

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

**To:** Education and Young People's Cabinet Committee – 13 January 2015

**Subject:** Adult Learning and Skills Strategy 2015 - 2018

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member Decision**

**Electoral Division: All**

**Summary:**

This report presents the draft Adult Learning and Skills Strategy 2015 – 2018 and outlines the consultation process on the draft Adult Learning and Skills Strategy for Kent.

**Recommendation:**

The Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform to undertake consultation on the Adult Learning and Skills Strategy for Kent and receive the outcomes of this consultation at the Education and Young People's Cabinet Committee on the 7 April 2015

**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 In 2014, the Skills and Employability Service within Education and Young People's Services took over responsibility for two key adult services: Kent Supported Employment, a service that supports Adults with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities into Employment, and Community Learning and Skills comprising Adult Education, Kent Training and Apprenticeships and Skills Plus.
- 1.2 The Skills and Employability Service also works closely with Job Centre Plus to reduce unemployment for young adults (aged 18-24) and is responsible for the destination of young people until age 19.
- 1.3 The Skills and Employability Service is increasingly working with Adults (18+) and has re-aligned the organisation structures to reflect this, with staff appointed to Adult Skills roles and a new senior management post for Adult Skills.

## **2.0 Developing an Adult Learning and Skills Strategy**

- 2.1 The Adult Learning and Skills Strategy attempts to bring together the priorities for Adult Learning and Skills, and will support Adult Skills training providers to deliver programmes which meet the economic needs and priorities of Kent, and support a comprehensive Adult Skills and Community Learning delivery model for all adults (including vulnerable learners and communities).
- 2.2 The development of Adult Learning and Skills has five clear priorities:
- to provide the skills required to drive economic growth across the county
  - to reduce 18+ unemployment and the burden to the individual and to wider society
  - to promote adult participation in learning with all the benefits to individuals, such as health, wellbeing, employment and income
  - to engage socially excluded people into society to achieve social inclusion, citizenship and community cohesion
  - to increase the take up of Adult apprenticeships
- 2.3 The Adult Learning and Skills Strategy attempts to assimilate these priorities in order to provide the widest impact possible. This will be achieved by developing high quality data sets that explain the need to develop Adult Skills provision in targeted locations such as Dover, Thanet and Swale alongside the need to develop skills in the growth sectors in the Kent economy.

### **Changes to Adult Skills Funding**

- 2.4 From 2013 Training Loans were introduced for adults along similar lines to Student Loans. Adults are required to take out loans for any training at level 3 or above. This has had a detrimental impact on the take up of Adult (25+) programmes, including apprenticeships, as the training element was previously paid for by employers. The number of 24+ Adult Apprenticeships halved from 2012-13 to 2013-14. This scheme is now being revised

### **Apprenticeship Reforms**

- 2.5 Current Apprenticeship frameworks are going through a radical re-structuring with new standards set to operate from 2016. The new standards have been strongly influenced by employers through a series of 'trailblazers' currently operating across the Country. (KCC is working with the Home Office to develop a standard for public sector apprenticeships). The funding arrangements for Apprenticeships are currently under review and consultation on these new arrangements has taken place. The new arrangements will transfer funding from training providers to employers giving the latter a greater role in skill training. The implementation date is yet to be determined.

### **3.0 Links to the 14-24 Learning Employment and Skills Strategy**

3.1 The Adult Learning and Skills Strategy is complementary to the 14 – 24 Learning Employment and Skills Strategy, which was approved and launched in 2013. It is important that there is a seamless transition from 18 into the Adult Skills Sector. Too often young people are not well supported into opportunities because of artificial barriers between the funding for pre-18 and post-18 courses.

3.2 The draft Adult, Learning and Skills Strategy is structured around four themes:

- Adult Employment
- Adult Skill Levels
- Priority Groups
- Priority Sectors

This closely mirrors the 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2013-16 which has the four, similar themes:

- Participation and Youth employment
- Achievement and Attainment
- Support for Vulnerable Learners
- Vocational Education and Apprenticeships

3.3 The Adult Skills and Learning Strategy sits alongside a Kent Adult Datapack that provides an overview of the Adult Skills Profile in Kent for all Adult Learning and Skills providers. The Datapack follows a similar format to the 14-24 District Datapacks that have been produced by Skills and Employability Service since 2011. The Adult Skills Datapack contains detailed information about the skills training infrastructure in Kent, adult skill levels, employment and unemployment and labour market information, and includes Key Performance Indicators for the next 3 years.

3.4 The draft Adult Skills and Learning Strategy 2015 - 2018 and Adult Skills Datapack are attached as appendix 1.

### **4.0 Consultation with services, partners, employers and stakeholders**

4.1 The draft Adult, Learning and Skills Strategy contains 14 aspirational targets with Key Performance indicators which will provide drivers for the work of Adult Learning and Skills providers over the next three years.

4.2 The Strategy will also inform the service specification for the new KCC delivery vehicle, (currently a not for profit company) which is being developed for the Community Learning and Skills Service. The Strategy explicitly states that it is a document for all the providers of Adult Learning and Skills in the County. To achieve this, a consultation process will be carried out with Key

Stakeholders over the next two months. The timeline for the consultation is as follows:

- Consultation with key stakeholders including employers in January/February 2015
- Report on the outcomes of the consultation to the Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2015

4.3 Employer engagement will be key to the delivery of the strategy. This will be achieved by working through the Chambers of Commerce and other employer lead organisations

4.4 It is intended that, following consultation a detailed action plan, containing the Key Performance Indicators and milestones will be produced, which will be reported to the Kent and Medway Education, Learning and Skills Partnership Board. This board is an advisory group to the Local Enterprise Partnership on skills. This will ensure there are clear interdependencies between the LEP Skills Strategy and a new Adult Learning and Skills Strategy for Kent.

## 5. Recommendations

The Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform to undertake consultation on the Adult Learning and Skills Strategy for Kent and receive the outcomes of this consultation at the Education and Young People's Cabinet Committee on the 7 April 2015

### Background Documents

Click on hyperlinks below to open

[NOMIS unemployment report](#)

[ONS Population Survey 2013](#)

[14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy](#)

[NIACE 2014 Adult Participation in Learning Survey](#)

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