

Kent Economic Board Skills for Business Growth

15th September at 5.00 – 7.00 p.m.
Darent Room, Sessions House

A G E N D A

- 1 Notes and feed back from previous meetings
- 2 Report from Steve Samson on European funding opportunities.
- 3 Reports from subgroups and review of actions:

Communications
Agriculture and Horticulture
Low Carbon Energy
- 4 Links with LEP skills group
- 5 Active capturing of contribution - All
- 6 AOB

Date of next meetings

7th December 2011, Pendragon, Invicta House.
28th March 2012
24th May 2012
18th July 2012
24th October 2012

Enc:

<http://www.keb.org.uk/news-and-events/article/kcc-monthly-economic-bulletin/>

Kent Economic Board

Item 1

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

Date: 15/6/2011 5-7 PM

Chair: Paul Carter

Notetaker: Roger Gabriel

Present & Apologies: Attached.

	Notes	Actions
1	<p>Introductions.</p> <p>Paul Carter opened the meeting by commenting that apart from being leader of the Council he also runs a number of businesses and feel passionately about making sure that KCC enables the right opportunities for our young people to flourish in the world of work in order to be an asset to both the public and private sector. KCC has been driving forward its apprenticeship programmes and is keen to hone the 14-24 strategy in order to match the training opportunities young people are offered so that they can face with confidence the world of work and the economy.</p>	
2	<p>Notes and feedback from previous meeting</p> <p>Roger said that most of the action points would be picked up as the meeting progresses. He then gave a brief update on the progress of the Pfizer skills sub group, mentioning that the group is looking at the skills shortages and surpluses arising from its closure, and the knock on effect this will have in the local economy.</p> <p>The group has produced an information newsletter that will be distributed to every business in East Kent to keep them abreast of training opportunities that are available. Job Centre Plus has set up an office on site for the past two weeks and has so far had around 700 visitors. The support from Higher Education has been very encouraging with a meeting planned for 29th June where Pfizer employees can find about opportunities in moving into academic research.</p> <p>Roger and Miranda Chapman have met twice in order to look at some of the communications issues raised at</p>	

	Notes	Actions
	<p>previous meetings.</p> <p>Roger also reported that Gioia Pescetto who used to represent HE/FE on the group is moving to Hampshire and Roger will meet with her replacement David Smith in due course to brief him on the role and operation of the group.</p>	<p>Roger to meet up with David Smith</p>
3	<p>Feedback from the Business Growth Meetings</p> <p>Roger gave a short presentation analysing the skills issues raised from the business growth meetings.</p> <p>KEB jointly with KCC has carried out a series of Sector Consultation events attended by around 400+ businesses. As a result of these events, KEB is analysing the data that was collected and have started to pull together potential actions to take forward.</p> <p>The analysis of the skills issues highlights common themes relating to higher level and technical skills and link to schools. Other important issues relating to the Low Carbon Energy Sector were centred on the green deal, feeding tariffs, new developments in Low Carbon technologies and retrofit training.</p> <p>Three priorities seem to be emerging, in order to address these it would be appropriate to create some short, time limited task and finish groups, championed by businesses, to look at dynamic, measureable and focus on the development that will contribute to the economic growth.</p> <p>The priorities are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Schools and FE – offering bite size flexible provision to meet specific business training needs. A group of five people from the Skills group with co-opting experts to meet over the summer to look at these issues. 2. The second group to look the higher education issues focussing on open innovation techniques. Businesses can look at sharing their ideas with higher education institutions on an inward and outward flow of information in such a way that the knowledge boundaries are pliable. The idea of sharing knowledge is to generate new knowledge that could then spin out to the advantage and growth of Kent Businesses. 3. The final group would focus on communications issues, which is key common theme. <p>Roger agreed to provide support and guidance to the groups and assist in keeping the momentum going. The outcome would be ideas for action which might be potential bids into the Regeneration Fund to kick-start their initiatives.</p>	

Notes	Actions
<p><u>Questions</u></p> <p>Paul Carter – Agreed that there were some good ideas in the proposal, but questioned whether the people sitting at the table had the capacity and knowledge in some of these areas to actually contribute sensibly and intelligently. He commented that we have only started with the first three sectors, building up a new relationship with the business economy of this county, engaging with them to help and support growth. Pulling together higher education, FE and schools; combined their expertise in looking at the education component required to delivering skills to the big sectors in the county of Kent would be a fair aspiration. Could we broaden this across the LEP region and get the same analysis done in Essex and East Sussex and see if we reach the same conclusion. Only employers at the end of the day are the really well qualified ones that are at the chalk face who know what the sausage machine of education is producing for them, and where the skills gaps are. This is an area where more extensive work needs to be done to understand the problem.</p> <p>Elias Dencker– not sure what the remit to resolve this would be, but there are a couple of things that cannot be solved around this table; such as funding. FE colleges are driven by money in, rather than quality out, and there is no link between the two. Strategically, even though it will be difficult for the group to solve this, might there be ways this group can influencing how colleges are funded?</p> <p>Laura Froude – the 14-24 unit are now collecting some the hard data required to make this case. The travel to learn data is highlighting some of these perversities, there is evidence that young people enrol on level one courses that require long travel arrangements, and unsurprisingly drop out after a few weeks. Where local colleges are half empty, pressure should be put to encourage them to be offering the range of courses locally demanded. He also asked for reliable exit data from colleges, how many go on to gain employment?</p> <p>Mark Lumsden-Taylor – agreed FE colleges are driven by numbers, the more 16-18 young people enrolments this year, the more funding the following year, if courses are under recruited funding the following year is less. Adult funding is different, there is a fixed budget allocated from central government and colleges have some flexibility over spending. There is a case to be made that colleges should be structured and funded more on quality outcomes. He also made the case that If we are going to have a series of short task groups they should be sector orientated rather than themed, as each sector has different needs and will require different solutions.</p>	

