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To: Education Cabinet Committee – 14 March 2014

Subject: 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy: Progress Update

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: Education Cabinet Committee - 21 November 2012

Electoral Divisions: All

**Summary:** This report presents a summary of progress towards the achievement of the aims and objectives of the 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy. It describes outcomes achieved to date and outlines future activities to meet the agreed targets.

**Recommendations:**

The Education Cabinet Committee is asked to note and comment on the progress made towards achieving the aims and targets of the 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy.

## 1. Introduction

### ***Strategy – Aims and Objectives***

- 1.1 The ambition of the 14-24 Learning and Skills Strategy is for all young people in Kent to become better qualified and more employable; to be able to participate and achieve success in education and work based training at least until the age of 18 and to ensure that more 18 to 24 year olds can access higher learning or sustained employment that is appropriate to their needs and relevant to the local and national economy. The Strategy was launched on 25 February 2013.
- 1.2 By achieving the ambition we will improve the Kent economy by ensuring there is a better skilled workforce and employers are more engaged in the design and delivery of new training programmes and vocational qualifications for young people, including a significant increase in apprenticeships.

### ***2. The Role of the Skills and Employability Service***

- 2.1 The role of the Skills and Employability Service is to deliver the 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy. It does this by working collaboratively with a wide range of key partners in Kent, and across all KCC departments, to equip young people with the skills they need to progress to further learning, employment or self-employment. It supports learning providers to match their provision to the needs of

learners and employers; it ensures young people are fully informed of the opportunities available to them; it tracks the destinations of young people into year 12 and 13; it provides additional support to the most vulnerable young people and aims to reduce youth unemployment; and it promotes the development and take up of apprenticeships and other vocational pathways.

- 2.2 The Strategy has four major priorities; to raise attainment; to improve and extend vocational education, training and apprenticeships; to increase participation in learning and employment with training; and to target support to vulnerable young people so that they achieve better outcomes and employment.
- 2.3 The Strategy is ambitious for major change in developing a better vocational training and skills system in Kent, which guarantees higher levels of qualification and employability that match the key employment sectors in the county. The targets we have set are challenging and their success will mean significant benefits for young people's employment and the Kent economy by 2016.
- 2.4 Overall governance of the Strategy is achieved through a Partnership Board comprising representatives from the KCC Business Advisory Board, Federation of Small Business, Invicta Chamber of Commerce, CXK, Canterbury Christ Church University, KAFEC, KATO, Primary, Secondary and Special schools, the Education Funding Agency, Jobcentre Plus, the National Apprenticeship Service, the Skills Funding Agency and a District Council representative. Meetings are held quarterly to receive reports on the 18 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and to identify future actions.
- 2.5 Day to day issues relating to joint working between partners are managed through an operational KCC run Joint Partnership meeting held monthly, comprising representatives from KATO, KAFEC, Skills Funding Agency, Education Funding Agency, Jobcentre Plus, National Apprenticeship Service, EBP Kent and East Kent College. Issues dealt with range from filling the gaps in entry level and level 1 provision in Kent to bidding for European funding opportunities. District, locality or individual provider meetings are regularly held to deliver the Strategy on the ground, depending on the needs in different areas.

### **3. Legislative Changes**

- 3.1 The Strategy is being delivered in the context of a number of major legislative changes. These changes include:
  - i. **Raised Participation Age** - The Raised Participation Age legislation gives Local Authorities statutory duties to:
    - make available to young people aged 13-19, and to those aged 20-24 with a Learning Difficulty Assessment, support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training.
    - Secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people aged 16-19 and for those aged 20-24 with a Learning Difficulty Assessment in their area.

- Track the identities of young people who are failing to fulfil the duty to participate in education or training.
  - Provide bespoke support for vulnerable young people.
- ii. **Apprenticeships** - Changes to the structure for the delivery of Apprenticeships, which stipulate:
- 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) need to be involved in the development of the new standards and funding will be given direct to employers rather than to FE colleges or work based learning providers.
  - 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.

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.

- iii. **Careers Education and Guidance** - All schools now have a statutory duty to provide impartial careers education and guidance for Years 8 to 13 and all learning providers must publish destination data for Year 11 and Year 13 leavers.
- iv. **Study Programmes** - Post-16 Study Programmes have been introduced. From 2013/14 Post-16 funding is allocated on a per student basis rather than per qualification. Study programmes seek to ensure that young people complete substantial and high quality qualifications that employers recognise and can enhance progression opportunities. Post-16 learners are required to continue studying English and maths, potentially up to Level 3.
- v. **Qualification Reform** - Other qualification reforms include decoupling AS levels from A levels, consultations on the subject content of A levels, new standards for Level 3 vocational qualifications and the introduction of Technical Vocational qualifications into post-16 performance tables from 2016.

