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To: Corporate Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 8 April 2010

Subject: International Affairs Group Update

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report is the regular update provided to POSC on Kent's International and European activities co-ordinated by KCC's International Affairs Group (IAG).

1 Introduction

1.1 There is a commitment to provide regular updates to this Committee on international work which includes the work of the International Affairs Group. This report builds on the 2008/09 Annual Report on KCC's International Activities presented to Members on 13 November 2009.

1.2 I set out my long term policy ambitions for the IAG team in 'Staying Ahead of the Changing Game' (an updated version of previous policy document) attached as appendix 1 to this report. In particular, not least to reflect current and future circumstances facing the County, I have asked the team to increase the support it provides Directorates in developing projects eligible for European funding and to extend their remit to work with colleagues in Regeneration and Economy to develop a County-wide programme of support to business for international trade. This paper is structured on the 5 cross-cutting actions established in the Staying Ahead' document.

2 Action 1 - Policy Development and Influence

2.1 In addition to the ongoing issue of the future shape of EU cohesion and funding policy after 2013 (see Action 2 below), other developments over the past year have included extending the range of KCC's policy influence through the successful delivery of the Kent in Europe seminar programme 2008-9. Last year also saw the unveiling to senior Euro-MPs, regions and journalists of the New Vision for High Speed Rail in Europe pamphlet and the European Network of High Speed Regions concept developed by Kent, Nord-Pas de Calais, the Dutch City of Breda and Brabantstad urban network. Work in 2010 will continue to strengthen the network, develop a research and intelligence platform, improve communication with key stakeholders and get ready for any further campaigning that needs to be carried out. This is of particular relevance to Kent in the true context of the liberalisation of HS1.

3 Action 2 – Securing Kent’s Competitive Position in Future EU Funding Regimes

3.1 The current EU Structural Funds programming period ends in 2013. The Funds are a primary mechanism for implementing EU ‘cohesion policy’ which currently addresses three key territorial issues: support to less developed regions to fulfil their economic potential; increasing regional competitiveness and employment and addressing cross-border and transnational cooperation. Kent has in particular secured significant EU funding under the latter two objectives via the South East ERDF Competitiveness Programme and the 2007-13 Interreg programmes.

3.2 A debate on the future of cohesion policy after 2013 is already well underway. The European Commission will set out its own position in its Fifth Cohesion Report which is due to be published in Autumn 2010, followed by a ‘Cohesion Forum’ in Brussels in December. Given the importance to the county of retaining eligibility for EU structural Funds after 2013, IAG has continued to monitor closely policy developments in this field. This has included taking opportunities to submit Kent positions on this issue. For example, a response to the Commission’s ‘Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion’ and contributions to the LGA’s work on a ‘Local Development Methodology’ (LDM)¹ as part of future Cohesion policy. This has included providing case-study examples of Kent projects which demonstrate ‘EU-added value’ over and above national initiatives (see below)

3.3 The main point at issue (as was the case in the negotiation of the current programming period) is once more likely to be whether future EU cohesion policy should continue to apply to all Member States or should be targeted only on the poorest. The ‘renationalisation’ of cohesion policy implied by the latter approach is again currently the position of the UK government but this is not supported by the new Regional Policy Commissioner, Johannes Hahn, or the European Parliament. KCC will continue to argue that, with improved effectiveness, cohesion policy is an objective for the whole EU and should continue to be EU-wide. Continued involvement in EU cohesion policy and structural funds is also valued for the role it gives local government in the development and implementation of EU funding programmes which is currently not always evident at national level.

4. Action 3 – Developing our Links with Business

Kent International Business Event

4.1 To encourage Kent companies to consider the possibilities for exporting products and services overseas, a ‘Kent International Business Event’ took place on 29 October 2009 in Canterbury. The event, which is part of the Backing Kent Business campaign and Kent in Europe seminar programme, was organised by KCC’s International Affairs Group and the University of Kent with backing from several other agencies. This event covered what businesses need to know about international trade and export, an introduction to International Markets; mainland Europe and the USA and how European Funding Programmes can support business development. It included presentations from key players in the field of business internationalisation: UTKI, the Enterprise Europe Network, University of Kent new i3 (Reciprocal Soft Landings)

¹ LDM includes targeting EU funding at smaller ‘real’ spatial levels and economies, such as counties, rather than ‘artificial’ administrative regions, and proper involvement of local authorities as partners of government in the design and delivery of Structural Funds programmes.