Notes	Actions
<p>Wayne Gough – we mustn't forget that students do have a choice in what courses they follow, we need to give them better information as to the potential employment opportunities some vocational courses offer.</p> <p>Ahmad Eslami – courses at level 1 to 3 are all funded, so costs shouldn't be an issue, adult funding has now been given by SFA to the colleges so funding here shouldn't be an issue. However, with the funding comes the responsibility of meeting local demand from the economy and the government are expecting LEPs, working with employers to identify that demand. We need to look at existing communications the public sector has with the private sector, and how we can utilise these to exchange information.</p> <p>Paul Carter – currently the data seems to suggest that colleges are responding to demand from students not from employers, and funding is predicated to support this, it is a learner centred funding model.</p> <p>Suzanne Wood – Kent universities can never offer the full range of higher qualifications that industry demand, advance manufacturing sector will always draw recruits nationally and internationally. However, unless they are made aware of local demand, courses can never be changed / refreshed. Business needs to feel local universities are there to help, in my experience this has not been the case, this reflects why a closer relationship will be difficult to broker.</p> <p>Mark Lumsden-Taylor –business relationships can be categorised in three way: business doesn't understand what is on offer, too complicated, too many acronyms; the avenue of communicating vacancies both ways is poor; the consistency of demand by employers on colleges is not helpful, training can be a long process, will job vacancies still exist when students qualify is always a gamble. Modern business is changing so fast training providers are finding it difficult to keep up. How can we set up a cross county mechanism to monitor this?</p> <p>Megan McKibbin – we need to get the right level of specificity with each sector, to achieve the prescription for actions to follow. The feedback at the sector meetings was positive with many businesses who attended saying they wanted to get more involved. HE claims (as does FE) to have good business links, then why are we still hearing from business these poor relation stories? We should be using our business network to counter this, raising the profile though example.</p> <p>Paul Carter – 85% of the businesses in Kent are SMEs, we need to find a way of establishing two way communications, in simple, concise terms, cutting through red tape.</p>	

	Notes	Actions
	<p>Miranda Chapman – this type of communication only works when it is face to face, written communication cannot be guaranteed to reach the right person.</p> <p>Paul Winter – I would like to see how we can influence choice at a much earlier stage, so any miss-match is balanced by a good quality knowledge about the sectors and job opportunities in those sectors, to bust some of the myths faced by engineering and agriculture for example.</p> <p>Summing up Roger agreed to convene a small number of task and finish groups, championed by business, co-opting expertise as required over the summer to investigate, communications, rural and low carbon energy sectors, reporting back at the next meeting. Their brief would be to examine skills issues around: consistency of demand, communication, business engagement, influence schools at an early stage.</p>	<p>Roger to convene 3 T&F groups: Communications Rural Low Carbon Report back at next meeting.</p>
4	<p>Bold Steps for 14-19 (24) provision report</p> <p>Laura Froude, gave a short presentation reflecting the data that the unit had collated on FE provision in Kent, in the context of changing employment in the private and public sector, and the funding changes that have been announced. From the data they had, the projected number of NEETS would appear to be failing, especially in the known areas of deprivation, but from a higher level that we experienced 2 or 3 years ago, so numbers were still high. She gave the example that more level 3 courses are needed in low carbon and environmental goods and service sector where currently there are 17,500 employed forecast to grow to the 26,000. The figures from the 'Choices 4 U' website would indicate that only 267 students in Kent are following courses that would lead to employment in this sector. She commented that in general there would be need to work closely with schools at an early stage to ensure vocational opportunities in new and emerging sectors were highlighted.</p> <p>Paul Carter – commented that this research was about identifying the significant gaps and quality of provision, across Kent.</p> <p>Elias Dencker – commented that this forum was unique in many areas of UK, as a mechanism for businesses to air their worries and complaints, and to address some of the issues raised in this report and the previous discussion.</p>	