#### 4. **Actions to Deliver the Strategy in 2013**

##### 4.1 **Raise attainment**

- i. Results at Key Stage 4 show Kent's performance at 5 or more GCSE A\*-C grades including English and maths in 2013 improved to 63%, compared to 61% in 2012. This is 4% above the national figure of 59%. However underlying this, nearly 70.5% of young people got an English or maths qualification, but not both. Nearly 1,000 young people did not achieve even a Level 1 in either qualification. As a result,

5,000 students will need to continue working towards GCSE Level 2 in Maths or English, or Maths and English, in 2013/14.

- ii. Of particular concern therefore, is DfE analysis which shows that, of students from 2009 with a Level 1 in Maths and a Level 1 in English in Kent (schools and colleges), only 5.6% had converted that Level 1 to a Level 2 in Maths, and 6.7% in English by 2012. This is a key priority for improvement.
- iii. Participation and attainment with modern foreign languages at GCSE and A Level also presents a challenge. In 2013 there were only 585 entries for A Level modern foreign languages in Kent (1.9% of total A Level entries), compared to 626 in 2012. Opportunities to study modern foreign languages post-16 are often confined to grammar schools, or the highest achieving young people in high and wide ability schools.
- iv. Performance at post-16 as a whole has improved on some indicators this year but has dropped in others, although less than the national average. The percentage of students achieving two or more A Level passes increased to 96%, compared to 92% in 2012.
- v. Kent's Average Points Score per entry is up 3.9 to 214.6, compared to the national static result of 212.7. The Average Points Score per student dropped 27.2 points to 710.1, compared to a national reduction of 23.9 to 709.1. The greatest improvement has been in the number of students gaining three or more A and B grades which improved from 5% in 2012 to 8.5% in 2013, compared to 7.4% nationally.
- vi. A number of factors undermining performance at Advanced Level are linked to the size of the Sixth Form and/or the curriculum offer. There appears to be a correlation between the size of sixth form and the level of outcomes. It suggests that Sixth Forms need to be of a large enough size to offer students a breadth of curriculum that allows them to select appropriate subjects and to be in groups that generate an appropriate learning environment. A small sixth form has fewer than 50 students. A viable sixth form will have approximately 150 pupils. It also suggests that small sixth forms can be successful however with a focus on vocational courses. Another issue is that small sixth forms are a financial drain on the school, so there are implications for standards in KS3 and KS4.
- vii. The Chief Executive of the Sixth Form College's Forum states that since 2010 there has been a 17% increase in the number of sixth forms in England and Wales, with a 10% decrease in quality and outcomes. Typically around one in seven post-16 exam entries is achieving a grade below what would be achieved outside of a small sixth form. 12% of students in small sixth forms are completing one subject fewer than would be typical. In an analysis of GCSE performance versus A Level results students in small sixth forms are underperforming by approximately one grade per student.
- viii. In Kent there is a clear correlation between size of sixth form and Average Points per Entry (APE) for each institution. From the data available it is clear that:
  - 20 out of 21 schools with an APE of 194 points or fewer have a sixth form of 100 or less;

- 9 out of 21 schools with an APE of 194 points or fewer have a sixth form of 50 or less;
- 4 out of 4 schools with an APE of 172 points or fewer have a sixth form of 54 or less.

