

**Agenda Item No:** 7 **Report No:** 27/15  
**Report Title:** LEAP – Employment and Skills  
**Report To:** Scrutiny **Date:** 5 March 2015  
**Cabinet Member:** Cllr Phil Howson  
**Ward(s) Affected:** All  
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### **Purpose of Report:**

To provide an overview of the Local Enterprise and Apprenticeship Platform (LEAP) pilot programme for the Scrutiny Committee.

### **Officers Recommendation(s):**

- 1 To note the progress achieved thus far with the LEAP pilot programme in respect of apprenticeships and new business start-ups, as well as the positive contribution that LEAP makes to the local employment and skills landscape.

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### **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 1 LEAP was launched as a two-year pilot initiative in February 2013. The programme is due to finish at the end of February 2015. After a slow start, LEAP has made significant progress in raising awareness of apprenticeships and the provision of free training and support for business start-ups in Lewes District.
- 2 LEAP has obtained a good level of brand awareness around apprenticeships and business support, which helps to demonstrate the added value that LEAP offers within the local employment and skills landscape.

### **Information**

#### **3 LEAP**

- 3.1 The LEAP initiative was first taken to Cabinet in May 2012 (Report no.90/12) and approval was given to work up a detailed business plan for the project. This was subsequently reported to Cabinet in November

2012 (Report no.188/12) and sought approval for the delivery programme.

**3.2** The targets set in the May 2012 Cabinet report were:

- a) Between 50 and 80 completed apprenticeships
- b) 15 – 30 new businesses started and supported.

**3.3** In November 2012, Members committed to providing £150,000 of funding for LEAP using a combination of S106 (£50k) developer contributions and New Homes Bonus (£100k) funding received from the Government.

**3.4** Match funding was secured from ESCC's Rural Growth and Employment Fund (RuGEF), albeit this was based on different – much higher – targets than those approved by Cabinet. To date, LEAP has accessed approximately £45,000 of ESCC funding to support project delivery (with a further £12,450 currently being processed).

**3.5** As at 1 January 2015, LEAP has achieved the following:

- a) 77 Apprenticeship starts in Lewes District
- b) 37 New employers recruiting apprentices
- c) 31 entrepreneurs completing LEAP training
- d) 21 new businesses started.

#### **4 LEAP - Apprenticeships**

**4.1** The LEAP business plan reported to Cabinet in November 2012 envisaged an 'Apprenticeship Competition' whereby a series of assessment processes and tasks over a 2-3 month period would whittle down applicants to find "The Lewes Apprentice" – who would then be given a two-year apprenticeship with a local employer. All other applicants were to be individually assessed and given a bespoke training, employment and support package.

**4.2** In practice, this idea proved unworkable. The process set out in the Business Plan effectively guaranteed candidates employment – this was undeliverable as there was no guarantee that employers would be recruiting for apprentices at the end of the selection process.

**4.3** LDC has worked on improving the original apprenticeship proposals to create a brokerage and support service for employers and young people seeking apprenticeships. This revised LEAP offer has incorporated a number of key activities.

- a) Dedicated employer brokerage and referral service. This offers employers an opportunity to discover more about how apprenticeships can benefit their business. LEAP will contact all suitable training providers on their behalf and present the options – followed by referrals and follow-up meetings with providers as required.