Network, the Thames Gateway Chamber of Commerce and HSBC. More than 40 businesses took part.

4.2 Research by the European Commission has confirmed that businesses that engage in international activities have a tendency to show better rates of productivity, growth and profitability. The growth potential afforded by the weak value of the pound coupled with the possibility for growth as the economic situation improves means that businesses could do well to consider developing international activities in the coming months and years.

4.3 There is a perception that the business community in Kent has, in general, not engaged in international activity despite the County's 'gateway' location. A recent figure from a BSK report suggests, for example, that only 8% of Kent companies are involved in exporting which is a lower rate than elsewhere in the South East. The reasons for this are unclear and information relating to SMEs currently involved or with the potential to be involved in international activities is far from comprehensive. Kent County Council has commissioned its own research work to be carried out by Business Support Kent to identify gaps in business support and make recommendations for how best to develop future support to Kent businesses in 'internationalising' their activities.

5. Action 4 – Increasing Our Support for Project Development

5.1 International Affairs Group has continued to help secure a number of significant high value EU projects in support of KCC Directorates' and Kent's priorities. For example, the French launch of the 'Greet the World' project, worth €1 million in EU grant to Kent, took place on 26 February 2010 at the 'Tourissima' Exhibition in Lille. 'Greet' is one of several recently approved EU-funded projects aimed at boosting Kent's tourism industry.

PARTNER'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Kent to benefit from €3m boost to tourism industry



Visit Kent, in partnership with Kent County Council, has successfully secured almost €3 million for the region's tourism industry from the European Union under the EU IVA 2 Seas' Programme. The bids were written by the Visit Kent team led by Sandra Matthews-Marsh, left, and Fran Warrington, right, working with the French, Belgian and Dutch, and seeks to drive the tourism industry forward in Kent for the next three years!



INTERESTING FACTS

THE BIDDING – Each business project has to have at least 10 partners from over 10 different countries. Projects can be for a maximum of 3 years.

THE OTHER – For example, the Kent County Council, County Council regional de France, Nord Pas-de-Calais, Western, Belgium and other approved regional projects up to 2013.

SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR KENT?

• Funding – to boost on performance, as well as making use of Kent's history and heritage.

ACTIVITIES – include the Business Development Centre, Kent County Council, County Council regional de France, Nord Pas-de-Calais, Western, Belgium and other approved regional projects up to 2013.

FACTFILE

Year of Tourism and the Emerging Market – success story.

Tourism is worth £2.5 billion to the local economy, and supports more than 200,000 local jobs in around 3,000 businesses.

The recent success follows the Kent County Council's Department for Economic Development's success in securing the first of its kind, worth around £2 million, very successful bid for the 'Year of Tourism and the Emerging Market'.

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Tourism training is on the Great the World team's agenda

of business, Environment, Health, Education, Skills, and Social Inclusion. The project is worth around €3 million in EU grant.

• **Central** – Action on Sustainable Economic Growth – focuses on promoting Kent's coastal and inland areas, and the role of the Kent County Council, County Council regional de France, Nord Pas-de-Calais, Western, Belgium and other approved regional projects up to 2013.

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'New funding will allow industry to flourish'

Kevin Lyons, KCC Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Tourism, said: "This is a very successful bid for the county's tourism industry and the people of Kent."

Amanda Collitt, Chairman, Visit Kent, said: "This is a very successful bid for the county's tourism industry and the people of Kent."

Amelia Kent, Visit Kent, said: "This is a very successful bid for the county's tourism industry and the people of Kent."

For further information go to www.visitkentbusiness.co.uk

5.2 A regular scorecard is kept of EU projects approved in Kent under the various 2007-13 programmes. The running total of all the projects shows that at March 2010 Kent had secured some £20 million of EU grant funding.

SEEC European Committee

5.3 On 22 January 2010, KCC chaired the first meeting of a new South East England Counties (SEEC) working group which will lead to true formation of a SE European Committee. Following the demise of the previous SEEDA/SEERA Joint Europe Committee this will provide a South East England voice on European Affairs. In particular the group will seek to ensure that South East England secures the maximum benefit possible from existing and future European funding streams. The total value of the mainstream programmes (across Europe) for which the South East as a whole is eligible, amounted to some €1 billion at the start of the programming period (see below) of which around €580 million remains to be committed as at March 2010.

