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To: Kent Children's Trust Board

Date of Meeting: 4 March 2011

Subject: Report to Kent Children's Trust on the development of the Kent 14-19 Strategic Forum to ensure young people reach their full potential to progress into employment and higher levels of learning

Classification: Confidential to KCT Unrestricted For Information Only

Supporting Papers:

Summary of Paper:

This paper aims to look back at the development of the Kent 14-19 Strategic Forum over a 7 year period including the outcomes achieved in this time. It also describes the current statutory role of KCC in relation to post 16 learning. The paper also seeks to look forward over the next three years at the changes that will impact on the future of the 14-19 strategic forum and ultimately the educational outcomes of our young people.

KCT Board are asked to:

- Be aware of KCC's current statutory functions for post 16 learning;
- Consider KCC's 14-19(24) strategic role working with partners and to be aware of the critical changes in relation to future planning and development;
- Consider the role of the 14-19 Strategic Forum in the light of the development of the new Kent Forum and partnership group sub structure;
- Consider the six 14-19 priorities below in direct relation to the CYPP priorities of Adolescent engagement and Safeguarding with a particular focus on these young people being our society's future parents.
- Consider how the Kent 14-19 Strategic Forum and the 14-19 Innovation team can have input into the further development of effective partnership arrangements focussing on the future of our young people in Kent. This is an ideal time to start a dialogue with KCT partners regarding how the 14-19 Strategic Forum and the local delivery structure can work most effectively within the new Kent and national context.

1. Introduction & Background

The partnership landscape in Kent is changing and the new Kent Forum and sub structure is developing. This is an ideal opportunity to start a dialogue with KCT partners regarding how the 14-19 Strategic Forum and the local delivery structure can work most effectively within the new Kent and national context.

- 1.1 The work of the Kent 14-19 Strategic Forum is critical to the development of strong local partnerships in the six local planning areas across Kent. These six planning areas encompass two Districts each and local planning forums are structured, either across the 2 Districts, or as in Ashford and Shepway, with one in each. The central strategic partnership leads, guides and shapes local changes in the design and delivery of 14-19 learning for all young people across Kent.
2. **The History of the 14-19 Strategic Forum**
 - 2.1 **In October 2003** the FE/LEA liaison group was formed, membership included FE, KCC, LSC. The strategic guidance at this time included the targeted development of new purpose-built vocational centres for 14-16 year old learners.
 - 2.2 **In January 2004** the Kent Strategic Forum for Post 14 Education and Training convened as a successor to the above, with a purpose to determine education and training priorities in the County; membership included senior representatives from KCC, LSC, Connexions, FE colleges and schools. This was in line with the statutory guidance at the time.
 - 2.3 **In December 2005** the Strategic Forum responded to the legislation requiring 14-19 reforms, including the duties to collaborate (section 10 Children's Act 2004), by putting together an implementation plan to develop the curriculum over a 5 year period, including the collaborative development of diplomas. Nine Local Planning Forums/ local partnerships were formed reflecting membership of the Strategic Forum and given the task of ensuring the new curriculum entitlement was developed. Chairs of these Local Planning Forums were invited to attend the Strategic Forum. The membership was extended to encompass work based learning and Higher Education (HE) representation. Employers were seen as important partners in developments. **Two years later in November 2007** following a review by the KSF executive, changes confirmed the Kent 14-19 Strategic Forum as a sub group of the Kent Children's Trust.
 - 2.4 **Between 2007-2010** the 14-19 Strategic Forum worked with the 14-19 Innovation Team providing strategic leadership to shape local delivery. Over a three year period 2007-2010 there was significant impact through work at central and local level influencing policy direction of 14-19 developments. This included the development of two 14-19 curriculum strategies, the County's NEET strategy, development and implementation of the Connexions' contract, work related learning strategy, expansion of the vocational programme, the introduction of apprenticeships, and in April 2010 the successful transfer of the LSC functions to KCC.