- ix. It is a priority to work with schools with small sixth forms to promote collaborative provision across a district to maximise student choice; encourage the development of appropriate student pathways that may be lacking in small sixth forms and increase the quality of post-16 delivery in these institutions.
- x. Another challenge in Kent is to improve the standards and skills achieved by young people aged 19 from low income backgrounds at Levels 2 and 3. These outcomes are below the national average, the achievement gap for Level 2 is 32% in Kent compared to 25% nationally between outcomes for the most vulnerable 19 year olds and other students, and it is not closing quickly enough.
- xi. In order to tackle these and other attainment issues in Kent, the Service is undertaking a wide range of activities with individual providers and collaborative groups.
- xii. By examining a range of attainment data, produced within the Skills and Employability Service Data packs, the local authority is reviewing with schools and challenging schools and providers on their curriculum and delivery methods, to influence the 2014/2015 curriculum, and beyond. District wide meetings, and meetings with individual providers, have taken place to work through the key messages arising from the data packs. Six schools and colleges have realigned their post 16 offer based on the information from the data packs so far. One school has adopted a post 16 curriculum which offers knowledge and skills more closely matching the economic need of the area; a Headteacher in North Kent reports that the pack, when produced at a ministerial roundtable meeting to discuss the economic and working futures of women, was extremely well received and seen as an example of local authority good practice; an OFSTED post 16 best practice case study highlighted true collaboration between providers and businesses: an FE college has drawn from the pack to support premises redevelopment in order to offer Health and Social Care, identified as a local need: three schools have submitted bids for post 16 demographic growth funds based on future planning linked to the packs, and two have been successful.
- xiii. 20 schools, with varying levels of post-16 attainment, have volunteered to take part in a profiling exercise to support schools in developing the post-16 curriculum, and improve participation and attainment. This will then be launched county wide later in 2014. By focussing on the data sources available to institutions, such as participation, recruitment and retention data we aim to help schools plan better post-16 programmes to meet local and national targets. The data used includes the LPUK Data dashboard including district and school type variations; English and maths data for level 2 attainment; narrowing the achievement gaps for priority groups; kentchoices4u and destinations measures at ages 16, 17 and 18, The visits are being undertaken in partnership with the School Improvement Team.

- xiv. Focussing on English and maths attainment, the Service is working in partnership with three teaching schools across East, Mid and West areas of Kent to target 12 under-performing schools and provide peer to peer support to develop good practice, in order to improve learner outcomes in these subjects at GCSE. A key part of the project is to identify the GCSE outcomes below Grade C and the links with the new Study Programmes to ensure the opportunity to study English and maths post-16 is made available. An Action Plan has been developed to progress this work with a particular focus on FE Colleges, where the data suggests the majority of the delivery of post -16 GCSE English and maths will take place in Kent.
- xv. In order to help support staff development within schools and colleges in Kent, the Service has delivered 11 training events and conferences in the last 18 months, to over 1000 Kent learning professionals. These covered topics such as post-16 pedagogy, CEIAG, curriculum development and work experience, and focused on raising awareness and developing solutions for the key issues identified by the data packs.

#### 4.2 Improve and extend vocational education, training and apprenticeships

- i. The Skills and Employability Service is working to extend vocational education, training and apprenticeships.
- ii. Data Published by the National Apprenticeship Service for the year 2012 / 2013 for apprenticeship achievements is given below:

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

- iii. 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) and nationally ( -14,676). 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.
- iv. There is still a concern over the number of higher apprenticeships being recruited. Kent's contribution has improved with a growth from 41 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 pathway leading to higher level technical and professional qualifications.

- v. Traineeships started in September 2013. There are 15 providers in Kent but 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 (Kent Association of Further Education Colleges) to lead on this to ascertain the present position and develop new provision.
- vi. The KCC Apprenticeship Programme is now working with 42 departments in the County Council (compared to 35 in 2012) and has placed 303 apprentices 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 high target of 700 by 2017. The KCC programme now has a robust salary policy and clear entry routes into the organisation. We have secured funding to provide additional training and we are about to launch our documents guides for managers and apprentice themselves. HR has now agreed to process all applications in line with KCC recruitment policy. A new handbook and training and mentoring systems are in place.
- vii. Apprenticeships are becoming very popular. Since September 2013, 32 apprenticeship vacancies have been advertised in KCC with 373 applications received. We have six 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 with departments to select the right frameworks which can be offered to give career progression.
- viii. In 2012/13, 172 students undertook a work experience placement across 30 Teams within KCC. Where appropriate young people who complete a work experience placement are encouraged to consider progression to an apprenticeship within Kent County Council.
- ix. The Service is actively promoting apprenticeships in schools, both Primary and Secondary, and facilitating the relationship between schools (as the employer) and training providers. Work is being undertaken to better match the apprenticeship model with the academic working year. By the end of 2012/13, 146 schools have taken on at least 1 apprentice.
- x. The Service is working in a partnership with Barclays Bank to extend their 'Lifeskills Bridges into Work' programme into Kent. This offers free support which will provide a two week work ready programme for school students and a service which introduces businesses to local candidates. We will expand this to the FE colleges. The outcome is that learners will have a guarantee of an interview with an employer and be better prepared to enter the workplace, thus improving their chances of employment.
- xi. The Service is establishing 12 Skills and Employability hubs, one in each district, as a focus for vocational activity and creating employer engagement and sector skills plans to complement these. Using the existing Skills Centre infrastructure, each hub

will develop and deliver best practise in employability and vocational skills to young people and adults, with a focus on improving employment opportunities for 16 – 24 year olds in the Kent priority sectors.