	Notes	Actions
	<p>Dave Ashcroft – reported that matching upskilling paid for by JC+ to future employment was governmental priority.</p> <p>Suzanne Wood – asked if schools were ‘doing enough’ to promote enterprise, leadership and management skills?</p> <p>Laura Froude reported that as a result of Wolf report changes to the curriculum were happening.</p> <p>Mark Lumsden-Taylor – pointed out the too many students still lacked basic functional skills, and would be unable to benefit from any enterprise or leaderships courses.</p> <p>Laura summed up that the Wolf report had 6 recommendations that Kent would be following, key to these would be development of better maths and English at basic skills level. This group should sign up to these initiatives. She hoped to finalise this work by the end of the year and could report back to the December meeting.</p>	<p>Laura to bring back findings to December meeting</p>
5	<p>CBI Report Roger circulated a paper with the agenda. The CBI have been contacted and would be sending a representative to a future meeting to discuss.</p> <p>Mark Lumsden-Taylor – commented that he sat on the CBI South East Council and would be able to assist in this.</p>	<p>Roger to meet with Mark</p>
6	<p>Date of next meeting. 7th December 2011, Pendragon, Invicta House. 28th March 2012 24th May 2012 18th July 2012 24th October 2012</p>	

Strategic Skills Group
Wednesday 15th June 2011
5.00 – 7.00 p.m.
Medway Room, Sessions House

Attendees

Paul Carter	Leader	Kent County Council
Dave Ashdown	Kent District Manager	Job Centre Plus
Miranda Chapman	Director	Pillory Barn Creative
Elias Dencker	O&M Project Manager London Array	DONG Energy
Ahmad Eslami		South East, SFA
Sue Flavin	Learning and Development Operations Manager	SKANSKA Infrastructure Development
Laura Froude	14-18 unit	Kent County Council
Roger Gabriel	ESB Manager	Kent Economic Board
Wayne Gough	Interim County Manager	(Supporting Independence Programme) Kent County Council
Megan McKibbin	Executive Director	Kent Economic Board
Mark Lumsdon-Taylor		Hadlow College
Terry Mitchell	Project Director	SKANSKA Infrastructure Development
Suzanne Wood	Director	Medway Fibreglass Ltd
Paul Winter	Managing Director	Wire Belt Company Limited

Apologies

Jane England	Recruitment and development manager	John Lewis, Bluewater
Roger House	Director Regional Chairman	Partnership-Working Ltd FSB Kent and Medway
Helen Kaye	HR Director	Henry Schein, Pharma Suppliers

Briefing on Youth Unemployment

Headline messages:

- The proportion of youth unemployment (those aged 18-24) in Kent has been increasing since the late 1990's.
- Unemployment in the 18-24 year old age group has risen from 3125 in July 2001 to 8,090 (6.8% of the 18-24 age group) in July 2011, a rise of 159%, much of this rise occurred from 2009. (the figure for 2008 was 4750)
- Recent data has shown that there has been an increase in those aged 18-24 being classed as "economically inactive" as they have chosen to go onto full time further/higher education.
- In Kent a significant number of young people seeking support from Job Centre Plus are moved into low skill occupations, reflecting the vacancies available.
- There appears to be limited correlation between what young people want and chose to study or train for and the needs of the local economy.
- Vulnerable learners, such as care leavers, teenage parents, young offenders and young people with learning difficulties are consistently over represented in NEET figures.
- In Kent, we have been successful in engaging young people (16-18) in education and training, and have kept the figure for NEETs at a relatively low level. However this success does not appear to be carrying through to the 18-24 olds.
- Employers continue to express concerns about the "employability" of young people. Requirements that are often cited are; literacy, numeracy, customer service skills and communication skills.
- Out of a total cohort of 57,471 sixteen to eighteen learners only 6.5% are undertaking apprenticeships
- We need to develop new models of school/employer partnerships, step up the number of apprenticeships and influence young people to undertake training that will lead to employment.

1. Kent Population and youth unemployment trends:

Under 18s

Kent has a slightly higher proportion of residents under the age of 18 compared to the national average. 22% of Kent's population is aged 0-17 years (312,900 people) compared to 21% nationally. Maidstone Borough has the largest number of under-18 year olds (31,600) but Tunbridge Wells has the highest proportion (24%).

Over the last 4-years Kent's 0-17 year old population has grown by 0.9%. This is a slower rate of growth than the average for the whole Kent population (3.5%) but at a higher rate than the national average (0.5).

Over the next 4-years the number of 0-17 year olds in Kent is forecast to increase by 3.5% (an additional 11,900 people) bringing the number of under-18s to 324,000 by 2014. The future increase in 0-17 year olds is partly attributed to rising birth rates, which have been increasing year-on-year since the start of the decade. However, Kent also sees net inward migration of this age group.

Youth population

Kent currently has a youth population (aged 18-24) of 120,800 people, which is equivalent to 8.5% of the total population. This is smaller than the national average (9.5%). Canterbury has the largest number of 18-24 year olds (25,000) and also the largest proportion of any Kent district (16%), which is largely because of Canterbury being a University town.