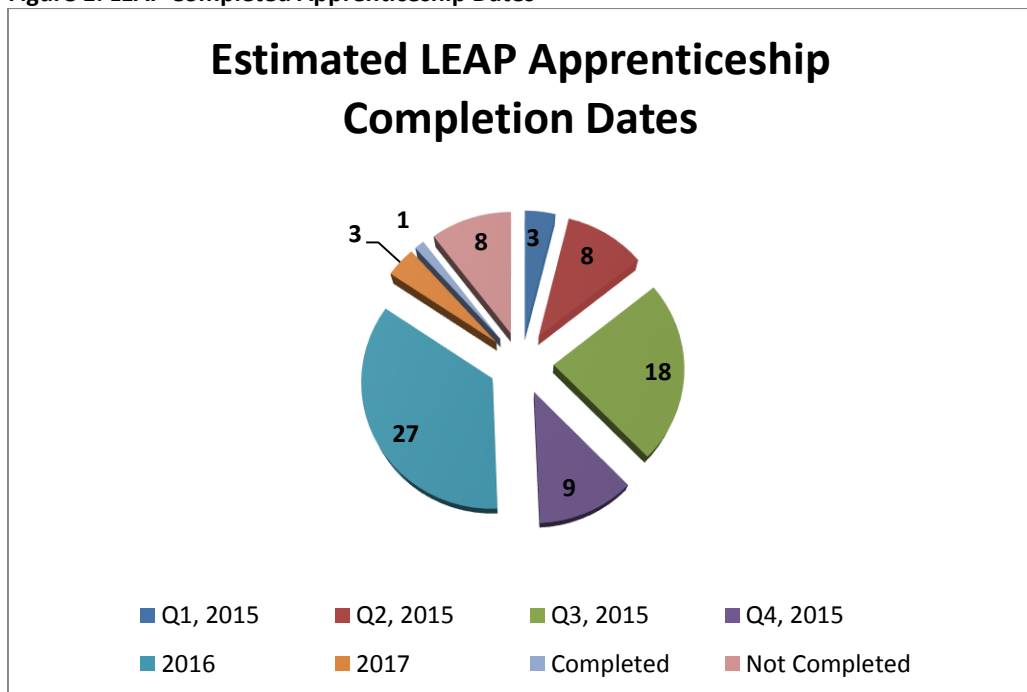
- b) Dedicated support service for young people. This includes independent advice and tips on how to find an apprenticeship, as well as referral to wider support organisations (eg. Youth Employability Service – YES – and Sussex Community Development Association – SCDA).
- c) Hosting dedicated apprenticeship events – either targeted at employers or young people or both.

4.4 Apprenticeships typically take between 12 months and 4 years to complete, depending on the type of apprenticeship framework and the Level being undertaken. Although, the originally forecast project outputs identified ‘completed’ apprenticeships, this was subsequently clarified with apprenticeships now referred to in terms of new job starts.

4.5 As noted in paragraph 3.5, LEAP had generated 77 new apprenticeship starts by 1 January 2015.

4.6 To date, there has been 1 confirmed successful apprenticeship completion. This figure reflects the slow start for the project initially and the fact that each apprenticeship takes at least one year and one day to complete. A further 37 completions are forecast before the end of 2015. A number of the apprenticeships commenced have been in skilled trades such as electrical engineering – with a Level 3 (Advanced) apprenticeship typically taking around three years to complete. This is demonstrated in the graph below.

