

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, 14 January 2014.

PRESENT: Mr A J King, MBE (Chairman), Mr D S Daley, Mr G Lymer, Mr R A Marsh, Mrs P A V Stockell and Mr R Truelove

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr R Gill (Economic Policy and Strategy Manager), Mr D Godfrey (Public Policy), Mr S Samson (Trade Development Manager), Ms M Caron (European Partnership Manager), Mrs S Frampton (Research Officer), Mrs J Medhurst (Democratic Services Officer), Mr A Tait (Democratic Services Officer) and Mrs A Hunter (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

13. 9.00 am - Ross Gill - Economic Strategy & Policy Manager (KCC) and David Godfrey - Interim Director of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP).
(Item 2)

(1) The Chairman welcomed David Godfrey & Ross Gill to the meeting.

(2) David Godfrey is currently seconded as the Interim Director of SELEP. He gave an overview of the role of the Local Enterprise Partnership and explained the relationship between the Growth Deals, which give access to the Growth Fund, and EU funding via the European Structural and Investment Funds. EU funding is a way of achieving the Growth Deal. The European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy (SIF) is due by the end of January. The SIF strategy aimed to develop with Government and through wider public sector spending, private investment and match finance, would inject a minimum of £5b new investment to boost the economies of Essex, Southend and Thurrock, East Sussex, Kent and Medway over the rest of the decade.

(3) The draft Strategy was produced in accordance with the Government Guidance to Local Enterprise Partnerships. It forms part of the wider economic growth strategy and acts in support of the SELEP Strategic Economic Plan. It was developed with a broad range of partners across the SELEP area including local businesses, local authorities, education institutions, the voluntary and community sectors and other stakeholders.

(4) The SELEP will receive £165 million plus £15 million, rural fund, making £180 million EU funding. The lobbying that has taken place to achieve this has been good but now the priority must be on accessing it for Kent. The means of doing this will be through the Growth Deal Strategic Economic Plan, due end of March, and the European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy.

(5) David went on to talk about European Structural Investment Funds (SIF) and explained that the strategy was being revised to build in local information which would bring in increased opt-in funding in conjunction with the Skills Funding Agency. Together with the use of JESSICA (Joint European Support for Sustainable Development in City Areas) developed by the European Commission. This would enable the LEP to lever in more funding for specific projects. He explained that it was an opportunity to link to wider growth packages by evidencing success of local schemes in Kent and Medway.

(6) The actual procedures around operating the fund are not defined as yet. There are some criteria that projects must meet to get funding like value for money and an evidence base showing a clear need for the intervention.

Question – what are the mechanics of winning bids assuming it would need to be robustly defended?

(7) David advised that the allocation was £165 million and it was a case of deciding how this could be accessed.

Question – who is the decision maker?

(8) David advised that it would the LEP and local priorities would need to be indicated. He explained that 85% would be distributed locally and although there could be a potential difficulty with this, with European experience in Kent he was sure this would not be the case.

Question - the strategy document is key and – how does it how it work?

(9) David advised that it was essential feed back was gained from government and the LEP would receive any challenges on this.

Question- will KCC's office in Brussels be participating?

(10) Not at the moment although it would be vital in later stages as they intended to look at wider access to other funding and their expertise would be needed. Brussels had also played a role in obtaining the amount of funding for the SELEP that had been achieved.

Question – How will the LEP benefit Kent & Essex with regard to the Lower Thames Crossing – could European funding be attracted to that?

(11) David explained that the bids needed to fit the criteria and this was why allocations were very important. He advised that there may be other programmes from which to access funding but not currently.

Question - other European countries have accessed EU funding for infrastructure (eg. Roads in Madeira) - the Lower Thames Crossing was desperately needed?

(12) David explained that there were opportunities to put bids in for additional funding but the type of projects is specified.

Question – Where will SELEP go for advice on EU funding business processes/meeting EU criteria?

(13) SELEP could call on expertise of individual authorities including Kent's IAG. It is currently unclear how Kent and Medway would be able to influence it – he had attended a Conference and the same question had been asked – Ministers felt a great influence would be placed on how funding flows .

Question – Although money may flow in – if criteria are not met – it could flow out again?

(14) There followed a discussion about the links to the Brussels office giving Kent an advantage when bids are prepared.