Over the last 4-years the number of 18-24 year olds in Kent has increased by 11%. This rate of growth is significantly higher than the national average (5.5%) for this age group and also the whole Kent population (3.5%).

Despite seeing such a large increase over the last 4-years within the next 4-years Kent's youth population is forecast to decrease by -0.8%. The 18-24 year old population in 2014 would have been born between 1990 and 1996. During this period birth rates began to decline so the 18-24 year old cohort will be naturally lower. However, Kent also sees net outward migration of this age group. The combination of both of these factors means that Kent will have a smaller youth population in the next 4-years than currently.

Background:

There are many European Union (EU) programmes on offer to support projects helping to deliver economic, social or environmental goals. Organisations in Kent can apply for funding for projects under a number of these funding programmes. Many different types of funding programmes exist, some cover the whole of Europe (Thematic programmes) whilst others have a particular geographical focus (e.g. Interreg Programmes). There are also some EU programmes that are operated on a national basis (e.g. ESF)

EU funding programmes usually require;

- Partner organisations from at least 2 EU member states
- Match funding (the rate varies according to the programme but is typically around 50% and is normally a combination of cash, staff time etc)

Past & Current Successes:

Kent organisations have been successful in securing EU funding for several skills-related projects since 2008:

“BPPE - Best Practice in Promoting Enterprise” & “Netforce 2”

Two Interreg IVa projects run by BSK-CIC with the Flemish and French partners which are delivering training in “entrepreneurship” to older workers, women, NEETs and schools leavers. (European grant for Kent €408K and €446K)

Under 18 Entrepreneurs

An Interreg IVa project secured by the Kent Foundation with the support of KCC’s IAG and a French partner organisation to research and make recommendations for support mechanisms for very young entrepreneurs (15 – 18 year olds). (EU grant for Kent €22K)

Pfizer

KCC’s international team identified opportunities for European funding support to help redundant Pfizer workers and others affected by the closure. The Skills Funding Agency recently offered a contract to Thanet College and other providers to deliver a package ‘Skills Support for Redundancy’ worth around **£700K** to Kent. Support will be aimed at individuals under consultation or threat of redundancy including up-skilling or re-skilling, targeted careers advice and skills-based interventions to meet the needs of employers offering recruitment.

Channel Arc-Manche Integrated Strategy

An EU networking Interreg project in which KCC is a partner. The project includes a work strand on training and workforce development which is identifying joint issues and skills gaps in order to develop future projects to develop skills among young people (EU grant for Kent €50K). A future project called “Pathways to enterprise” is currently under development.

Connexions Kent & Medway

Connexions has been allocated over £2.6m ESF funding from the Young People’s Learning Agency to reduce the number of young people who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and provide additional support for young people at risk of becoming NEET.

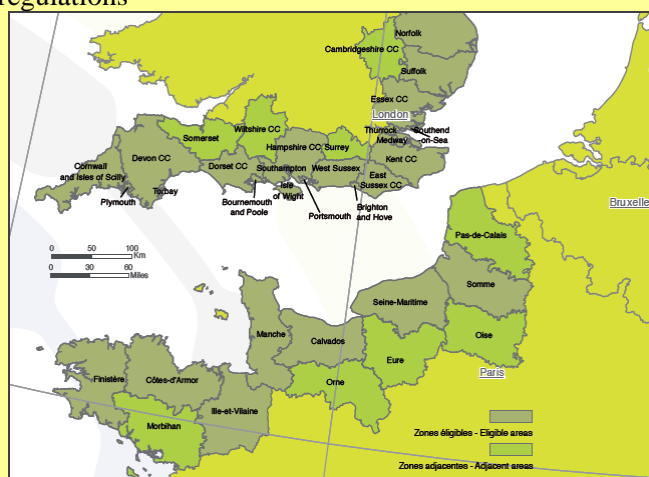
KCC also recently submitted an Interreg IVA project application to increase the take up of apprenticeships in Kent, Flanders and France. The project aims to work with employers and young people providing support to both. The outcome of this bid will be known in November.

Current EU Funding Opportunities for Skills:

There are several EU funding programmes which could part-finance projects relating to skills development and training. However as we approach the end of the current seven year EU funding programming period the funding remaining for such initiatives is becoming more limited.

Interreg IVA – Franco-British Channel programme

- **Aim:** to part-finance projects between eligible areas of France (see map) and England which aim to tackle shared issues in border regions.
- **Opportunities:** The programme can support joint projects under the heading of “social inclusion” which covers education and training in a broad sense including skills development and helping different groups prepare for / return to the job market.
- **Funding available:** €80m
- **Co-financing rate:** 50%
- **Who can apply?:** Mainly public sector and not for profit organisations but the private sector can participate under certain conditions and in line with State Aid (competition) regulations