EU Funding Programmes – Funding remaining as at March 2010 and next calls for projects

Programme	Total Value	Total Funding secured for Kent Feb 2010	Funding remaining Feb 2010 ²	%	Next call for projects
Interreg IVA '2 Seas'	€169m	£7.3m	€106m	63	7 May to 9 July 2010 19 Nov to 21 Jan 2011
Interreg IVA 'Channel'	€173m	£1.9m	€115m	66	12 April to 10 May 2010 13 Sept. to 11 October 2010
Interreg IVB North West Europe (NWE)	€334m	-	€195m	58	12 March – 9 April 2010
Interreg IVB North Sea Region (NSR)	€150m	-	€40m	27	1 March – 7 April 2010
Interreg IVC	€302m	€143K	€106m	35	9 Dec 09 – 5 March 2010
South East ERDF Competitiveness	£23m (€27m)	£622K (€732K)	£15m (€18m)	66	12 April – 12 May 2010
Totals	€1,151m³	€10.1m	€580m		

IAG support for Directorates' European policy and project activity

5.4 As can be seen, a considerable number of funding opportunities remain, including those programmes such as Interreg IVB which have been untapped in Kent despite being publicised by IAG. For example, a regional seminar on the IVB NWE programme was held at County Hall in Maidstone on 24 November 2009. In this regard, a key objective for IAG in 2010 is to develop further the support it provides to KCC Directorates. By increasing its understanding of Directorate policies and priorities IAG hopes to better identify potential EU funding streams and relevant policy

² Excludes projects already submitted and under appraisal

³ Excludes European Social Fund (ESF) and 'pan-European' programmes such as the Research Framework Programme (FP7)

developments, especially in order to maximise Kent's take-up of those Structural Funds which still remain. As a first step, Managing Directors are being asked to nominate appropriate officers within their Directorates to act as a key liaison point with IAG to develop these arrangements further. It is essential that we continue to maximise Kent's European income when there is heavy pressure on public funding.

6. Action 5 – Optimising benefit from our International and Domestic Partnerships

6.1 KCC's International Strategy emphasises that, firstly, 'existing relationships should be re-examined at regular intervals with a view to redefining common areas of activity and ensuring the focus is on practical co-operation projects and exchange'. Secondly, 'we should only consider new links where they demonstrate clear and quantified added-value. In particular new partners must:

- Share broadly similar social and economic characteristics;
- Provide similar opportunities, priorities and challenges;
- Be reasonably accessible at reasonable cost;
- Provide linkages of relevance to local communities on both sides'

6.2 I am in the process of reviewing our existing International Partnerships and Networks, including the key objectives and outcomes expected from our involvement, in the light of the different emphasises placed on the work of the team by the Staying Ahead document.

6.3 In particular there is a need to think through the partnerships we have specifically developed to help Kent Company's trade internationally. The link with Virginia State is very important and in this regard, with the relatively recent election of a new Governor, I anticipate renewing the existing Memorandum of Understanding to place a greater emphasis on trade and commerce links with a view of a trade mission in 2011. There is also a need to develop a Far East partnership and KCC has joined the Singapore Business Council opportunities including the gateway to China role that Singapore plays.

Partnership with Pas de Calais

6.4 At the last meeting between KCC Leader Paul Carter and the President of the Conseil Général Dominique Dupilet on 11 March 2009, a number of actions for KCC – Pas de Calais cooperation were agreed, in particular; giving a boost to joint cross-channel tourism. Since then, two substantial Kent – Pas de Calais tourism projects: 'Greet the World' and 'CAST' (Coastal Actions on sustainable Tourism) were approved at the Interreg IVA '2 Seas' Programme Steering Committee in Breda (NL) on 23 October 2009. Good progress has also been made in delivering the Interreg 'Observatory' project on Improving Public Services on both sides of the Channel as well as moving forward on potential World Heritage Status for the Dover Straits based on an Amendment to the original Partnership Agreement which the two leaders signed at the March meeting.

6.5 After the French regional election we will also be strengthening our links with Conseil Régional du Nord Pas de Calais. KCC participated in a range of activities during 2009 within the overall context of a programme of joint Pas de Calais and KCC events, the 'Year of Franco British Partnerships' (or 'Channel Hop') encompassing the

100th Anniversary Commemoration of Louis Blériot's first flight across the Channel. These included the Dover Festival and Gala Dinner of 25-26 July, the Nature Trail project of 16 and 18 June and the Guided Walks of 6 September and 4 October. A review of progress with all KCC – Pas de Calais cooperation projects will take place at the next Leaders' meeting currently scheduled for 18 May 2010 at Leeds Castle which will include showcasing of the strategic tourism projects now underway.

