

Kent Economic Board

Name of Meeting: Skills for business growth
Darent Room, Sessions House, Maidstone

Date: 07/12/2011, 5-7 PM

Chair: Paul Carter

Notetaker: Sylvana Jones

Present & Apologies: Attached.

	Notes	Actions
1	<p>Notes and Feedback from previous meeting Notes had been circulated with the agenda; all matters arising were to be addressed at this meeting.</p> <p>Roger mentioned that due to Michael Bax's new role he has emailed to confirm that he is no longer able to continue with this group. Roger thanked him for all the hard work he had contributed whilst a member.</p>	
2	<p>Rural Update Roger confirmed he had spoken to Donna Hawkes from Brockhill School over the video production for rural skills and that they were very keen to engage. He had also spoken Hadlow and UCA who will provide technical expertise to help.</p> <p>Teacher Training David Smith had been working to implement these actions, and suggested the use of teacher placement in business as part of the training process. He confirmed that Diploma of teaching and the Lifelong Learning groups would be engaging with this in the future. He was also investigating the role that Academies could play in exposing existing staff to this engagement.</p> <p>Business Survey interim results Miranda Chapman explained that the purpose of the survey was to engage with a wider representative group. Businesses had been asked a series of questions on generic employability/work ready skills and the relationship challenge between schools and work experience, link between businesses and teachers, technical and innovative Skills. Responses have been slow but there was now increased support from FSB with its members, and she will report fully once survey is closed in the new year. Interim results will be posted on the KEB website.</p>	<p>Results from survey to be presented at next meeting</p>

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3	<p>Briefing on Youth Unemployment</p> <p>Paul Carter gave a short presentation explaining the proposed £2m intervention fund to tackle youth unemployment.</p> <p>He explained that there was no new money in this scheme, but a careful recycling of existing funds that jointly would have more impact. All the recent gains in lowering youth unemployment from the impact of the future jobs funds were being lost, and this intervention was to try and ameliorate this. In total the fund would enable employers to receive a subsidy of approximately £6,000 PA per apprentice employed to cover wage costs, amounted to approximately 50%.</p> <p>It is hoped that a target of 2000 young people could be assisted through this fund over a 2-year period, which would have a significant impact on unemployment figures for this age group in Kent.</p> <p><u>Discussions</u></p> <p>DS – It is important that KCC leads in this strategic framework role; communication of this opportunity will be key, in order to ensure that businesses are aware, and can get involved.</p> <p>TA - welcomed the idea, thanked KCC for their investment and said that provision is available to support these apprenticeships. The government announced last week that it was going to pilot £250m nationally in terms of allowing employers direct access to government funding for the training of apprenticeships. This would be aimed particularly at the SME market but KCC could possibly tap into this and Tony will contact Wayne in order to provide further details about this.</p> <p>MM – raised two issues; 1) the product offer needed to be clearly and professionally given to employers as there is a legacy of rather complicated schemes and therefore we ought to take every opportunity to refine and craft the product offer. Marketing it to some of our businesses that we have very strong relationships with through KEB and BAB, and the Creative Kent Network. 2) look at how it might engage with Social Enterprise's, as there could be opportunities to energize this at local level to innovative and social enterprise businesses.</p> <p>DS – The qualifications have to have real national credibility and we needed to energize partnerships through the FSB, the Chambers at local levels.</p> <p>MC - explained that she received on average three calls per week from companies purporting to sell apprentices over the phone, mostly from outside the county that this shows clearly that a champion is needed to convince employers that this is really something that they should and need to engage with.</p> <p>DA - this issue has been discussed in various meetings he and Tony have attended and that marketing is of vital role with employer base. Job Centre plus works with 70/75% of young people and could coordinates this.</p> <p>DS - pointed out that East Midlands have set up a trust that sits at arms length from any of the delivery bodies; can raise funds in its own rights by organising paid events, and appears to working well.</p> <p>To conclude, Paul said that Wayne Gough is leading from KCC and volunteers would be needed to carry out trial runs in order to approve the rules and regulations that may have to be applied, before public announcement in February.</p>	<p>Tony and Wayne to discuss</p> <p>Wayne to report on progress</p>