2.5 Working within the strategic and local context, Kent's 14-19 Strategic Forum has ensured the delivery of effective and innovative curriculum projects including:

- The development of vocational centres across the county to provide high quality work related opportunities for over 8,000 learners. This programme achieved green flag status by the Audit Commission for innovative approaches to help young people in learning.
- Collaborative Diploma Gateways. In 2010/11 a total of 896 learners had taken up Diploma opportunities.
- The development of the Kent Young Apprenticeships Programme has been extremely successful, by promoting work based learning, opportunities, the current cohort of young apprenticeships 14-16 stands at 529 one of the largest in the country.
- 949 learners accessing collaborative Foundation Learning designed to improve engagement at KS4 at entry level and level 1.
- A unique Skill Force Programme enables 14-16 year olds to develop employability skills with an emphasis on social and physical development. In 2009/10 500 learners enrolled.
- Reduction in NEETs (young people Not in Education, Employment or Training). In 2008/09 Kent performed better than national and statistical neighbours, and was tracking a positive downward trend. Whilst Kent's numbers of young people who are NEET for 2009/10 slightly exceed those reported last year, Kent is still performing better than national, regional and statistical neighbours outlined in the table below.

	Kent average	National average	Statistical Neighbour
Dec 2007	5.2%	6.7%	6.0%
Dec 2008	4.7%	6.7%	6.2%
Dec 2009	4.9%	6.4%	6.2%
Dec 2010	4.8%	not available	not available

- The Area Wide Prospectus and Common Application Process ensures real choices for post 16 learners. Providers and the 14-19 Innovation Team have worked together to ensure that the post 16 offer for Kent opportunities is on the website in time for all Kent learners and others cross-border to apply for courses for the following academic year. To date there have been 92,275 visits to the common application website, so far this year. The number of learners who unlocked accounts to make their choices is currently 11,551 and the number of learners who have made online applications is 7,606. This

is the most successful Area Prospectus in the country enabling young people to make informed choices at 16.

2.6 The Current Period of Change

From 1st April 2010 the LSC responsibility for planning and ensuring access to post 16 provision came across to KCC, this included provision for learners up until the age of 24 with a learning assessment.

In September 2010 a new 14-19(24) Innovation Team was established within KCC, including the appointment of six local planning and commissioning officers and manager of planning commissioning and skills strategy to deliver the local authority's statutory functions for 14-19 provision, in partnership with schools, colleges and work based learning providers.

In September 2010 The Strategic Forum agreed new Terms of Reference and six key 14-19 priorities for the year (see section 3).

In October 2010 the Comprehensive Spending Review changed the resources available for 14-19 development. The Government White Paper for Schools "The Importance of Teaching" further changed the strategic direction, ending the learner entitlement. A further White Paper is due this autumn which will define the direction for qualification changes.

In November 2010 The Strategic Forum agreed a time line for curriculum change, moving away from entitlement to full participation, engaging young people in learning and skills, within the context of the Wolf report and further central government policy on curriculum. This is a tight time line for change if the new curriculum offer is to be on line for September 2012 by October 2011.

3. Strategic Priorities for 14-19 Partnership

The Kent 14-19 Strategic Partnership aims to ensure that every 14-19 year old learner in Kent, and those aged between 19-24 with a learning difficulty assessment, irrespective of their personal, social or economic circumstances, can:

- 3.1 Access a broad and inclusive 14+ Curriculum Framework, comprising high quality provision which engages them and equips them with the skills, knowledge and high aspirations for progression into meaningful employment and higher levels of learning. **Specific 16-19 strategic priorities** are to support the quality of post 16 provision, raise the attainment and progression of 16-19 year olds, and to increase their participation and reduce the number of young people who are currently NEET.
- 3.2 Choose an appropriate programme of study from an offer that is coherent and accessible across the **geographic area** and which is planned, developed and where appropriate delivered collaboratively by

- education and training providers. **Specific 16-19 strategic priorities** include ensuring appropriate specialist provision including for LLDD and offender learning.
- 3.3 **Access full and up-to-date information, impartial advice and guidance** to support their learning choices, life choices and to plan their progression and career options. **Specific 16-19 strategic priorities** are to promote learner support arrangements including IAG and financial support.
 - 3.4 **Receive effective, targeted support** at the earliest opportunity for those with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities and other barriers, to learning to support their continued participation in learning, to prevent disengagement, and to enable progression. **Specific 16-19 strategic priorities** include the development of foundation learning.
 - 3.5 **Progress seamlessly** through all levels of provision gaining skills and knowledge to reach their highest potential where appropriate, to include enterprise and entrepreneurial skills. **Specific 16-19 strategic priorities** include increasing the training opportunities for those in jobs currently without training, and the progression and employability of vulnerable learners.
 - 3.6 **Participate in learning and activities which prepares them for employment**, enabling them to gain experience and understanding of the world of work. **Specific 16-19 strategic priorities** include working with employers to increase the number of apprenticeships.

