

From: **Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform**

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To: **Growth Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee - 22 March 2017**

Subject: **Kent and Medway Employer Guilds**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of Paper: **19 January 2017 Growth Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee**

Electoral Division: **Countywide**

Summary:

A progress report on the operation of the Kent & Medway Employer Guilds explaining their inception, development, membership, early impact and future priorities.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to note the content of the report and endorse the progress of the Guilds to deliver clear outcomes and impact in education/employer engagement.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 **Creation and purpose of Guilds.** The central role of the Guilds is to provide an interface between (local) employers and the education (and training) sector. This is in response to requests from employers to provide better links between employers, schools, colleges and training providers. This also meets the government agenda to ensure that through new qualifications, and apprenticeships employers are much more in control of skills training delivery. Membership of the Guild comprises local employers, within a defined sector, and providers that deliver education or training relevant to that sector.
- 1.2 Steps are currently under way to further expand the level of employer recruitment to the Guilds. These include direct contact with relevant employers; newsletters to the sector; contact via Chambers of Commerce and the Federation for Small Businesses; and use of Skills And Employability's links with many employers through existing programmes, such as Kent Supported Employment, Kent Employment Programme and the Assisted Apprenticeships scheme.

- 1.3 The Skills and Employability Service has an effect on the Employer Database bringing together all of the above strands. There are currently over 2,300 employers on this database which is used to keep in regular contact with a wide range of Kent employers, updating them on Guild activities and apprenticeships.
- 1.4 The majority of Guilds were set up at the beginning of 2016 to facilitate employer/education engagement necessary for the delivery of Key Performance Indicators in the 14-24 Learning Employment & Skills Strategy and the Adult Learning Employment & Skills Strategy . These documents provide the framework for the work of KCC's Skills and Employability Service and its strategic partners. The Guilds contribute to KCC's overarching Strategic Objectives:
 - Children and Young People in Kent get the best start in life,
 - Kent Communities feel the benefits of economic growth by being in work, healthy and enjoying a good quality of life.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 The South East LEP will be issuing a call for applications for ESF funding relating to employer engagement, in the Autumn. In partnership with Medway, an application will be made to financially support the Guilds. A successful application will enable the Guilds to expand their activities considerably. It is intended that this support would enable Guilds to have dedicated and specialist support.

3. Development of the Guilds

- 3.1 The first Guild (Hospitality and Tourism) was created in 2015 and had an early success with the delivery of the 'Hospitality Conversation' a conference and market place for employers and young people studying courses in the sector. Over 400 pledges for apprenticeships and work placements were made which formed the basis of the Guild's work during 2016.
- 3.2 Subsequently, a further seven Guilds were convened:

Construction and the Built Environment; Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing; Sciences; Land Based Industries; Health and Social Care; Creative and Media; and Financial Services.
- 3.3 The Guilds meet quarterly and are attended by employers, FE and HE college representatives, training providers and schools that offer relevant technical education. Over 150 employers attend the eight Guilds and the mailing list is rapidly growing with many employers showing an interest to join their relevant Guild and offer support to schools and offer activities.
- 3.4 Each Guild is chaired by a local employer and supported by an officer from KCC Skills and Employability Service. The Guilds meet quarterly and have

action focussed sub groups to take forward the actions agreed in the Guild Action Plan.

3.5 Each Guild Action Plan has the following objectives, which each Guild delivers differently:

- Employer led initiatives within educational establishments
- Establishing 'Hub Schools' for each sector
- Creating work experience opportunities
- Creating Apprenticeship opportunities
- Supporting events, including sector careers events
- Communicating activities through CEIAG networks
- Establishing a directory of employers willing to engage
- Regular production of promotional material showcasing the sector
- Capturing and promoting case studies depicting young people's success
- Establishing sector ambassador programmes

An example of a current Action Plan (for the Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing Guild) is attached at Appendix 1.

3.6 In addition to the above objectives, each Guild has been asked to produce a Communications Strategy describing how it intends to widen its membership and communicate the activities of the Guild to the wider sector audience for 17/18.

4. **Impact of the Guild**

4.1 In the first year of their operation the Guilds are already having a significant impact in increasing employer engagement with schools, colleges and training providers. This includes:

- Over 3,000 young people have attended sector specific careers events providing young people with the opportunity to make direct contact with employers. In addition many Guild members (employers) will be attending the Kent Choices events in March where 6,000 young people are expected to attend
- Employers have attended 21 school assemblies, explaining their role to over 4,000 young people
- Employers have held workshops providing hands-on practical experience in eighteen schools and four colleges
- Over 300 students from eleven schools have visited local businesses, such as engineering works, building sites and care homes
- 85 work based placements have been arranged for students
- 40 new apprenticeships have been created and each guild is being tasked to contribute to a target of 300 more Apprenticeships from Guild Members in 2017-18

Highlights include:

- Creation of the Carer Adviser Network in 20 Coastal Schools
- 500 young people attended the 'Hospitality Conversation' at Ashford International Hotel, with over thirty employers in a 'market place'. Over 410 'pledges' to provide work placements (310), and apprenticeships (104) were made, and on the day two job offers were made
- 800 students attended a STEM careers event at the Leigh Academies Trust where fifteen employers were present
- The Engineering & Advanced Manufacturing Guild has organised industry based training for staff from five schools
- The Creative and Media Guild has created a partnership between two Theatres and the University of Kent.
- Development of a promotional video for the Health Social Care sector by Mid Kent College.

5. Next Steps

5.1 Each Guild has been asked to contribute towards the following aggregate targets for April 2017 to March 2018 and Guild members are currently working on their contributions to these targets:

- 800 additional work place placements/work experience opportunities
- 300 additional apprenticeships
- 100 new employer – school/college partnerships
- 8 sector based career events
- Representation from every sector at the Kent Choices events

The Action Plans are currently being re-written to include clear targets with defined outcomes consistent with the above targets. These will be available from the end of March.

5.2 The first Kent and Medway Skills Commission conference will be held in March (21st) to which all of the Guild Representatives have been invited. There will be over 80 employers and training providers attending.

The conference will include presentations from the Careers Enterprise Company and Business In The Community about national examples of good practice in employer engagement. There will also be opportunities for the Guilds to showcase examples of good practice at the local level.

The Conference will provide a further opportunity for the Kent County Council to promote KCC's new Apprenticeship programme, Made in Kent.

A copy of the agenda for the conference is attached at Appendix 2.

6. Conclusions

The Kent & Medway Employer Guilds are rapidly becoming an important contributor to the Local Authority's desire to have an strong partnership with employers in order to support the skills infrastructure in the County. In their first

year of operation the Guilds have made considerable progress in re-building the partnership between industry and education that has been perceived to be lacking.

As the Guilds build their action plans and commit to clear outcomes and objectives their impact will continue to grow.

7. Recommendation(s)

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The Cabinet Committee is asked to note the content of the report and endorse the progress of the Guilds to deliver clear outcomes and impact in education/employer engagement.

8. Background Documents

8.1 14 -24 Learning, Employment & Skills Strategy.

http://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/6206/14-24-learning,-employment-and-skills-strategy.pdf

8.2 Adult Learning Employment & Skills Strategy.

http://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/54632/Adult-Learning-Employment-and-Skills-Strategy-2015-2018.pdf

9. Contact details

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