

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SELECT COMMITTEE - KENT'S EUROPEAN RELATIONS

MINUTES of a meeting of the Select Committee - Kent's European Relations held in the Wantsum Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 10 December 2013.

PRESENT: Mr M Baldock, Mr A H T Bowles, Mr D S Daley, Mr A J King, MBE, Mr R A Latchford, OBE, Mr G Lymer, Mr R A Marsh, Mrs P A V Stockell and Mr R Truelove

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms D Fitch (Democratic Services Manager (Council)), Mrs S Frampton (Research Officer) and Mr R Moys (Head of International Affairs)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Election of Chairman

(Item 1)

Mr A H T Bowles proposed and Mr G Lymer seconded that Mr A J King.MBE be elected Chairman of the Select Committee.

RESOLVED that Mr A J King, MBE be elected Chairman of the Committee.

2. Kent's European Relationship - Topic Review

(Item 2)

(1) Mrs Frampton introduced the report that had been circulated with the agenda which set out proposed Terms of Reference, scope and general approach to the review included suggested witnesses either for written or oral evidence. She also circulated a glossary of common acronyms. Mrs Frampton explained her role as the independent research officer for the review to the Committee.

(2) Mr Latchford stated that the undue haste in completing the work of this Select Committee was not supported by the KCC UKIP Group and expressed concern about the time pressures on the Select Committee to complete its work in time to submit their report to County Council in March 2014.

(3) The Committee discussed the wording of the terms of reference and in particular the deletion of the word "disbenefit" from the terms of reference on the assessment form which had been considered at the Scrutiny Committee on 12 November 2013 and its replacement with "challenges". There was agreement that both words should be included in the terms of reference.

(4) Mrs Frampton circulated a list of officers that she had met with to date in order to assist her in supporting the Committee in identifying the key issues for this review and assist with the identification of potential witnesses. The Chairman mentioned that Mr Moys (Head of International Affairs) would be attending meetings of the

Select Committee in order assist the Committee with any issues that required clarification.

(5) In response to a question from Mr Baldock, Mrs Frampton undertook to provide the Committee with a summary of each of her interviews with officers. A number of Members thanked Mrs Frampton for the amount of work that she had carried out in a short space of time to provide background information for the Committee.

(6) Ms Fitch explained to the Committee the background to the Select Committee media protocol which had been circulated with the agenda for Members information. One of the aims of the protocol was to ensure that there was a clear understanding with the Corporate Communications team of the way in which press enquires on Select Committee matters should be address which was via the Select Committee rather than the Cabinet Member.

(7) Mrs Frampton circulated a list of possible questions to be sent to those witnesses from whom written evidence would be requested and sought the Committee's views and approval. Mr Baldock asked for his objection to be recorded to papers being tabled at the meeting for Members comments and approval. The Committee discussed the proposed questions for witnesses and made a number of suggestions which were noted by Mrs Frampton and she undertook to circulate the updated version to Members of the Committee with a request that they provide her with any additions within 48 hours.

(8) The Chairman asked Mr Moys to provide the Committee with a short paper on ongoing European projects on a non-disclosure bases. .

(9) The Committee discussed the scope of the review and there was general agreement that there would be a focus on what lessons could be learned from those that had sought European Funding including those that had been unsuccessful in order to maximise the amount of funding obtained in Kent.

(10) Mrs Frampton mention that she had been made aware of the Dover and Thanet Chambers of Commerce which the Committee may wish to seek evidence from, the Committee confirmed that they should be added to the witness list.

(11) Mrs Frampton made the Committee aware that "Locate in Kent" and "Visit Kent" were currently in a procurement process with KCC and therefore she was asked to seek advice from the Director of Governance and Law as to when it would be appropriate for the Committee seek evidence from them.

(12) It was agreed that the Chairman of the LEP should be invited to attend as a witness and it was also suggested that evidence should also be sought from "Protect England" or possibly organisations like the Road Haulage Association and Tax Payers Alliance. There was agreement that evidence should be sought from Protect England. It was agreed that no MEP's would be invited to be witnesses.

(13) There was agreement that if any of the witnesses invited to hearing sessions were unable to attend they would be asked to provide written evidence. Mrs Frampton reminded the Committee that written evidence was given the same weight as oral evidence. If any Members were not able to attend any of the hearing

sessions then if they send Mrs Frampton any questions that they would like asked of the witnesses she would ensure that they were addressed.

(14) Mrs Frampton sought the Committee's views on including a request for evidence in the "inside track" newsletter to voluntary organisations to seek their experiences of European funding bids both successful and unsuccessful; this was agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED that (a) the following terms of reference for the Select Committee be approved:

To determine:

- *The benefits, disbenefits and challenges for KCC, Kent organisations and the Kent economy from KCC's European engagement and activities over the period 2008-13.*
- *The key lessons that may be drawn from engagement and activities undertaken during this period*
- *What KCC needs to do in order to maximise the potential benefits to the county from European engagement and activities in the future.*

(b) the witness programme be as agreed by Members at this meeting and as clarified outside of the meeting via email.