

Appendix 1

Kent's European Relationship - Action Plan (Further updated February 2017)

Select Committee Recommendations	Proposed Actions	Progress to date	Status
<p>R1 That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Affairs Group (IAG) works to maximise funding, activity and projects from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) European Programme and supports the commissioning process for KCC, Kent and Medway projects through that programme • The LEP delivery architecture includes the involvement of an appropriate rural organisation so that the rural priorities of the county will be pursued as an integral part of Kent and Medway's overall objectives for growth. • KCC lobbies central government to ensure that it accesses appropriate EU national funding streams for rural issues and the EU Solidarity Fund in relation to recent floods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with our LEP partners and government to ensure that governance processes, including commissioning, project selection and partnership arrangements, enable Kent and Medway to maximise their funding from the SELEP programme • IAG to highlight opportunities to KCC Directorates and other organisations • We will develop bespoke 'Opt-in' arrangements with UKTI South East for the delivery of business support services and with other agencies, such as SFA and MAS, where appropriate • We will secure appropriate Kent & Medway rural representation on the SELEP EU Delivery Group, and develop a new EU Rural Development LEADER programme for East Kent • We will seek funding for rural activities from the EAFRD under the SELEP EU programme (KCC also wrote to DCLG in January 2014 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A total of some £58 million in EU grant has now been secured to date for 27 projects across KCC and Kent.</i> • <i>This includes fifteen KCC projects worth £8.3 million e.g. :</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>'Foreign Inward Investment Kent' (£1.7 million) to attract FDI from high value investors;</i> - <i>'LOCASE' (£3.8 million) to promote the commercialisation of low-carbon technologies in the county.</i> • <i>A new EU 'LEADER' rural development programme has now been secured for East Kent worth £1.6 million in 2015-20. This complements follow-on LEADER programmes for Kent Downs & Marshes (£1.9 million) and West Kent (£1.8 million).</i> • <i>Kent has secured the only two EAFRD projects approved to date from the First Call for projects. A SELEP EAFRD event is being held at the Kent Showground on 6 April 2017 to promote projects under the current Second Open Call for proposals (Rural Tourism; Food Processing and support for SMEs).</i> 	<p><i>Ongoing - Programmes open for bidding</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing - Programmes open for bidding</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing - Programmes open for bidding</i></p>

	<p>urging the government to explore an application to the EU's Solidarity Fund in respect of flood damage).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KCC wrote to DCLG in January 2014 urging the government to explore an application to the EU's Solidarity Fund in respect of flood damage but this was not pursued by the UK 	Complete
<p>R2 That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Affairs Group (IAG) updates KCC's International Strategy: 'Global Reach Local Benefit' in concert with the Local Enterprise Partnership EU Structural Investment Funds Strategy for the South East and the Kent and Medway Local Growth Plan, taking account of and noting the recommendations of this report and that • In addition, IAG produce or commissions EU funding guidance for the 2014-20 funding programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will revise the International Strategy to reflect the recommendations of the Select Committee, as well as incorporate new opportunities from the new programmes Structural Funds 2014-20, business and trade activities, and the refocusing of the Hardelet Centre and Kent Brussels Office • A Guide to Key Thematic Programmes has been produced (February 2014). This will be revised to incorporate the other new programmes, such as Interreg, once they are finalised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An updated European Strategy 2014-20 has been drafted which reflects the recommendation of the Select Committee Report including priorities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Securing EU Funding – Boosting Kent's Business and Trade – Ensuring International rail connectivity – Maintaining and developing local and European partnerships where these support the development of funding bids or support policy learning and best practice • A Guide to Thematic Programmes has been produced together with internal Fact Sheets and guidance on other programmes such as Interreg 	<p>Complete but potentially to be reviewed in the light of 'Brexit'</p> <p>Complete</p>
<p>R3 That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Affairs Group prioritises its partnership development function, increasing its capacity to maintain and develop the relationship with local and European partners; businesses and Members of the European Parliament in the South East to maximise the potential for EU funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing of the Hardelet Centre (See R4) will be restructured to enable the current Acting Manager to fulfil her core function as IAG's European Partnerships Manager • KCC will sign an MOU with West Flanders as a key partner in the new EU programming period 2014-20 • The Kent Brussels Office will relocate to the offices of Nord-Pas de Calais, our most longstanding European 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KCC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with West Flanders in Ypres on 28 March 2014 • The Kent Brussels Office joined with the region of Nord-Pas de Calais in January 2015 This is strategically advantageous to KCC in terms of Joint project development and NPDC is Managing Authority for several of the new EU funding programmes for which Kent is eligible in 2014-20 	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p>