Question – Do we know what the European neighbours were bidding for (referring to the coastal line of Belgium and Northern France)?

(15) David advised that this information would not be available via the LEP but Interreg are open about their projects.

(16) IAG would know what other European countries were bidding for through their contacts.

(17) There followed a discussion about the creation of the LEP and the joining of three counties, bringing together a combination of people. The raised profile of the LEP reflected the importance of the task being approached in the right way, illustrating the value of intelligence and personalities.

ROSS GILL

(18) Ross introduced himself and explained that his role included bidding for funding including from the Government's Regional Growth Fund and the European Regional Development Fund together with establishing new economic projects and programmes. He was also responsible for developing KCC's Economic Strategy, including the Regeneration Framework and Unlocking the Potential - Going for Growth.

(19) He explained that the LEP was a big opportunity and big challenge. He talked about the Unlocking the Potential Document and its Annexe and working in parallel to establish the Kent Economic Partnership which brings together businesses etc. and was a voice for Kent. Ross explained that the bids to the European Fund would be made this year and to the Local Growth Plan – next year. The broad principles of the two funds were in alignment and it was envisaged the plan would move forward over the next few months. There would be a key role for the European team and district colleagues. Focus needed to be made on how investment would be used and priorities noted for other European funding – Key Projects and High Growth in Kent. He explained that if Kent had not received funding then we wouldn't be pitching for this funding.

(20) Ross referred back to the question of the prospect of funding for major infrastructure and explained that infrastructure funding from Europe usually went to

less affluent countries. Britain and in particular the South east were more developed and affluent. He explained that it would be necessary to explore different channels and that LEP would have a better route in.

(21) David Godfrey concluded that this was a prime example of where LEP could work.

Question – Could you elaborate regarding the tension between the Strategy and bids?

(22) Ross advised that the tension arose around housing numbers etc, growth funds and what to spend on – he explained that any bids needed to reflect the strategic needs to secure the required resources.

There followed discussion about needing “more flesh on the bones” and the frustration that latterly joined countries were seeking the most investment. There was a policy of combining what funds were available ie 50% and match 50%. The need for LEP to work very closely with IAG and the importance of European Funding was emphasised..

(23) David advised that the longer term relationships and partnerships were being built.

(24) Ross advised that it was a short term /long term plan and a 7 year programme which would be constantly reviewed. He advised that the Government would not want unspent funding so it was essential to demonstrate good strong schemes.

(25) Alan Marsh confirmed that agencies handling RGF funds had in some cases been unable to satisfy enough bids and spend all the money. He emphasised that it was necessary to work closely with the LEP as they were in a position to do much better than others.

(26) David referred back to the £165 million and reiterated it was necessary to be as flexible and creative as possible.

Question – could you tell us more about Jessica?

(27) JESSICA (Joint European Support for Sustainable Development in City Areas) was a South East fund programme able to access European investment money. It had a chequered past and we needed to see what was possible and what was not .

(28) Jessica is a revolving investment fund but money had not always returned for re-investment.

Question – From the “Unlocking the Potential” Document it is difficult to see how this can be actioned – (referring to the Transport Investment Programme and traffic and that 7,000 homes were to be built per year over the next 20 years which would mean a 20% increase in the population) where will jobs derive from?

(29) The strategy was looking at growth in the main corridors, how to use them to bring in jobs but this must be business led.

Question – SME support focuses on trade and inward investment - will EU funding help?

(30) Not directly - it will be more about the site infrastructure, skills investment and links with universities. The ability of Kent's SME's to take up the support is less than in other areas and the challenge is how to address this. There has been progress to get more businesses through the door, using Chambers of Commerce to cascade the message. When going out searching for projects to get funding West Kent were best, then Thames Gateway and East Kent.

Question – could you break it down into sectors?

(31) Ross identified manufacturing and initiatives supporting the low carbon sector. He explained that it was a challenge with homebased businesses setting up on their own whether in London or abroad – limited local economic strategy meant therefore the businesses may not be aware of them.

Question - could it be regionalised?

(32) Ross explained that an exercise had been carried out three times and in each case local businesses were asked if they had projects to be considered – Thames Gateway were quicker and stronger than East Kent and West Kent were better still with responses.

(33) The Chairman thanked Ross and David for attending the meeting and helping the Committee with their work.

