

CABINET

6 MARCH 2018

MEDWAY SKILLS PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE, Inward Investment,
Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships
Councillor Jane Chitty, Planning, Economic Growth and
Regulation
Councillor Andrew Mackness, Children's Services (Lead
Member)
Councillor Martin Potter, Educational Attainment and
Improvement

Report from: Richard Hicks, Director Regeneration, Culture, Environment
and Transformation and Deputy Chief Executive

Author: Martin Hall, Skills Programme Manager

Summary

This report seeks Cabinet approval to establish a Medway Skills Partnership Board, as a Cabinet Advisory Group.

The Medway Skills Partnership (MSP) Board will steer, champion and monitor the improvement of skills delivering across Medway and will receive updates on key issues relating to the delivery of skills and employability, both impacting on the work of the Council and its partners.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 Skills delivery, including budgetary provision, is shared between internal services, such as the Medway's Apprenticeship Academy, Medway Adult Education and the work of the Children and Adults Directorate with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEETS) and Looked after Children (LAC). In addition, training providers, Further Education and Higher Education sectors, businesses and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SE LEP) have a key role in defining and supplying future skills needs.
- 1.2 Establishment of the Medway Skills Partnership (MSP) Board is required to inform and champion the development of a 'one council' approach to the improvement of targeted skills partnership working. In addition, the establishment of an MSP Board would contribute to the Council Plan priority

“Maximising regeneration and economic growth” and in particular support the outcome of “residents with jobs and skills”.

- 1.3 The establishment of, and appointment to, Cabinet Advisory Groups is a matter for Cabinet.

2. Background

- 2.1 Providing people with the skills they need to be able to make a positive contribution to all levels of Medway’s economic future is critical to delivering the Council Plan priority of “Maximising regeneration and economic growth”. An example is the need to build a pool of skilled and employable staff to ensure the long term success of important Gross Value Added (GVA) contributors, such as the business likely to locate at the Innovation Park Medway. The MSP Board will work to ensure higher level skills are developed by the Further Education (FE) and Higher Education establishments through schemes, such as the Higher Level Apprenticeships.
- 2.2 The Children and Adults Directorate has taken responsibility for managing NEETS and monitoring and supporting those with no known destination. Improved real time evidence alongside cross service and directorate working is already identifying opportunities to drive down both the percentage of NEETS and Not Knowns. The MSP Board will establish a target for the reduction in NEETS and will champion, challenge and monitor its progress.
- 2.3 Officers from the Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation (RCET) Directorate and the Children and Adults Directorate supported the work of the Employment Opportunities for 18-25 Year Olds (Including Apprenticeships) Task Group that recently explored the Employment and Skills needs of 18 – 25 year olds. This resulted in a suite of recommendations for the Medway Partnership Skills Board to consider, which cover four key lines of enquiry. The recommendations align with the five skill priorities, as developed by the MSP Board. Where appropriate, progress on addressing the Task Group recommendations will be reported at an Annual Skills Summit.
- 2.4 An Officers Skills Board met in August 2017 to define the emerging skill priorities. These were reviewed at the first shadow Members Skills Partnership (MSP) Board held in November 2017. Members agreed the following skill priorities:
- Careers advice (IAG)
 - Supply and Demand
 - Meaningful apprenticeships
 - Young people not in education, employment or training (NEETS)
 - Looked After Children
- 2.5 The South East Local Enterprise Partnership has consulted on a LEP Skills Strategy. This provides the regional skills context for the work of the MSP Board. The MSP Board will receive regular updates on the work of the SE LEP’s Skills Advisory Group and feedback local knowledge and funding bids.
- 2.6 The Cabinet has established a number of Cabinet Advisory Groups to assist in key areas of Council activity including, the Local Plan, the Local Transport

Plan, Regeneration, Innovation Park Medway and the Council's procurement arrangements. It is proposed that the MSP Board is established as a Cabinet Advisory Group, supported by the proposed terms of reference and membership, as set out in Appendix 1.

3. Advice and analysis

3.1 A Medway Skills Partnership Board is required to grow the shared awareness, resources, ambition and ownership of skills development. This is in part a response to:

- the recommendations from the Employment Opportunities for 18-25 Year Olds (Including Apprenticeships) Task Group agreed by Cabinet on 6 February 2018 (decision no. 25/2018 refers).
- The findings of the Kent and Medway Area Review;
- the SELEP Skills Strategy;
- the new Local Plan;
- the need to contribute to the Growth for All agenda;
- to minimise future NEET numbers;
- to maximise the partnership delivery of meaningful apprenticeships; and
- to assist the educational sectors in building a skills pool that meets the needs of growing priority business sectors.

