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To: ELS Partnership Board – 12th December 2014
Subject: Sector Skills & Employer Engagement
Classification: Unrestricted

: Background:
The paper reviews the progress so far in the identification of the key growth sectors in Kent and Medway, and the work to establish a “Guild Model” to provide a framework for employer engagement.

Introduction:
In March 2014 the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership published “Unlocking the Potential for Growth”, Kent and Medway’s seven year growth plan. The plan sets out the big opportunities for business growth – and the challenges to be overcome. It identifies the solutions to unlock growth and sets out proposals for intelligent, market-led investment for jobs, homes and added value. A pivotal element of the plan is the identification of 7 Key Growth Sectors.

- Construction & the Built Environment
- Land Based
- Transport & Logistics
- Creative cultural and media and the visitor economy
- Engineering & Advanced Manufacturing
- Life Sciences & HealthCare
- Environmental Technologies and Energy

In the Plan the K&MEP identify the need for greater employer engagement with education, and the development of the Guild Model to support the engagement.

Background to the Guild Model:
The aim is to establish “Guilds” in the seven Key Growth Sectors to support both the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership and the Ambition of the 14-24 Strategy. This will be through a partnership between employers and education, promoting a conversation, to develop a common vocabulary and a common vision for employer engagement. The Tourism, Hospitality and Transport Guild have identified as their purpose;

“The Kent Hospitality, Tourism and Transport Guild has been established to - raise the profile of the industry as an attractive and sustainable career option; develop streamline entry and progression pathways for students and employees in the
industry; match this with the needs of the local businesses and assist in delivering the skills needs of the visitor economy.”

This will be realised through a “Triple A” framework;

1. Aspiration: To raise the perceptions and awareness of employment in the Sector. Thus we are planning for each of the 7 Key Sectors to have a zone at KentChoices4Ulive on March 25th and 26th.

2. Attitude: To promote the employability skills set has identified by the CBI. This has been promoted through the Employability Skills Passport which is being piloted this year in four centres.

3. Achievement: To increase awareness of both education and employers of the changes to the curriculum, to promote improved outcomes through the sharing of good practice. The purpose is that young people should have appropriate skills and qualifications to be able to access employment in the sector.

**Promote pathways to employment:** The Guild Model sets out potential pathways to employment, pathways which Kent County Council is seeking to establish

- Work Experience
- Traineeships
- Apprenticeship – Intermediate
- Apprenticeship – Advanced
- Apprenticeship – Higher
- Graduate Entry

**Progress So Far:**

The Tourism, Hospitality and Transport Guild is the furthest developed, with an Executive Steering Group consisting of both education and employer representatives, supported by Visit Kent and the Skills & Employability Service.

Work is underway developing;

- An initial meeting has been held with Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing, between education, employers and the Engineering Employers Federation.
- An initial meeting has been held for Land Based between the Kent Farm Schools, Royal Horticultural Society and the Kent County Agricultural Society.
- A meeting has been arranged between the Kent Bio Network and Simon Langton Girls School to discuss a Kent Life Sciences Guild.
- A meeting has been arranged between Local Authorities across the SELEP to discuss a Logistics Guild.
Creative and Media is taking shape through the Inspire project which is part of the legacy of the 2012 Olympics, developing links between the curriculum and employers.

The intention is that:

- all 7 Sectors will host a zone at KentChoices4Ulive
- A home page for each Guild to be hosted on [www.kentchoices4u.com](http://www.kentchoices4u.com)
- each Sector will have an Executive Steering Group with Terms of Reference
- each Sector to produce an Action Plan

To underpin this work the ELS Partnership should also consider supporting the Invicta Chamber of Commerce, as it implements the British Chamber of Commerce Manifesto to promote 2015 as The Year of Young People. A key element of the year will be to establish Young Chambers in education providers.

**National Background:**

At a national level there have been a number of reports identifying skills gaps in a wide variety of sectors. This is reinforced by our anecdotal conversations within the Guilds. The latest report identifies five priorities to address these issues.

**“Growth Through People” UKCES**

The report sets out five priorities for action over the next twenty years:

1. Employers need to lead the charge Employers should lead on skills development and government should enable them to do so, by encouraging greater collaboration between businesses, unions and the workforce in regions, sectors and across supply chains
2. Increased productivity equals career progression Improving workplace productivity is the route to pay and prosperity including better management, better job design and increased employee engagement
3. We need more quality ‘earning and learning’ routes like apprenticeships. They should be a normal career pathway for many more young people, and a normal way for businesses to recruit and develop their workforce
4. Bridge the gap between education and work Education and employers should be better connected to prepare people for work. Work experience should become an integral part of education for all young people.
5. Real results, not exam results Success should be measured by a wide set of outcomes, including jobs and progression, not just qualifications
**Action:**

That the ELS Partnership Board should promote in 2015 an Employer Engagement campaign through its partners, with a key focus to increase the employer profile on the ELS Partnership Board.

**Recommendations**

That the ELS Partnership Board agrees in 2015 to promote partnership working between education and employers to ensure young people have greater awareness of the key growth sectors and the potential pathways to employment.