**Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce**

**North Kent Economic Development Group Meeting**

**30th June 2015**

**Medway Innovation Centre**

**Minutes**

**Attendees:**

Richard Lavender (RLC) – Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce

Pat Jackson (PJ) – DMA Mechanical

Shaun Whyman (SWN) – Harlequin Group

Jake Gann (JG) – Hatten Wyatt

Louisa Felstead (LF) - Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce

Suzanne Wood (SW) – Medway Fibreglass

Peter Webb (PWB) – MidKent College

Ann Komzolik (AK) – NWK College

Steve Boxall (SB) - Regeneration X

Rosemary Williams (RW) - RW Coaching

Richard Longman (RL) – Thames Gateway (Kent) Partnership
Dr Katherine Riggs (KR) – Port of London Authority
Jayne Stokes (JS)- Port of London Authority

In attendance, Paula Weeks (PW) - Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce

**Apologies:**

Jo James - Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce

Stuart Haddow - Xperisoft Ltd

Lisa Michalowicz – Ramada Encore Chatham

Peter Cooper – Penshurst Planning Ltd

Gavin Coleman – Handelsbanken

Charlotte Bland - Caxtons

Chris Inwood – Gravesham BC

Debbie Townrow – Swale BC

Wayne Saunders – Medway Council

Phillip Painter

Lisa Cranney – Hatten Wyatt

**Minutes**
**1.1 Minutes of previous meeting** Approved

1.2 Matters Arising
 PJ – will Cathedral Group use local contractors? RLC – have been assured that they will and urged SW to arrange for KCFG to engage with them.

1.3 Actions Review
 Outstanding action 2.1 completed.

**2 Update from KICC Board**RLC – Lower Thames Crossing, KICC are holding a breakfast at the Ashford office on 24th July with Highways England, to update members on the progress to date and the next steps.
Airport Expansion - The Davis Commission report on the airport expansion plans is due 1st July.
Operation Stack – To be discussed by CEO with MP’s and KCC. This has a large effect on the Country as not only are supplies are not getting through but the huge cost implications as well. KICC have been contacted by businesses with regard to the effects countrywide. Tenaco an exhaust manufacturer in Mid Wales has steel stocks delayed on lorries in Calais and are facing penalties for supply delays to Jaguar/Landrover.

**3. Group Reports
Environment (SB)**Ebbsfleet Garden City – at a meeting Stephen attended a while ago it seemed that Central Government were pushing for a large number of houses to be developed asap rather than giving priority to creating a high quality and sustainable place ie a proper garden city.
RL – The Board has now been recruited and will have planning powers wef 1.7.15. The NKEDG must follow activities at the EGC closely and ensure our points about quality are emphasised at every opportunity throughout the planning process.

**Transport & Infrastructure (PC)**Although unable to attend the meeting PC had forwarded the following :

Lower Thames Crossing. - As noted from the previous minutes, public consultation on short listed options will commence later in 2015.The government is seeking expressions of interest for Civil Engineering consultancy services in connection with the construction of the crossing. The supporting information refers to a decision date of early 2016 for determining the type and location of the crossing. The appointment is for a period of 10 years with an optional further 2 years if required. A supplier briefing event is to be held in Central London at the end of June. This is perhaps an indication that the crossing is set to go ahead subject to agreement as to the crossing type and its location.

Airports Commission. - Publication of recommendations expected 1st July. Press speculation indicates that Heathrow is likely to be the preferred location for a new runway, but Gatwick may still be in the running. Issues relating to Heathrow include the need to stay within EU air quality limits and the cost of road and rail improvements.

 East London River Crossing. - No indication of timing for further consultations on TfL’s identified potential locations for further river crossings at Galleons Reach and Belvedere.

**TGKP (RL)**TGKP are holding a Business Breakfast on 14th July.7.30 am at The Bridgewood Manor Hotel, Chatham.
Guest speakers include Gordon Jones (Kreston Reeves), Dawn Hudd (Chair, Institute of Economic Development), Robin Cooper (Chief Executive, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation), Steve Leahey (Principal, Leigh UTC). Colleagues were invited to join the invitation/waiting list.
TGKP had written to Dept of Transport flagging up concerns over transport infrastructure, in particular the need for coherent planning of rail capacity in North Kent including possibly extension of Crossrail to Ebbsfleet and Gravesend. An official level reply had been received, but TGKP were now escalating this by writing to Secretary of State.
The future structure and boundaries of the Local Enterprise Partnership had been discussed at the latest meeting of both SELEP and Kent & Medway Economic. KMEP favoured breaking up SELEP and would be submitting proposals to Government for a Kent & Medway

**4 Presentation by Port of London Authority on Thames Vision Project**

A copy of the presentation was given to everyone in the meeting by Dr Katherine Riggs, Director Thames Vision Project.

* The PLA is responsible for 95 miles of river from Teddington to North Sea. This project is looking for opportunities to improve how we use the river or how to do things differently.
* PJ – the name ‘PLA’ is misleading as its responsibilities extend well down the Kent & Essex coasts on the Thames Estuary.
* AK – It is estimated that 5% of visitors to London Paramount (around 4500 on a peak day) will travel to the park via the river. Skills issues for safety & training.
* RL – is there a segmented analysis of the economic etc valuationsaccording to area ? KR – report to be published with full details but there are uplift values along the river, more so in the West.
* RL – Has any international comparison work been done where any transferrable lessons can be picked up? KR – A good passenger system has been developed on the Seine. The nearest comparison would be Brisbane but there is not as much freight use as the Thames. Can draw on various lessons but it is difficult as the freight is so strong on the Thames.
* SW – Seafarers UK run an outreach programme ‘Seavision’ encouraging youth to become involved with the marine industry. PLA should try to engage with them.
* PJ – Where is the funding coming from for the improvements? KR – As it’s an overall strategy, some aspirations and targets will be for other agencies to finance.
* RLC – KICC would like to be involved going forward and asked for them to return early in the new year for an update and thanked the PLA for their presentation saying a lot had been learnt from this meeting especially the future use of the River Thames regarding building material and passengers services to the development areas of North Kent.

**5. AOB**

RLC – Extended invitation to AK & PWB from the colleges to attend future NK EDG meetings. AK – good to meet local businesses to enhance curriculum planning. RLC – Agreed that curriculum planning was essential to have the skilled work force in place at the commencement of the future large scale developments in North Kent.
PJ – Unable to recruit new staff so last year took on 6 apprentices, however, is a burden on business as there is no return on that investment for at least a year. Other alternative is to look for skills elsewhere which will be of lesser quality but may be necessary to have a sustainable business.
SW – will feedback from the meeting to KCFG. RLC – a focus group for Engineering is also being set up by the Chamber and more information will be forthcoming from the CEO..
SWN – Mobile hot spots increasing; high on governments agenda.
JG – No significant business updates currently.
RW – overall things more positive.

Date of next meeting : Tuesday 25th August 10am Medway Innovation Centre.