Domestic partnerships

6.4 International Affairs Group generates income via Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with a number of partners in Kent: the University of Kent, University of Greenwich, Canterbury Christ Church University, Shepway District Council, Medway Council, Business Support Kent, and, most recently, Kent Fire and Rescue. Over the last year a new approach has been developed with a limited number of strategic SLA partners to strengthen the development of policy initiatives that reflect joint agendas and are to the mutual benefit of *both* parties.

7 Recommendation

Members are requested to note the report

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS GROUP

‘STAYING AHEAD OF THE CHANGING GAME’

Kent County Council’s approach to international work re-stated to meet the challenges of the second decade of the twenty-first century
By Alex King, Deputy Leader of the Council

The Recent Past

The purpose of the then European Affairs Group was defined by the document ‘Staying in a Changing Game’ published in 2003. This document outlined seven key objectives

- Focussing on an intelligence-led approach to policy and delivery
- Providing clear leadership for Kent and beyond
- Networking beyond the Euroregion
- Establishing consistency across Kent through the International Affairs board
- Modernising relationships with Partners
- Restructuring the team
- Balancing the budget

The implementation of the approach outlined in ‘Staying in a Changing Game’ was in part reflected in KCC’s CPA assessment in which the Audit Commission congratulated the County Council in its outward looking stance commenting that “the Council and its partners are acutely aware of the strategic opportunities and challenges of the ‘Corridor to Europe’ transport links that cross the County from London to Dover and the Channel Tunnel. They have adopted early, active and successful horizon-scanning and wider lobbying to ensure that the benefits accrue to the people of Kent to offset the adverse impact on their environment.” (Audit Commission, KCC Corporate Assessment June 2008).

The Present

However, Europe continues to change – as does the County Council – and we need to respond to different policies, attitudes and structures.

Since I wrote ‘Staying in a Changing Game’ there have been a number of internal and external developments that impact on the re-named International Affairs Group’s work and how it operates. These are listed on the following page in box 1.

Box 1: Internal and external changes on IAG

Internal Forces including....

- The election of a new Administration, Leader and Cabinet
- A radically changed corporate policy framework with new priorities and focus
- The head count of IAG has been gradually reduced from 11 to 7 members of staff. Including a change to the Head of Brussels office and the reduction in the head count in the Brussels from 4 to 2
- The appointment of a Deputy Cabinet member for International work
- The publication by Cabinet of an International Strategy in 2008
- The relocation of IAG to the Chief Executives Department in 2006
- The move to new Brussels offices – International House - in 2008
- The reduction in the number of SLA partners
- The creation of the Kent International Advisory Board

External Forces including....

- The expansion of the EU from 15 to 25 and then to 27 member states
- The introduction of new funding regimes including new structural fund programmes from 2007 – 2013
- The start of preparations and negotiations for the total EU budget 2014-2020
- The start of preparations and negotiations for the Structural Funds 2013-2017
- The collapse of sterling with depreciation of up to 30% against the euro
- The creation of the PASCAL international network with Kent as a founder member

The immediate impact of the current recession means that we must ensure that IAG remains true to its core business. We have seen dramatic reductions in inflation and interest rates and the UK continues to be in a real recession – unlike most of Europe – with rising unemployment and the prospect of continuing increases in business failures.

Testing the Outcomes of Staying in a Changing Game

Of the seven priorities for action in the original ‘Staying in a Changing Game’ document, five related to how the team operated.

‘An Intelligence led approach’ (Action 1) remains important, especially in the longer term. Whilst, as foreseen, relatively less funding was allocated to countries such as the UK following enlargement of the EU in 2004, Kent remained eligible (itself a testimony to KCC’s influencing activity) for a number of the EU new programmes for the 2007-13 period. Although competition for funding has increased significantly, these programmes provide a key opportunity to support our priorities over the next few years but will require Directorates in particular to invest staff and resources in order to reap the benefits.

If anything, ‘Leading the Region’ (Action 2) now has even more bearing given current uncertainty over the future of the regional bodies, including the withdrawal of SEEDA from various stands of EU activity and the winding-up last year of the SEEDA/SEERA Joint Europe Committee (JEC). There is therefore an opportunity for KCC to lead and set the European agenda in these current circumstances through South East England Counties where we are recognised as the leader in this field, building on the positive references to the authority’s European and International work in the CPA Report.

