

North Kent EDG Meeting Tuesday August

Medway Innovation Centre, Chatham

Minutes

Attended:

Steven Boxall (SB)	Regeneration X
Emma Harraden (EH)	Hatten Wyatt
David Liston-Jones (DLJ)	Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
Lewis Kirnon (LK)	Dartford Borough Council
Richard Longman (RL)	Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
Carlo Gargiulo (CG)	Swale Borough Council
Janet Robinson (JR)	Springfield Education & Training
Jo James (JJ)	Kent Invicta Chamber
Richard Lavender (RLC)- Chair	Kent Invicta Chamber
Louisa Felstead (LF)	Kent Invicta Chamber
Paula Weeks (PW)	Kent Invicta Chamber
Ross Gill (RG)	KCC

Apologies:

Suzanne Wood, Chairman (SW)	Medway Fibreglass
Peter Cooper (PC)	Penshurst Planning
Chris Inwood (CI)	Gravesham Borough Council
Martin Garside (MG)	Port of London Authority
Clem Smith (CS)	Medway Council
Stephen Parker (SP)	Willmott Dixon
Alastair Gale (AG)	Port of London Authority
Robert Goodman (RG)	Bluewater/Lendlease
Stacey Driver (SD)	Stickleback Manufacturing

Welcome by RLC

Minutes of last meeting amended and agreed

Chairman's report

RG: The **draft proposal for the SELEP** re the growth framework for Kent is due in October for consultation – this will be a strategic plan to form basis for funding. Trying to ensure timetables are locked in. There is to be a Joint Kent EDG meeting in September, after which views from across Kent will be available to update the LEP and EDG. Need the September meeting to ensure views and input from everyone.

JJ: Opportunity for EDG to have insight into the plan and feedback

RL: Each part of the Country differs so views are necessary to reflect what is happening within Kent.

RLC: Feedback on **Lower Thames Crossing** – survey has gone out via the Chamber across Kent. North Kent had a very high response. The results- For North Kent 3% voted for option A, 22% for option B and 74% option C (including variants)

Consultation with Paul Cater – option of tunnel and not bridge could be an alternative. For option C the route is not set but this one is expensive. In Ashford: 77% option C, 11% option A, 11% option C. In Maidstone: 66% option C, 25 % option B and 8.3% option A.

SB: No decision has been made on the toll or how this will be financed. No strategy yet re funding.

There is a need to have a strategy of what the group wants – this can be fed from main issues or concerns. This is important to make the group work.

ACTION ALL: bring views and ideas to next meeting to ensure we can develop strategy.

CEO's Briefing

JJ: SELEP Would like to start giving direct focus. Where can Chamber help the public sector to engage with business? What projects can Chamber support and work towards?

RLC: An example of where a project has been useful elsewhere was lobbying re trains for fast link to the Olympics, downgrading of rateable values in areas of disturbance and fighting for action re Operation Stack.

ACTION: email JJ with thoughts that we can start to think of as well as suggestions of private sector businesses to input into the EDG

JJ: Chamber heavily involved in Young Chamber – School business plan. Ashford – 3 year fund with every school signing up to school business plan.

RLC: Possibly identify projects that spread across NK. Strategy wise this is not difficult but the challenge maybe in practical projects. It's not just about one area of North Kent.

JJ: We may need to think wider than this group and there is a need to engage every member – want to know about all projects.

RLC: Meetings – do they need to be more or less frequent especially with more areas covered. All businesses need actions even if they are minor.

LEP:

RL: There is a new chair Peter Jones – John Spence is standing down. There are decisions to be made in regard to what sort of LEP is required. Current structure is heavily questioned due to the size and scale. The current structure may be streamlined – lighter touch and strategic – whilst making sure decisions are meaningful. Central Government still respect and believe in LEP's. LEPs have been asked to prepare strategic growth plan - which decisions are then based on – thus Medway and Kent have a voice in there. SELEP is the largest in Country.

JJ: Kent and Medway LEP based on same model and have an equal number of private and public representatives.

SB: How was the decision for Chair made?

JJ: The role needed someone with experience and understanding of both business and public sector. Peter will make a good chair. The role was advertised externally.

RG: Used head hunters - there was a period of time for nominations for the chair.

JJ: Essential to sort the structure especially for Kent and Medway.

RL: How much input will we get - is there any opportunity for impact at local level?

RL: It does come down to local level.

Isn't really an East and North Kent split – there is strong representations from each.

RL: We have clear view on priorities and so do East Kent which means there are some useful building blocks.

RL: East Kent may have views on what is happening at the meeting

ACTION: If there are any questions or worries about LEP ask JJ.

JJ: There are seven businesses that sit on the Kent part of the LEP so use JJ for route into the LEP – some LA's do sit on the LEP too. This is an opportunity for EDG's to feed into.

DLJ: Plan to feed into RG's plans and in turn into LEP. So we need this group to feed in their projects and concerns. Outline for consultation is slightly delayed. Plan to have ready soon - the first draft in the next 3-4 weeks which will sit in with the next meeting.

JJ: We need to discuss the document or if it is ready in advance it can be sent around.

ACTION: Summary of document to be completed ready to ask feedback from members.

October is the next meeting

RL: Change in mode music that will be reflected in the plan. Keen to use this as an opportunity to get views and something up to date.

JJ: We have plans for more – which will represent different sectors – so everyone has a role and input.

RL: We will send a note beforehand to ask for items before meeting. Will provide outline of views but confirm on practical projects.

LF: Has shared this

RL: Opportunity for businesses and retailers to come in and present ideas / proposals.

LK: Sits on the future town centre forum – so anyone can come and see what we do there.

RL: Town centres can bring real issues to the table.

CG: Maybe bring case studies from what town centres are doing

JJ: Town centres are definitely on the agenda

ACTION: Let JJ know dates for any future consultations.

Update on KICC: JJ: Membership is going well and is already exceeding former TG membership. PW now employed for 20 hours per week to support LF. There will also be a new base for LF and PW.

Need to look forward 2 – 3 years and the best places for offices. Looking at the County structure and using map of customer bases – possibly open larger office in North Kent?

ACTION: Please advise of cost effective spaces to rent ?

Update on Portfolios and Local Government

September 2014 – manufacturing Expo.

Medway and Swale business support contracts going well – doing radio campaign for business start-ups.

TIGER going well but need to increase numbers.

CS: Have included a note under the preferred sector category – especially if the business will increase employees and size. Need more applications – especially in Gravesend – so maybe include a similar line for Gravesend?

ACTION: September is the Gravesham Business event – there will be a slot there on TIGER.

CS: Eurolink Expo has just passed in Sittingbourne. Local plan has gone for consultation.

ACTION: CS will send this out and get closing date.

RL: Reminder of North Kent B2B – Minister will be there at 4pm.

LK: Keen to push TIGER. There is movement on the regeneration projects e.g. Paramount discussion / Eastern Quarry activity / near completion of station in Town Centres/ demolished Co-op site.

New trainee scheme is in place – volunteering for 3 months. Possibly look at Traineeships in Year 11

ACTION: Janet and RLC to meet

JB: Film makers in Scotland going round to all industrial sites to find out what they are doing – great idea as need to let everyone know what we are doing

LF: do we want meetings more often

All: No – need to get projects in place

ACTION: JJ to email the Ashford structure.