Figure 1: LEAP Completed Apprenticeship Dates

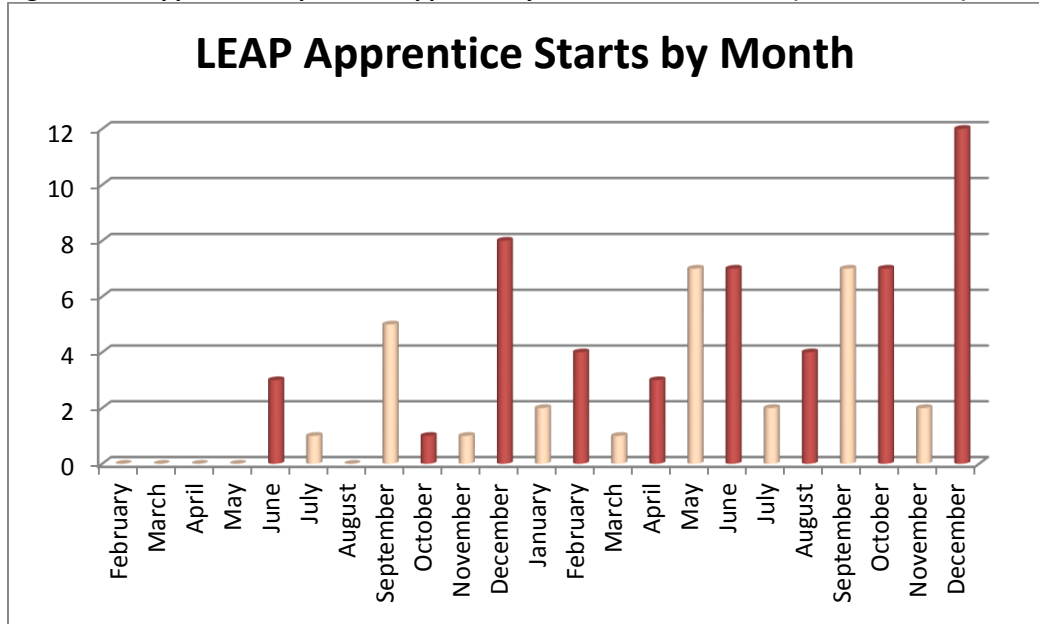


4.7 A map is shown in Appendix A. This highlights the primary office locations of all of the companies that have recruited apprentices with LEAP’s support, as well as all of the entrepreneurs that have completed training through LEAP. There is inevitably a strong focus on the urban areas of the District, due to the stronger business networks that exist in

these areas. As shown, the spread of apprenticeships has been stronger than for the entrepreneur programme.

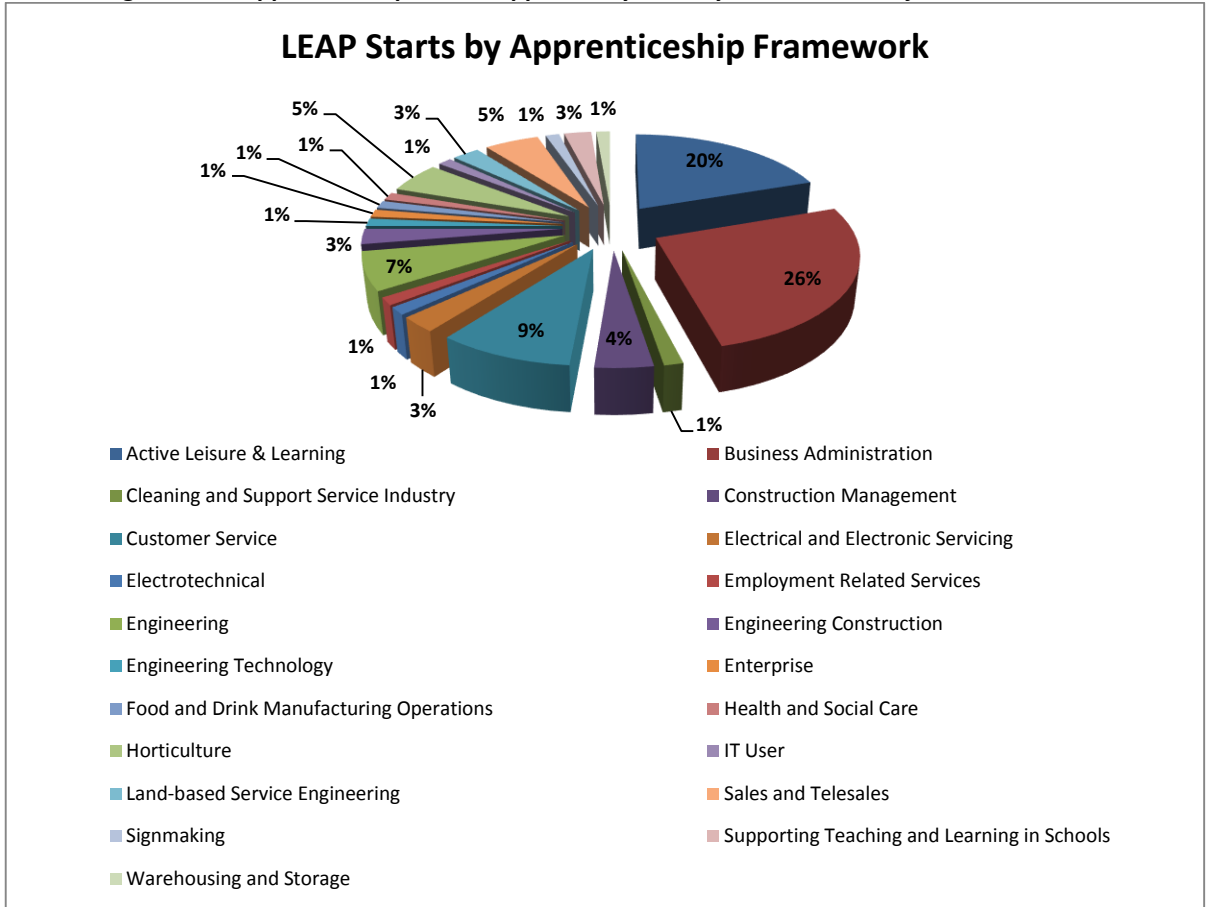
- 4.8** Where apprentice vacancies have been created just outside the District, these have only been included where the apprentice is a Lewes District resident. Equally, for entrepreneurs the home postcode of candidates has been used, but all have committed to starting their business within Lewes District.
- 4.9** To further support project delivery, LEAP works closely with the Sussex Council of Training Providers (SCTP), Apprenticeships in Sussex (AiS) and Soren Learning Solutions. This latter organisation has provided dedicated employer engagement services to ensure that LEAP covers as much of Lewes District as possible.
- 4.10** To date LEAP has helped to place apprenticeships with 16 different training providers. Our initial experience demonstrated that the programme should focus on finding the most appropriate training provider, rather than just the local College (ie. Plumpton or Sussex Downs). This change of focus has made a significant positive difference to the added value offered by LEAP.
- 4.11** There have been challenges in ensuring the quality of applicants for apprenticeship posts, and that both employer and employee understand what is required of them. The revised focus for LEAP has enabled us to identify and address potential issues at an early stage and, to date, we have received only positive feedback regarding the LEAP service.
- 4.12** As of 01/01/2015, LEAP has directly supported the creation of 77 apprenticeships within Lewes District. These jobs have been created across 37 different employers. Two of these positions have been created within LDC – our LEAP Apprentice commenced work at LDC on 24/02/2014, with an IT Helpdesk Apprentice commencing work on 22/09/2014. Provision is also being made for apprenticeships within key LDC contracts, including an apprentice that has been taken on by LDC's grounds maintenance contractor and apprentices recruited by the building contractor responsible for Newhaven Growth Quarter and the Shared Services Facility.
- 4.13** In addition to these figures, LEAP is currently supporting a number of employers recruit 14 further apprentices – although these posts have yet to be finalised.
- 4.14** If we take the apprenticeship starts figure, LEAP is well on course to achieve in excess of the targets set in the May 2012 Cabinet report. The graph below shows the rate of LEAP apprenticeship starts by month.

