

Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce Maidstone Economic Development Group

Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 12th January 2016
at Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent. ME14 1DB

Present: John Taylor (JMT, Chair), Nick Rowell (NR), Nick Rowell (NR), Bill Lash (BL),
Chris Blundell (CB), Colin Davies (CD), Roger Keech (RK)

	<p>Briefing from Paul Spooner, MBC on MBC's Local Plan with particular reference to the Intergrated Transport Policy currently awaiting approval by MBC Councillors. Regulation 19 was discussed. Feb 3rd – 6 weeks consultation. Submit local plan after Consultation to Government attaching to it schedule of modification. From September to Christmas – Examination in public. Aim of the Local Plan is to be approved and adopted early 2017 (Feb-March).</p> <p>2011 – 2031 plan to build 18560 homes (some are consented or under construction) Leaving a 9,000 balance.</p> <p>Town Centre is in need of starter homes.</p> <p>Enterprise Zone status for Medical Campus.</p> <p>Alongside the Local Plan is - Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Integrated Transport Strategy.</p> <p>Junction Improvements – There is a 8.5m local growth fund pot which can be used whilst waiting for money to come through, money then put back in pot for further use.</p> <p>Bus Operators – Need to improve commute into Maidstone. MBC are working with the bus operators to improve the quality. Only 1 route at present. MBC are pushing Operators for 4 routes. Also looking to refurbish the Business Station in Mall.</p> <p>As well as Local Plan, Transport and Infrastructure, the town centre development is – Maidstone East The Mall – refurbishing Run more festivals And Strategic TC Advisory Board.</p> <p>Plans for the Enterprise Zone will be sent to JMT for distribution. <u>Action MBC</u></p> <p>Park & Ride, JMT asked about the proposed loss at the Chiltern Hundreds without any form of replacement. PS said that this could be reconsidered but no scheme in short term. Need to improve the bus facilities/service. Longer term there probably will be/not closing their minds to it.</p>	
	Karen Franek and Abi Lewis attended from MBC.	
1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE John Foster (JF), Jo James (JJ), Allis Beasley (AB), Mandy Bearne (MB), Nick Baster (NB), Keith Grimley (KG), Jason Lewis (JL).</p>	

2.	<p>MINUTES OF LAST MEETING</p> <p>Small amendment to Point 7 which was noted on Minutes. Operation Stack, public consultation from Tudor Price, KICC has been emailed to all members. JT to look at and put comments together. <u>Action JMT</u></p> <p>Agents summary of business conditions. JT to email out to everyone. <u>Action JMT</u></p> <p>12. AOB – Work streams that the Group could get involved in – NR suggested Pensions and the living wage. He will come back to the group with a proposal for these. <u>Action NR</u></p> <p>JT asked that any questions the group would like to raise with Paul Spooner about today's briefing on MBC's Local Plan, for them to give them to JT to pass on. <u>Action All</u></p>	
3.	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>Tudor Price is still to come in to discuss skills shortages. <u>Action JMT</u></p>	
6.	<p>PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT J8</p> <p>JMT updated the group on the legal appeal of decision on the Secretary of State on Waterside Park.</p>	
7.	<p>LOCAL PLAN – HOUSING ISSUES/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Nothing to discuss.</p>	
8.	<p>TOWN CENTRE FUTURE – GABRIELS HILL UPGRADE</p> <p>Paul Spooner spoke about this in his Briefing at the start of the meeting. Spoke briefly about Gabriels Hill.</p>	
9.	<p>SKILLS</p> <p>JJ had planned to attend with Linda Marsh from KICC to discuss this. This will be held over to March's Meeting. <u>Action JJ</u></p>	
10.	<p>LOCAL ECONOMY UPDATE</p> <p>NR handed out his survey and this was discussed (copy on file).</p> <p>a) Bank of England Economic Update Report This was discussed.</p>	
11.	<p>ARMED FORCES COVENANT</p> <p>JMT reported on the ongoing concern for companies looking to employ people coming out of the Armed Forces, Royal Engineers and Gherkers. They also looked at the problem of education and priority of families that are moved to Maidstone and their children not being able to get into local schools. Particularly Primary Schools within a reasonable distance from the Barracks. Shift on policy of MOD in assisting local groups with work. Rules have been changed by the MOD. An insurance surcharge now has to be paid.</p>	
12.	<p>BUSINESS INCUBATION CENTRES</p> <p>KF reported that this is going very well but there's still a lot of work to be done. The offices are full. But the Workshop programme is still to be built up. KF suggested that it should continue but in a slightly different way, the principles need to be Education of private rented sector. To support retention of small office buildings in Maidstone as somewhere is needed for companies to move to after incubation. JMT asked if this should still be an agenda item or whether it could go to one side. JMT proposed that some members of the Group form a smaller Working Group to look at specific issues what the Chamber can do locally for prevention/retention of</p>	

	<p>small office accommodation. CD and NR to look at this and report back at the next meeting what the workstream would look like.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>Action CD/NR</u></p>	
13	<p>KENT POLICE AND BUSINESS CRIME PARTNERSHIP JMT reported that there was a taster Conference at the Police Training Headquarters in November 2015. The Chamber will be promoting a Conference the second half of May which will be a joint Conference with Kent Police. This will be held at Ashford Chamber.</p> <p>b) Modern Day Slavery Real problem in Kent. This is on the Agenda as looking to see how we can highten the profile of it, assisting Police in educating people/businesses in the County.</p>	
14	<p>CHAMBER UPDATE Tudor Price was not in attendance to give briefing on the Growth Hub.</p> <p>a) What's on around the County JMT is not satisfied that everyone knows what the Chamber is doing round the County.</p> <p>b) North Kent Enterprise Zone JMT to write to Paul Spooner to ask for information to distribute to members.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>Action JMT</u></p>	
15	<p>AOB None.</p>	
	The meeting closed at 5.05 pm.	

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 8th March, 2015, 3pm at Mid Kent College, Maidstone