

By: Mark Dance, Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Economic Development
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To: Economic Development Cabinet Committee
6th March 2013

Subject: Produced in Kent – Feedback from Member Visits

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary

The report outlines details of the planned visit by members of this committee to a number of Produced in Kent (PinK) member businesses on 1st March 2013. A verbal update providing more detailed feedback for discussion will be provided at the meeting.

1. Introduction

- 1.1** Produced in Kent Ltd is a joint venture company established by KCC and Hadlow College primarily to promote the local food and drinks sector for the County along with a smaller number of artisan producers. The Chairman of this Committee, in his capacity as Deputy Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Economic Development, sits on the PinK Board. The core team of three are KCC employees committed wholly to this initiative at an annual cost to our budget of £120,000
- 1.2** Members of this Committee requested an opportunity to learn more about the activity of PinK as part of its programme of visits and presentations by the wider compliment of organisations supported through this portfolio as they provide direct support to businesses within this sector.

2. Background

- 2.1** PinK is a member-led organisation re-established in 2005 with the ultimate aim of stimulating and supporting the sustainable development of the food and drink sector in Kent. Membership is open to businesses throughout the food supply chain subject to them meeting certain criteria. Despite the economic downturn membership numbers have steadily increased over the past few

year to the current 230 and range from primary producers to retailers, distributors and hospitality businesses though the majority (50%) of the current membership are small and medium sized growers, processors and manufacturers collectively known as 'producers'. PinK provides support, training, advice, information and business development opportunities to its members. To date, in addition to KCC engaging the core team, PinK relies primarily upon membership fees, sponsorship and external funding opportunities to fund its overall operation.

- 2.2** Over recent years a strong and credible 'Produced in Kent' brand has been established and a refresh of the company's strategy is now being taken forward under the direction of the PinK Board and Edwyn Martin, the new Produced in Kent Manager, appointed in January. A very timely set of circumstances with the recent national and Europe-wide horse-meat, Halal food and chicken products scandals at the forefront of public concern and where demonstrating the provenance of what we eat puts PinK in an excellent position to promote the benefits and overall sustainability of producing and buying locally.

3. Strategic Objectives

- 3.1** PinK's strategic objectives are currently defined as:

1. To champion and support the growth, development and future of the food and drink sector in Kent.
2. To leverage brand equity to generate greater visibility and recognition amongst the public, future members and private sector investors.
3. To develop an exceptional and valued membership experience.

These are underpinned by the following core values:

- Quality and provenance
- Respect and trust
- Innovation and expertise
- Commerciality

- 3.2** Focussing on the above will ensure that PinK continues to develop its role to ensure that food provenance, food security, business growth and job creation continue to be of critical importance and that the sector continues to develop as well as become a career path of choice for our young people thus supporting the strategic objectives of both KCC and Hadlow College.

4. Visits

- 4.1** The visit programme is shown in the Appendix to this report. It

provides the opportunity for Committee Members to see at first hand a variety of businesses in one local area during the morning as representative of those types of businesses to whom PinK provide a range of support. The visit culminates in a lunch and round table discussion for Members with a wider number of businesses.

- 4.2** Members are invited to feedback their experience and thoughts following the visits and in doing so are asked to identify how they would like to hear about PinK's activity in the future and measure its progress and success which could include future presentations at Committee meetings.

5. Recommendation:

- 5.1** Members of the Cabinet Committee are asked to:

- a) To discuss key perceptions and outcomes of the fact finding tour; and
- b) Invite Edwyn Martin, Manger, and Produced in Kent, to provide an update to the committee during the coming year.

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Background Documents:

Appendix 1: Visit Programme and Attendance List.



EDCC Meeting 1st March – An Introduction to Produced in Kent

9.00am Collection from County Hall, Maidstone.

9.30am Visit to SW Doughty, Doddington

Award winning butcher that has been supplying quality local meat for over 100 years. It is unique in Kent as it has its own slaughterhouse.

10.25am Visit Pine Trees Farm, Doddington

Fruit farm currently run by the 4th & 5th generation of the Payne family. They sell apples, fruit juice, jams & chutneys and recently added their own cider to the range of products.

11.10am Doddington Place Gardens, Doddington

Local visitor attraction and tea room, serving Kentish produce.

Meeting with representatives from the Produced in Kent membership.

An opportunity to meet and talk to members about the work of Produced in Kent and to understand the challenges facing rural businesses

12.00pm Networking lunch.

1.30pm Return to County Hall, Maidstone

Attendees:

Mr Dance

Mr Wickham, Chairman

Mr K Smith

Mr Prater

Mr Collor

Mr Ferrin

Mrs Tweed

Mrs Law

Mr Bowles