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To: Education and Young People's Cabinet Committee – 16 December 2014

Subject: 14 – 24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy Refresh 2015 – 2018

Classification: Unrestricted

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member Decision

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| Summary: | This report presents the findings from partners and stakeholders to refresh and refocus the 14 – 24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy from 2015 to 2018 |
| Recommendation: | The Education and Young People's Service Cabinet Committee is asked to note and endorse the revised strategy towards achieving the new priorities and key performance indicators of the 14 – 24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy from 2015 to 2018. |

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The ambition of the 14 – 24 Learning, Employment 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 – 24 year olds can access higher levels of learning or sustained employment that is appropriate to their needs and to the relevant local and national economy. The Strategy was launched on 25th February 2013. Following the recent review and consultation with stakeholders and partners these ambitions remains unchanged.
- 1.2 The role of the KCC Skills and Employability Service has been to support the delivery of the 14 – 24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy. This has been achieved by working collaboratively with schools, colleges and work-based training providers and developing effective partnerships with representative groups of employers.
- 1.3 Through the use of compelling data provided by the District Datapacks, the strategy has supported learning providers to match their provision to the needs of

young people and employers. The planning of 14-19 provision is now considered on a yearly basis within schools, colleges and work based learning providers. For example, there is now a local district offer for flexible courses and employability programmes hosted on KentChoices4U for every district.

- 1.4 The Skills and Employability Service also ensures that young people are fully informed of the post 16 opportunities available to them including information and opportunities for apprenticeships.
- 1.5 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to track the destinations of all young people at ages 16, 17 and 18. This data is used to target resources and provide additional support to the most vulnerable young people, through the Early Help and Preventative Services directorate. This year there has been a significant reduction in NEETs for vulnerable learners because of this targeted work.

2. Governance

The Employment, Learning and Skills Partnership Board – 2015 – 2018

- 2.1 Overall governance of the strategy is achieved through a Partnership Board comprising of representatives from the KCC Business Advisory Board, the Federation of Small Businesses, Invicta Chamber of Commerce, CXK, Canterbury Christ Church University, Kent Association of Further Education Colleges, Kent Association of Training Organisations, Kent Association of Headteachers, the Education Funding Agency, the Skills Funding Agency, Jobcentre Plus, and a District Council Representative.
- 2.2 The Deputy Cabinet Member and Corporate Director for Education and Young People's Services attend these meetings. Meetings are held quarterly and they receive reports on current strategic activity, and monitor performance against the 18 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- 2.3 This Board agreed the key findings of the review and consultation on the 14 – 24 strategy and will continue to monitor impact on the partnership priorities set out in the document. (Attached as Appendix 1). Following the consultation on the strategy it was agreed to increase employer representation on the Board and develop a new communication strategy to engage employers in the training and skills agenda. The Partnership Board has a crucial role in the determining and delivering the skills projects, through the LEP processes, as these come on stream.

Joint Partnership Meetings

- 2.4 Day to day issues relating to joint working between all partners are managed through an operational Joint Partnership group, meetings are held monthly, comprising of representatives from Kent Association of Training Providers, Kent Association of Further Education Colleges, the Skills Funding Agency, Education Funding Agency, Jobcentre Plus, National Apprenticeship Service, Education

Business Partnership Kent, and KCC. This group deals with a range of issues and focuses on developing appropriate post 16 provision, which has included developing a successful campaign increasing the take up of 16 – 18 apprenticeships, identifying gaps in provision, and the development and delivery of the Youth Employment Action Zones in Gravesham, Thanet, Dover, Swale and Shepway to reduce youth unemployment.

District Partnership Meetings

2.5 District partnership meetings are held to deliver the priorities and to ensure provision is available to meet the needs of the specific profile of learners in the district and the local economy. The membership of these partnership meetings varies but includes officers from the Skills and Employability Service, and Early Help and Preventative Services, CXK, local schools and colleges, employers and representatives from district councils.