**Figure 2: All Apprenticeship Starts supported by LEAP in Lewes District (since Feb 2013)**



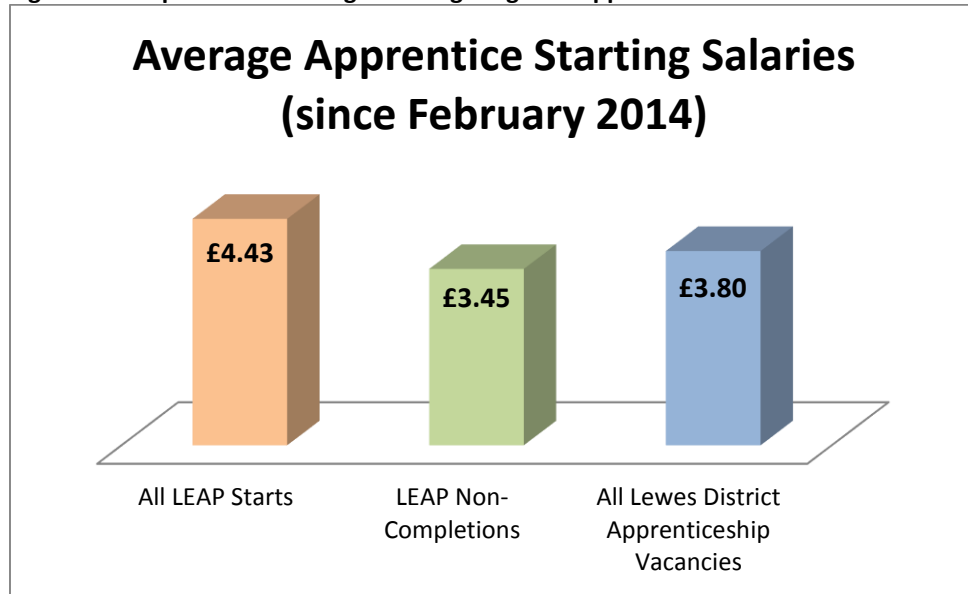
- 4.15 As one would expect, approximately one-third of all apprenticeship starts that LEAP has supported are in the core areas of Business Administration and Customer Service. One-fifth of all apprenticeships have been created in the Active Leisure category. This reflects that two large local health and fitness providers have recruited a number of apprentices.
- 4.16 In addition, 11% of all apprenticeship starts have been in engineering and related subjects. This reflects the prevalence of such firms in and around Newhaven, as well as the longer completion times for certain apprenticeships discussed in paragraph 4.6.
- 4.17 The graph below highlights all apprenticeship starts through LEAP between February 2013 and December 2014.