#### 4.3 Increase Participation and Employment

- i. The Skills and Employability Service is working to increase participation in learning and employment for all young people to age 18 and beyond.
- ii. The Kent Apprenticeship Programme has engaged with 862 businesses across Kent to promote the value of apprenticeships and the services offered by the Skills and Employability Service. This has resulted in 543 visits by our Employer Engagement team to talk about apprenticeships and the funding available through KCC and other Government funds. This has led to employers returning 475 contracts and we have recruited 485 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 are being recruited across the county. The team has established strong working partnerships with Job Centres and Work Programme providers across Kent, as well as various training providers and colleges.
- iii. The average figure for the number of NEETs in Kent during the 2012/13 academic year was 5.7% compared to 6.2% of the cohort last year, and 5% across the South East as a whole. A number of activities are being delivered to address this which focus on the outcomes of four Raising the Participation pilots that were completed in Thanet, Dover, Swale and Tonbridge.
- iv. Through working with Job Centre Plus the nature of unemployment (ages, skill levels, geographical spread, etc) has been determined down to ward level. Employment Action Zones have been established in the 5 districts with the highest youth unemployment rates (Thanet, Swale, Shepway, Gravesham and Dover), with a target to reduce youth unemployment to below the national average in each area. A series of projects have been commissioned to complement existing JCP support in each area including:
  - engaging a training provider to carry out Personal Profiles of young people
  - engaging FE providers to deliver short term (4-6 weeks) programmes especially for 18 year olds, where a significant lack of learning provision has been identified
  - consulting with young unemployed people to determine their views
  - convening multiagency task and finish groups where none exist
- v. NEET to EET partnership meetings have taken place in seven districts in Kent. By working closely with all agencies to case manage individual vulnerable young people, 200 young people have been found learning, training and employment placements, who might otherwise have had negative outcomes post-16
- vi. Working with six schools, a new model of curriculum delivery is being developed called the “2-1-2” model. By offering young people a curriculum based on 2 days of key skills (maths and English), 1 day of work experience, and 2 days of vocational learning, they will develop employability skills and good working practices,



embedded within the normal timetable. About 100 post-16 learners are expected to take part in the pilot by July 2014.

- vii. We have a strong CEIAG (Careers education and independent 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, the online facility for young people to get information and advice about career options and courses. We have recently held separate Careers and Work Experience conferences with nationally renowned speakers. The theme has been progression and relevant pathways. Apprenticeships have featured as a key discussion point. Both conferences had over 75 attendees and KCC were praised for having such strong networks which are lacking in many other local authorities.
- viii. Schools are being supported to audit and develop their delivery of employability skills in the curriculum. We aim to pilot the Employability Health Check by 1 school in each District by April 2014, and to have signed up 50 schools by April 2015. The Employability Health Check identifies employability outcomes, supports the assessment of employability provision and has an audit tool to provide a framework for the quality delivery of employability skills to Post-16 students.
- ix. KentChoices4U provides Year 11 pupils with the opportunity to search all Kent providers for post-16 courses, and apply for them online. Up to end of November 2013, 7,600 young people had accessed their account and 2,100 young people had applied for courses online through it. This is a significant increase of 90%, or 1,000 young people, compared to the previous year. The website also provides young people with a variety of online careers advice and guidance tools to support their post-16 choices
- x. We have continued to make significant progress to ensure Year 11 and Year 12 learners have a September guarantee of a learning destination. At the beginning of November 2013, 93.5% of Year 11 students had received offers compared to 93.9% in 2012. At the beginning of November 2013, 86.7% of Year 12 students had received offers compared to 86% in 2012. Through this work we will be able to track vulnerable young people and ensure they have appropriate support.
- xi. The availability of provision to meet the requirements of progression for learners at entry level to level 2, particularly learners without English and maths qualifications at grade C, remains an issue. The Education Funding Agency (EFA) has withdrawn contracts for 120 FTE learners in Kent due to poor OFSTED reports at learning providers TBG (Ashford) and TPT (Maidstone). Parenta and Concept Training have chosen to stop Foundation provision for about 150 FTE learners in Kent. The EFA acknowledge that there are groups of young people that could be affected because providers are unclear how they can be accommodated within the new study programmes funding, in particular students at high risk of becoming NEET, due to their likelihood of not sustaining their learning, and those undecided about their future. This is a critical issue that requires urgent attention. The lack of provision for these learners seriously impacts on their participation and future employability.
- xii. A range of solutions have been proposed by the Service to address these issues, including highly localised contracting for individualised provision via the district hubs, integrating with social services and KLIASS etc; together with partnership