14. 10.00 am - Steve Samson - Trade Development Manager (KCC)

(Item 3)

(1) Mr Samson introduced himself as the Trade Development Manager within KCC's International Affairs Team. His primary role was to focus on European co-operation and project development and until 2009 this had involved work in helping to secure Interreg funding for KCC and a variety of Kent-based organisations. His focus was now primarily on international trade promotion.

(2) Mr Samson went on to give a presentation on Kent's role in EU Funding and International Trade Development. He began by describing it as identifying opportunities; shaping and influencing programmes; developing strategic projects with key partners; and supporting project development (and appraisal) and project delivery. KCC needed to ensure that the programmes and projects accorded with its priorities. A lot of KCC's work involved mapping these priorities against opportunities within EU funding streams.

(3) Mr Samson continued by outlining the factors that enabled KCC to achieve success with projects supporting core business. The first of these was the dedicated staff resource and expertise, leading to an understanding of the programmes and developing excellent connections to programme bodies and partners. Staff members had become very familiar with the EU funding mechanisms and had the support of well-established partnerships, enabling them to focus on Interreg cross-border programmes, in line with KCC's priorities.

(4) Mr Samson contrasted the positive factors with reasons that opportunities had been missed, particularly in wider pan-European and thematic programmes in areas such as environmental protection and innovation. He said this was due to a general lack of awareness of the opportunities and staff capacity (a number of project staff having left KCC). Budgetary pressures had the potential to jeopardise match funding (which for the majority of funding programme to date had been 50%). Awareness of EU funding opportunities within the KCC Directorates was also variable. The Enterprise and Environment Directorate was very proactive in this field, whereas FSC and ELS posed a greater challenge, requiring awareness-raising within their Directorate Management Teams.

(5) Mr Samson went on to identify the risks and challenges associated with EU Funding. He said that as a result of diminishing staff resources, it had become more difficult to monitor, identify and raise awareness of EU funding opportunities, and to support project development within all the KCC Directorates. Another challenge was posed by the complex project management and eligibility requirements. The External Funding Finance Unit performed an essential service in ensuring that the funding bids were duly and correctly prepared and delivered. There was a widespread misunderstanding of the purposes of EU funding. The Economic Development Team often received calls asking for EU assistance for local activities such as renovating community facilities (which would not usually meet the eligibility criteria). Lastly, negative media coverage (particularly of non-flagship projects) tended to increase the difficulty of raising awareness of the opportunities available.

(6) Mr Samson then described the Kent International Business Programme (KIB) which had received a "Highly Commended" award in the 2013 Enterprising Britain Awards. KIB had been set up in 2011 in response to a study which had identified that only 8% of Kent firms regularly exported despite the county's location. This was lower than the South East average of 10%. One of the reasons for this was that whilst there had been a lot of support for potential investors, there had also been confusion instead of cohesion and coordination. It was also recognised that international trade could be daunting, especially as a consequence of perceived barriers such as language & cultural differences, additional costs and regulation.

(7) Mr Samson said that KIB's aims and objectives were to raise awareness of the benefits of international trade (for the local economy); to boost Kent's export levels and promote business growth; to ensure that the trade support services in Kent were more coherent, joined-up and visible; and to provide relevant support to Kent companies through the KIB partnership.

(8) Mr Samson said that KIB was led by KCC and that its key organisations were UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) and Enterprise Europe Network (EEN). There were 12 other partners, many of whom are business membership organisations. The District Councils also backed the partnership through the Kent Economic Development Officers Group. KIB would also work with other agencies on an ad hoc basis.

(9) Mr Samson then described some of the KIB activities. It undertook awareness-raising, including the establishment of the KIB website which enabled all elements of trade support to be brought together in one place. It arranged local events, which could be sector, topic or market specific. One of these had been the

UKTI Export Week event which had been attended by representatives from 130 businesses. It had sponsored a Kent Excellence in Business Award (KEIBA) for 'success in international markets' enabling KIB to identify flagship companies which could provide examples and inspiration to others. It had secured EU funding to deliver international support programmes in Kent through the EEN, the Chain 2 Project and the 2 Seas Trade Project.