**Figure 3: All Apprenticeship Starts supported by LEAP by Framework Subject**



- 4.18** As well as the tangible results highlighted above, LEAP has helped to showcase the Government’s wider apprenticeship agenda and raised awareness of the benefits of being an apprentice for both young people and employers. LEAP’s activities have been well received by its target audience.
- 4.19** The average starting wage of the apprentices that LEAP has supported to date is £4.43 per hour. This is significantly above the National Minimum Wage for Apprentices (£2.68 pre-October 2014, £2.73 since). Interestingly, for the small proportion of apprentices that have failed to complete their apprenticeship, the average starting wage was significantly lower at £3.45 per hour.

Figure 4: Comparison of Average Starting Wage for Apprentices



- 4.20** LEAP has strongly recommended to employers that apprentices are paid a wage that is affordable for their business but that also offers incentivisation for the apprentice. This is reflected in the above graph when compared to all district-wide vacancies that LEAP has tracked.
- 4.21** Aside from the initial project launch, LEAP has held 3 primary Employer Engagement Events. These have been in the form of breakfast networking events hosted at Pelham House Hotel in Lewes, at Peacehaven Golf Club (Newhaven/Peacehaven) and Seaford Golf Club. These have been well attended – particularly in Seaford, where LEAP hosted a joint event with the Chamber of Commerce to maximise coverage and value-for-money.
- 4.22** LEAP has also hosted information events for young people. These have ranged from drop-in ‘Clinics’ in LDC reception, to ‘Parents Evenings’ for young people and their parents to raise awareness of apprenticeships and receive individually tailored advice from qualified careers advisors working for LEAP partners.
- 4.23** Numbers for the young people events are typically lower due to the need to provide 1:1 advice to each young person. Thus far, approximately 35 young people have attended dedicated information events through LEAP. It is important to note, however, that this is not the only mechanism through which LEAP supports local young people.
- 4.24** In addition to LEAP hosted events, LEAP attends a wide range of careers fairs and networking events within Lewes District. LEAP is now invited to schools careers events to promote apprenticeships, as well as events hosted by organisations including 3VA, SCDA’s employment arm and events of regional significance.
- 4.25** This activity has further cemented the strength of the LEAP brand locally and across East Sussex. At the last count, LEAP has been represented at approximately 50 events across Lewes District since the project’s

inception. A full list of all events attended / organised by LEAP is provided in Appendix C.

- 4.26** After a challenging birth, LEAP does add value to the local apprenticeships landscape. This is evidenced by the positive feedback received (primarily from employers). Some examples of this feedback are shown in Appendix B. The strength of the LEAP brand provides local residents and businesses with a clear pathway to information and support on apprenticeships.