working between schools and small providers; sub-contracting local providers if they can demonstrate their national OFSTED failure was not a reflection of local quality of provision; subcontracting the work experience element of study programmes to specialist providers so that students can demonstrate a commitment to study a vocational programme, before starting provision with a learning provider; and working with all providers to reduce the bureaucracy that is currently inherent in collaborative working. A task and finish group of the Partnership Board has been established to scope these solutions and report back in March 2014, to influence the 2014/15 curriculum offer.

#### **5.4 Target Support for Vulnerable Young People**

- i. The Skills and Employability Service provides targeted support for vulnerable young people.
- ii. The Assisted Apprenticeship programme supports our most vulnerable young people, (teenage parents, learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, children in care and young offenders) into supported apprenticeship placements. Formerly, the Vulnerable Learners Apprenticeships project, it has placed 37 young people from a target of 35 and has now set an ambitious target of 60 placements. The project now targets 6 cohorts: young parents, care leavers, young offenders, home educated young people, those with disabilities and young people in the troubled families programme. Each category has an identified champion who works with the young people on our behalf. Since September 2013, 11 young people have been placed.
- iii. The highest proportion of young people with a statement of special educational needs have a behavioural or emotional difficulty, or BSED. A BSED project was established in 2012/2013 with £60,000 of KCC funding matched by £60,000 funding from the BSED Special schools in Kent. By providing 3 mentors to work with 119 young people from these schools, during their transition to FE College and their first few weeks of term, drop out has been significantly reduced during the first two terms of 2013/14.
- iv. As a result of this project, Special schools have started to think about joint 14-19 curriculum planning with FE colleges to ensure relevant progression pathways are on offer for their students.
- v. A smaller pilot project was undertaken with six students from Five Acre Wood School who were progressing on to Mid-Kent College. By promoting integrated working between staff and pupils, good practice in ensuring successful transitions between Special schools and colleges was developed. The pilot work will be further developed with all Special schools in the county. Key messages learned have been:
  - independent mentors are a key element in supporting transition
  - the need to identify at transition the actual level at which learners are achieving, which may differ from the assessments made
  - direct conversations between providers are essential
  - interventions at transition are not expensive and can be integrated into day to day working
  - parental engagement is key

- transport issues remain a barrier and need further investigation.
- vi. Further projects for 2013/14 include developing innovative curriculum pathways for four Post-19 pupils from Ifield School to attend North West Kent College. The project will test integrated working between a variety of providers, and the practicalities of creating cost effective local provision through effective local multi-agency working for students rather than sending them out of the county.
- vii. By working with Thanet College a pilot will be developed so that Special schools students in the locality will be tracked from Year 9. As a result their needs for post-16 provision can be identified at a very early stage enabling the college to plan for this provision in advance, building on existing good practice with Special schools in Thanet.
- viii. Throughout 2012-13 KCC consulted with schools and a wide range of agencies working with young people about the quality and range of provision available in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and Alternative Curriculum provision. The review had the following aims:
- to raise standards and ensure that a much greater percentage of young people in the groups identified are enabled to attain in line with their mainstream peers;
  - to reduce travel and wherever possible localise the provision;
  - to reduce the number of permanent exclusions;
  - to reduce the numbers who leave school at age 16 without opportunity for further education, employment or training;
  - to enhance the capacity of teaching staff in PRUs to teach to the highest standard;
  - to enhance the capacity of mainstream school staff to manage behaviour more effectively and therefore reduce referral off-site and/or exclusions.
- ix. As a result of the review, in 2013 PRU and AC management has been reformed ensuring a better headteacher representation on Management Committees of the school communities that they serve, with improved delegation of funding to support new delivery structures. Improved Service Level Agreements are in place; a new quality monitoring and evaluation framework is in place; 9 key performance indicators are in place with regular monitoring; and delivery sites have been reviewed with a programme of disposal and refurbishment in place. Significant changes to the funding that PRUs and AC will receive in their budgets will not occur until April 2014, so 2013 has been a transition year to resolve staffing issues and establish new provision. The quality of Pupil Referral Units and Alternative Provision improved to 75% good or outstanding from 60% in 2012 and there has been a significant reduction in permanent exclusions.
- x. A Strategic Framework for Post-16 SEN and LLDD working is being developed which will build on this work and develop a cycle to ensure that learners are properly tracked, have their needs identified early, are offered effective pathways with funding identified leading to enhanced progression and achievement via local provision, where possible.

