

THE EDUCATION PEOPLE - NEXT STEPS

Cabinet - 12 January 2023

Report of: West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network (WKEAN)

Status: For noting

Also considered by:

People & Places Advisory Committee - 29 November 2022

Key Decision: no

Executive Summary: Prior to August 2022, Sevenoaks District Council was the accountable body for the West Kent Enterprise Advisory Network, which was responsible for assisting schools in West Kent with career advice services that were closely aligned with the economic needs of the district and future career opportunities. In August, this service was transferred to The Education People, a fully owned Kent County Council company providing similar services to the rest of Kent. This report provides an update on the new arrangements in place and the role that the Council will be undertaking.

This report supports the Key Aim of: Building on the District's thriving economy through the regeneration of our market towns, and by enhancing both the visitor and rural economies.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. L. Dyball

Contact Officer: Simon Harris, Ext. 7347

Recommendation to People and Places Advisory Committee:

That comments on recommendations (a) and (b) are passed to Cabinet.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

- (a) Cabinet notes that The Education People will continue to deliver the WKEAN within an expanded Kent & Medway Careers Hub, and this will be monitored by the Council.
- (b) That Sevenoaks District Council continues to play a role by encouraging staff to volunteer time to support local schools in connection with Careers Hub activities and events.

Reason for recommendation: The Education People has recruited Enterprise Coordinators to cover the whole of Kent & Medway, including Sevenoaks and West Kent. Legacy projects will be delivered in West Kent.

Introduction and Background

- 1) For five school-years the WKEAN was delivered through the West Kent Partnership. Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) was the accountable body and employed two Enterprise Co-ordinators. Activities were funded using revenue from the Business Rate Retention pilot.
- 2) 35 schools including grammar, non-selective, and special educational needs were supported during the five years. The primary objective was to match each school with a voluntary Enterprise Adviser who would help make career strategies fit for purpose in order to prepare students for the future world of work. This applied to all students from age 11-18 (25 with SEN) and every young person was involved in multiple encounters with the world of work, activities connected therefrom, events and activities. Students from age 14-18 were also involved in workplace visits / experiences. The activities were created in response to the strategic plans created by the schools with the support of Enterprise Advisers and included stereotype busting exercises for the younger students, mock interviews in the middle years and business focus groups for the older ones. Greg Clark MP attended such a focus group.
- 3) The WKEAN has now been transferred to The Education People (TEP). This transfer was necessitated through an evolution of the Careers & Enterprise Company's (CEC) model to that of Careers Hubs and the allocating of leadership of this in Kent & Medway to The Education People (TEP), a trading company wholly owned by KCC. A single entity across the County was considered to be in the best interest of schools, young people and employers.
- 4) TEP has appointed a dedicated Enterprise Coordinator covering West Kent and a further operational hub lead. They will be responsible for the building of business networks and recruitment of Enterprise Advisers.
- 5) The Council has had several meetings with TEP to ensure that service provision is at the same standard (or better) to that which was delivered by SDC and that there is appropriate service coverage in West Kent. Comprehensive handover notes were shared with TEP.
- 6) The Council will be monitoring this service by establishing clear KPIs and also by retaining a role as an Enterprise Adviser, thereby allowing the Council to be fully connected with what is happening in mainstream and special educational needs locally. As such it will be possible to challenge TEP if the overall service became of concern.
- 7) West Kent schools are now absorbed into the Kent & Medway Careers Hub, which means that they are receiving comprehensive support to achieve all

eight Gatsby Benchmarks. These benchmarks were formulated by the Gatsby Foundation following years of extensive research into what works best in careers for schools in other OECD countries. They were subsequently adopted by the DfE and the Careers & Enterprise Company in 2018. They formed the quantitative benchmark against which we helped the schools measure impact. The DfE reduced its targets against the benchmarks during the pandemic but we saw some recovery in the last year. Gatsby Benchmarks will continue to form the KPIs against which TEP's service will be monitored. Gatsby Benchmark scores will need to be submitted to SDC at the end of each school-term so that we are able to see evidence of continuing progress.

- 8) Two schools remained outside the Network at handover. These are Orchards Academy and Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys. Orchards has now reached out to the Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) with a request to join the new Careers Hub, and TEP will be following up this request with a Memorandum of Understanding and an undertaking to provide an Enterprise Adviser. TWGSB was approached within recent months to ask whether they were in a position to re-join and indicated that they were. Again, The Education People will be following up on this.

Other options Considered and/or rejected

Maintain status quo: This would have involved the Council continuing to provide the service for West Kent. This was not considered possible given the CEC's revised delivery model and were the Council to continue this Service, funding would not have been made available to the West Kent Partnership area. The partnership would have had to have sought alternative funding. The transfer of the service to TEP, however, has the added benefit in ensuring all eight Gatsby Benchmarks can be applied to schools in West Kent. This is a great level of service that can be provided more effectively and efficiently through a central Careers Hub in Kent.

Do nothing: This would result in the service discontinuing in West Kent and Sevenoaks District in particular to the detriment of our local schools and residents.

Key Implications

Financial

1. Revenue from Business Rate Retention continues to fund a skills specialism within the economic development team. This is supplemented by the contributions of the three West Kent authorities so that this function is combined with the role of West Kent Partnership Manager.
2. The business rate retention revenue expires at the end of May 2024. Some legacy projects are under development and more funding will need to be secured to protect the skills specialism in the future.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

None directly arising from this report.

Equality Assessment

The Careers Hub is providing a DfE programme and as such will need to be aligned with the equalities duty stipulated by Government. The Hub is expected to have apposite impact on all young people regardless of background and overtly challenges stereotypes and promotes social mobility. This includes activities, events and experiences that encourage gender equality and the participation of young people with disabilities in work where appropriate. The Gatsby Benchmarks incorporate an element of evaluation in this regard and TEP will continue to monitor through these and also its engagement between Enterprise Coordinators, Enterprise Advisers and school careers leaders and governors.

Net Zero Implications

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district, or supporting the resilience of the natural environment

Conclusions

The Education People will be delivering a comprehensive Careers Hub for the whole of Kent. SDC, on behalf of the West Kent Partnership will continue to monitor The Education People performance, which will be evidenced against the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Appendices - None

Background Papers - None

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