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To: Members of the Kent's European Relationship Select Committee

Subject: Kent's European Relationship Topic Review

Date: 10th December 2013

Summary: To discuss and agree proposed Terms of Reference, Scope and general approach for the Review

This review takes place against a complex backdrop. We face the prospect of a referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union (EU); and, while there are signs of an upturn in the British economy, we are still feeling the effects of a global financial crisis. Not least, the County Council is in the process of major whole-council transformational change and needs to make savings of £273 million over the next three years while ensuring that its priorities for the future of Kent are kept to the fore.

EU funding has become interwoven in the multiple funding streams that support many of KCC's core activities and objectives and those of Kent more widely. It has been used as leverage for other sources of funding in some cases worth many times the 'original' amount. EU funding has three strands: Thematic (Europe-wide), Interreg (geographic) which brings together EU regions and cities working jointly on programmes, projects and networks; and structural funds which are governed at EU level and managed nationally.

As this review takes place new arrangements with regard to EU structural funds are being finalised with three funds: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and part of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) being brought together as Structural Investment Funds (SIF) for growth, allocated to regions via Local Enterprise Boards (LEPs). Funds will come to Kent via the South East LEP. New arrangements too, are being put in place for the provision of match funding. Thus KCC can potentially access a range of European funding at each of these levels.

KCC's European activities and engagement in support of European partnerships (for KCC and Kent) are for the most part facilitated through International Affairs (IA) comprising a small staff based in Maidstone, an office in Brussels and an educational (leisure) establishment in Harelott, France. IA has been situated within various directorates and currently comes under Business Strategy and Support (Economic Development) which is likely to fall under the 'Corporate' heading once KCC's current transformational changes have taken shape.

The focus of IA activities is in three key areas: policy, partnerships and projects. It has a policy influencing role both in the UK and in Europe and, for example, has facilitated close cross-border relationships with a number of European partners as well as supporting businesses and promoting trade and inward investment, including through the Kent International Business network. It carries

out a range of work to secure EU funding for identified projects, contributing to KCC core business objectives and those of partners in Kent. Over £30 million has been secured for Kent from the EU Regional Development Fund over the current 7 year EU funding Programme.

As we approach the end of this EU funding round (with preparations for the programming period 2014-20 already well under way) it will be important that Members, businesses and all those who live and work in Kent, can have a clear understanding of how KCC's activities with regard to European funding and Kent's relationship to and engagement with European partners have contributed to KCC's priorities for Kent. A further key aim of this review will be to capture the learning from experience of EU funding, engagement and activities to date and identify ways in which the potential for positive impact on KCC and the Kent economy can be maximised.

2 Committee

2.1 The Select Committee conducting this review will be operating over a short period with pre-Christmas desk research and a 2-day programme of meetings in January. It will need to establish clear objectives and retain a sharp focus on them in order to complete the work within the allocated time. A closely defined scope will be critical to the review's success and it is therefore vital that this is fully discussed and agreed at the outset.

2.2 The Select Committee comprises nine Members of Kent County Council:

Mr Mike Baldock	(UKIP)
Mr Andrew Bowles	(Conservative)
Mr Dan Daley	(Liberal Democrat)
Mr Alex King, MBE	(Chairman Designate- Conservative)
Mr Roger Latchford, OBE	(UKIP)
Mr Geoff Lymer	(Conservative)
Mr Alan Marsh	(Conservative)
Mr Roger Truelove	(Labour)

(At the time of writing a fifth Conservative Member is to be put forward)

3 Draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for decision

With the mandate of Scrutiny Committee (13th November) the Terms of Reference have been revised and those put forward for consideration are as follows:

To determine:

- The benefits and challenges for KCC, Kent organisations and the Kent economy from KCC's European engagement and activities over the period 2008-13.
- The key lessons that may be drawn from engagement and activities undertaken during this period

- What KCC needs to do in order to maximise the potential benefits to the county from European engagement and activities in the future.

4 Draft Scope/Questions

Determine:

The benefits and challenges for KCC, Kent organisations and the Kent economy from KCC's European engagement and activities over the period 2008-13:

Gain an understanding of how KCC's EU related work operates and is resourced

- Projects:
 - i. For which projects was EU funding secured during the last EU funding round (KCC and Kent) and what was the value of that funding?
 - ii. How do projects arise/how are they selected?
 - iii. (Highlight projects representing a number of sectors¹ and explore the challenges faced with regard to securing EU funding as well as the benefits to Kent realised (or anticipated) from project activity)
 - iv. Was KCC able to fully exploit opportunities for EU funding during this period/barriers to doing so/potential solutions.
 - v. What are the issues around match funding?
- Policy:
 - i. How has KCC exercised its role (in the UK and in Europe) in the last four years to influence and impact on European policy in order to benefit Kent?
 - ii. What have the outcomes of that activity been?
- Partnerships:
 - i. What partnerships have been developed in Kent in relation to European engagement (including Kent International Business).

How does the learning from KCC's EU related work feed into business planning?

The key lessons that may be drawn from engagement and activities undertaken during this period:

What has been learned from KCC's experience and activities in relation to policy, partnership and projects? Including:

- How could EU funding opportunities be maximised?

¹ This may include, for example, the areas of business, trade and export, inward investment, cross-border tourism, economic development and regeneration, rural development and the environment.