Lifelong Learning Programme

- **Aim:** the LLP supports a wide range of education and training activities across Europe and provides opportunities for all stages of lifelong learning.
- **Opportunities:** The programme is broken down into 5 strands including:
 - **Vocational Education and Training - Leonardo**
The Leonardo programme can part-fund activities to transfer best practice in training, customise training materials, provide work experience placements in another EU country, offer professional development for trainers, support skills acquisition among job-seekers.
 - **Learning professionals - Transversal Strand**
These visits enable participants to learn about the education and training systems and practices in another EU country and to forge links with fellow experts from across Europe
- **Co-financing rate: up to 75%**
- **Who can apply?:** UK organisations involved in delivering or designing training for work can participate in the programme. This includes organisations such as local authorities, colleges, schools, trade unions, chambers of commerce, private training organisations etc

Others Programmes:

ESF – European social Fund

ESF aims to improve employment opportunities by providing financial support towards the running costs for vocational training schemes, guidance and counselling projects, job creation measures and other steps to improve the employability and skills of both employed and unemployed people. ESF is administered and run on a national basis and in the SE aims to **extend employment opportunities** and **develop a skilled and adaptable workforce**. The fund is delivered through co-financing organisations such as the Skills Funding Agency which issue tender specifications for certain skills packages. ESF was administered on a regional basis (by SEEDA and the LSC) and whilst funding will be available in the South East between 2011 and 2013 (potentially in excess of £75m), it is currently unclear how this programme will operate over the next two years and what specific opportunities will be available for organisations in Kent to bid for contracts.

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs

The EYE programme provides opportunities for new (young) entrepreneurs to gain experience in an established entrepreneur's company in another EU member state.

PROGRESS Programme

A pan-European programme which is focused on policy-making and policy implementation in the field of employment and social inclusion. The PROGRESS programme cannot fund the delivery of training activities.

EGF - European Globalisation Adjustment Fund

The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) exists to support workers who lose their jobs as a result of changing global trade patterns so that they can find another job as quickly as possible. When a large enterprise shuts down or a factory is relocated to a country outside the EU, or a whole sector loses many jobs in a region, the EGF can help the redundant workers to find new jobs as quickly as possible.

Kent County Council, through its Brussels office is participating in a recently established network called RESET (Regions in Europe for Education, Skills and Training). The network consists of 40 different EU regions and could provide a useful platform for identifying potential project partners.

The Future:

The EU's "Europe 2020 Strategy" sets the policy framework and ultimately the focus of EU funding allocations over the next decade or so. One of the three EU 2020 priorities is "*Inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.*" This priority includes an initiative which aims to put in place "*an agenda for new skills and jobs to modernise labour markets and empower people by developing their of skills throughout the lifecycle with a view to increase labour participation and better match labour supply and demand, including through labour mobility.*"

Early indications show that the Commission is proposing to allocate €15.2bn to education and training during the next EU programming period 2014-2020. This will take the form of a single, integrated pan-European programme for education, training and youth which focuses on developing skills and mobility.
(pan-European)

In addition to this, the EC has proposed that at least 25% (some €4bn) of future cohesion policy (Mainstream Structural Funds) budget be spent on skills development i.e. the nationally delivered ESF programme.

September 2011, Steve Samson, KCC International Affairs Group

Notes from Skills sub group meeting on 18th August:

Communications

Attendees:

Neal Ashford	Lavender blue media
Suzanne Wood	Medway fibreglass
Marcus Chrysostomou	KCC Communications
Roger Gabriel	KEB
Andrew Metcalf	Maxim PR
Miranda Chapman	Pillory Barn

The brief: to examine skills issues around: consistency of demand, communication, business engagement, influence schools at an early stage.

We began by articulating business skills as we perceived they were needed:

- Bite sized provision
- Meet new regulation
- Timely – to suit staffing
- Cost? (Is this an issue)
- Relevance – qualifications vs skills
- Succession planning
- Apprenticeships - relevance
- Who to ask, which media?

There was a concern that with the small sample size of the businesses who had attended the 3 sector events we might not be getting a true picture.

Actions

Design and undertake a representative survey specifically to investigate the skills needed by Kent business. Target a chosen representative cross section from which to draw conclusions. Work with existing business representative groups who already undertake surveys to minimise unnecessary duplication.

Draft survey available at: <http://www.keb.org.uk/taskgroups/employment-and-skills/>

Establish a process whereby as part of their training, teachers can immerse themselves in a real experience of working in and with business, by enabling students at CCCU to work shadow.

Using agriculture and horticulture as a pilot, work with young people to develop some promotional materials that promote the skills, potential and career opportunities the sector can offer. Use this model to work with other sectors that suffer from poor images.

Notes from Skills sub group meeting on 23rd August:

Agriculture and horticulture

Attendees:

Ahmad Eslami	Skills Funding Agency
Liz Harrison	KCC, Rural Development Manager
Roger Gabriel	KEB
Megan McKibbin	KEB
Oliver Doubleday	Hugh Lowe Farms
David Smith	CCCU

The brief: to examine skills issues around: consistency of demand, communication, business engagement, influence schools at an early stage.

There is and will continue to be skills shortages in this sector although the sector often fails to recognise this threat. The future skills needs of those working in the industry will be more diverse and technical. The real skills gaps are in the operation of ever more complex technical machinery/practices and in some of the more traditional skills which are required less and less.

