

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

GROWTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITIES CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Growth Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 7 July 2015.

PRESENT: Mr M A Wickham (Chairman), Mr S Holden (Vice-Chairman), Mr M Baldock, Mr A H T Bowles, Mr D L Brazier, Miss S J Carey, Mrs T Dean, MBE (Substitute for Mr B E Clark), Mr J A Kite, MBE, Mr G Lymer, Mr F McKenna, Mrs E D Rowbotham, Mr C Simkins and Mr R Truelove

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M C Dance, Mr P M Hill, OBE and Mrs S V Hohler

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs B Cooper (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport), Mr D Smith (Director of Economic Development), Mr K Day (Sports and Physical Activity Services Manager), Mr M Rolfe (Trading Standards Manager (East)) and Ms C A Singh (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

85. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item A2)

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mr B Clark.
2. Mrs T Dean attended as substitute for Mr Clark

86. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda

(Item A3)

No declarations of interest were received.

87. Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 20 May 2015

(Item A4)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2015 were correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

88. Verbal updates

(Item A5)

1. Mr Dance, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, advised that Sands Heritage Limited had been secured by Thanet District Council as the operator of Dreamland amusement park. The fairground opened in June 2015. Mr Dance suggested that a mechanism of measuring the potential success of the reopening of Dreamland as well as the other attractions such as the Turner Art Gallery in Margate and the impact locally and for the rest of Kent needed to be found.

2. Mr Dance explained that Locate in Kent commissioned Alison Watson to look at Kent's Life BioScience and agrotech offer. This would create benefits for similar smaller businesses in the BioGateway in procurement. This was dedicated to developing Kent's offer of a life science network with the ability to attract businesses in Europe.

3. Mr Dance referred to the recent Operation Stack advising that a delegation of Kent MPs were meeting with the Minister for Transport to discuss alternatives to Operation Stack. He advised that he had been notified that another issue was likely to happen. Mrs Cooper advised that there was a possibility that Operation Stack would be on and off in the coming days. Notifications would be given regarding travel routes to avoid.

4. The Cabinet Committee were advised that Thanet District Council were due to make a decision in the near future on whether to pursue a Compulsory Purchase Order or other options for Manston Airport.

5. Mr Dance and the Corporate Director for Economic Development responded to questions by Members as follows:

- The Corporate Director agreed that this was a national issue which Kent had to bear. Following the last Operation Stack in January 2015 a Group was set up tasked with identifying more effective solutions to the current Operation Stack arrangement. The Group included Dover Harbour Board, Eurotunnel, representatives of lorry parking and logistics sectors, Shepway District Council, Ashford Borough Council, Dover District Council, Kent County Council, Highways England, the Road Haulage Association and the Freight Transport Association to discuss whether there was a better way to manage Operation Stack. The Group was producing a report on proposed solutions. Mrs Cooper explained that the reason more lorries joined the queue following 2 days of Operation Stack was; lorry drivers took the view that they would rather be 3000th in a queue than 4501 because they had to stay somewhere and were not paid for overnight parking. This was not a good use of the Police or KCC's resources.
- Mrs Cooper advised that the Group's report would be forwarded to the Secretary of State, who had been made aware and was waiting to receive it.
- Mrs Cooper advised that any issues regarding road signage should be forwarded to her.

6. Mr Hill, Deputy Cabinet Member for Community Services advised that Kent had received the Libraries, Registration and Archives Customer Service Excellence Award 2015 after improving on last year. He explained that of the 57 criteria Kent had 14 compliance plus and 43 compliance, up by 2 on last year on compliance pluses. Mr Hill applauded the service's efforts achieved. Mr Hill then spoke on the Sainsbury's School Games. He attended the games held at Folkestone's new sport centre. Tracey Crouch new Minister for sport was in attendance at Medway. There were overall, 30,000 participants from 600 schools and a total of 6000 pupils took part.

