

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Economic Development Cabinet Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 6 March 2013.

PRESENT: Mr M A Wickham (Chairman), Mr N J Collor (Vice-Chairman), Mr A H T Bowles, Mrs E Green, Mrs J P Law, Mr R A Pascoe, Mr T Prater, Mrs E M Tweed and Mrs C J Waters

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M C Dance, Cabinet Member

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms B Cooper (Director of Economic Development), Mrs T Bruton (Head of Regeneration Projects), Ms E Harrison (Economic Development Officer), Mr R Gill (Economic Policy and Strategy Manager), Mr W Gough (Employment Programme Manager), Ms C McKenzie (Sustainability and Climate Change Manager), Mr M Blincow (Research and Development Manager) and Mrs C A Singh (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

58. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2013

(Item A4)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2013 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman subject to the following wording being added to Minute 55 paragraph 3 "(g) Mr Prater disagreed with the recommendation and made a formal request that this be recorded in the Minutes" .

59. Regeneration and Economic Development Portfolio Financial Monitoring 2012/13

(Item C1)

(Report by Mark Dance, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development and Mr D Cockburn, Corporate Director, Business, Strategy and Support)

(Ms B Cooper, Director of Economic Development was present for this item)

1. Ms Hansen, Finance Business Partner, sent her apologies. Ms Cooper introduced the report that detailed the second quarter's full budget monitoring report for 2012/13 as reported to the Cabinet on 3 December 2012 and the subsequent update to this position which was reported in the monitoring exception report to Cabinet on 23 January 2013.
2. RESOLVED that the revenue and capital forecast variances from budget for 2012/13 based on the last exception report be noted.

60. 'DIGITISING KENT': Maximising the benefits from the Kent and Medway BDUK project
(Item D1)

(Report by Mark Dance, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development and Mr D Cockburn, Corporate Director, Business, Strategy and Support)

(Mrs E Harrison, Economic Development Manager, was present for this item)

1. Mrs Harrison introduced the report that set out the ambitions of the Kent and Medway BDUK Project of bringing Broadband to every premise across Kent and the development of a Digitising Kent Action plan to stimulate take up and utilisation of those new services.
2. Mrs Harrison noted Members comments and answered questions which included the following:
 - a) In reply to a question Mrs Harrison advised that she was unable to say when an announcement would be made on the work commencing this was dependent on factors which lay with BDUK.
 - b) It was suggested that the areas of Kent with the poorest Broadband service should be given priority. Ms Harrison confirmed that those were the areas that the Kent and Medway Broadband Project would be targeting.
 - c) In reply to a question Mrs Harrison advised that BDUK were being asked for examples of best practise in supporting SME's take up and optimise the availability of better broadband services.
3. RESOLVED that the responses to questions by Members and the information in the report be noted with thanks.

61. Unlocking Kent's Potential - Kent's Strategy for Growth
(Item D2)

(Report by Mark Dance, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development and Ms B Cooper, Director Economic Development)

(Mr R Gill, Economic Policy and Strategy Manager was present for this item)

1. Mr Gill introduced the report that outlined the general brief for the preparation of the new document "Unlocking Kent's Potential" and the timescales for its production.
2. RESOLVED that the work underway to prepare *Unlocking Kent's Potential* and its links with the development of the growth strategy being taken forward by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership; and the major themes that the revised strategy should contain be noted.

62. Economic Growth on Romney Marsh

(Item D3)

(Report by Mr M Dance, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development and Ms B Cooper, Director Economic Development)

(Mr R Gill, Economic Policy and Strategy Manager was present for this item)

1. Mr Gill introduced the six month progress report that was requested by Members on the development of a strategic approach to regeneration and economic growth on Romney Marsh in particular the work currently underway to secure additional economic development investment from the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and a planned business event in March 2013.
2. Mr Gill noted comments and responded to questions by Members which included the following:
 - a) The Local Member, Mrs Waters advised that the proposal for Dungeness C was not supported by the Government and with the decommissioning of Dungeness nuclear power station A and B focus was needed to create and secure jobs especially for youngsters.
 - b) In reply to a question regarding funding, Mr Gill advised that there was no formal date for the Magnox decision. The proposal would be submitted to the Magnox Executive Board on 21 March.
 - c) In response to a question, Mr Gill said that there was no reason why young people starting a business could not apply for the funding.
3. RESOLVED that the efforts underway to identify alternative sources of employment on Romney Marsh, including the business event proposed for 15 March 2013 and the report be noted.

63. Kent and Medway Green Deal Partnership

(Item D4)

(Report by Mark Dance, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development and Ms B Cooper, Director Economic Development)

(Ms C McKenzie, Programmes and Partnerships Manager, was present for this item)

1. Ms McKenzie introduced the report on the progress on the housing retrofit activities of the Kent and Medway Green Deal Partnership and proposed next steps.
2. In reply to a question, Ms McKenzie advised that there was no risk to the applicant with the Green Deal as the ECO funding paid for the measures to the homes and it was anticipated that the cost would be covered by the ECO Provider.
3. RESOLVED that the progress and actions taken on the Kent and Medway Green Deal Partnership be noted.

