

By: Alex King, Deputy Leader
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To: Cabinet – 03 December 2007 – Item No.4

Subject: KCC International Activities Annual Report 2006/7

Classification: Unrestricted

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The International Activities Annual Report 2006/7 is the second annual report covering the diverse range of international work in which KCC is involved.
- 1.2 The report utilises the following headlines to report activity across KCC in the past year - The Global Economy; Developing Global Citizenship; Ensuring World-Class Services. The report also groups information by geographical region. This format follows the structure of the draft KCC International Strategy (Appendix 1).

2. 2006-7 Headlines

- 2.1 Headline successes in 2006-7 include:
- Determining a realistic EU Funding target for Kent of €100 million over the next programming period 2007-13.
 - More than 1000 students and teachers have undertaken international visits in 2006-7. There has been significant emphasis on vocational education and professional development.
 - Successful premises relocation of the Kent Brussels Office with KCC as leaseholder.
 - Successful bid to host the prestigious EBN Congress 2007 in Canterbury around the theme of Transatlantic Cooperation between SMEs in Innovation & Technology.
 - A renewed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by the current Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Tim Kaine and the Leader of KCC, Paul Carter to further develop joint work across a range of areas of common interest.

3. Costs / Benefits

Directorate	Unit / Project	Costs (£m p/a)	Financial Benefits (£m p/a)
Adult Social Services & Communities	International Perspectives Unit	0.07	£2.1m
Chief Executive's Department	European Affairs Group	0.321	£20m
Children, Families & Education	International Development Unit	0.08	£2.1m
Environment & Regeneration	Kent/Virginia	0.315 (*2007)	(to be confirmed)
	Smithsonian	0.225 (*2007)	(to be confirmed)
	PASCAL	0.058	£100k
TOTALS		£1.069m	£24.3m

* Time limited – Costs 2005-2007

4. An International Strategy for Kent County Council

4.1 In a changing world, Kent must remain firm in its understanding of, and commitment to, international activity, and its relevance and benefits for the people of Kent. Kent has always looked outwards and a good measure of its prosperity has been derived from its geographical situation – but this factor alone is no longer enough to ensure competitiveness. As the world grows ever smaller and more inter-dependent, it is vital that KCC keeps pace with change to allow the people and businesses of Kent to profit from future opportunities.

4.2 As such, KCC's first corporate International Strategy (Appendix 1) has now been produced to bring together the key strands of this work. The strategy addresses the following issues:

- Why must Kent work internationally?
- Spheres of Influence
- Principles
- Monitoring & Evaluation
- Communication

It is grouped by geographical area and under the following headlines:

- The Global Economy
- Developing Global Citizenship
- Ensuring World-Class Services

4.3 The strategy is a crucial tool in bringing greater coherence to KCC's international activities and through the strategy, Members are asked to acknowledge and support the ongoing development of this area of business for the benefit of the people of Kent.

4.4 As part of this developing work, a strategy for engaging with China is in development and will be brought separately to Members and officers in the near future.

5. Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) NOTE the contents of the 2006-7 Annual Report, and
- (ii) DISCUSS & APPROVE the draft International Strategy (Appendix 1)

Background Documents: None

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1. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

1.1 The Global Economy

Europe

- Influencing European Policy and future EU funding programmes
- Responding to consultations and influencing the outcome of EU and government key policy proposals, including the shape of new Interreg cross-border programmes; DTI State Aid Review (extension of Kent's coverage); EU Strategic Guidelines; National Strategic Reference Framework; EU Urban Regeneration.
- Drafting a high-quality bid for Interreg IVA Managing Authority.
- Securing the only Local Authority place on Interreg IVA North Programme Working Group.
- Securing membership of S.E. EU Competitiveness Programme drafting group and lobbying for targeting of resources on coastal strip and Kent ports.
- Securing, for the first time, participation in new EU North Sea Transnational Cooperation Programme 2007-13.
- Securing a realistic EU Funding target for Kent of €100 million over the next programming period 2007-13.

- The Strategic Innovation Gateway Network (SIGN)
- Technology transfer of two technologies prompted by the Centre for Innovative Technology (CIT), Virginia.
- SIGN vital to the success of the bid to host the prestigious EBN Congress 2007.
- Influencing the accreditation of Kecskemét Business Innovation Centre (BIC) by EBN.