(10) Mr Samson briefly explained that EEN was a project run by BSK-CIC in Kent to help companies identify contacts and other support to companies involved in international trade. The Chain 2 Project aimed to support businesses in developing trade links and collaborations between southern England and northern France.

(11) Mr Samson set out future KIB activities. These would include accessing EU Strategic Investment Fund Programme (EU SIF) funding for work with UKTI including intelligence gathering, sector specific support, market visits and Trade Fairs.

(12) Mr Samson moved on to consideration of The 2 Seas Trade Project. This was a project led by KCC, incorporating 9 partner organisations including Chambers of Commerce in Belgium and the Netherlands. Its purpose was to provide market entry support into English, Dutch, Flemish and French markets for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Kent, Nord-Pas de Calais, East Flanders, West Flanders and the South West of the Netherlands. The Project had secured 700,000 euros of EU funding. Its activities included local business workshops, 1-2-1 support visits, trade fairs and market visits as well as other advice and information. It was important for Kentish enterprises to appreciate that West Flanders, East Flanders and the South West of the Netherlands were all good start-up markets due to their prosperity and the ease of access to them.

(13) Mr Samson briefly gave examples of market visits arranged by The 2 Seas Project for various sectors (Logistics, Interior Design and Water Waste Management). He then said that the Food and Drink sector had taken up a free stand space at a Trade Fair, leading to the development of new selling markets.

(14) Mr Samson concluded his presentation by summarising the 2 Seas project outputs. There had been 15 business workshops in Kent, attended by 162 Kent businesses. There had been a 2 Seas project stand at 4 international trade fairs, 7 sector-focused market visits attended by 102 companies. 309 Kent companies were involved in the project, 346 individual participants from Kent businesses. The total number of companies supported by the project in the entire region of Kent, East and West Flanders, the South West of the Netherlands and Nord-Pas de Calais was 564.

(15) Mr Truelove asked whether the farming industry in Kent was performing better as a result of the projects described. Mr Samson replied that it was difficult for him to be sure as most of his work in that area was with the food and drink sector. Nevertheless, there were great opportunities for the farming industry, particularly as much of Kent's produce was at the high quality end of the market. He believed that proper research would identify the most rewarding parts of Europe to export to.

(16) In response to questions from Mr Daley, Mr Samson said that his personal role was now around 20% Interreg-based. The way in which partners were found for Kent organisations was usually through historic ties and contacts.

(17) Mr Samson said that the Joint Technical Secretariat in Lille had the task of administering and reviewing projects. For the past 7 years, KCC had held a seat on

the Project Selection Committee, enabling the County Council to have an influence on the decisions taken on behalf of local authorities in the SE.

(18) Mr Samson agreed with Mr Daley that the 2 Seas Project was more beneficial to Kent in terms of developing markets than to its partner regions. This was because for historical and geographical reasons, Kentish businesses tended to need more support in availing themselves of the opportunities that European markets provided whereas Belgian and Dutch companies have traditionally been more open to export.

(19) Mr Marsh commented that the Brussels Office had been a significant factor in the success of KCC's European work as it was able to monitor what was happening in the rest of the region. He asked whether there would be significant benefits if staff numbers were increased. Mr Samson replied that he believed that Brussels Office colleagues were well placed to monitor EU funding opportunities arising from the pan-European programmes, usually administered in Brussels.

(20) Mrs Stockell asked why so many Kentish companies were missing out on the opportunities for export. Mr Samson replied that feedback from companies indicated that they had either not considered the possibilities or that they had believed that the risks and complexities were too great.

(21) Mr Lymer asked for an assessment of the ED Team's intelligent marketing and research capacity. Mr Samson said that the ED team did map out the key sectors. Individual companies were able to register their profiles with UKTI who provided initial advice on export-readiness. He agreed with Mr Lymer that there could be considerable opportunities in the sphere of second hand products where the UK was at the forefront. There could, however, be restrictions on certain second hand products such as machine parts. Such companies would need to obtain specialist advice on the viability of exporting certain products. Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, for example can provide a range of services to support with export paperwork.

(22) Mrs Frampton asked whether the ED team was able to measure project outcomes. Mr Samson replied that it was hard to keep a central record of individual project outcomes although final reports from project were always made available. There was also an expectation from the EU funding bodies that reporting and evaluation takes place within all projects.

