

West Kent Partnership Meeting – 9 October 2020

<p>Present</p> <p>Nicolas Heslop, TMBC, Chair Peter Fleming, SDC Jane March, TWBC Lesley Dyball, SDC Brian Luker, TMBC Jim Mawby, West Kent College Emily Haswell, SDC Alison Parmar, FSB Allan Baillee, KCC, KICC, Andrew Metcalf David Candlin, TWBC Detlev Munster, SDC Dr Lindsay Pamphilon, Hadlow College James Read, TMBC Jeremy Whittaker, TMBC Jon Regan, Hugh Lowe Farms Jon Weller, IMAGO Nigel Smith, KCC Ross Gill, KCC Tudor Price, KICC Sarah Nurden, KMEP Wendy Wood, WKP</p>	<p>Apologies</p> <p>David Joyner, KCC Catherine Brunger, AXA PPP Pav Ramewal, SDC Hilary Smith, TWBC Simon Harris, WKEAN</p> <p>Guests</p> <p>Chris Hare, Mid Kent College</p>
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1. Minutes & Matters Arising

- Minutes of previous meeting were approved
- Nicolas sent letters to each of the 5 MPs, lobbying for action on LEADER style funding to bring forward jobs and growth in the rural and landbased economy. Each MP is pursuing a different route within government and Partners will be kept updated on progress
- Partners endorsed again the value of the LEADER programme to our rural economy and a desire to see the work extended

2. Economic Recovery – Skills – Presentation and Discussion

Powerpoint presentation attached.

- How do LA's and FE sector respond to current challenges?

- Concern was expressed that the Jobcentres may not have the infrastructure or capacity to support those out of work. Reinstating more local provision would benefit job seekers
- The lack of HE provision in West Kent an ongoing concern and would be beneficial to have FE provision in all 3 districts
- Southampton study on destination of graduates show that vast majority end up working close to the university they attended. West Kent needs to find a way to attract young people to stay here for HE study
 - University of Kent has closed School of Creative Art and opportunity for West Kent College to lead on this locally
 - Colleges can specialise in different areas. Mid Kent are planning an advertising campaign *stay local go far*. Covid will have an impact on way people choose to study
 - FE/HE physical presence in Sevenoaks District sadly lacking – potential for a business school linking into lifelong learning
- We need to respond to an underlying trend of lower skills and meet Allan’s challenge to become a high skills high value economy.
- Nicolas a member of employment task force.

West Kent College

- Now part of North Kent College with Principal reporting into Chief Executive there
- During recent education administration process student numbers haven’t fallen and achievement rates have improved on previous years
- Aspirations to develop HE offering partnering with CCCU Kent and University of Greenwich - currently 280 HE students
- Less level 3 provision this year in response to employer demand
- Adult provision has fallen in response to less demand as difficult for adults to access funding and has to be repaid. The government’s commitment to lifelong learning should help address this trend and could be opportunities to work with industry sectors to develop skills provision for adults
- 18-24 unemployment peak is not mirrored with increased numbers of students – could be supported with further education
- College now in a much more stable position and looking to future and how to respond to challenges

Hadlow College

- White paper should support colleges as centre of communities and centre for lifelong learning.
- Priorities now out of transition is settling students into college and learners back into education.
- Numbers for FE 10% up against last academic year
- Over 220 HE students on 5 pathways following on from level 3
- Course offer is agile
- It was a challenge to support apprenticeships during lockdown. Rural sector has been able to cope with challenges better than in other sectors
- No recruitment for apprenticeships in the summer and although recruitment started in September there is a gap to address
- Covid cases are low so students attending and engaging

- Have to ensure students confident and able to learn in a variety of forms including online and will be a focus going forward

Mid Kent College

- Maidstone on fringe of partnership area – Malling.
- Dedicated HE campus in Maidstone and work with three universities on HE courses delivering part time in engineering and building services industries.
 - Most of recruitment is internal progression, level 2 into 4 and above. Shift in market over last 3 years – real move to Higher Apprenticeship provision – now 60% of all provision.
- Blended learning mode, trying to get youngsters to understand social distance
- Marginal increase in numbers, but also seen greater increase in level 3 and decrease in level 2
- Apprenticeships are at only 60% of normal level – usually have 300 new starts. Of the reduced numbers starting only half have an employer
- Are a Kickstart employer, taking on 30 placements
- Kent colleges have come together to see how they can support Kickstart employers and placements in developing skills utilising the £1500 grant
- Barriers to success – teacher/lecturer recruitment – particularly in skills where employer demand is high. Looking at initiatives to attract skilled tradespeople to move to teaching

3. Kickstart West Kent www.kickstartwestkent.co.uk

- West Kent Partnership team is leading on the initiative. A dedicated website has been built – kickstartwestkent.co.uk
- creating a package of wrap around support to offer to businesses that join the West Kent scheme to ensure success for employers and young people alike drawing on the expertise in delivering employability support and training of Enterprise coordinators and professional careers guidance practitioners, Simon and Usha
- Businesses are offered the opportunity to benefit from being networked through the gateway and to receive pre-placement training, advice and guidance. This will prepare them for employing a Kickstart placement, identifying what is expected of them in terms of support in the workplace and how we can supplement this through the wrap around programme
- The gateway will have a role in disbursing grants to businesses and ensuring the young people receive appropriate support to succeed in the placement and access progression opportunities
- First West Kent gateway application has been submitted for a total of 51 placements across 19 organisations. Government aims to respond to applications within one month. We are now building a second cohort
- There was discussion around the £1500 grant for set up, training and support which is payable to employers and the need for consistency across Kent in the quality of the offer
- It was suggested that it would be beneficial to the young people to receive a day a week vocational skills training and that the colleges may be able to identify an additional funding stream to deliver this
- Kent Invicta Chamber are partnering with the FE colleges for skills delivery to safeguard integrity of delivery and compliance. 950 placements so far and guidance and information on full role of gateway still to be confirmed