The infrastructure to deliver training for the future needs of the industry is in place in Kent but the supply of new labour/new entrants to the sector is limiting growth. The land-based sector needs to facilitate better education of young people regarding food and the career opportunities in land-based sector. Improved engagement with the educational sector and career advisors is needed.

Training needs to be more relevant to the needs of industry and alternative methods of delivery of education/training is needed.

Actions:

Investigate what links might be created with Hadlow (Kent), Plumpton (Sussex) and Writtle (Essex) agricultural colleges (LEP dimension) in the delivery of skills necessary to meet some of the demands from the sector. See attached matrix of short courses. Mid Kent Training are providers of some of these short courses, working with providers to create a more efficient cost effective mechanism to promote these, and bring down costs?

<http://www.thamesdeltatraining.co.uk/>

Important transitions in young person's development are 14,16,18,21. It was felt that a method of raising the profile of the sector at these interfaces was required especially as we had worries of poor careers education. Create a series of video shorts (2:30 mins) where young people can explain the opportunities this sector can offer. Contact the ICould web team to undertake a feasibility study.

http://icould.com/?gclid=CJmNmLSW_KoCFQcNtAodzyOSzg

Work with the 'Fresh start' team to more widely publish their offer, and promote links with Kent Rural PLC

<http://www.careerinfarming.co.uk/>

Kent Rural PLC to be encouraged to look at create a peer review group similar to the Farming Clubs – ‘Monitor Forums’ in NZ, these enable farming best practice to be shared though peer review / mentoring networks.

<http://www.farmchat.co.nz/Default.aspx>

TRAINING Matrix for short courses

Abrasive Wheels	
Air Assisted Sprayer	
All Terrain Vehicles - Basic	
Asbestos Management	Refresher Courses not needed
ATV + Implements	
Cereal Group: BASIS	
Cereal Group: BETA	
Cereal Group: NROSO	
Chainsaw	
Circular Saw Bench – Tractor Mounted	(Browns Woodworker)`
Dipping & Drenching/PA12	
Emergency First Aid	Appointed persons
Excavator 360 below 10 Tonnes (wheeled)	
Excavator 360 Degree Digger/(Dumper) (ITSSAR / Lantra)	
Field Crop Sprayer	Refresher Courses not needed
Fire Awareness & Preventioin + Use of Fire Extinguishers	
FLT: Industrial Counterbalanced	(Conversion from RT Telescopic)
FLT: RT Telescopic	Refresher required in 3 years
Forklift Industrial Masted	
Game Conservancy Course	
Granular Applicator	
HACCP	
Introduction to ICM	
Introduction to Store Management & Monitoring	
Level 2 Food Safety in Catering	Refresher required in 3 years
Level 2 Health & Safety in the Workplace	Refresher required in 3 years
Location and Avoidance of Underground Apparatus	
Meet the Manufacturer	
NPTC PA1 Assessment	Refresher Courses not needed
NPTC PA10 Assessment	
NPTC PA2 & PA2A	Refresher Courses not needed
NPTC PA3A Assessment	
Plant Operator and Tower Scaffold	
Safe Use of Pesticides	
Sprayer, Stores & Buffers (NRoSO)	
Tractor Driving	
Vermin Control: Mole Control	
Vermin Control: Rabbit & Mole Control	
Vermin Control: Rat & Mouse	

Notes from Skills sub group meeting on 6th Sept:

Low carbon energy

Attendees:

Colin Bentwood	The Strategic Development Group
Richard Byers	SKANSKA
Ahmad Eslami	Skills Funding Agency
Roger Gabriel	KEB
Megan McKibbin	KEB
David Smith	CCCU
Mark Styles	KCC
Melanie Rogers	Vattenfall

The brief: to examine skills issues around: consistency of demand, communication, business engagement, influence schools at an early stage.

Key to the discussion was a recognition that Wind, Wood (bio mass) and Waste (to energy) along with Retrofit potential will be substantial growth areas and therefore will require a (up) skilled workforce.

RG presented a data paper (attached) which highlighted; that Level 3 technical level jobs are available in this sector now; higher apprenticeships maybe a new route way to degree qualification; and that there will be a shortage of STEM skills at degree level in the future.

Young people entering the job market in the future will be 'green natives' and as such should be encourage to think of the potential career opportunities offered by this sector.

Actions:

'Denne' through its National Skills Academy in Stanhope Estate Ashford work and 'Bluewater' with its close links with NWK College have developed a model of apprenticeships that have been very successful. They 'broker' apprentices to sub contractors and retail outlets as required to ensure that they receive wide ranging training. Working with Vattenfall and DONG we could replicate this for the this sector. Using Thanet and Swale Skills Centres as providers of training, and the SME supply chain as sub contractors.

To encouraging STEM skills, and to 'inspire' young people, we discussed the 'Brighton Science Festival' and how we could replicate this here in Kent, drawing on existing science fairs, but concentrating them over a week of intensive activity, using the new Discovery Park as a base.