(23) Mr Samson agreed with Mr Daley that working with French partners could, on occasion, be a challenging experience due to different working cultures. On the other hand, the links between Kent and Nord-Pas de Calais were very good whenever the right project was identified.

(24) Mr Samson summed up by saying that the target was to raise the percentage of Kentish businesses that regularly exported to 10%. Achieving this would require an additional 1000 companies to export. Currently, some 300 companies have been supported by the 2 Seas Trade project but orders and contracts often follow several months or years after a support intervention. Meanwhile, KIB was looking at SE LEP programmes. East and West Flanders and SW Netherlands had indicated that they wished to continue working in partnership with KCC and that this could include developing a second trade development Project.

15. 11.00am - Myriam Caron, European Partnership Manager

(Item 4)

- (1) The Chairman welcomed Myriam Caron to the meeting and invited her to give the Committee background information about her role and how it had developed since 1997, before answering questions from Members of the Committee.
- (2) Ms Caron said she was originally attracted to the post within the Economic Development team because she thought KCC was being adventurous and modern. She went on to say that KCC had a good reputation in Europe and the original focus of her role was to raise awareness of European funding, particularly Interreg (2A at that time). in rural areas with districts and in fact the whole of Kent. She worked closely with Nord Pas de Calais, focusing on KCC priorities and bringing through funding to achieve common objectives.
- (3) Her role had evolved and since March 2012 she had been acting as the Hardelot Centre manager, living on site as well as undertaking her normal duties in Maidstone. The Hardelot Centre is owned by KCC for the benefit of schools, youth organisations and the broader community and had been considered for closure 3 years ago. It was close to Hardelot Castle and was an asset. She also said that the closing the centre would send a wrong message and there were opportunities to use it differently. It still welcomed schools, mainly primary at present but had been opened to schools in the whole of the UK and also French Groups. There could be more of a focus on what we want to do for young people with regard to e.g. language and travel. People in Nord Pas de Calais are interested in Kent and it gives people from Kent the chance to meet residents of Nord Pas de Calais. We could do more around education and other partners in the UK can see what Kent is doing. We could use it to promote local produce from Kent.

Question – Could the facilities at Hardelot be used for seminars for British businesses to learn about French culture with a view to developing trading opportunities?

- (4) Ms Caron said the centre could be developed in a variety of ways and a vision/mission statement needed to be developed and agreed. Why we should keep it, what we should do and how it fits with our European activities and priorities.

Question- Is more publicity needed in order to promote its facilities

- (5) Yes more publicity was required, the centre as a whole needed to be run like a business; it is now viable but we could do a lot better and KCC needed to decide what it wanted from it and be clear how it benefitted the residents of Kent. The French are very keen to use it and there are 120 secondary schools that are keen to pair up here. We need to look at the accommodation; there are small conference facilities.

How many beds has the centre?

Could the centre be developed as an equestrian centre?

- (7) Equestrian, tennis, golf and sand yachting facilities were all available locally but under KCC rules it was not possible to promote the Hardelot Centre and these facilities as a package. When schools stay at the centre they pay separately for any activities outside the centre. It would however be possible to develop comprehensive packages for schools and for other organisations such as Scouts.
- (8) A list of local available activities that were not currently promoted is to be circulated to the Committee.

What is needed to develop the facility and make it viable?

- (9) KCC needed to set out the purpose of the centre and make a relatively small capital investment to increase the accommodation from 35 to 60 beds so full coaches of students could be accommodated. More publicity to increase the awareness of the centre among schools and youth groups and a user-friendly website that included the facility to book on line were also required.
- (10) Roy Moys said there was a need to prioritise the use of Ms Caron's time and, although she had done an excellent job managing the centre, her principal role was to develop partnership working. He suggested that the ELS might wish to run the centre since it needed a centre manager. He also said the provision or improvement of accommodation was not generally eligible for EU funding.

