

Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce

North Kent Economic Development Group

10:00 to 12:00, Wednesday 24 April 2013

Held at Medway Innovation Centre, Rochester

Minutes

Attending:

Suzanne Wood, Chairman (SW)	Medway Fibreglass
Jo James (JJ)	Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
Louisa Felstead (LF)	Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
Chris Inwood (CI)	Gravesham Borough Council
Clem Smith (CS)	Medway Council
Richard Longman (RL)	Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
Lewis Kirnon (LK)	Dartford Borough Council
Phil Matthews (PM)	North West Kent College / SUSCON
Peter Cooper (PC)	Penshurst Planning
Steven Boxall (SB)	Regeneration X
Stacey Driver (SD)	Stickleback Manufacturing
Emma Harraden (EH)	Hatten Wyatt
Graham Moody (GM)	North West Kent College / Maritime
Carlo Gargiulo (CG)	Swale Borough Council

Apologies:

Alastair Gale	Port of London Authority
Robert Goodman	Bluewater
Gareth Edwards	Gem Merchandising
David Liston-Jones	Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
Janet Robinson	Springfield Education & Training
Stephen Parker	Willmott Dixon

Minutes:

Will be circulated to all – 7 days to review and amend – then posted onto website

New member introductions

Previous minutes

No comment

TIGER

- CS: Launch event took place – programme is operational. Business support helping to manage process – ensuring ready when applications come in.
- CG: Also had successful launch event – 5/6 approved at the pre app stage. Fine tuning taking place over next few weeks – contracts will be awarded soon.
- LK: Launch event well received – in progress.
- RL: Team at KCC working exclusively on programme as well as expansion Kent. Approx. 25 pre apps (13 capital loans / 5 innovation / 7 young innovation) 17 are progressing to full application. 8 did not meet the criteria and being referred back. 2 from Dartford / 10 Medway / 6 Swale and 7 Thurrock. Concern over low interest in Gravesham – to be monitored closely
- CI: Possibly due to lack of innovation incubator space and manufacturing site premises. Looking at different ways of reaching businesses. Few interested in advanced engineering – but fall under Ship Building and Repairs an EU ineligible sector.

- Review progress and criteria after 6 months
- JJ: Chamber newsletter is changing format – using external agency and will be bi-monthly glossy. June edition will focus on RGF (TIGER and Expansion). Possibly put Jackie forward for inclusion?

Paramount:

- SW: Effects of jumping spiders?
- SB: All designs should bear in mind and incorporate any element of wildlife – increase biodiversity. Happened at Olympics.
- PC: Impact on infrastructure and housing? Discussions are still on-going. Paramount will create lots of growth and will compliment all other local plans
- CI: Been involved in discussions since early – big issue is the transport
- SW: Part of the proposal involves creating results for employees
- JJ: Need to ensure have local supply chain in place – will look into. Meet the buyer?
- CI: Maybe too early for local college involvement– possibly 6-9 months
- JJ: Markers can be laid down for this
- SW: Will use LOCOG model – but not sure on scale
- SD: useful to have Chamber available as signpost for information and advice for business
- SW: real potential with this
- CS: Medway and KCC involved in putting plan together and LEP asked to put growth plan together. Good opportunity for LEP.
- JJ: Heathrow have launched study – arranging event for them to present on a Hub airport – should help widen knowledge of other options.
- SB: Consideration to design of aircraft- less noise?

Lodge Hill:

- CS: Potential problem – major development with 321 hectares from river Medway (north of Strood through to Thamesport) The land is earmarked for 5000 new homes and 3k jobs – effectively creating a small town. Land Security are overseeing and taking development forward – lot of work has been done. However site backs onto scientific interest and Natural England are concerned how the plans will affect local breeding ground for nightingales. So have hit a wall as to how to continue development.
- SB: Should have been incorporated into development plans
- CS: On-going discussions
- PC: 22nd May is commencement date if Lodge Hill can meet requirements. Inspector may decide unsound. There are already plans for 75 homes – so raises questions as to where housing should go?
- CS: This will affect wider development programme and will have knock on affect to LDA.
- **ACTION: Will find out if planning policy need any support**

Chatham Waters

- SB: Information is on the Intranet. Is at next stage – however questions around impact on rest of Medway. Issues raised over how all developments work together and link together in Medway.
- CS: The transport between sites is paramount to support the connections. Possibility of bringing back the rail hub (previously used for freight). Longer term potential for rail upgrade. This will be a 10-15 year development - phase 1 presented last month
- SB: How will this affect town centre – especially Gillingham
- CS: If a rail hub goes ahead – there will be a positive economic impact in Gillingham with businesses benefiting from foot fall. Gillingham public reside in close proximity – so will probably not be affected.
- SB: Concern over urban design
- SW: Maybe get someone from PEEL to talk at next meeting