3.2 The Medway Skills Partnership Board has agreed to the following overarching principle, which unites skills interests across age ranges and between partners. *'To work in partnership with local schools, universities, colleges and training providers to develop clear pathways and opportunities for the people in Medway and its employers, in particular where there are skills gaps and priority sectors'*.

3.3 In order to achieve the 5 skills priorities for Medway, it is considered necessary for the Medway Skills Partnership Board to steer and monitor the skills delivery of a range of sectors and services. The Terms of Reference, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, sets out the pool of stakeholders that could work with the MSP Board.

3.4 Setting this group up as a Cabinet Advisory Group will ensure that the group's terms of reference and membership is reviewed by Cabinet annually.

3.5 It is proposed that the remit of the board, constituted as a Cabinet Advisory Group is to:

- keep under review strategies to grow skills and employability;
- coordinate skills and employability initiatives, projects and funding streams related to the five skills priorities;
- make recommendations on external funding opportunities;
- ensure skills and employability opportunities are appraised and pursued as appropriate and;
- ensure a positive message regarding Skills attainment and delivery is effectively communicated.

3.6 In conclusion, the Medway Skills Partnership Board will provide improved coordination of skills development and delivery. It will engage stakeholders to monitor progress on the delivery of higher skills, careers information advice

and guidance, meaningful apprenticeships, NEETS and support for the Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities.

4. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
1. Poor coordination of skills delivery.	There are numerous separate funding streams and policy frameworks covering skills delivery. Without coordination, this position can lead to confusion and also the dilution of external resources.	Establish Medway Skills Partnership Board to drive comment actions.	D3
2. Low quality skills provision does not support high GVA growth	To attract high GVA businesses and jobs, investors need to be confident that Medway's skills institutions can deliver the required skill sets.	Establish Medway Skills Partnership Board to inform and champion higher level apprenticeships and targeted HE provision. The MSP Board will work to grow priority business sectors and to align skills supply and demands.	E2
3. Lack of resources to deliver on the five skill priorities.	Resources are spread across a number of services or sit with external partners.	The Medway Skills Partnership Board will explore aligning existing resources and will work in partnership to maximise opportunities for external funding.	D3

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Relevant Cabinet Members (Councillors Rodney Chambers OBE, Chitty, Mackness and Potter) have participated in the development of the five skill priorities. A draft of this Cabinet report was supported at the Shadow MPS Board held on 12 February 2018.
- 5.2 Cabinet will be asked for approval to consult on specific matters wherever public consultation is necessary.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report. It is a matter for Cabinet to establish and/or remove such groups as appropriate, as well as determine their size and composition.
- 7.2 As a Cabinet Advisory Group, the Medway Skills Partnership Board will not be a decision making body. It may make recommendations, which will either be implemented under existing officer delegations or referred for decision by the Council, Leader and Cabinet or other Committees, as appropriate and in accordance with legal and constitutional provisions.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 That Cabinet approve the establishment of the Medway Skills Partnership Board as a Cabinet Advisory Group, with the Terms of Reference and proposed membership, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
- 8.2 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Chief Executive to finalise the membership of the Medway Skills Partnership Board, in consultation with the Leader.

9. Suggested reasons for decisions

- 9.1 A Medway Skills Partnership Board will provide improved coordination and oversee progress of skills and employability, ensuring that the Council's aspirations can be achieved.

Lead officer contacts

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Medway Skills Partnership (MSP) Board: Terms of Reference

Background papers

None

APPENDIX 1

Medway Skills Partnership (MSP) Board: Terms of Reference DRAFT February 2018

Background

Skills is an area of work that crosses the Council's corporate priorities, its directorates and its portfolios. To reflect this situation, a cross directorate and Member portfolio approach, uniting and engaging internal and external stakeholders, will be delivered through the MSP Board. The Board's work will need to be supported by a robust evidence base and an audit of skill's supply and demand.

Why a Skills Partnership Board?