16. 12.00 noon - Tudor Price - Invicta Chamber of Commerce

(Item 5)

- (1) The Chairman welcomed Tudor Price to the meeting and invited him to introduce himself and outline the role of the Chamber of Commerce, before answering questions from Members of the Committee.
- (2) Mr Price said the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce was one of 52 accredited British Chambers in the UK and represents the County of Kent. He said the Chamber of Commerce was involved in domestic and international activity and provided support and advice to businesses. He referred to the Quarterly International Trade Outlook which had been included in the agenda for the meeting and set out the opportunities and risks facing British companies and provided a useful tool for monitoring export and economic activity.
- (3) He said that the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce was involved with Kent International Business (KIB) and was a partner with KCC in the 2 Seas Trade Project. He said that KCC's activity in Europe was useful and benefitted Kent partly because of being able to access EU funds and also because of the learning from the experience which could be shared with small and medium sized business (SME). The Chamber of Commerce played a key role in

ensuring that the offer to local business was relevant and attractive but that it took time to persuade business to engage in Europe. However 2 Seas Trade was feted in Europe and the success had been because of our involvement with partners. It had focused delivery on what businesses want and produced outputs.

Question – Are younger/new enterprises more likely to think about external trade than longer established businesses?

- (4) Mr Price said that there was not enough evidence to support this view and small businesses tended to focus on raising sufficient capital to get established in the first instance. The Chamber of Commerce then encourages them to expand their thinking to include trading with Europe.

Question - Given the single market it is as easy to trade with Dusseldorf as it is with Dundee: what specific projects to encourage international trade need additional input from Chambers of Commerce?

- (5) The Chamber of Commerce is involved in direct recruitment, training and introductions and brings a commercial focus to the offer. Interreg projects require partnership working, involve significant amounts of paperwork and spreadsheets, and generate a plethora of logos and badges which can all appear dull to businesses and is not what they want. There are real opportunities for commercial reality to bring the offer into focus and 2 Seas Trade has been successful so far. The Chamber of Commerce shapes what is being offered to make it attractive to local business.

Does the Chamber of Commerce run trade fairs in Kent?

- (6) No. There is insufficient sector demand in Kent and from the inward investment perspective the focus is on creating wealth through successful businesses.

Do you get involved in invisible (service) exports?

- (7) Yes. This is normally through partnership arrangements. British Chamber of Commerce is working with UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) to develop an international accreditation standard (trusted partners) for chambers of commerce and we work in partnership with organisations such as Locate in Kent on the offer and Chambers of Commerce abroad to provide soft landings for businesses starting to trade abroad.

What are we not doing and should be doing?

- (8) Businesses need products not programmes. For example the Regional Growth Fund (RGF) is a programme that gives money for specific, tangible items such as purchasing equipment. Interest free loans and match funding work better than grants. There is a need to be very specific about the product rather than focussing on the outcomes of a programme. The Chamber of Commerce can turn programmes into products and use its network to get the information to the right people and organisations. There is also a need to get

commitment and input from businesses as they may show initial interest (such as in a trade visit) but then not turn up once arrangements have been made.

- (9) The creation of additional brands can cause confusion. Kent International Business (KIB) provides co-ordination and support but its brand with a multitude of logos causes confusion. KCC branding was good enough in the past. There are some bodies that provide services and support free and other organisations that charge for services such as translation, logistics, travel and insurance services. Providing an overarching brand is not a role KCC should be looking to achieve.

Is there a cost implication for developing and maintaining a brand?

- (10) Yes, there is the cost of building and maintaining a website. KIB is not looking for customers whereas chambers of commerce, the Institute of Directors are. I am not sure of the logic behind the brand and it is slightly misleading, causing confusion in the marketplace. Raising awareness and trying to market a service is a poor use of funds and KCC should be concentrating on providing products and offers that plugged the gap in provision. The private sector organisations would then have a vested interest in sign posting businesses to this offer whilst saving Council money

Do you charge companies a fee for introductions to European markets?

- (11) If we can secure private sector funding to deliver the service we will do so. We also help European firms with soft landings in Kent by introducing them to solicitors and accountants etc. They are looking for trade and a market not to invest initially. If they are looking to invest, Locate in Kent get involved.

KIB benefits are advice and support but not only one body provides this – they are support services - who funds KIB?

- (12) KCC and borough councils.

Are local chambers of commerce supported by district and borough councils?

- (13) No

Would the same funding and relationships with Europe continue to happen without the KIB brand?

- (14) Yes. KCC have a good reputation with Interreg – here it is led by Kent. We are quite happy to act and to approach Interreg on our own projects. The KIB brand is superfluous and the Internal Affairs department should concentrate on products and not the creation of a new entity.