

By: Mr R Gough, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Supporting Independence

To: County Council – 17 May 2007

Subject: Kent Prospects 2006 - 2012 – Final Draft

Summary: To receive and comment on the final draft of Kent Prospects, the Kent Partnership's countywide economic development and regeneration framework.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Kent Prospects was first produced in 1996 as a 10 year countywide framework to guide economic development and regeneration activity, with this updated in 2002 to take it through to 2006. Kent Prospects was reviewed during 2006 to roll it forward to 2012. This has taken place within the context set by the Kent Partnership's Community Strategy – the Vision for Kent.
- 1.2 Kent Prospects 2006 to 2012 is owned by the Kent Partnership, and provides a further level of detail to support delivery of the Vision for Kent, the Kent Agreement, and KCC Towards 2010 aspirations for developing the county's economic prosperity. The Kent Commitment also provides a key mechanism driving the delivery of Kent Prospects.
- 1.3 KCC's Cabinet considered and endorsed the final draft of Kent Prospects at its meeting of 12th March 2007. In addition to the County Council meeting, it will also be considered by the Kent Economic Board at its 21st June meeting and the Kent Partnership at its meeting of 26th June 2007 before publication.
- 1.4 A copy of the final draft is attached for members of the Council. A full colour version of the document is also available for viewing as a PDF document on the KCC website (details in the Background Papers section).

2. Review and Consultation Process

- 2.1 The review of Kent Prospects has involved key stakeholders, been led by KCC and overseen by a multi-agency Kent Prospects Advisory Group (KPAG). In addition to the Vision for Kent and Kent Agreement, it has drawn on partner plans and strategies, KCC plans, activity and material, including KCC's Towards 2010 programme, the Kent and Medway Structure Plan, the Local Transport Plan, and the Supporting Independence Programme.
- 2.2 A March to July 2006 stakeholder consultation involved circulating a draft to a wide range of organisations and individuals. This was accompanied by a programme of meetings and workshops. Comments and responses received through the consultation process have been taken onboard in the final draft of Kent Prospects.

3. Kent Prospects 2006 to 2012 – Final Draft

- 3.1 Kent Prospects (pages 14 to 18) provides an overview of how the county's economy has performed in recent years in national and south east comparisons. Kent achieves a good level of performance on job creation and enterprise growth, and attracts significant amounts of inward investment. Kent performs less well on knowledge economy jobs, skills at NVQ4+, and gross value added (GVA) per head.
- 3.2 Pages 4 to 7 of Kent Prospects underline that the county has some unique assets and opportunities to lift economic performance, including its gateway location, growth and regeneration areas, established business community, key sectors, quality of life and environment, and the start of CTRL domestic services in 2009.
- 3.3 In response to challenges and opportunities, Kent Prospects outlines a framework to influence, guide and co-ordinate Partners' delivery of economic development and regeneration activities. Its purpose is not to provide a detailed and prescriptive listing of initiatives and projects, with this fine grain of detail to be considered by accompanying action plans and partners' own programmes. Its 4 key objectives and 26 associated priorities are listed as follows:

Strengthen Kent's accessibility, infrastructure & connections by investing in:

Infrastructure, roads and public transport
Kent's gateway location
ICT , broadband and wireless infrastructure
Environmental infrastructure, utilities and services

Develop growth & regeneration opportunities & combat deprivation by focussing on:

The Thames Gateway Kent and Ashford growth areas
The coastal area and towns
Major and principal urban centres across Kent including the Maidstone growth point
Rural areas and communities
Supporting Independence, community & neighbourhood renewal
The social economy and social enterprise
2012 Olympics and Paralympics, sporting and cultural events
Changing perceptions of Kent

Promote enterprise, competitiveness & market opportunities to develop:

Jobs and skills opportunities
Cluster, sector and market opportunities
Tourism opportunities
Inward investment opportunities
Enterprise and SMEs
An innovation culture & links to higher education establishments
Sites and premises
A culture of enterprise through education
Global and European links

Develop pathways to sustainable prosperity to create:

Quality design, construction and pragmatic approaches to sustainability
Sustainable consumption and resource efficiencies
Sustainable enterprise and market opportunities
A carbon neutral economy
Improved capacity and skills

4. Strategic Overview, Delivery and Monitoring

4.1 The Kent Partnership through the Kent Economic Board (KEB) will have strategic overview of Kent Prospects. In this regard, key issues and opportunities will be developed and promoted through KEB's 4 task groups on skills for the economy, enterprise, strategic infrastructure and spending priorities.

4.2 Kent Prospects delivery will be broken down into three 2-year action plan cycles (2006 to 2008; 2008 to 2010; 2010 to 2012). Action plans will relate closely to KCC's Towards 2010 programme, the Kent Agreement and economic development opportunities promoted by KEB. Progress will be tracked through the monitoring framework outlined by page 56 of Kent Prospects.

5. The Kent Commitment

5.1 Local Government Leaders have drawn up the 2007 Kent Commitment, which includes a statement of intent to enable economic growth and regeneration opportunities in each part of the county, by effectively combining the decisions and resources held by national and regional bodies with those of KCC and the District Councils. Government also has a key role to play by providing the county with a fair share of infrastructure funding to support developments in the Thames Gateway, Ashford growth area and key locations across Kent.

5.2 Kent Prospects provides a further level of detail to support actions driven by the Kent Commitment.

6. SEEDA's Regional Economic Strategy (RES) 2006 to 2016

6.1 SEEDA's Regional Economic Strategy (RES) 2006 to 2016 was endorsed by SEERA during September 2006. The Kent Prospects review process has therefore been used as a mechanism to ensure SEEDA are aware of county issues and opportunities.

7. 2007 to 2013 European Union (EU) Structural Fund Programmes

7.1 New arrangements for 2007 to 2013 EU Structural Funds commenced on the 1st January 2007. The review of Kent Prospects has helped shape thinking on new structural fund opportunities related to competitiveness, skills, innovation and Intra-regional co-operation (Interreg).

8. Recommendations

The County Council is asked to:

8.1 Note the timetable for the Kent Partnership to produce the published version of Kent Prospects 2006 to 2012.

8.2 To provide comments on the final draft of Kent Prospects.

Mr R Gough

Cabinet Member for Regeneration
& Supporting Independence

Background Papers

Kent Prospects 2006 to 2012 (Final Draft) – PDF version available by going to:

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/business/economic-development/>

The Vision for Kent

Towards 2010

The Kent Agreement

Further copies of Kent Prospects available from:

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