To the West

- Kent-Virginia Project
- A renewed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on 14th November 2006 by the current Governor of Virginia, Tim Kaine and the Leader of KCC, Paul Carter. The MoUs now cover the following areas for co-operation:
 - Trade and business relationships for commercial, economic and social benefit,
 - New approaches to tourism development jointly between the Virginia Tourism Corporation and the Kent Tourism Alliance building on and beyond the 2007 Quadricentennial events,
 - Links between the land based economies in Virginia and Kent,
 - Educational and cultural links between Virginia and Kent,
 - Virginia's economic and commercial presence in UK and Europe and Kent's economic and commercial presence in the US,
 - Performance Management
 - Health and Medical Administration including social care, fostering and adoption
 - Energy Use and Comprehensive Energy Policy
 - Agribusiness and Farm Preservation
 - Sharing experience and best practice in any field that the parties agree to be relevant for mutual benefit
- In addition, a Statement of Intent on Staff Exchanges was signed in July 2006 by Stephen Adkins, Virginia Department of Human Resources and Amanda Beer, KCC.

To the East

- Emerging Links with China
- The economic and social drivers behind China's rapid and ongoing development mean that there are now significant opportunities for KCC to engage with China. A number of activities have already been identified which are relevant to this intention to develop closer links with China. A strategy for engagement will be developed and implemented in 2007-8 and beyond.
- The Children, Families and Education Directorate has already undertaken a visit to China (Shanghai, Chongquin & Zhangqui), hosted a return delegation and looked at a number of innovative proposals for future links.
- The University of Kent has an established Anglo-Chinese Business & Management Centre which has educational and commercial partnerships in China, including jointly-awarded academic qualifications.
- The University of Greenwich is soon to commence an adult-nursing programme with a partner university in China.
- Representatives from KCC and Locate in Kent have also met with Strategic China with a view to engaging with their high-level links with relevant government agencies and trade bodies.

Inward Investment

- Locate in Kent Ltd. (LiK) is Kent's investment promotion agency and one of the most successful agencies of its kind in the UK. During 2006-7, LiK recorded 65 successes, creating 1358 new jobs and retaining a further 1596 jobs. The following companies provide a sample of the continuing achievements of LiK:
- CFSI (Cabot) - Cabot has shut down a facility in Bradford and consolidated its whole operation at Kings Hill in Kent because of a greater quality of staff and much higher level of staff retention in Kent. This underlines Kent's ability to be home to a significant and growing financial services business where the right skills can be accessed and -with the forthcoming expansion to new premises on Kings Hill- the right support can be given as expansion takes place.
- Over C (UK) Ltd - A new start-up assisted by LiK over a period of 4 years. Over-C specialises in the design and development of advanced web application software tightly integrated with Near Field Communication (NFC) mobile phones and works in partnership with Nokia. The technology created is utilised within the security industry as well as event management and many others.
- SearchFlow expansion project - SearchFlow is an electronic conveyancing search service. It provides a one-stop solution for sending and receiving property searches. Originally a success from 2003, Searchflow recently expanded and currently employs over 90 people.
- James Villa Holidays - Operating from the 20/20 Business Park in Maidstone, the company outgrew its premises. Maidstone proved to be a fertile ground for staff recruitment and the company moved in July 2006 to the AA Building. The staff is expected to grow from 85 to 160 over the next three years.
- Hitachi - A new rail and maintenance depot is being constructed in Ashford for the Hitachi high-speed train. It is estimated that the depot will be completed in June 2007. The depot will employ 97 staff primarily from three sectors (Rail, Engineering & Military). LiK has advised on recruitment, tax and accounting issues and made links with other Japanese companies in Kent and Ashford.

1.2 Developing Global Citizenship

Europe

- International Student Visits
 - More than 1000 students and their teachers have undertaken international visits in 2006-7. Schools have also been encouraged and supported to link with other education establishments across the world.

- Hardelet Centre
 - Managing the Hardelet Centre in northern France and growing its potential to aid the development of global citizenship in schools. Although the Centre is mainly used by schools and youth organisations, it is also open to other groups when available and during 2006-7, the Centre increased it's bookings by 20%.

- Support to Schools
 - Giving expert advice and support to schools and providing opportunities to forge links, particularly with our partners in Nord Pas de Calais, Virginia, Aix-Marseille and South Africa;

- EVOLVE
 - The EQUAL-funded Development Partnership focuses on the most deprived districts in Kent and promotes the employability of disadvantaged groups through three types of service; Vocational training, mentoring, advice and guidance. The transnational element involves partnering with Finland, the Netherlands and Austria.

- Bien-être: Healthy Schools and Communities Project
 - This Interreg IIIa partnership project, facilitated and managed by the Kent & Medway NHS Health & Europe Centre also included Kent County Council and schools in the Dover Cluster. The objectives of Bien-être were to create cross-border and local learning networks – comprised of those involved with the health and education of children and the well-being of communities – in order to learn from different cultures, to foster mutual understanding of different methods of health and educational service delivery and to explore opportunities for reducing health inequalities in schools and local communities. By focusing on food, the project stimulated interest in healthier lifestyles through professional, social and cultural exchanges and increased community involvement in local projects.