	<p>partner, as part of a strengthened relationship with NPDC (see R5 below)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings took place with our key European partners immediately after the EU referendum result in order to assure them of our continuing commitment to cross-border cooperation and future joint project development under Interreg. 	Ongoing
<p>R4: That</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hardelot Centre is developed as a flagship link between South East England and Northern France: that solutions are sought for an increase in accommodation to enable a diversification of use (with a focus on language skills, cultural awareness and exchange) to foster Anglo-European partnerships and maximise trading opportunities for Kent businesses in Region Nord-Pas de Calais and further afield. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Full Options Paper including associated business cases and relevant facts and figures to be prepared. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developments at Hardelot have reduced expenditure and increased income to make the Centre increasingly financially self-sufficient. • This has been achieved through staff restructuring, re-negotiation of utility contracts, tighter financial management, a reduction in food waste and more effective marketing to increase bookings. • 50% of bookings are currently from Kent schools; any 'gaps' (e.g. due to UK school holidays) are being filled by French groups e.g. summer camps. • This was facilitated by the designation of the Centre in 2015 as an 'Association' under French law. 	Actioned and ongoing
<p>R5 That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of KCC's Brussels Office is strengthened and refocused towards policy, influencing and the provision of guidance to KCC and Kent organisations with a particular emphasis on accessing EU Thematic funding and new Interreg funds for the benefit of Kent and its residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Brussels Office will develop a detailed Work Programme and engage further with Directorates and reflect key corporate priorities in its work programme, in particular those that can be progressed through EU policy or funding activities. • A hub for project development will be created with Nord-Pas de Calais Regional Office in Brussels, focusing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The co-location of the Brussels Office with Nord-Pas de Calais (now part of the new 'Hauts-de-France' region) took place in January 2015. • The Brussels Office is leading our efforts on specific policy fields including efforts to maintain Kent's international rail connectivity (see Recommendation 10 below) and supporting work to assess the impact of 'Brexit' on key Kent sectors, 	Actioned Ongoing

	<p>particularly on thematic programmes such as Horizon 2020, Erasmus+ and the Connecting Europe Facility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A programme of seminars in Brussels on Kent’s policy objectives will build on key partnerships and opportunities for project development. 	<p><i>including the rural economy, business and trade.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Office has organised a number of thematic workshops with our key European partners which has led to the development of a number of successful EU-funded projects (see R1).</i> 	Ongoing
<p>R6 That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KCC ensures it has sufficient staff resources to optimise the development and implementation of EU funded projects (with, as a minimum, a leading role in each of the three new directorates). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An assessment of resource needs will be carried out including the potential for ‘call-off’ arrangements for bid-writers and the recruitment of a European Project Facilitator within IAG to support KCC Directorates with project development, technical support, bid-writing support and project implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead contacts for project development have been identified within GET, SCHW and EYPS <i>and has led to the development of a number of successful EU-funded projects (see R1).</i> • Directorates will also need to build strong project management capacity working closely with IAG and the External Funding and Specific Grants Team. 	Ongoing
<p>R7 That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KCC ensures International Affairs Group and EU project officers are enabled to take advantage of free/low cost communication options (e.g. Skype) in order to maximise cost effective communication/engagement opportunities with EU partner organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IAG will use such options wherever available and feasible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KCC ISG has advised that standard Skype is ‘an insecure means of communication and that, even where the intention was to use it as a channel for non-sensitive information, use would result in broadcast of infrastructure data classified as ‘official’ by CESG and the Cabinet Office.’ • Teleconference facilities are, however, increasingly being used for partnership and project development meetings as an alternative to travel. Communications options are also being considered as part of actions under Recommendation 8 below. 	Not actioned

R10 That:

- KCC continues to make the case for improved international rail connectivity at both Ashford and Ebbsfleet, supported by the business case for Transmanche Metro which is due to be published later this year.
- The Select Committee would like to express strong support for the Ashford Spurs signalling project for which KCC is the lead authority, and which is at an advanced stage of development with most of the funding committed for the planning and design stage, since Ashford must be assured of future international rail connectivity in order to benefit the people of Kent and Kent businesses.

- KCC has obtained capital funding from the Local Growth Fund through the SELEP to finance the Ashford Spurs project.
- KCC will continue to make the case to Eurostar for the development of new services at both of Kent's International stations once the Ashford Spurs project is completed. This is now expected in Spring 2018.

- European funding of £1,900,000 for new signalling works at Ashford was secured from the EU's 'Connecting Europe Facility' (CEF).
- ***However, a subsequent decision to deploy the KVB signalling system, rather than the EU approved ETCS, system means that all the required capital funding for the Ashford Spurs project has now been secured from the Local Growth Fund through the South East LEP. The project is on schedule to be completed in the 2017-18 financial year.***

Complete

Actioned and implementation underway