

From: Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Economic Development
Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee 17 January 2020

Subject: The Kent Developers Group

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: None

Future Pathway of Paper: None

Electoral Division: All

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

This report outlines the work of the Kent Developers Group (KDG) to encourage deliverable development, infrastructure and growth in jobs and housing.

Recommendation:

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the contents of this report.

1. Background/Context

1.1 The Kent Developers Group (KDG) was originally formed in the early 1990's with the primary objective of encouraging commercial development across Kent & Medway and early membership included the Channel Tunnel Group and major landowners/developers such as Land Securities.

1.2 It has now evolved into a unique association which represents the development community as a whole and comprises developers of commercial spaces as well as residential and mixed-use schemes across the county, along with social housing agencies and various land, property and construction consultants.

1.3 Together they work alongside public sector partners including Kent County Council, Homes England, Natural England and the Environment Agency to address strategic issues affecting Kent & Medway.

2. Objectives

2.1 The availability of appropriately priced homes and commercial property play a significant role in attracting new businesses to the county. In support of sustainable growth and in conjunction with the other related groups across Kent and Medway KDG's aim is to encourage effective working relationships between the private and public sectors to bring about deliverable development, infrastructure and growth in jobs and housing.

2.2 This work has encouraged government agencies and key organisations including Highways England, Network Rail and the Utility Companies who operate across Kent & Medway to engage, finding strategic solutions and innovative ways to accelerate delivery of high-quality development. There are a number of achievements in this respect, including the examples outlined below.

2.3 This work also includes engagement with SELEP, forming similar groups within Essex and East Sussex to encourage collaborative working across the region.

3. Function of the Group

3.1 In operational terms, the stated benefits of KDG for the development sector therefore include:

- the opportunity to be part of the partnership working to remove barriers to growth and delivering future economic prosperity to Kent.
- the opportunity to discuss strategic issues with major public sector organisations.
- quarterly meetings, providing an excellent opportunity for networking and presentations on legal matters, planning, the environment, sustainability and design, as well as learning from other developers' experiences and exchanging useful contacts.

4. Achievements

4.1 Recent Initiatives/Achievements amongst others include production of both a 'Planning Protocol' and a 'Viability Protocol' jointly working in association with Districts and County which are designed to help streamline the planning process and provide consistency of approach as far as possible (see 'Planning Protocol' at Appendix A and 'Viability Protocol' at Appendix B).

5. Recommendation:

5.1 The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the contents of this report.

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