For further info on Brighton see: <http://www.brightonscience.com/2011/>

As Aim Higher nationally is closing, Kent universities are looking to retained something similar locally we would like to persuade them to consider a Kent STEM bursary.

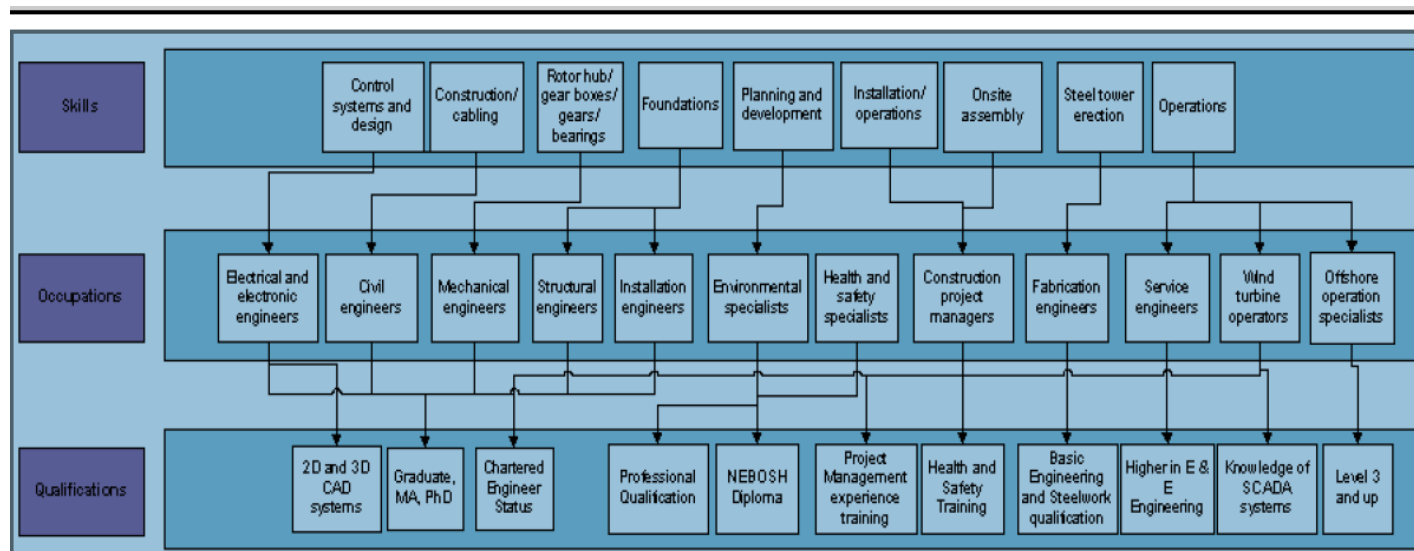
A project brief was submitted on 7th September for a potential Interreg 2011 bid. The project is focusing on developing skills and training for the low carbon sector with a focus on wind energy, biomass and retrofit construction. The project will be designed to develop and deliver intensive, practical short training programmes for young people (NEETs). The programme are designed to give young people employability skills and work experience in the low carbon sector. The outcome will be a sharing of cross-border expertise to help young people aged 16-24 to progress on to further training or employment in the target sectors in the UK and France. We should here shortly if we progressed to the next stage.

Skills and employment in Low Carbon Energy Sector

The sector is forecast to grow significantly over the period to 2020. Key to fuelling this growth will be the development of a skilled workforce. 'SQW Energy report'

Which skills are important to the sector?

Below summaries the key occupations for the sector and the typical qualifications associated with these occupations. Many are characterised by a requirement for higher level skills.



Source: SOW Energy

Projections for the sector in the period 2014 - 2020 suggest significant employment growth, total UK figure shown below:

Sub Sector	Slow growth (static)	Solid progress (base case)	Dynamic (based on political support)
Wind, Wave and Tidal (Base line 2014)	12,000	14,500	18,000
Wind	23,100	35,900	56,900
Wave and Tidal	350	1,600	2,100

Within six years it is anticipated that the number of FTE's within this sector will have more than doubled, even on the most conservative scenario.

Supply of Skills – implications for Kent?

Graduates

There is significant estimated growth in UK engineering and technology graduates of around 3.6% annually. However, enrolments on electrical engineering courses has decreased from 5,100 to 2,900 from 2004 – 2008, whilst foreign enrolments on such courses has increased by 41% (EU Skills 2008)

Vocational training / apprenticeships

Currently numbers of apprenticeships in electro-technical and engineering is relatively high. (LSC 2007) Governments plans to increase the total number of apprenticeships to over 400,000 by 2020. In addition tailored courses are developing for technician level wind power stations.

Young people

The number of young people age 16-18 is forecast to drop over the period to 2020 (government actuary UK from 809k to 687k) which will reduce the overall pool of young people available, however, data relating to A level results in STEM shows an increase of 30% since 2006.