All Partners have agreed to the 6 strategic priorities within the Strategic Framework updated Sept 2010.

All the above priorities link directly to the CYPP priority in relation to Adolescent engagement

4. **Issues for KCTs consideration regarding key drivers for future development and proposed approaches to partnership working**
 - 4.1 KCC now has a new duty towards the County's resident 16-19 year olds which complements its duty for compulsory school age pupils. Section 41 of the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 1999 changed the Education Act 1996 to give authorities the duty, "to secure sufficient education and training to meet the reasonable needs of 16-19 year olds resident in their area, as well as the reasonable needs of residents aged 19-24 who have a learning difficulty assessment." The provision must be **suitable** to the young person's age, ability, aptitude and any special needs.
 - 4.2 In Kent it is important to work in partnership with all providers to ensure that every 16-19 year old resident has access to a suitable curriculum

- programme offer with appropriate progression routes to further or higher education and/or employment.
- 4.3 Moreover, for learners up to the age of 18 with a statement of SEN, the local authority must secure the provision including the school placement named in the statement. For young people aged 16-24 who have a learning difficulty assessment, the local authority must ensure that there is sufficient and suitable education and training. As an authority, we are also required to have a 16-19 transport policy and a County-wide role over admissions arrangements.
- 4.4 The duties of the Local Authority must be seen in conjunction with the plans of the Coalition Government to raise the participation age of 16-18 year olds now called "Full Entitlement" by 2015. The Government has placed an emphasis on the local authority's strategic role in 16-19 provision locally, and looks to authorities to provide strong local strategic leadership, working in partnership with schools, colleges, academies and training providers which are ultimately responsible for determining their curriculum. Those institutions are expected to take account of local authority strategic 14-19 plans.
- 4.5 Kent's 14-19 year olds have long benefited from a strong partnership authority carrying out its strategic functions jointly with institutions which actually deliver education and training to 14-19 year olds. For example, the 14-19 Strategic Forum oversees this work and is chaired by the Chair of KAFEC, with a wide membership of schools, college and training providers, as well as Connexions and relevant KCC officers; underpinned by local planning forums covering six planning areas within the County, in addition to links and networks between individual institutions and the authority.
- 4.6 The local authority therefore uses its strategic lead to work in partnership with providers and stakeholders to support the delivery of the overall curriculum/programme offered locally. This will be increasingly important within the context of fiscal decline, rising youth unemployment and a rapid change in direction regarding the 14-19 curriculum. This is a significant challenge as providers become more autonomous and the "free market" expands.
5. **Participation and engagement**
- 5.1 Schools, colleges and the 14-19 Innovation Team are engaged in listening to the views of young people to shape and influence 14-19(24) development in line with learner demand, interests and aspirations. Strategic Priority 3 is about ensuring impartial advice and guidance which is the critical dialogue that needs to happen with young people prior to transition.
- 5.2 All six Strategic Priorities for 14-19 year olds relate directly to the equalities agenda and the new statutory role of KCC in relation to

learners with a learner assessment until the age of 24 is further extending our duties.

6. **Next Steps** The 14-19 Strategic Forum is meeting on 24th March for an away day to discuss the emerging agenda and plan developments for the next three years. All providers are working together to prepare for a paradigm shift and part of the day will be supported by Roffey Park, Institute for Leadership. There will be a focus on “Value Innovation” giving participants the opportunity to work on how in partnership we can respond to a new environment for learning with fewer resources and more local autonomy.

Kent Children’s Trust Board is asked to consider how the work of 14-19 Strategic Forum supports and delivers the CYPP priorities.

The KCT Board are asked to:

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- Consider how the Kent 14-19 Strategic Forum and the 14-19 Innovation team can contribute to the further development of effective partnership arrangements focussing on the future of our young people in Kent. This is an ideal time to start a dialogue with KCT partners regarding how the 14-19 Strategic Partnership and the local delivery structure can work most effectively within the new Kent and National context.

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Background documents: 14-19 Strategic Forum, terms of reference meeting notes and papers on Trust Web, DFE website for Schools White paper ‘The Importance of Teaching’ and the impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

(Interim Wolf report available DFE March 2011)