## **5 LEAP – Business Start Up Programme**

- 5.1** The LEAP business plan reported to Cabinet in November 2012 allowed for 3 Business Start-Up (BSU) programmes for up to 10 entrepreneurs each time. Following discussions with our delivery partner, this was subsequently increased to a maximum of 15 entrepreneurs per programme to maximise value for LDC.
- 5.2** This element of the project invited local entrepreneurs to pitch to a panel of local businesspeople and representatives - the Lewes Den - to win a cash prize to help start up their business idea. This is part of an overall BSU offer which is unique in East Sussex and has been extremely well received.
- 5.3** LEAP's 3<sup>rd</sup> BSU programme completed in December 2014. The first 3 programmes have seen a total of 31 entrepreneurs complete the training and submit a business plan for judging. Evidence provided to our funding partners highlights that 21 entrepreneurs have started their businesses in Lewes District as a result of support from LEAP. We have also made best use of our allocated budget and plan to run an additional 4<sup>th</sup> BSU programme during 2015 (approved by Cabinet in November 2014). This is within the originally agreed budget parameters, as well as expanding capacity to allow for 15 people per programme as noted in paragraph 5.1 above.
- 5.4** The delivery of LEAP's BSU programme involves:
- (a)** Five x 1-day training workshops (for up to 15 people) to provide the skills and knowledge required to start your business;
  - (b)** Follow-up mentoring and coaching to help with the completion of a detailed business plan;
  - (c)** Business leaders panel meet to assess the business plans and shortlist 4/5 to present to the 'Den';
  - (d)** Shortlisted entrepreneurs present their business idea and plan to the 'Den';
  - (e)** Winner receives a cash prize of £3,000 to help get their business off the ground, with all other entrepreneurs that complete the programme receiving a tailored package of support worth £350 - £700.
- 5.5** The LEAP BSU training programme is delivered by Lets do Business Group on behalf of LDC. Let's do Business Group have a team of



professional workplace trainers that deliver business support programmes across the South East, including Brighton & Hove City Council's 'Ride the Wave' initiative.

- 5.6** LEAP's entrepreneur offer has also fitted well with other initiatives. Specifically, LEAP was able to secure the creation of a dedicated category and sponsorship of the Entrepreneur of the Year Award at the inaugural Lewes District Business Awards to maximise publicity and exposure for the shortlisted candidates on our 2<sup>nd</sup> BSU programme. LEAP plans to continue this involvement in 2015, with the winner of the 4<sup>th</sup> BSU programme also being announced at the Lewes District Business Awards due to be held in July 2015.
- 5.7** The 1<sup>st</sup> BSU programme was launched as the Project Manager and Project Officer both left employment with LDC. As a result, there was a lower take-up of training places due to weaker marketing. This has subsequently been addressed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> programmes through a clear marketing strategy targeting key publications in both urban and rural areas of the District, as well as utilising LDC's own assets to promote (eg. window displays at Lewes Tourist Information Centre).

Figure 5: Photo from 3<sup>rd</sup> BSU Programme (LEAP KickStart – December 2014)



- 5.8** LEAP's programme is different to other sources of support available. It offers extensive training, mentoring and follow-up support / prizes. There are no current initiatives that share all of these characteristics with LEAP, and feedback from candidates that have attended our programme has been universally positive. Some of the feedback received is shown in Appendix B.

- 5.9 In addition, page 25 of the recent Investment (Open for Growth) Peer Challenge in which LDC took part reported that *“The LEAP Lewes initiative...is a good example of successful partnership working, bringing together training providers, voluntary and community groups, employers and young people. LEAP also provides support for aspiring entrepreneurs providing extensive training and mentoring for business pre-starts.”*

## 6 Staff Resources

- 6.1 The current LEAP project is relatively resource intensive for LDC. To run the project effectively, this necessitates a dedicated Project Officer (P/T), an Apprentice (F/T) and regular detailed support from the Project Manager – along with a high degree of committed time / resource from key partners (eg. SCTP, AiS, Soren Learning Solutions and a range of training providers). The Project Officer and Apprentice posts are paid directly from the LEAP budget and are dedicated to the programme.

## 7 Cost-Benefit Analysis

- 7.1 To identify the effectiveness of the interventions undertaken through the LEAP programme, an indicative cost-benefit analysis has been undertaken. As far as practical, this has been split between apprenticeships and entrepreneurs to place a realistic value on each core element of LEAP.

