**Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce**

**North Kent Economic Development Group Meeting**

**24th June 2014**

**Medway Innovation Centre**

**Minutes**

**Attendees:**

Richard Lavender (RLC) acting Chair- Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
Richard Longman (RL)- Thames Gateway (Kent) Partnership
Leslie Fernandez (LF)- North West Kent College
Steve Boxall (SB) - Regeneration X
Wayne Saunders (WS)- Medway Council
Chris Hare (CH)- Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, West Kent EDG
Chris Inwood (CI)- Gravesham Council
Wendy Brazil- Hannam(WBH)- Ramada Encore, Chatham
Clare Clark (CC)- Facts & Figures
In attendance, Louisa Felstead (LAF)- Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce

**Apologies:**

Jo James – Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
Deborah Shell- Hatten Wyatt
Steve Gerring – UKHSE
Suzanne Wood- Medway Fibreglass
Lewis Kirnon- Dartford Borough Council
Swale Borough Council
David Liston-Jones- Thames Gateway (Kent) Partnership
Martin Garside- Port of London Authority
Alastair Gale- Port of London Authority
Stephen Parker- Willmott Dixon
Robert Goodman-Bluewater/Lendlease
Peter Cooper- Penshurst Planning
Janet Robinson- SET Training

1. **Minutes**
	1. Minutes of previous meeting approved
	2. Matters arising- CH attending NK EDG to shadow RLC as currently setting up an EDG for West Kent
2. **Action List Review**

RLC- still looking for a suitable N. Kent Chair for the group.
Paramount: RLC- very little evidence of public consultation as yet.CI- a stakeholder group is being set up which will include bodies such as Chambers.

1. **Presentation** and open discussion on current developments in North Kent and Thames Gateway Area. Presentation as attached

 RLC- a massive volume of both agreed and potential development within the area. RL- further detail is available via [www.tgkp.org/documents](http://www.tgkp.org/documents).

 RLC- suggested putting together a guide for all funding available in North Kent. RLC asked RL what percentage of business funding in N.Kent comes from the EU? RL- the allocation is £165 million across the South East split mainly across three key areas. LF- £7.75 going to skills capital. SB- interested to know more about Paramount but not enough information at present to form a view. Comment that N.Kent suffers from the “London Factor” when it comes to jobs and apprenticeships as salaries are much higher in London.

**4. Group Reports**

**Education & Training**LF- Change in government policy for apprenticeships going well. With “trailblazers” there is a change of emphasis with these being employer led. Many changes about to happen with the UTC s opening. SB- schools offering apprenticeships to keep funding. CH- the Medway UTC which opens in the summer of 2015 will be a jewel with its engineering focus and businesses already committed to supporting it.

**Planning**

SB- Tesco in Dartford town centre- compulsory purchase not yet complete. The proposal for the Heritage Centre in Gravesend has gone to judicial review. WS – still SST in areas re Lodge Hill. LAF- Chamber looking to assist Airvolution re the New Rides Wind Farm

**Commercial Property**

No portfolio holder. CI suggested Caxtons

ACTION: LAF to contact Caxtons to invite to join the NK EDG

**Business Legal**

Deborah Shell to replace EH as the portfolio holder here

**Business Finance**

CC- New forms of business funding available; happy to respond to any queries on these from group members

**Local Authority Update – Gravesham Borough Council**

CI- judicial review underway re Heritage Quarter re-development

A further years contract has been awarded to First Forward to supply business support in the Borough.

Marks and Spencer in the High Street to close summer 2014

Asked about Gravesham listing on Chamber web site re business support and break down of Chamber members in Gravesham

Dartford and Gravesham business award entries close at the end of July www.dgbawards.co.uk

ACTION: LAF to ask re Chamber web site and obtain break down of membership figures for Gravesham

**Local Authority Update- Medway**

WS- Assisted status will give additional funding for the Medway/Swale areas. Planned expansion of Rochester Airport to go ahead. Chatham Waters- Peel Ports have planning permission and the development is going ahead- the new UTC will be on this site and the new Asda store is to be one of the key buildings on the first stage of development. WBH- has permission been granted for a hotel on this site? WS- yes.WS- Rochester railway station to be rebuilt and the Corporation street area is to be opened up for investment. This year’s Manufacturing & Engineering exhibition and Construction exhibitions are to be held at Detling on the 8th October in conjunction with KCC and KICC.

The 30th Medway business awards close for entries at the end of July www.mbawards.co.uk

**Thames Gateway (Kent) Partnership**
RL - No agreed route yet re Third Thames Crossing- with the next General Election looming, he thinks it unlikely if any announcement will be made soon. Equally, as regards an Estuary Airport, time might be a factor. TGKP are opposed to the idea on the grounds of deliverability. The Airport Commission are to confirm plans by September.

Ebbsfleet Garden City- an Early Development Corporation is pressing on with the preparation and timescales are tight.SB- what is happening as regards the purchase of land for this?

**AOB**

RLC – inundated with opinion on the airport debate. Meetings have been held with TFL. The preferred option is to be announced in September and the TGKP are backing additional capacity at Heathrow and Gatwick. RLC asked if group members are in favour of an airport hub? Any comments to be forwarded to RL- richard.longman@thamesgateway-kent.org.uk.

ACTION- ALL- to send comment to RL re airport hub

RL- asked CH about developments with K. College. CH- College currently being split into two separate entities by geography

LAF- are group members happy to have the 2015 group dates arranged along the same lines as have been thus far?

**Date of next meeting**: Tuesday 26th August, The Swan Room, Medway Innovation Centre, 10.00-12.00