- What opportunities are there for income generation or cost-saving?

What KCC needs to do in order to maximise the potential benefits to the county from European engagement and activities in the future:

- Make recommendations for action by KCC
- Make recommendations for any further research required to assist decision-making on this topic

5 Proposed Timetable (summary)

Late Nov/ Early Dec 2013	Research, preparation, identification of stakeholders and witnesses; setting up of Hearings and meetings
10th Dec	First Meeting of Select Committee to elect the Chairman, discuss and agree: TOR, potential witnesses and timetable.
Late Dec	Desk research, obtain written evidence, contact witnesses; publicise review; draft themes and questions
Mid January	Hearings (2 days available – consider 2 x 3 interviews or 2 x 4 shorter interviews)
End Jan	Meeting to discuss and agree recommendations
Early Feb	Report writing
End Feb	Meeting to agree final report (drafts by email) OR meeting to consider draft report (final by email)
Early March	Executive Summary Report shared with Cabinet Member and Director (by email)
Mid March	Executive Summary/Report shared with CMT, Economic Development Cabinet Committee and Cabinet (by email)
17 th March	Report despatched to County Council
27 th March 2014	Report presented to County Council
Monitoring: June 2014	Directorate to agree action plan and share with Economic Development Cabinet Committee
March 2015	Reconvene Select Committee to evaluate impact of recommendations and respond.

6 General Approach

- 6.1 A rapid ‘light touch’ review is proposed comprising a short period of desk-based research and Member-led interviews. Written evidence will be obtained and may be provided to Members outside of the meeting schedule to enable reading time.
- 6.2 Members may also wish to carry out individual work as Rapporteurs, on particular aspects of the scope.

7 Evidence gathering – Hearings (for discussion)

- 7.1 Two half days have been identified for Select Committee Hearings during early January 2014. Members may wish to consider whether to carry out 6 45 minute interviews or 8 shorter interviews. Hearings will normally be open to the public unless there is a specific requirement to hold a closed session.
- 7.2 It is proposed that Members remain for 30 minutes after both sets of interviews to ensure all views, key points and emerging recommendations (from interviews and written evidence) are captured.
- 7.3 Details of suggested organisations/witnesses to invite to hearings are outlined below. A number of others may be identified as the research process progresses. (Written evidence may be requested from those who are unable to attend or cannot be included in the timetable.)

	Organisation	Individual	Topic area
1	KCC International Affairs	Ron Moys (Head of International Affairs)	Overview of KCC's International Affairs Group
2	KCC International Affairs	Dafydd Pugh (Head of Brussels Office)	Policy and influencing
3	KCC Trade Development Manager	Steve Samson	Business and Trade, Kent International Business (KIB) 2 Seas Trade
4	KCC Enterprise and Environment	Carolyn McKenzie – Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Climate Change and Business Support projects
5	UK Trade & Investment (UKTI)	Rob Lewtas	Inward investment and international trade support
6	Conseil General du Pas de Calais	Jean-Paul Mortreux (Le Directeur de Cabinet)	Cross-border relationships
7	Visit Kent	Sandra Matthews-Marsh (Chief Exec)	Cross border tourism and projects
8	BSK – CIC	Erica Russell	Business Support and pan European projects
9	Kent Downs	Nick Johannsen (Director)	Rural development and projects
10	Agence de Developpement et de Reservation Touristique (ARDT)	Diana Hounslow (Directrice)	Cross border tourism
11	Invicta Chamber of Commerce	Tudor Price – Business Development Manager	Kent International Business, Business support and international activities LEPs

12	Hardelet Centre	Myriam Caron	Educational and business aspects of Hardelet
13	Locate in Kent	Paul Wookey	Inward investment
14	UK Higher Educational International Unit	Joanna Newman (Director)	Education
15	Centre for European, Regional and Transport Economics CERTE (UKC)	Roger Vickerman	Cross-border transport
16	Environment Agency	John Gower – Project Manager	Lead agency – ERDF Interreg 2 Seas Project CC2150
17	European Parliament	Richard Ashworth (MEP)	

8 Written views/comments

- 7.1 In addition to that noted above, and in order to gain maximum input to the review, it is proposed that summaries/key points from a number of officer interviews are provided to Members, where these would aid understanding of the issues.

9 Other Meetings of the Select Committee (for discussion)

- 9.1 The Select Committee will meet at the end of January to discuss its findings and agree recommendations. There will be no opportunity for a further meeting on recommendations so it is important that Members focus on this aspect during the Hearing programme.
- 9.2 Committee Members' comments on the draft report and those of the lead Director and Cabinet Member will be sought by email. It will also be necessary for the closing process (where the report would normally be presented to CMT, Cabinet Committee and Cabinet) to take place by email, to meet the timescales for reporting.

10 Project Risks

- 10.1 The timescale for reporting leaves means that a 'light touch' approach is necessary.
- 10.2 There is no time in the programme for the select committee's report to be formally considered by CMT, Economic Development Cabinet Committee, and Cabinet though it will be important to ensure these processes take place by some means.

11 Exclusions

- 11.1 It is proposed that there is agreement to avoid any wider debate on European matters.

Recommendations:

1. To agree the Terms of Reference and general approach to the review of Kent's European Relationships
2. To authorise The Chairman or Vice Chairman to agree programme development on behalf of the committee with the committee being kept informed by email.

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