7. RESOLVED that the responses to questions by Members and the the information received in the verbal update be noted.

89. Presentation: "The County's Visitor Economy" by Visit Kent
(Item A6)

1. The Cabinet Committee received a presentation from Mrs Matthews-Marsh and Mrs Cottrell on the work, ambitions and funding streams for Visit Kent using overheads followed by a short promotional film.

2. The Cabinet Committee thanked Mrs Matthews-Marsh and Mrs Cottrell for the presentation and congratulated them on the work achieved. Members were pleased to note that Kent had been awarded "Europe's best family holiday destinations" by Lonely Planet.

3. The Cabinet Committee noted that Mr Jonathan Neame, Chief Executive, Shepard Neame, would be replacing Mrs Cottrell as Chairman of Visit Kent, later in the year. Mrs Cottrell would be Honorary Patron.

4. Mrs Matthews-Marsh and Mrs Cottrell responded to questions by Members as follows:-

- a) Mrs Matthews-Marsh explained that Kent's proximity to London was a great marketing tool. Visit Kent carried out marketing in Europe, mainly France, Belgium, Holland and Germany, Kent being the third largest inbound market for those countries. European funding helped Visit Kent with reaching those European markets. She explained that Visit Kent was waiting to bid for new Intereg funding when it came online. Mrs Cottrell explained Visit Kent's partnership with Southeastern regarding marketing work to attract people to Kent by advertising in Southeastern's stations and as a result help to fill the 'off peak' trains.
- b) A Member commented that tourism was a hugely unrealised part of what Kent could offer.
- c) Mrs Matthews-Marsh reflected that the responses to every survey that Visit Kent carried out were about enjoying; clean streets, attractive, thriving town centres, vibrant high streets, distinctive shops and events. She hoped that once there was a clear picture drawn up through the Destination Management Plans (DMPs) a more joint approach can be made. Mrs Matthews-Marsh added that visitors made many public community assets more viable and it was important for visitors' views to be articulated to councillors etc who made decisions on town centres etc.
- d) Mrs Matthews-Marsh concurred that parts of Kent had unrealised areas for tourism and Swale was one of them. The Isle of Sheppey was already established as a bird watching and natural habitat site that would attract tourist.
- e) Mrs Matthews-Marsh advised that although Mr Neame was going to be Chairman of Visit Kent, Shepard Neame had to pay for its advertising with Visit Kent and were not treated more favourably than the microbreweries and 15 vineyards in Kent, they were all members of Visit Kent and formed part of the fabric for new Kent, the Garden of England.
- f) Mrs Matthews-Marsh explained that Bluewater Shopping Centre was losing business to other shopping centres and was working with Visit Kent as a critical footfall ie Bluewater acts as the magnet then people were dispersed into Kent from there.

- g) Mr Brazier agreed to advise the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment that Visit Kent would be happy to join the Clean Up Campaign against littering. Mrs Cooper agreed to submit a report on the issue of litter collection to a future meeting.
- h) Mrs Matthews-Marsh advised that Bluewater shopping centre was a leader in retail and had expanded its offer to include; leisure, it now had a huge event space. Bluewater was already had the highest volume footfall in Kent but was working to increase its footfall
- i) Mrs Matthews-Marsh advised that three members of the Visit Kent Team had been trained in World Host Training to become teachers, with the ambition of offering world host at a lower cost.
- j) Members noted that evidence showed that accreditation schemes for businesses were declining due to the public using social media sites for information about the quality of a service.
- k) Visit Kent would welcome the opportunity to carry out a DMP on Dartford.
- l) In response to a question regarding the possible effect on the hospitality sector of restrictions to migrant workers, it was advised that Visit Kent shared concerns regarding policies/legislation that might limit/reduce the ability to hire the right labour to service the hotels. Mrs Matthews-Marsh, Mr Dance and Mrs Cottrell were looking to introduce a Hospitality Guild to encourage more local young people to consider a career in hospitality..
- m) Mrs Dean advised on the development of a scheme to be introduced in the West Malling area, similar to the Blue plaque scheme, [The Blue plaque scheme did not operate on a national scheme outside London]. The plaque would use cheaper materials and include a QR system [A QR code (quick response code)]. Visit Kent had offered a site on its webpage where this information would be held. If this was successful it was hoped that the scheme could be adopted elsewhere in Kent. Mrs Matthews-Marsh said that Visit Kent was working towards introducing iBeacon technology. This would be used to bring to life the stories behind Kent's buildings.
- n) A Member commented that we needed to promote Kent restaurants which were Michelin star rated and Kent produce, including; cheeses, wine; and snails, which were exported to restaurants in France.

5. RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the comments and responses to questions by Members be noted;
- (b) a report on the issue of litter collection be submitted to a future meeting;
and
- (c) the information given in the presentation be noted with thanks.

90. Tunbridge Wells Cultural Hub
(Item B1)

1. The Cabinet Member, Mr Hill introduced a report on the partnership between KCC and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to deliver a Cultural and Learning Hub in the heart of Tunbridge Wells. This would bring together the Libraries, Registration and Archives Museum, Gateway, Information Point, and adult education facility and Theatre Box Office in a single facility, to add significant benefit to increasing the

footfall. The project was dependent on the success of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid. This was Round 1 of the bidding process and the result of the bid was due on 21 July 2015.

2. The Project and Operations Manager, Mr White, explained that this was an £11.2 million project. The plot consisted of two listed buildings that were to be refurbished, along with 540sq m of new build. He advised that the breakdown of the funding was £2m capped from KCC; £4m of the funding would be from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council; £3.9m from the Heritage Lottery Fund; £750,000 from Arts Council England; and £550,000 from other fundraising schemes. Mr White advised that only 20% of HLF bids were successful due to the volume of bids in Round 1 but discussion held with the HLF Board were positive. Should the first round bid fail it was expected that there would be the opportunity to resubmit the bid in six months. If successful there would be a draft collaboration agreement document drawn up and the tendering process would be in place for an architect to draw up the plans with an 18 month time frame for drawing up HLF Stage 2. Post HLF Stage 2 bid being successful there would be a 24 month build period.

3. Mr Hill and Mr White noted comments and responded to questions by Members as follows:-

- Mr White advised that an Economic Impact Assessment had been carried out by an independent company that has shown the benefits to the Borough and KCC and Kent as a whole. With regards bringing services together, Mr White said that it was about creating sustainable services and cross pollinating the services. He gave the example of, where the post office was being brought into the Swanley Library which would increase the footfall to the library.
- Mr White advised that the partnership with Tunbridge Wells Bough Council was sound. The legal agreements would be detailed regarding the leases, collaboration agreement and development agreement and would set out how the project would go forward and ensure KCC was completely protected.
- Mr Hill advised that bringing together services created a centre of excellence and improved not only those facilities but surrounding areas. He gave the example of The Beaney, Canterbury which has brought many more people into the area and the Turner Contemporary which had further assisting in the regeneration Margate.
- A Member commented that this was a good example of cooperation and working together of local authorities. There was no doubt of Tunbridge Wells commitment to this project.

4. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the responses to questions by Members be noted;
- b) the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee endorsed the recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development to enter into legal agreements including, but not limited to, a Memorandum of Understanding with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. The Memorandum of Understanding sets out the intention with which KCC will progress the project;

- b) to support the delivery of the Cultural Hub by agreeing to temporarily relocate the library and adult education service during the period of the works, and incorporating them within the new Cultural Hub facility when the works are complete; and
- c) that KCC shall act as the accountable body for the project subject to KCC's VAT partial liability exemption position not being breached.

91. Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework
(Item C1)

(The Leader of the County Council, Mr P B Carter, CBE, was present for this item)

1. The Cabinet Committee received a report on the work carried out to develop a Growth and Infrastructure Framework for Kent and Medway which sets out a clear picture of the infrastructure needed to facilitate growth across the County to 2031 and quantified the funding gap for provision of this infrastructure.

2. The Head of Strategic Planning and Policy, Ms Carruthers, gave a short presentation using overheads that explained the process and benefits of the Framework in demonstrating the funding gap which would then enable conversations on how the necessary infrastructure could be delivered.

3. Mr Carter advised that he requested that this report be submitted to this Cabinet Committee before it was discussed at the next County Council meeting on Thursday, 16 July 2015, to allow Member the opportunity to discuss the issues. He explained the infrastructure identified this was not a wish list but a must do list. The projects would emphasise that there was a funding gap which was smaller than first thought. He stated that a solution for the funding gap would need to be found. He suggested that there would be a need to look at contribution from the private sector and CIL. He added that the local authority should scrutinise the utilities 5 year programmes. A suggestion was made that the Utilities could be invited to meet the Scrutiny Committee.

4. The figures used to calculate the funding gap were from KCC figures and housing trajectories. The income levels were extrapolated from information that KCC already held and best guess estimates where necessary. KCC was working closely with the Medway Unitary and had participated as the District councils had.

5. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the responses to questions by Members and the work that had been carried out to produce the Growth and Infrastructure Framework for Kent and Medway be noted; and
- b) the Cabinet Committee requested that a vote of thanks be made to Mrs Carruthers and her Team for their work.

92. Funding for Sports Organisations and Talented Performers
(Item C2)

1. The Cabinet Member, Mr Hill, introduced a report that gave information on funding for sports provided through the Sport and Physical Activity Service for sports organisations and talented performers and ways of mitigating 38% funding reduction across 2015/16 and 2016/17.

2. The Sport and Physical Activity Services Manager, Mr Day, advised that as well as allocating funding to talented athletes, sports clubs and organisations the service also signposted people to other funding sources, including coaches.

3. Mr Hill and Mr Day responded to questions as follows:

- A suggestion was made that there should be more support for team sports to improve facilities and a concern that the funding from league sports was not reaching the grass roots as intended. Mr Day said that he would provide information on funding to sports.
- Mr Hill advised that he would be raising various issues with the Minister for Sport and the Olympics, Tracey Crouch and would discuss the need for a 50 metre swimming pool in Kent.
- A Member advised that Dartford Borough Council made a choice to invest and focus its efforts in providing sport facilities in the area and has enjoyed many competitions hosted by Olympic competitors. Dartford was due to open a pavilion. This had contributed to reducing graffiti and crime in the Borough.

4. RESOLVED that the responses to questions by Members and the report be noted.

93. Work Programme 2015
(Item C3)

1. The Cabinet Committee discussed a report giving details of its proposed Work Programme for 2015.

2. The Cabinet Committee suggested the following items be included in the Work Programme:

- A suggestion was made that the Cabinet Committee meets with Small Medium size Enterprises (SMEs) to hear what impact KCC's decisions had on their businesses.
- It was confirmed that a presentation by the University of Kent would be held in the Autumn.
- A suggestion was made that this Cabinet Committee should hold a meeting in Margate to include a visit.
- A request was made for an update report on the Regional Growth Fund Programmes.

3. RESOLVED that subject to the requests by Members, as set out in paragraph 2 above, being included in the Work Programme, the report and Work Programme for 2015 be noted.

94. Decision 15/00048 - Protocol for National Illegal Money Lending Team
(Item D1)

1. The Cabinet Member, Mr Hill, and Trading Standards Manager, Mr Rolfe, introduced a report advising on a decision that was taken outside the meeting cycle in accordance with Appendix 4 Part 6 of the Constitution as it could not be reasonably be deferred to the next programmed meeting of this Cabinet Committee.
2. RESOLVED that the report be noted.