- 7.2 As at 1 January 2015, the overall project expenditure on LEAP was £134,932. This includes all costs, including the full staffing costs for the Project Officer and Apprentice.

- 7.3 The expenditure on the apprenticeship and entrepreneur elements of LEAP are shown below. It should be noted that in those cases where costs incurred are general to the programme as a whole (eg. website design and staff costs) these have been split equally between the two elements:

a)	LEAP Apprenticeships	£62,713
b)	LEAP Entrepreneurs	£72,219

- 7.4 If we take the 77 apprenticeships that LEAP has helped to place thus far, this equates to a cost of **£814** per apprentice started within Lewes District. The summary of this calculation is shown below.

**Figure 6: Cost per Apprenticeship Start - LEAP**

Area of Expenditure	Allocation (% of Total)	Expenditure (£)	Apprenticeship Starts	Total Spend per Apprenticeship (£)
Apprenticeships Promotions	100%	46,393	77	<b>£814</b>
Staff Salary Costs	50%	16,320		
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	-	<b>62,713</b>		

- 7.5** It is more difficult to undertake this analysis for the entrepreneur programme. This is because people undertaking the training will not necessarily start their business venture immediately following completion of the LEAP programme. Nevertheless, we have tried to assess the effectiveness of each of the 3 LEAP entrepreneur programmes that have been run thus far:

**Figure 7: Cost per Business Start - LEAP**

Programme	No. People Completing Course	Cost per Person Completing (£)	No. New Business Starts	Cost per Business Start (£)
Entrepreneur of the Year 2013	7	3,068	5	<b>£4,296</b>
Entrepreneur of the Year 2014	11	2,467	10	<b>£2,714</b>
KickStart 2014	13	1,815	6	<b>£3,993</b>

- 7.6** As shown above, after the first programme which was poorly attended due to the change in project team discussed in paragraph 5.7, the cost per person has been reduced significantly.
- 7.7** As a guide, Let's do Business Group deliver training workshops and mentoring in the Hastings area. They have indicated that a sensible cost per person completing this type of training with a view to starting a business would be in the region of £2 - 2,500.
- 7.8** It is also worth noting that the high cost per business start for the 3<sup>rd</sup> programme (KickStart) reflects that the programme only finished in late 2014. A number of the candidates completing the course have indicated that they plan to start their businesses during 2015.

## **8 Additional Achievements**

- 8.1** Although the figures highlighted in this report pertaining to apprenticeship starts and new business start-ups in Lewes District are the primary means by which LEAP's effectiveness has been monitored, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that LEAP has played an important role in raising wider awareness of apprenticeships.
- 8.2** For example, Plumpton College have advised the LEAP team that, since LEAP's launch, the number of apprenticeship starts recorded by the College has increased by 10%. Whilst not all of this is due to LEAP, Plumpton College feel that LEAP has played a vital role in raising awareness amongst employers in particular.

- 8.3** This role is further reflected by the quote below from Daniel Karlsson, an Account Manager at Sussex Downs College:
- 8.4** *“Since its inception, LEAP has worked closely with Sussex Downs College in raising apprenticeship awareness. With the support provided by LEAP, the College has successfully delivered apprenticeships to companies in the Lewes District who may not previously have considered recruiting an apprentice. The additional support provided by LEAP on national recruitment sites has greatly helped promote local employers apprenticeship requirements, resulting in increased fill success rates and new apprenticeship starts for the College.”*
- 8.5** As well as the Colleges, LEAP works with all appropriate local and national training providers. The quote below is from Nicole Bass, the South East regional contact for Smart Training & Recruitment, who have a head office on the Isle of Wight:
- 8.6** *“Smart Training & Recruitment has been co-working with Lewes LEAP since January 2014...we have communicated together regularly regarding apprenticeship opportunities within businesses in the local area...we have successfully placed a number of apprentices into job opportunities. Working with LEAP has been a pleasure and a success for driving new job opportunities with nationally recognised training programmes to run alongside these new postings. Employers in East Sussex are engaging with the programme and always provide positive feedback regarding the LEAP project and how this has helped their business grow in terms of recruiting new employees.”*
- 8.7** LEAP has also played a key public sector role in the successful Brighton City Region Business Support Programme bid to the Regional Growth Fund. LEAP plays an ongoing public sector ‘matching’ role to enable key partner organisations – including both Brighton and Sussex Universities – to access central government funding to provide a suite of additional business support and innovation to facilitate economic growth and employment creation. The quote below is from Philip Ward, Programme Manager at Brighton & Hove City Council:
- 8.8** *“LEAP is a valued partner within the Greater Brighton City Region Wave 2 Regional Growth Fund programme...Throughout the period of the programme, LEAP has provided excellent evidence of activity in a timely and thoroughly professional manner, thus providing an excellent example of public sector involvement within a government programme specifically designed to support SME’s and create jobs.”*