- To exploit the above procedural changes and to ensure the maximisation of Medway's regeneration and economic growth potential, there is a need for a new way of thinking and working across the Council.
- Skills are an essential part of the economic and social infrastructure upon which Medway's future will be grown. Developing higher skills within Medway's population is critical to securing the area's future economic and social growth.
- In Medway, unemployment is 2.1% higher than in the south east and NEETS percentage in January 2017 was measured as 5.6% of young people compared to 3.2% for Kent.
- To respond to the recommendations of Employment Opportunities for 18-25 Year Olds (Including Apprenticeships) Task Group covering NEETS, SEND, Careers Information Advice and Guidance and apprenticeships.
- To provide a cross portfolio and directorate platform, which is able to facilitate the meaningful engagement of key partners.
- To drive a positive response to the National Careers Strategy (Dec 2017), ensuring careers advice for all ages.

Purpose of Group

The MSP Board has been established as a Cabinet Advisory Group to coordinate and oversee progress of skills development in Medway. The Skills Board will drive implementation of the Medway Skills Plan in line with funding streams and appropriate mechanisms. It will be supported by the MSP Officer Group, chaired by the Chief Executive.

The Medway Skills Partnership Board has agreed to the following overarching principle, which unites skills interests across age ranges and between partners. *'To work in partnership with local schools, universities, colleges and training providers to develop clear pathways and opportunities for the people in Medway and its employers, in particular where there are skills gaps and priority sectors'*.

The remit of this group is to:

- Keep under review evidence and strategies to strengthen skills delivery across Medway's schools, academies, colleges, universities and businesses.
- Coordinate initiatives, projects and funding streams related to skills and employability.
- Make recommendations on internal resource allocations and external funding opportunities.
- Ensure all appropriate development opportunities are appraised and pursued.
- Ensure a positive message regarding skills and employability is effectively communicated, including holding of an annual Skills Summit.

At all times the group should ensure that appropriate stakeholder engagement has taken place.

The Medway Skills Partnership Board will be chaired by the Medway Council portfolio holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships.

Task and Finish Groups will be established, as agreed by the chair of the MSP Board, to develop opportunities as directed by the Skills Board.

An annual Medway Skill's Summit and Report will drive monitoring and championing the delivery of Medway's skills agenda.

Decision-Making Processes

As a Cabinet Advisory Group, the Skills Partnership Board will not be a decision making body.

It may make recommendations, which will either be implemented under existing Medway Council officer delegations or referred for decision by the Council, Leader and Cabinet or other Committees as appropriate, and in accordance with legal and constitutional provisions.

Medway Council will make decisions in its role as promotor of economic growth and as a corporate parent, however in some circumstances, recommendations will also need to be considered and agreed by other bodies such as SELEP and Further and Higher Education bodies. This will be mapped for each issue.

Decision-making processes relating to external funding should also be considered, and future funding sources will also need to be reflected should these have alternative reporting structures.

All matters coming before the Board shall be decided by a majority of the Board present and voting thereon at the meeting. In the case of an equality of votes, the chairman or person presiding shall have a second or casting vote.

Membership

The Medway Skills Partnership Board will consist of representatives with strategic interest in skills as follows:

Cllr Rodney Chambers OBE	Portfolio Holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships (Chairman)
Cllr Jane Chitty	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation
Cllr Andrew Mackness	Portfolio Holder for Children's Services
Cllr Martin Potter	Portfolio Holder for Educational Attainment and Improvement
Neil Davies	Chief Executive, Medway Council
Richard Hicks	Director, Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation, and Deputy Chief Executive
Ann Domenev	Deputy Director, Children and Adults Services
Tomasz Kozlowski	Assistant Director, Physical and Cultural Regeneration
Carrie McKenzie	Assistant Director, Transformation
Sunny Ee	Head of Service, Regeneration Delivery
Martin Hall	Skills Programme Manager

and key skills partners (Industry, Schools, Higher Education and Further Education) will also be in attendance as required, reflecting the specific meeting agenda.

Administration

Reflecting the strategic importance of the Medway Skills Partnership Board and the external interests associated with the interest, the Board will be chaired by the Portfolio holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships.

The Regeneration Delivery Team will be responsible for preparing and agreeing the agenda and papers, and the Executive Assistant of Assistant Director to Regeneration Delivery will set meeting dates and taking minutes.

Agendas will be circulated at least one week prior to the MSP Board meeting, following a template report format.

The Medway Skills Partnership Board will meet quarterly.

Declaration of Interests

Declarations of interest will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Medway Councillors and officers must act in accordance either with the Members' Code of Conduct or other provisions in the Council's Constitution as applicable.

Members of the Board representing external organisations must declare any financial or other significant interests that they may have before discussion of items. Action should be taken to resolve any conflicts of interest which should include not taking part or voting and withdrawing from the meeting in cases where a financial or other significant interest arises in relation to any business under consideration by the Board.