3. Priorities Identified from the Consultation

3.1 A consultation on the refresh of the strategy commenced in June 2014. The Employment, Learning and Skills Partnership Board were asked a series of questions to inform the future shape and direction of the 14 – 24 strategy. The outcomes of this consultation were reported back to the Partnership Board on 14th October 2014.

3.2 Overall respondents supported the ambition for the strategy and agreed that the four key priorities should remain. These are:

- Raising attainment
- Improving vocational education, training and apprenticeships
- Increasing participation and employment
- Targeted support for young people

3.3 The key findings of the consultation are shown in Table 1 under the four key priorities. These identify key actions to be taken to achieve further progress and improvement.

Table 1. Key Findings of the Consultation

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| Raise Attainment and Skills Levels | <p>Sharing good practice – in raising attainment in Maths and English in Key Stage 4 and at post 16, and in delivering Careers Guidance</p> <p>Developing local 14-19 programme planning opportunities</p> <p>Sharing data across all providers to support student transition at 16, 17 and 18 years old</p> |
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| <p>Improve and extend Vocational Education, Training and Apprenticeships</p> | <p>Linking the curriculum to the world of work</p> <p>Developing better progression pathways/ compacts for vocational and technical qualifications including destinations into employment</p> |
| <p>Increase Participation and Employment</p> | <p>16-19 Study Programme linked to LMI (including the 2-1-2 model)</p> <p>Improve employer representation on the ELS Board – labour market intelligence from the priority sectors and the development of Centres of Excellence</p> <p>Ensure employability skills are better developed in schools, colleges and work-based learning providers</p> <p>Shaping the future direction of the five Learning and Employment Action Zones</p> <p>Improving Careers guidance including employer engagement</p> |
| <p>Target Support for Vulnerable Young People</p> | <p>Developing and improving job mentoring and coaching.</p> <p>Improving the support for vulnerable young people, by employers, job coaches and mentors</p> <p>Developing further the Assisted Apprenticeships Programme</p> <p>Developing the 14-24 pathways for SEND learners into employment or assisted employment</p> |

3.4 Section five of the revised Strategy sets out how partners will address these key findings. Progress on these priorities will be reported to the Partnership Board.

4. Current Performance against the 18 Key Performance Indicators

4.1 Performance against the Strategy is determined by 18 Key Performance Indicators that are measured four times a year. The consultation confirmed that there should be no changes to these priorities. Overall progress set out in Section 1 of the revised strategy is extremely positive with only 3 areas of performance giving cause for concern, where progress has not been satisfactory. These are:

- Attainment in English and Mathematics will improve so that at least 50% of 16 year olds that do not attain Level 2 will achieve the qualification by age 17

- The number of young people, especially those from low income backgrounds, aged 16 with skills below level 2 to achieve a level 2 qualification and progress to level 3 by age 18 will increase by 20%
- Participation, provision and outcomes will improve for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities and all young people with learning difficulties and disabilities aged 16-19 in Special schools will have access to appropriate provision.

4.2 These 3 areas of performance are a priority for the Employment, Learning and Skills Partnership Board in focusing resources, developing new partnerships and activities to improve performance for vulnerable young people. There will be significant activity to increase the number of young people gaining Level 2 qualifications in English and Maths by age 18.

4.3 There has been significant progress made against the priorities set out in the Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy in February 2013. Section 2 of the revised strategy provides details of the key successes to date, explains the activities that have taken place and give details of the impact of effective partnership working.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The 14 – 24 Learning Employment and Skills Strategy continues to set ambitious targets for the participation and achievement of young people aged 14 – 24 in Kent. Moving forward in developing more effective partnerships and new collaborations will be key to the success of this refresh. This is against the background of significant changes to the legislative framework and reduced resources for all post 16 providers. The Skills and Employability Service will continue to develop and deliver a whole range of activities to meet the priorities and KPIs within the new document, ensuring improved outcomes for learners and employers.

6. Recommendation

The Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee is asked to note the review and endorse the revised 14 – 24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy.

Background Documents

14 – 24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy

Review of the Kent 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy –
Consultation document July 2014

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