 5.10 This initiative has an explicit cohort within our Assisted Apprenticeship scheme. To date there are 6 apprenticeships being processed as the TF team did not have a referral system in place. In response to this issue we delivered training in early November to 50 TF staff to make them understand how apprenticeships and employability courses can improve the employment and training opportunities for the families with which they work. They have now designed their own system to refer young people to the Skills and Employability Service to provide additional support as required. We are working to ensure we achieve the target of at least 100 apprentices from troubled families.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 We will register as an apprenticeship 'Trailblazer' to help to lead the reform of apprenticeships. We will work with businesses to redesign apprenticeships and will work with NAS and Government to ensure we have a high quality apprenticeship product under the new system. An apprenticeship programme could fulfil much of the requirements of Kent Manager or provide an alternative.
- 6.2 We have started the process of organising our Apprenticeship Summit to be in April 2014. The focus will be on the following topics
- Apprenticeships as a positive choice for young people
 - Progression to higher levels

- Transition from school to work
- What will the Apprenticeship programme of the future look like? How does Kent influence it?

6.3 This will be a high profile event with views from Government, major businesses and academic research being presented.

6.4 The KCC LEP plan clearly defines apprenticeships as a quality pathway to up skill the workforce. These are linked to sector priorities. To improve sector ownership of apprenticeships we are establishing a 'Kent Tourism & Hospitality Guild' to involve key employers (such as Shepherd Neame) to develop a sector specific Guild. We aim to shine a spotlight on this sector with a view to raising its positive profile as an attractive and sustainable career option especially for young people. At the same time, the Guild will also focus on what is necessary to develop and streamline entry and progression pathways for students from the age of 14 onwards to include apprenticeships. The Skills and Employability Service have been working closely with Visit Kent Ltd to develop the concept for a Guild along with education providers and employers. A Kent Curriculum Framework for the sector is being developed, which will identify clear pathways for a young person entering the Sector. The theme of the framework will be Aspiration, Attitude and Achievement. The pilot will then be rolled out across the other key sectors.

6.5 We will review the brand of KCC Apprenticeships to ensure it is fit for purpose. It is vital that KCC is seen as a market leader in public service apprenticeships. With the changes being made to the Kent .gov website it is vital that KCC Apprenticeships as a product can be easily identifiable and recognised as high quality. We aim to expand our use of social media at service level and think innovatively as to how our branding can reach more young people. We will work with KCC Communications and other agencies to produce a high quality brand of choice.

6.6 We have been looking at how the Skills and Employability service could generate income to support other projects and we are currently looking at how to create a Community interest company.

6.7 Our aim would be to create a pathway for employers, schools and young people to use which would generate funding, and any surplus could then be used within Skills and Employability service to fund other projects. We would wish to match the need of the employer and work with the young people to achieve a match, which would grow the business and help improve the opportunities across Kent. The company would develop a service which would be chargeable to employers and give employability skills to the young person to enhance their career progression.

6.8 The following Sectors have been identified as priority areas for development within Kent as part of 'Innovation for Growth' and 'Unlocking Potential strategies. These include low carbon and environmental technologies; life sciences and medical technologies; and food production. These sectors are currently part of the SELEP plan and the Skills and Employability Service are currently engaged in developing the plan through regular meetings with KCC Economic Development. One of our Officers is assigned to the LEP and SELEP to drive the process forward. Tourism is also identified as strong area in Kent which is likely to grow.

- 6.9 We have negotiated with Bloodhound to visit Kent. This is Richard Noble's attempt at the first 1000mph vehicle. This project will roll out from March 2014 and visit a range of areas within Kent to promote engineering and electronic careers and in particular apprenticeships. Rolls Royce and BAE systems are just two of many employers engaged in the project.
- 6.10 Higher Apprenticeships will soon be available in subjects including Engineering Environmental Technologies, Fashion and Textiles, Interactive Media, Legal Services and Space Engineering. We will bring together the key employers and training providers in these sectors in Kent to agree how higher apprenticeships will be delivered. This will form part of the implementation plan for apprenticeships where employers will design apprenticeship standards. We will also work with local Universities to agree the pathways for apprenticeships to Bachelor's degree and Masters Level. We are establishing a specialist working group to engage Grammar schools to provide specialist employer links in key sectors such as legal, finance and insurance to develop pathways for advanced and higher level apprenticeships.
- 6.11 We aim to continue to improve our support for employers through our Apprenticeship Advisory Service which provides advice to employers who take on young people as apprentices. We assist in the recruitment and preparation of young people for work and provide greater opportunities for employers to discuss their needs with schools and providers through sector development groups and the future 'Guilds' as described above. We will create a number of 'job coaches' who will act as a point of reference to young people who will support them through the apprenticeship process. This is currently a gap in provision.
- 6.12 At the March meeting of the Kent and Medway Education Learning and Skills Partnership Board a proposal was endorsed to develop an explicit campaign to address the decline in 16-18 apprenticeship recruitment. A time line has been agreed and a task and finish group are in place to develop this further.
- 6.13 The Skills and Employability service has just launched a Careers Plan and we are about to support schools to complete the process. The Careers Plan will allow schools to identify the effectiveness of their current information, advice and guidance, based upon national priorities. We have developed 'My Kent Choices' as an interactive resource and portfolio system which will allow young people to develop and improve their employability skills online.
- 6.14 To improve the September guarantee process we will include key apprenticeship information into our post 16 registration letter for KC4U. This will be sent to all Year 11 and year 12 young people and their parents on an annual basis.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Apprenticeships in Kent are increasing and we have outperformed our statistical neighbours and are ahead of national trends across the board. Our drive is to ensure that young people are aware of apprenticeships and that they are high profile as the skill option of choice for them and employers. We work with key partners on the best way to record the destinations of apprentices.

7.2 KCC must lead the public sector in best practice and demonstrate the value of apprenticeships in organisational development and succession planning. Our 14-24 Strategy has apprenticeships at its core and we are working closely with our key partners to develop ways of communicating more effectively with young people and businesses at a local level.

8. Recommendation(s): the Scrutiny Committee is asked to

- (i) Endorse the Apprenticeship Report and Action Plan, and
- (ii) note the significant National policy changes that have occurred which will impact on the Apprenticeship Select Committee recommendations

Background Documents:

Report to Scrutiny Committee - 12th December 2012


<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=752&MId=4887&Ver=4>

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