- **ACTION: establish if James Whittaker can attend next meeting.**

Manufacturing event

- SD: The group sitting behind the event has changed – still involved but reduced level. Carole Black has taken control (Best Business events)
- The event will include an educational element – concern had been raised if this was driving the date rather than the need. The date is July the 10th – not the best date for manufacturing businesses and limited lead up time – however the date is now fixed. There will be focus on “Meet the buyer” to maximise the exhibition. There is a group developed to drive manufacturing events – the Made in Medway trophy idea is developing.
- JJ: The date has been set – so the focus is on ensuring it is successful for all. The event will be smaller scale – but will act as spring board for 2014. Plans in place to set up a manufacturing sector group – similar to the Construction one. Would welcome SD’s support and help.
- SD: Discussion around bringing the Manufacturing and Construction events together. There had been concern over losing the Construction expo from the area – it’s essential the sector groups work and come together.
- LF: ECA are supporting – need to get publicity out ASAP
- JJ: 2014 will see them brought together. Awareness will be raised via e-marketing – using database and other contacts. Kent Business etc will also promote.
- CI: Suggest use other sources such as Reporter and other business publications.

Made in Medway competition

- SD: Keen to launch one but not yet made progress – is strongly on the agenda.
- CS: Link growth and expansion to the event to encourage colleges and help career developments – strong tie with university is important
- SD: possibly link with Design colleges?
- SD: great opportunity to push products out that are made locally in Kent. Although design is important – it is seen as a higher career path – so we need to manage that connection to ensure manufacturing remains core. There has been an innovation group set up to discuss innovation between Businesses and universities – strong interest in this being in addition to Canterbury.
- CI: Gravesham has working relations with Greenwich University and would like the same relationship with the other Universities
- **ACTION - SD: Can help CI get in touch with universities**
- JJ: Has met VC of universities regarding business engagement – they are on board and want to increase engagement. Chamber and SD can help with connecting with relevant people.
- **ACTION - LF: Possibly invite on the universities to join EDG?**

Bloodhound

- SD: This has progressed and looking at a Medway version of the Swale model. KCC have put in a pitch for Bloodhound initiative for the area. Bloodhound is in the UK from Jan 2014 – July 2015. Trying to move this forward - KCC has asked Medway to get involved so that they can have access to the car for a week and invite the schools to be involved. Each day will involve a series of events. In July 2015 there is a closing ceremony and there is a pitch in place to hold this at the Dockyard. Will cost £20k to have BH in Medway - £100k for Kent wide. The cost goes towards hire of car and logistics. SD has asked for breakdown of costs.
- Will need funding and sponsorship – but good opportunity to bring Medway and Kent together and communication level.
- **ACTION - SD: Provide update when hear back and then publicise. Meeting at the Dockyard next week**

Stemfest:

- 18th July – exhibition for delivery of stem related careers to present themselves to teachers. 800 schools invited. Bloodhound will have a table there.

- **ACTION – All: uptake is slow - so raise awareness through networks for taking a stand and attending**
- **LF: Possibly open up to Young Chamber?**
- SD: no restriction on who or where located

Transport

- JJ: No decision has been made yet – preferred option is being discussed – will provide update on LEP
- RL: Lower Thames Crossing Stakeholder Group meeting may give more clarity. 3rd week in May is consultation period for 8 week. There will be more information soon on the events due to take place soon. Looking at effects on businesses and locals. TGKP will try and come up with an agreed view.

Crossrail:

- SW: If CR is extended may present opportunities – but is there anything we can do and is this something we want?
- GM: Can we use existing line?
- CI: No capacity on existing NK line – GBC has saved a corridor of land in the LDF to enable extension to Gravesend TC if the opportunity arose to extend past Abbey Wood which would have a positive effect on the Town Centre
- LK: Could be good timing for Dartford – discussion in place for capacity

Kent Science Park:

- SW: Question over expanding the KSP?
- CG: Connections poor to the park – lot of small companies have labs there providing opportunities for students
- JJ: There is approx. £95m for funding transport which will be allocated to key infrastructure projects that will increase growth. There is a list of key projects – this will be narrowed to 2. Those that are priorities for Kent need to be on that list and must be feasible and ready to go. Has a list of those projects – want to extend to local businesses.
- CG: The M2 access to Swale could be raised as a major issue affecting businesses in Swale.
- **ACTION – JJ: will feedback from next LEP**

Maritime sector

GM:

- DFDS are expanding into education in regard to taking on NWKC apprenticeships on ship.
- Port of London Authority – seeking new employees – potential for employment in the area is strong.
- Thamesport: Shipping may move over to new terminal.
- Fishing: No real expansion
- Cruise: Potential few changes – Disney looking to expand. Future terminals. Ports may like to put in a terminal for business in Greenwich
- Thames ship repair – great opportunity if they can expand
- Northfleet harbour group – clearing old harbour to possibly put in a marina
- SUSCON – from Sept will have facility in Gravesend for confined space training as a requirement
- Online Maritime jobs has been launched
- Maritime sector is expanding with more opportunities coming through
- **ACTION – GM: Liaise with CI regarding connections in London Gateway and possible river taxi from Gravesend to Essex**

AOB:

- SD: Handed out information on Young Eco Engineers programmes
- CI: Met with Thurrock – possible joint business events

- RL: Protocol barriers on traffic – question is anyone has information on costs of existing congestion
- JJ: To feed through Chamber
- **ACTION – All: All LA's have launched Business Awards - raise awareness**