Following the ending of the Euroregion in 2004 (Networking beyond the Euroregion : Action 3) KCC has further developed around a dozen partnerships, networks and other international relationships where these have supported core business and the County Council’s key priorities. These include a new bi-lateral agreement with the Conseil Général Pas de Calais, the setting up of the European Network of High-Speed Regions and the establishment of the PACAL International Observatory, the formal relationship with the Commonwealth of Virginia and bi-lateral connections with other countries in Europe and Asia.

Joined up activity (Action 4) has been enhanced by the strengthening of IAG’s corporate role, including its relocation to CED, in providing a coordinated approach to KCC’s overseas activity. The establishment of a KCC internal International Affairs Board (IAB) with Directorate representation was supplemented in July 2008 by a Kent International Advisory Board (KIAB) to help provide a joined-up approach to international work across the county.

Staying ahead (New arrangements with Partners: Action 5) envisaged the development of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) which reflected joint agendas rather than the sole interests of the partners. This approach is currently being strengthened further with a targeted number of strategic stakeholders in Kent, particularly those which have an SLA with the County Council. This will require IAG to concentrate and deepen its work and relationships in a number of core areas to mutual benefit.

The Future

KCC has a robust policy framework to guide the work of IAG over the next few years including the Vision for Kent, Towards 2010/2014, The International Strategy, the Regeneration Framework, Backing Kent Business and Backing Kent People.

This framework, together when overlaid with our experience of the implementation of ‘Staying in a changing game’ and our analysis of the internal and external environment (under

sections xx of this report), suggests 5 thematic priorities and 5 cross-cutting actions that will guide IAG’s future delivery of KCC’s priorities and international activities.

Figure 1: Thematic Priorities and cross-cutting actions guiding IAG’s future work

Policy Development and Influence				
T R A N S P O R T	E D C E O V N E O L M O I P C M E N T	S E C U R I T Y	D E M O C R A T I C H I C	P U B L I C I N N O V A T I O N S E C T O R
Developing our Links with Business				
Increasing Our Support for Project Development				
Maximising our International Partnerships				
Securing Kent’s Competitive Position in Future EU Funding Regimes				

Action 1 – Policy Development and Influence

Kent’s interests at European and national level are critical - with a focal point in Brussels and active networking wherever we need to influence future policy. A general ‘watch’ on the 70% to 80% of European legislation that impacts on the work of local authorities may be useful but a clear focus on policy priorities is essential. The following policy strands will be the priorities for the coming years

- Cross border transport - including Operation Stack intermediate High Speed Rail stations, the future of Eurostar and the use of High Speed 1, movement of freight on to rail.
- Cross border economic development – changes and the revision of the Lisbon strategy and the implications for areas such as regional airports (Lydd and Manston), rail linkages, and the deregulation of businesses
- Cross border migration (not asylum).
- Demographic change (ageing/ reduction of working age population) - impact on health and care with liberalisation of cross border health and social care systems
- Cross border security including asylum
- Public sector innovation - the use of technologies and innovation in all aspects of reshaping the nature and delivery of public service provision
- The climate challenge

Action 2 – Securing Kent’s Competitive Position in Future EU Funding Regimes

The programmes for which Kent is currently eligible, such as Interreg, the Competitiveness Programme and ESF, end in 2013. The Commission’s Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion of October 2008 signalled the start of a debate on the future of EU regional policy and European Funding for the new programming period 2014 – 2020. Having coordinated a Kent response to the Green Paper, a key objective for IAG will be to ensure that Kent continues to be eligible for EU support under any future funding regime. Actions for IAG in this area will therefore include:

- Keeping abreast of policy developments in this field and disseminating information to key partners
- Developing a clear Kent policy position as the post-2013 debate unfolds
- Coordinating and drafting Kent-wide responses to any UK government or European Commission draft proposals
- Maintaining and utilising EU, national and regional level contacts including MEPs, and networks such as the LGA or AER, in order to influence policy development in this field
- Working with local, regional and European partners and networks to develop joint positions in line with our priorities.