Implications and actions

- Technical and highly skilled occupations will be the most important to the sector.
- Longer term supply of graduates in STEM is estimated to grow.
- FE is beginning to develop a range of apprenticeships which are sector specific.
- In schools with a declining demographic more pupils should be encouraged to follow STEM subjects.
- Influencing careers choices at all stages will be important.
- Increasing retention and internal capacity within the sector to train to 'grow our own'.

MPs voice fears over provision of school science

Students are not receiving the practical science education necessary to produce the next generation of scientists, warns Commons Science and Technology Committee.

The Commons Science and Technology Select Committee yesterday published its report on practical experiments in school science lessons and science field trips. It concludes that many students are receiving poor practical science experiences during their secondary school education.

Andrew Miller MP, Chair of the Committee, said,

"We heard evidence that the pressures of managing a busy curriculum, challenges in finding time for specialist continuing professional development, or time to get out of the classroom, are all factors contributing to a decline in the quality of practical science.

This is worrying. If the UK is to be confident of producing the next generation of scientists, then schools -encouraged by the government - must overcome the perceived and real barriers to providing high quality practicals, fieldwork and fieldtrips."

The report says health and safety concerns may be used as a convenient excuse for avoiding practicals and work outside the classroom, but the MPs found no credible evidence to support this frequently cited explanation for a decline in practicals and trips.

Knowledge and practical skills

Instead, the committee says more focus is needed on what happens after teachers have been recruited to the profession: knowledge and practical skills must be maintained and developed in order for high quality science education to be delivered.

High quality science facilities and qualified and experienced technical support are vital. A career structure for technical staff should be provided and the government should ensure schools provide science facilities to match its aspirations for science education.

Practical science is relatively expensive and carries little cachet for parents comparing schools. The inspection regime and the requirements set for exam boards should therefore drive higher quality with more and better practical science lessons.

STEM directories

The committee also found a lack of coherence in the provision of science educational materials. It urges the science community to utilise the STEM directories—the online database of STEM enhancement and enrichment activities for schools and colleges—and calls on the government to secure

the future of the directories which provide vital contacts between schools and scientists.

Detailed strategy

Finally, the committee urges the government to provide a detailed strategy on how it intends to achieve its ambition to increase participation in school science subjects.

LEP SKILLS GROUP DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE

1. To outline the newly emerging LEP developments in respect of Skills and to support a discussion about how the KEB Skills Group, with its business membership, can help and contribute to the wider agenda across the three counties.

THE SOUTH EAST REGIONAL LEP

2. The LEP is a strategic body and will focus its efforts on areas of cross-border economic importance where there is added value in working together. Its single goal is to promote steady, sustained economic growth over the next two decades. In order to support the joint business and public sector overarching goal, the LEP Board agreed four strategic objectives:
 - secure the growth of the Thames Gateway
 - promote investment in our coastal communities
 - strengthen our rural economy
 - strengthen the competitive advantage of strategic growth locations
3. The Board also identified four enabling activities which the LEP will focus on in order to realise its vision, overarching goal and the four strategic objectives set out above:
 - Enabling activity 1: strategic transport Infrastructure
 - Enabling activity 2: universal superfast broadband
 - Enabling activity 3: skills
 - Enabling activity 4: new financial instruments
4. On 12th August 2011, the LEP Board agreed a number of workstream leads from its membership to support the delivery of the LEP vision, as follows:

Cllr Rodney Chambers	Secure the growth of the Thames Gateway
Cllr Nigel Holdcroft & the Coastal Sub-Group	Promote investment in our coastal communities
Jon Regan	Strengthen our rural economy
Nicholas Cook	Strengthen the competitive advantage of strategic growth locations

Cllr John Kent	Strategic transport infrastructure
Rupert Clubb	Universal superfast broadband
Bill Fearon	Skills
John Spence	New financial instruments
Cllr Peter Martin	Research on key industrial sectors

LEP SKILLS WORKSTREAM

Core purpose of the group

- To act as a short-term, task and finish group to progress skills issues of genuine strategic importance where there is added value from working across three counties
- To provide a platform for lobbying and engagement with Government and key strategic agencies
- To offer a high-level interface between FE, HE, local and central government and the business community

Focus

- Initial group, comprised of the FE/HE and business leads from the LEP Board, will be meeting early October to agree its remit/terms of reference and to agree what it wishes to achieve in its time limited life
- One of its challenges will be how to reach agreement on its actions which is of priority across the counties under the LEP – with such wide borders there is a multiplicity of agendas and key focus areas

Challenges – for discussion

How can the LEP Skills Group truly understand and represent the current issues and challenges across three counties?

What communication mechanisms exist which can support an appropriate two way exchange between the KEB Skills for Growth Group and the LEP Skills Group?

What are our priorities in Kent – what do we want to press for?

If you are interested in keeping up to speed with the LEP developments, you can find the weekly newsletters at the following link:

<http://www.keb.org.uk/lep/>

*Bill Fearon
Principal, K College*