64. Raising Participation Age (RPA)

(Item D5)

(Report by Mark Dance, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development and Mr D Cockburn, Corporate Director, Business, Strategy and Support)

(Mr M Blincow, Research and Development Manager, was present for this item)

1. Mr Blincow introduced the report that set out the current position of the Raising Participation Age (RPA) which takes effect from the last day of the academic year in 2013 and the work being undertaken by the Skills and Employability Service.
2. Mr Blincow noted comments by Members and responded to questions which included the following:
 - a) There was concern raised about choices available and promoted to young people who are not academic and employers preferring to recruit someone over 18 years old.
 - b) Members noted that voluntary work counted as participation.
 - c) There was particular concern for the NEETs cohort who needed encouragement and given self belief before they entered back into training and who would deliver this. Mr Blincow advised that work was being undertaken on how to best support those most vulnerable young people.
 - d) Members suggested that this was not only about young people acquiring academic qualifications but a work ethic and work experience.
3. RESOLVED that the responses to questions by Members and the information in the report be noted with thanks.

65. Proposed Extension to Service Level Agreements for Visit Kent and Locate in Kent for the period April 2013 - March 2014

(Item D6)

(Report by Mr M Dance, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development and Mr D Cockburn, Corporate Director, Business, Strategy and Support)

(Mr W Gough, Economic Development Manager, was present for this item)

1. Mr Gough introduced the report which advised that the Service Level Agreements with Locate in Kent and Visit Kent expired on 31 March and reflected the changing and independent nature of Locate in Kent and Visit Kent and KCC's need to reconsider the most appropriate method of continuing to fund those organisations in the future.
2. RESOLVED that the extension of the existing Service Level Agreements for 1 year, whilst KCC establishes the most appropriate method for securing Inward investment services, and Destination Management services be noted.

66. Economic Development Unit 2013/14 Business Plan

(Item D7)

(Report by Mark Dance, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development and Mr D Cockburn, Corporate Director, Business, Strategy and Support)

(Ms B Cooper, Director of Economic Development, was present for this item)

1. Ms Cooper introduced the report which was produced following a request by Cabinet Committee at its January meeting on how performance indicators figures had been determined and for the final business plan to be strengthened with reference to cross cutting activity links to other Directorate.
2. Ms Cooper noted the comments by Members and responded to questions which included:
 - a) In reply to a question, Mrs Cooper explained that the figure of 40% used in the “discounting factor” was used by PricewaterhouseCooper and others who had significant experience of this when more than one agency was involved in creating jobs. This method would be used for setting the jobs target. Officers would also be collating job creation data from the individual agencies eg Locate in Kent, Visit Kent etc and cross referencing that data to check against the target figure to produce an accurate number of jobs created in Kent.
3. RESOLVED that:
 - a) the responses to questions by Members be noted; and
 - b) the proposed approach to assessing and reporting performance indicators and the area of cross- cutting activity in paragraph 3.2 of the report be noted.

67. Produced in Kent - Feedback from Member Visits

(Item D8)

(Report by Mr M Dance, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development and Mr D Cockburn, Corporate Director, Business, Strategy and Support)

(Mrs T Bruton, Head of Regeneration Projects, was present for this item)

1. Mrs Bruton introduced the report which outlined the visit by Members of this Cabinet Committee to a number of Produced in Kent (PinK) member businesses on Friday, 1 March 2013.
2. Mrs Bruton advised that some of the key points raised by the Produced in Kent member businesses included the following:

- Difficulty in accessing funding – There was an appreciation of the support given by Produced in Kent with this area.
- There were more young people interested in accessing this sector for a career.
- There had been growth in some of the businesses through diversifying.
- Produced in Kent gave the local businesses the opportunity to share employees, especially those who were part time workers and expertise.

3. Mrs Bruton noted comments and responded to questions by Members which included the following:

- a) The benefits of being a Member of Produced in Kent were applauded especially the help to SMEs in setting up websites, labelling etc.
- b) In reply to a question, Mrs Bruton advised that Mr Edwyn Martin, Manager, PinK, would be looking at setting up a website for SMEs that were Produced in Kent (PinK) members so that their goods could be obtained online from a collective Kent base supplier.
- c) In response to a question, Mrs Bruton suggested that the survival of the poorer quality Farmers markets would be down to people “voting with there feet”.
- d) Businesses needed to be made aware of the KCCs Apprenticeship scheme, Leader programme.
- e) Members noted that Produced in Kent was primarily aimed at producers of food and drink but there were also businesses in craft and there was no intention to extend that remit.

4. The Cabinet Member, Mr Dance, advised that Visit Kent, Locate in Kent and Produced in Kent working closely together would be written into their future agreements.

5. RESOLVED that:

- a) the responses to questions by Members and the report be noted; and
- b) Mr Edwyn Martin, Manager, Produced in Kent, be invited to a future meeting of the Cabinet Committee.

68. Verbal Update by Director of Economic Development

(Item D9)

1. The Chairman invited the Director of Economic Development, Ms Cooper to give her verbal update. The points highlighted included:

- “Grow for it” – There was a successful launch at the London Stock Exchange when the Leader, Mr Carter was invited to open the day’s session by ringing the bell. This event was supported by representatives from both the media, businesses and MPs.
- The Games Expo East Kent “GEEK” was successfully held at the Winter Gardens, Margate which raised the importance of digital, with 60 businesses represented to discuss their needs which included, collaboration and networking.

- TIGER - The launch would be on 21 March at Princes Park, Dartford. The District Councils would hold individual launches too. Application process will be open from 8 April.
- A National Tourism Conference would be held in Dover on 20th March, which was being promoted as part of the “English Tourism Week” which all Members had been invited to attend.
- RGF 4 bid was being prepared for further financial assistance for local businesses. Ms Cooper warned that this bid would have an outside chance of success. The bid needed to be submitted by 20 March

2. Ms Cooper took the opportunity to thank the Cabinet Committee and the former Regeneration and Economic Development Committee Members for the support given to the staff of the Economic Development Unit.

3. RESOLVED that the responses to comments and questions by Members and the information given in the verbal update be noted, with thanks.