Action 3 – Developing our Links with Business

Although the team has always had a strong relationship with Visit Kent, Locate in Kent and Business Link there have never been strong links with the business community. However, given the current economic circumstances and KCC’s renewed commitment through the Regeneration Framework and Backing Kent Business the team will become more involved in helping Kent companies ‘internationalise’. This is not to stray in to the work of Visit Kent, Locate in Kent or Business Link but to offer higher levels of support to them in their work and to increase our work in supporting Kent companies to trade overseas as exporters and, as importers to improve their supply chains

This will include

- Developing the work of the Kent International Advisory Board
- Researching and meeting the international needs of Kent companies
- Developing a suite of support tools and networks for Kent companies and organisations
- Establishing the need and demand for trade missions
- Improving the networking of existing resources
- Working to improve the way European funding can be used to ‘unlock’ talent to support economic recovery
- Campaigning for changes in the EU’s current Lisbon strategy (for growth and jobs) to better reflect current economic circumstances
- Campaigning with key business partners for the simplification of EU rule and regulations and to reduce the overall administrative burden of the regulatory regime

Action 4 – Increasing Our Support for Project Development

Competition in securing EU funding has progressively become more and more competitive partly because of the expansion of the EU but more particularly the extension of the

geographic scope of the Interreg programmes and the developing experience and competency of public and private bodies in bidding for funding.

Whilst we are ahead of the game in ensuring Kent as a region is included in programmes, it is becoming more and more difficult for KCC service Directorates to develop successful project applications and then to make it through the project selection process. Whilst, as indicated earlier, Directorates will need to prioritise limited staff and resources for this activity in order to maximise the benefits, IAG will also need to provide more support to service Directorates by:

- Maximising our influence from our attendance at Programme Committees and related sub-groups and continuing to seek representation where we do not currently have membership.
- Strengthening our working relationships with the individual programme secretariats
- Devoting more staff resources in support of service Directorates in partner search, brokering European partnerships, supporting bid development and sustaining a partnership development process during the life of the successful projects. This project support will be focused on those policy priorities identified in Action 1 above
- Development awareness and access to the wider range of EU funding streams not traditionally accessed in Kent including more direct involvement in European Commission pilot projects
- Promoting full use of International House as a European hub for project development and dissemination

Action 5 – Optimising benefit from our International and Domestic Partnerships

The International Strategy is quite clear on the need to capitalise on existing links and to focus on a limited number of key partnerships with other regions. For IAG these relationships are needed for three broad reasons. First, most funding into the County requires cross-border partner consortium bids. Second, experience has taught us that policy influence both in the EU and indeed nationally is enhanced by an international partnership approach. Third, the need to identify and use best practice from anywhere in the world to in support of KCC's approach to service improvement and innovation. Thus IAG will achieve by:

- Strengthening collaboration and joint working in the following key regions
 - Nord Pas de Calais / Pas de Calais
 - Province of West Flanders
 - Province of North Brabant and the City of Breda
 - Stockholm Region
 - Commonwealth of Virginia
- Maintaining good, but light touch relations with
 - Conseil Général de Nord
 - County of Bacs-Kiskun
 - Jamtland County
 - Region of Flanders
 - Certain key Governmental, industry and non-governmental stakeholders where interests are aligned with Kent on thematic priority areas.
- Exploring the need or otherwise for a strategic partnership with a region of China and elsewhere in South East Asia

- Extending our virtual network of partners through the work of the PASCAL Observatory
- Keeping existing, and any potential new partnerships, under regular review to ensure they remain focused, relevant and mutually beneficial

In addition, the move towards agreements with domestic partners that reflect joint agendas rather than the sole interests of the partners will be accelerated. IAG will:

- Focussing service-level agreement partnerships to strategic stakeholders who can work together on a number of core areas of mutual benefit.
- Developing a more customer-responsive range of activities that cover areas of mutual benefit for organisations beyond the core, strategic stakeholders

The Result

We will stay ahead of the changing game by

Presenting clear and coherent representation of KCC's International policy priorities with the EU and other international partners, driven by KCC's corporate policy framework.

- ***Leveraging existing influence, partnerships and projects to help deliver our other thematic priorities or and cross-cutting actions.***
- ***Refining and improving the intelligence led approach to European work.***
- ***Extending the reach of KCC's policy influence to an appropriate wider international audience***
- ***'Winning' the competitive process of retaining Kent's eligibility for EU structural funding post 2013***
- ***Securing for Kent more funds than any other County area eligible for Interreg funding***
- ***Actively contributing to working with partners on supporting Kent organisations to win inward investment, to attract new visitors and to benefit from international commerce***
- ***Establishing of a Kent-led South East EU Policy Network working through South East England Councils***
- ***Reviewing and strengthening our international partnerships and networks to maximise their contribution Kent priorities and support practical cooperation projects.***

Alex King MBE
Deputy Leader, Kent County Council
And
Chairman, Kent International Advisory Board

November 2009