## **6. Key developments for 2014/15**

- 6.1 Building on the success of 2013/14, the Skills and Employability Service will continue to deliver against the four priorities of the Strategy and develop the following further key activities:
- 6.2 A virtual Academy will be established in Kent which will allow NEET and vulnerable young people the opportunity to access an alternative curriculum pathway where they are facing barriers to traditional delivery in school or FE colleges. An initial pilot for 100 learners is planned to be established by September 2014.
- 6.3 Work with KIASS (Kent Integrated Adolescent Support Service) and other services will improve the infrastructure to further support vulnerable learners into education, employment or training. We will develop a robust data collection, storage and analysis system to support vulnerable groups, to inform provision planning and develop individual progression plans.
- 6.4 A new and comprehensive marketing campaign will be launched to provide up to date information on apprenticeships, targeted to specific groups. In partnership with the campaign an employer recruitment drive will be launched via the Kent Employment programme, with a target to contact 1,000 employers to recruit apprenticeship opportunities. This will be supported with through the employer engagement strategy to support the vocational training needs of KCC's priority employment sectors, and particularly Level 3 and Level 4 apprenticeships.
- 6.5 We will register as an apprenticeship 'Trailblazer' to help to lead the reform of apprenticeships. We will work with businesses to redesign apprenticeships. KCC will work with the National Apprenticeship Service and Government to ensure we have a high quality apprenticeship product under the new system. An apprenticeship summit will be held in April 2014.
- 6.6 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.
- 6.7 The following sectors have been identified as priority areas for development within Kent as part of 'Innovation for Growth' and 'Unlocking Potential' strategies. Low carbon and environmental technologies; life sciences and medical technologies; and food production. These sectors are currently part of the South East LEP plan and the Skills and Employability Service will be exploring using ESF funding to develop advanced and higher apprenticeship take up in these sectors.
- 6.8 To further improve sector ownership of apprenticeships we are establishing a 'Kent Tourism and Hospitality Guild' to involve key employers (such as Shepherd Neame) to develop a sector specific Guild to shine a spotlight on this sector to raise its positive profile as an attractive and sustainable career option, especially for young

people. At the same time, the Guild will focus on what is necessary to develop and streamline entry and progression pathways for students from the age of 14 onwards to include apprenticeships

- 6.9 Following the full transfer of responsibilities from CXK in February 2014, we will establish the statutory process of post-16 student tracking within KCC using the IYSS database.
- 6.10 As a driver to raise the quality of statutory CEIAG provision, we will develop and deliver an Annual Careers Plan template for schools to use. 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.
- 6.11 We will extend the Kentchoices4U website to 17 and 18 year olds and to graduates.
- 6.12 We will also ensure PRU/AC provision is in place in all districts, in partnership with local providers, including post-16 programmes, traineeships and apprenticeships. Undertake a review of Health Needs PRUs to create a new service and improve outcomes for learners.

## **7. Current Performance against Key Performance Indicators**

- 7.1 Performance against the Strategy is determined by 18 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), that are measured at varying times throughout the year. The KPIs, current performance and targets are contained in Appendix 1.

## **8. Conclusion**

- 8.1 The 14 – 24 Employment, Learning and Skills Strategy set ambitious targets for the participation and achievement of young people aged 14-24 in Kent, involving a wide range of stakeholders, against the background of a changing legislative framework for Post -16 learners. The Skills and Employability Service has undertaken a wide range of activities to address these targets, in the nine months since the Strategy was launched, and has an ambitious programme for the future, putting learners and employers at the core.

## **9. Recommendation(s):**

The Education Cabinet Committee is asked to note and comment on the progress made towards delivery of the 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy.

## **10. Background Documents**

None

## **11. Contact Details:**

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