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	<p><u>Migrant Workers in the South East</u></p> <p>Paul continued and explained that Dover District Council had been looking at employment statistics across the whole of the South East Region for a report to the South East England Councils network. Particular attention had been given to investigating the number of National Insurance registrations in the UK from the 8 EU Accession states. Work was also undertaken to look at work permits issued to non EU countries which were granted by the home office. This work had been carried out by Worcester research, and they had made some of the initial data available and this was presented to the group. A8 migrants account for 0.3% of the total workforce in the SELEP area. Paul explained that this is a trend that is repeated every year, and as no figures are available for the numbers of migrants from A8 countries who return to their country of origin there was thus a compounding effect which appears to indicate that A8 migrants could now fill up as much as 4% of the working age population. Over a significant period, this starts to make up a very big percentage of the workforce, hence the increased concern about youth unemployment in Kent. It would appear on the basis of raw numbers that the number of migrant workers working in Kent appears to be the same as the number of young unemployed (however, skill sets will be different). According to data taken by the UK Border Agency, migrants are questioned on entry as to which sector and skills area that they will be working in as they enter the country, these figures were also presented. It should be noted that no check is made later to establish what sectors migrants actually enter. Most migrants are very well motivated, well qualified and for example it is believed that mostly A8 undergraduates do fruit picking for the first six months before moving on to better paid higher skilled work.</p> <p>Data is still weak, and this work is continuing.</p> <p><u>Discussions</u></p> <p>Members of the group enquired as to whether a survey had been carried out in Kent.</p> <p>TA – It is very difficult for employers to recruit locally young people to fill short term contracts, this is because most who are already in education want to stay on and therefore this has an impact on young people’s careers guidance. He pointed out that just as Connexion started to get to grip with this issue, it was being closed.</p> <p>SW – Parents play a key role in deciding the education for their children, most parents want their children to go to university.</p> <p>MM – following on from the last Business Advisory Board meeting, the economic commentary received seemed to show that Businesses are recruiting again.</p> <p>It was agreed that there are many issues that restrict the recruitment of young people, e.g. Health & Safety Laws (supervision), lack of work skills experience to open up other opportunities, but that this issue should be revisited as more data is available.</p>	<p>Data to be presented as it becomes available.</p>

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4	<p>Dover Maritime A paper compiled by Roger from Sue Dunn was circulated for comment at the next meeting.</p>	<p>Progress report at next meeting.</p>
5	<p>Links with LEP Skills Group Tony Allen reported that the LEP Skills group had met last week for the second time, and was working on 4 key work themes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raising the aspirations on Employment & Skills for young people 2. Increasing the number of apprentice placements 3. Supporting new starter business and encourage self employment 4. Higher and Further Educations skills that encourage high growth organisations and more exports. 	
6	<p>Configuration of group moving forward New ways of working will be determined in liaison with KCC restructure. Roger will put together a paper to show where the group will feature once the reorganisation has been completed and circulate to the group.</p>	<p>Roger to circulate paper.</p>
7	<p>AOB None</p>	
	<p>Proposed dates of future meetings. 28th March 2012 24th May 2012 18th July 2012 24th October 2012</p>	

Attendees

Paul Carter	Leader	Kent County Council
Tony Allen	Area Relationship Director	South East, SFA
Dave Ashdown	Kent District Manager	JobCentre Plus
Miranda Chapman	Director	Pillory Barn
Roger Gabriel	KEB Skills Manager	Kent Economic Board
Wayne Gough	Interim County Manager (Supporting Independence & Programme)	Kent County Council
Megan McKibbin	Executive Director	Kent Economic Board
Melanie Rogers		Vattenfall
David Smith	Pro-Vice Chancellor, External Relations	Canterbury Christ Church University
Paul Winter	Managing Director	Wire Belt Company Limited
Suzanne Wood	Commercial Manager	Medway Fibreglass Ltd

Apologies

Michael Bax	Senior Partner & Director	BTF & Kent Wool Growers Ltd
Elias Dencker	O&M Project Manager	DONG Energy
Laura Froude	14-19 Innovation Team	Kent County Council
Sue Flavin	Learning & Development Operations Manger	Skanska Infrastructure Development
Jo James	Chief Executive	Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
Roger House	Director Regional Chairman	Partnership-Working Ltd FSB Kent & Medway
Mark Lumsdon-Taylor		Hadlow College