

Minutes of meeting held by the
East Kent Economic Development Group (EKEDG)
28/10/2015
Held at: Royal Cinque Ports Yacht Club

1. Welcome and apologies

Present:

Ray Johnson (RJ) (Chair)
Lee May (LM)
Tim Ingleton (TI)
Roy Atack (RA)
Andy Cruttenden (AC)
Jonathan Clarke (JC)
Richard Lavender (RL)
Dan Deed (DD)
Catherine Harvey (CH)
Brian Hall (BH)
Linda Marsh (LM)

Apologies:

Paul Sayers
Jane Hughes
Daniel Sangiuseppe
Kimberly Anderson

Ray gave the opportunity for Roy to give us an update, who is now seeking new employment.

Louise Hall from Thanet District Council is now on maternity leave. In order to ensure continuing attendance at the meetings from TDC Ray Johnson will contact TDC through Tim Ingleton. A potential contact at TDC is Abigail Raymond. **RJ**

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Approved subject to amendment of the figure quoted for discretionary business rate relief which should read £250k

3. Outstanding Actions

- (i) Kimberly Anderson had raised the issue of Apprenticeships – RJ liaised with chamber and put KA in touch with Chris Hare from the board.

- (ii) The introduction of the Living Wage had been discussed at the previous meeting. Ray Johnson had circulated a communication on this from Chamber. The view from employer's perspective is that the introduction of the living wage should be staggered over 5 years.

Jonathan Clarke identified that there is a particular concern for those businesses where there are tight margins, for example the hospitality sector.

Bryan Hall highlighted that the impact will not just be at the bottom end of the pay scale as higher paid employees will also push for a pay rise in order to maintain differentials.

- (iii) The lack of new housing development was discussed at the previous meeting. Ray Johnson has discussed this issue with Julie Anderson from the Kent Construction Focus Group. John Taylor had provided some information and Ray will send on. **RJ**
- (iv) Ray Johnson encouraged members to submit letters of support for the expansion of the Port of Dover. Also please send on to encourage other businesses to respond. **All**

4. Local Authority Update – Tim Ingleton Dover District Council

The meeting received a presentation from Tim Ingleton regarding the various schemes which are currently progressing within the Dover District Council area. Copies of the slides are available at:

https://iiservices-my.sharepoint.com/personal/ray_independentinsuranceservices_co_uk/_layouts/15/guestaccess.aspx?guestaccesstoken=CwSrh%2bgLLWjtdUUbWhDrNMsLLJ4%2feg1oqfkG8rtVTkY%3d&docid=0ab81b03849ac4b749a1c7e0d4e9f2b4c

Tim Ingleton mentioned the Dover Skills Fair. Details available at:

<https://www.skills4dover.co.uk/Events/Events.aspx>

Ray Johnson asked about the delivery of light industrial units. Tim Ingleton identified sites at Discovery Park, Incubation units at Aylesham, Betteshanger and the White Cliffs Business Park.

A question was raised regarding the future of rail link with Ashford, Folkestone and Dover. Tim Ingleton referred to the New Parkway Station near Discovery Park. The key is to reduce rail journey times from London. This will be aided by the formulation of the new rail franchise – enhancement of frequency and investment in infrastructure/improve connectivity.

The unacceptable situation with Operation Stack in the summer was highlighted. There is a need for big ticket infrastructure to deal with the anticipated demand arising from economic and housing development.

Tim Ingleton identified Discovery Park as a flagship scheme for government.

Katherine Harvey said that Shepway District Council has also submitted an application for an enterprise zone within its area.

Linda Marsh highlighted the need for investment in universities and colleges and the need for funding support for schools to enable them to engage.

5. Presentation from Dover Harbour Board

This meeting received a presentation from Richard Christian regarding the Dover Western Docks Revival. RJ to circulate slides. **RJ**

The Summer Disruption including operation stack was highlighted as a challenge. The Port of Dover will be creating holding places for 400 lorries within the port which will help to manage the situation.

The Port of Dover is supporting government initiatives to improve the whole logistics chain including the lower Thames crossing. Also highlighted as important was the connectivity with the town important and heritage. There is a real estate partner looking at potential for residential to be incorporated into the scheme.

The aim is for the redevelopment of the Western Docks to be finished by 2020 with work to start in January 2015.

Richard Christian asked for support to be registered via: www.deliverfordover.co.uk Ray Johnson encouraged support from the Chamber

6. Sector Update

The consensus within the meeting was that the East Kent area is on the up and that there are a number of positive developments taking place in the area.

Ray Johnson mentioned that some of his developer clients have indicated a willingness to invest in the area. Bryan Hall emphasises importance of East Kent and the importance of maintaining the momentum.

7. Other project updates

Ray Johnson indicated that he is happy to receive any sector or other update via email.

8. Any other business & topics

Katherine Harvey mentioned a “meet the expert” event being run by Shepway District Council which is taking place at the Leas Cliff Hall on Tuesday 1st December. Details to follow. **KH**

Richard Lavender said that there is a new group being established along the lines of the Kent Construction Focus Group and which is aimed at engineering and manufacturing. It is being run by Tim Allen from MJ Allen Manufacturing.

There is a B2B event at Discovery Park on 4th November and the Chairman encouraged all to attend.

9. Date of next meeting

Ray Johnson will circulate proposed dates for future meetings. The next is likely to be at the end of January 2016. **RJ**

Revised RJ 25th November 2015