## **9 Financial Appraisal**

- 9.1** The Council allocated a total of £150,000 as funding for the initial 2-year LEAP pilot programme. Target-driven match funding was also secured from ESCC’s Rural Growth and Employment Fund (RuGEF).

- 9.2** As at 1 January 2015, the overall project expenditure on LEAP was £134,932. This includes all costs, including the full staffing costs for the Project Officer and Apprentice.
- 9.3** Spending on LEAP has been contained within the budget, and it is currently forecast that at least £20,000 will remain uncommitted at the close of the pilot phase.
- 9.4** At 1 January 2015, LEAP had received £45,625 in contributions from ESCC. A further contribution of £12,450 is due to be received before the end of February 2015 in respect of targets achieved to date.
- 9.5** The Council is able to access funding for LEAP activities from ESCC up until September 2015 and claims for this funding will be submitted until that time.

## **10 Legal Implications**

- 10.1** This report details the outcome of the LEAP programme and is for noting only. As such there are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **11 Sustainability Implications**

- 11.1** I have completed the Sustainability Implications Questionnaire and there are no significant effects as a result of these recommendations.

## **12 Risk Management Implications**

- 12.1** I have completed a risk assessment.
- 12.2** The following risks were identified in the May 2012 Cabinet report for LEAP, and have been mitigated in the following ways:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Duplication / overlap with other apprenticeship schemes	The reshaping of the apprenticeship element of the project (as per the November 2014 Cabinet report) has ensured that this risk was mitigated and that sufficient buy-in was secured from all local training providers and key partner organisations.
Lack of support from employers	There has been a good level of support shown by employers in creating apprenticeship positions. This is evidenced by the 77 starts that were created (as at 01/01/15).
Lack of support from training providers	LEAP has helped place apprentices with 16 different training providers, demonstrating the buy-in from a wide range of training organisations.
Lack of take-up from unemployed, low skilled, workless and potential entrepreneurs	After a slow start, there has been a good level of interest in both apprenticeships and entrepreneur training from local residents. This is most recently evidenced by Wave Leisure's recruitment of 8 apprentices in December 2014 – with 37 local young people applying for the positions.
Lack of funding for future phases	Although LEAP's support service is now reducing, responsibility is passing to some of LEAP's key partners to continue effective delivery of local apprenticeships in Lewes District.
Lack of subsidy for transport	Although discussions were undertaken with commercial and voluntary operators – this element of LEAP was not progressed due to the existing network of transport services available (eg.

	Wheels to Work, etc).
Tesco contribution is not forthcoming within the current timescales	The planned S106 developer contributions have been accessed as agreed and used to fund the LEAP pilot programme.
Lack of capacity to manage and deliver the project	A dedicated Project Officer (P/T) and Apprentice (F/T) were recruited to work alongside the Project Manager to deliver the target outcomes for LEAP over the two year pilot period.

**12.3** As shown, the risks identified were adequately mitigated during the operation of the LEAP two year pilot programme.

### **Equality Screening**

**13** The proposal was screened for equality implications by Peter Sharp on 7 January 2015, and as no adverse impacts were identified a full equality analysis is not required.

### **Background Papers**

**14** None.

### **Appendices**

**15** Appendix A: Map of LEAP Activity

**16** Appendix B: Feedback from Entrepreneurs and Employers

**17** Appendix C: Events with LEAP Representation (February 2013 – December 2014)