- Important that those 25 and over and out of work aren't disadvantaged by the Kickstart scheme
- Partners will be kept updated on progress of Kickstart programmes

4. Kent Renewal and Resilience Strategy

- Renewal and Resilience – not just about recovery but how county generally looks to the future
- Acts as a framework for Partners across the county and reinforces message that Kent is open for business and promotes the County
- Evidence base will be renewed soon
- Sets out 3 overarching principles - Greener futures, productive and open, and better opportunities, fairer chances,
- Five channels
 - Communications, Confidence and Trust – providing better intelligence to inform our actions and ensuring collaboration and partnership to drive our activity
 - Open for Business – taking action to build confidence and demonstrate that Kent is open and accessible
 - Supporting Business – supporting resilient and innovative businesses to drive future growth
 - People – enabling people to access work and skills and reach their potential
 - Investment – planning and investing now for a sustainable future.
- The Growth Hub Covid Business support helpline has been extended to 31 December
- Kent & Medway Business Fund (KMBF) has been relaunched
- Employment task force has been established.
- Getting Building Fund (GBF) will draw Investment into the County
- Intelligence gathering continues through helpline - revisiting businesses who did business impact survey – phoned over 5000 and got 986 responses. 200 across broad range of sectors will be deep dive with more narrative questions about how they can best be supported. Stats will be in district format quite soon but deep dive a little longer
- Concern regarding digital connectivity and its huge importance in the current situation with businesses being run from home and often from rural locations
 - Crucial to social agenda as well with students studying at home. Hardware, not just connectivity
 - There will be Getting Building Fund available to be spent by March 22 for digitally connecting rural areas
 - Action: to be a focus for January meeting, Liz Harrison to be invited

5. Economic Recovery Strategy – Draft Addendum to West Kent Priorities for Growth

- Partners who took part in a meeting to scope an approach to recovery in West Kent were thanked for their input
- Paper A is a draft addendum to current West Kent Priorities for Economic Growth and identifies short term actions to supplement and extend activities
- Partners were invited to review the document and feedback to Wendy - distributed after meeting (and again with these Minutes) Feedback would be welcome by 31 October
- Action: Economic Recovery Discussion at January WKP meeting

- Action: Finalised document as well as being an action plan will also be used as a lobbying document highlighting recovery issues in West Kent

6. Standing Updates

West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network

School

- All mainstream schools are in the network with the exception of Orchards Academy (Sevenoaks) and Bennett Memorial (Tunbridge Wells). The reason these two are not included is because they have chosen not to engage, but the door remains open.
- Two Bridges Pupil Referral Unit became the latest non-mainstream to join the network.

Activities

- Enterprise Adviser Induction
- Careers Leader Induction (mirrors the above)
- Ofsted Education Framework Inspection training targeted at school career leaders, careers link governors and Enterprise Advisers
- Labour Market Information training to be rolled out to school careers leaders in 2021.
- Revised LinkedIn training for schools to be delivered, probably from November 2020.
- Schools did not deliver as fully last academic year due to Covid. However DfE took these as exceptional circumstances and team have worked hard and creatively to ensure that virtual encounters and experiences will impact young people this year.

Strategies

- Three strands make a strong chord to pull schools in the right direction. The three strands are careers leader, careers link governor and Enterprise Adviser and we ensure they all understand their roles, how they connect and how they work together.
- All schools to build from a strong strategic careers foundation – encouraging review and evaluation of strategy and design of new fit-for-purpose programmes and delivery plans.
- Encouraging schools to employ a young person on Kickstart on careers strategy and impressing that this person could really get their careers delivery in good shape.
- Every school to have developed an expansive network of its own with help from its EA and drawn from governing board, parents, alumni, friends of teachers, suppliers.
- Adoption of Compass +
- Preparation to be 'hub ready'

Ambitions for Next Year

- Careers hub for West Kent
- Careers Link Governor in every school and engaged with the network
- The 'chord' working in every school, supported by the ECs and riving high-quality careers work with young people

FSB

- 26% of business owners lack confidence in digital skills. A wide range of free courses are available through the digital partnership
- Skills 3030 speed networking – exploring how can pick up in a virtual environment – important pipeline to keep going – linking business and education
- Broadband report from 2019 asks government for full fibre by 2025

- Pushing for additional discretionary grants for hard hit sectors, culture, arts, hospitality
- FSB will be part of a commission on future of self-employment and are talking to government around Covid support for the self-employed. There are 24,000 in West Kent

KMEP

- Minister for Energy will attend the BEIS meeting with SELEP on 20 October – discussion will include what government can do to enable businesses to take advantage of green recovery, role of local networks and key barriers to pivoting
- SELEP had paused on Local Industrial Strategy work but is now recommencing
- Focus on Getting Building Fund and getting cases through and funding awarded for delivery by 22.
- Network rail strategy consultation for Swanley to Medway Towns route

KICC/Growth Hub

- Growth hub helpline extended to 31 December – it has been accessed by businesses all over the county, many who had not engaged before
- Businesses struggling the most now are those that didn't apply business skills and have an inability to pivot - supporting them to develop new alternative revenue streams
- Chamber is a gateway for Kickstart and will be working with the FE colleges on wraparound employability support offer
- Membership is growing, reflecting the increased need for support
- Lobbying for sector based support – let the economy transition to a new normal
- Brexit – EU transition end December. Chamber acting as an agent for customs declarations and from 1 January large numbers will have to be processed

7. Next Meeting

Friday 22 January 2021, 10-12 Microsoft Teams

- West Kent Recovery Strategy
- Digital connectivity