1.3 Ensuring World-Class Services

Europe

- Strengthening and developing strategic partnerships
 - Strengthening partnership working with Nord-Pas de Calais, including Joint Political Declaration signed with Regional Council on 5 April 2006 and close cooperation to mutual benefit on the future Interreg Cross-Border programme 2007-13. Adult Services managers are developing concrete joint activity between social care functions on both sides of the Channel and key themes include the isolation of older people, learning and physical disabilities, and strategic workforce issues. Potential is also being explored at a low-key level around themes relevant to Sport, Leisure & Olympics, Cultural Development and Libraries & Archives.

- Renewed impetus for work with Bács-Kiskun County Council, including Kent involvement in their Structural Funds projects following a meeting with the new Leader in December 2006.
- The established protocol between Kent and Southern Finland has been refreshed and renewed, one key focus being exchanges for young people and relevant staff. The new agreement also allows for the future involvement of other KCC services to be explored in 2007/8.
- Implementing Kent's strategic priorities through EU funding
 - Ongoing implementation of a range of EU-funded projects (including Interreg IIIA, B & C; Urban; Objective 2; Leader; ESF)
 - 14 new Interreg IIIA projects (out of 24 approved across programme area) amounting to an additional £1 million ERDF.
- Providing a strong representation for Kent's interests in Brussels
 - Effective lobbying on key issues such as 'Operation Stack' and Eurostar. With the support of the Committee of the Regions, KCC brokered a joint KCC-NPDC meeting and Communiqué regarding Eurostar on 7 December in the presence of high level Commission officials, SEEDA and SNCF.
 - Kent Brussels Office (KBO) leadership of UK Brussels Office Regional Policy Group and joint chair of UKBO Health Group.
 - Successful premises relocation of KBO with KCC as leaseholder.
- Information, intelligence and advice to KCC and partner organisations
 - Regular policy updates and range of briefings for partners in Brussels and Kent including meetings of Regional Policy Thematic Group, Kent Breakfast Meeting.
- Bidding for the European BIC Network (EBN) Congress 2007
 - There has been a successful bid for the Congress to be held in Canterbury, 20-22 June 2007 around the theme of Transatlantic Cooperation between SMEs in innovation & technology.
 - Kent will be positioned as an international conference centre, tourist destination for the 2012 Olympics and will gain an enhanced profile.
- European Network on Community Safety (ENoCS)
 - Community Safety, along with Kent Police, is working to establish a European best practice and staff (warden) exchange network – no such forum exists at present in Europe. This will involve known partners in the short term, and will revolve around an annual conference.
- International Professional Development
 - Working with 12 key international partnerships, 2006-7 has provided opportunities for more than 200 teachers, headteachers and education professionals to engage in international professional development. This has been achieved through a number of themed study visits across Europe, (France, Finland), America (Virginia) and further afield (Canada, Sri Lanka, and South Africa). In 2006-7 these visits have had an emphasis on vocational education, allowing both students and their teachers to explore the relevance of the Global Economy.
- LET'S TALK
 - Developed in partnership by the Kent & Medway NHS Health & Europe Centre with Kent Teenage Pregnancy Partnership and the Conseil General de la Somme, this

two year Interreg action research project aims to explore the values and attitudes of groups of teenagers and professionals to sex and relationships, sexual health and teenage pregnancy. The information gathered from the Project has been used by young people and professionals to develop new ways of looking at education and health services, with the aim of tackling teenage pregnancy.

To the West

- International Staff Exchange Programmes
 - The Seattle Adult Services exchange programme, which has a focus on older people, mental health, and adults with learning disabilities, continues to make a valuable contribution to the Staff Care package, notably around the motivation and retention of staff. Opportunities have been available to five mainly front-line staff during this financial year, offering personal and professional development and best practice exchange.
 - Building on the successful Adult Services programme and at the request of the Chief Executive, a pilot exchange with King County Council, Seattle, has taken place. A range of future potential co-operation themes was identified, with a strong focus around democratic processes and the modernisation of local government.

To the East

- PASCAL International Observatory
 - PASCAL is an international research and policy development alliance sharing new and emerging ideas about Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions. It was established in November 2003 by the University of Stirling, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University, the State Government of Victoria (Australia), the Scottish Executive and Kent County Council. Key successes in 2006-7 include:
 - The development of joint vocational education programmes between RMIT University and KCC notably in the field of advanced engineering.
 - A 2nd PASCAL book, published by NIACE further establishing credibility as a cutting edge, research driven initiative.
 - A Memorandum of Understanding signed between KCC and RMIT University.
 - The prestigious PASCAL international conference 2008 will be held in Kent.

2. Resources & Benefits

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