

**Minutes of meeting held by the**  
**East Kent Economic Development Group (EKEDG)**  
**30/3/2016**  
**Held at: Shepway District Council**  
**The Boulogne Room**

**1. Welcome and apologies**

**Present:**

Ray Johnson (RJ) (Chair)  
Lee May (LM) – Brachers LLP  
Andrew Woodcock (AW) – Woodley Coles  
Daniel Sanguseppi (DS) – Burlington Hotel  
Jonathan Clark (JC) – Morgan Jones  
Brian Hall (BH) - Chamber  
Emma-Jane Copley (EJC) – Martello Building Consultancy  
Steven Arnott (SA) -Shepway District Council

**Apologies:**

Andrew Cruttenden  
Dan Deed  
Kate Wilson  
Tim Ingleton  
Catherine Harvey  
Paul Sayers  
Jane Hughes  
Kimberly Anderson

**Absent:**

Roy Attack  
Richard Christian  
David Hall  
Danny Martin  
Abigail Raymond

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Approved.

**3. Outstanding Actions**

None.

#### **4. Chairman's Comments and Report**

RJ reported that the Chamber had responded to the consultations on the Lower Thames Crossing and the proposed lorry park solution to Operation Stack.

#### **5. Growth Hub Programme**

Brian Hall reported on the Grown Hub Initiative. The initiative was started in 2011 in Manchester and proved to be a success. As a result it is being rolled out in other parts of the country. There are currently 4 in the South East (including in Kent) with the intention that ultimately there will be 35 nationally.

In Kent the programme has 25 full time staff who are tasked with assisting businesses access government initiatives to support business, such as grants, low cost loans, the East Kent Rural Development Programme and discretionary rates relief from Local Authorities.

An example of how the programme can work is a business which was signposted to a Regional Growth Fund loan of £300,000 to develop a new factory.

There is a national number and a local number and BH recommended that the local number is used.

#### **6. Sector Update**

It was agreed that we should seek to expand the group through the addition of members from other sectors such as commercial agency, transport and logistics and agriculture. Suggestions from the group for new members would be welcome. To be discussed at the next meeting.

Going around the table the following sector updates were noted:

- Steve Arnott - Shepway District Council.  
SA reported that the Council has a new economic development website called "Folkestone Works". In addition the Council is managing an apprenticeship scheme which has placed 75 apprentices in various sectors and businesses across the area.
- Andrew Woodcock - Woodley Coles.  
AW reported that Dover Port are currently engaged in a major port regeneration and that work should be starting later in 2016.
- Daniel Sanguseppi - Burlington Hotel.  
DS reported that we are now moving into the busier part of the year for the hotel and tourism industry. They are anticipating a good year. The main concerns in the industry are around the impact of the referendum, operation stack and introduction of the living wage.
- Jonathan Clark – Morgan Jones.

JC reported that the jobs market is good – from cleaning/waiting to bio-tech/civil engineering. The issue is finding the right talent.

- Brian Hall - Chamber of Commerce  
BH reported that they are conducting events with schools and colleges. Membership within East Kent is a growth area for the Chamber. There is a jobs fair taking place in Folkestone on 14<sup>th</sup> April.
- Lee May – Brachers  
LM reported that the firm as a whole is very busy with a significant amount of commercial property work in Kent.
- Ray Johnson – Independent Insurance Services  
RJ reported that the current issue in the sector is the increase in Insurance Tax of ½%. This will raise £750m for the exchequer. The industry works on tight margins so this will have a real impact. Also difficulties in achieving growth due to competition from the USA and China.

**Date of next meeting**

Next meeting 25<sup>th</sup> May at Port of Dover, Marine Parade, Dover