

From: Mark Dance, Cabinet Member for Economic Development
Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee
- 10 January 2019

Subject: Members' Recent Visit to Gravesham District

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: None

Future Pathway of Paper: None

Electoral Division: All

Summary: This report is in two parts. It summarises the outcomes of the recent visit by KCC Members to Gravesham District and outlines the programme of future visits to other Kent districts in 2019.

Recommendation: The Cabinet Committee is asked to receive and endorse the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the November 2017 meeting of this Cabinet Committee, Members agreed that officers arrange a programme of informal visits to Kent districts. The objective was to provide an opportunity for Cabinet Committee Members to gain an understanding of the economic development and regeneration opportunities and challenges within each of the Kent districts.
- 1.2 This report summarises the main outcomes of Members' visit to Gravesham District on 16 November 2018.

2. Visit to Gravesham District

- 2.1 The visit to Gravesham District on 16 November was arranged with the full support of officers and Members of Gravesham Borough Council, who provided a briefing about the economic development and regeneration opportunities and challenges for their district which are listed below:

- Employment space
- North Kent Enterprise Zone
- Lower Thames Crossing
- Tourism and Culture
- Town Centre Regeneration:
 - Transport Quarter improvements
 - St Georges shopping centre refurbishment
 - Heritage Quarter development
 - River frontage and ferry transport

The highlights of the visit summarised in Appendix 1 to this report.

Particular issues identified on the day are outlined below:

- High Speed One - need for more rolling stock as this is an issue at peak times when there is standing room only.
- Gravesend-Tilbury ferry and particularly a Sunday service. The ferry service provides access to employment and tourism opportunities at London Gateway, Amazon and Tilbury cruise terminal.
- Crossrail extension to Ebbsfleet - seen as crucial to opening up links to City Airport and Canary Wharf.
- Additional quality commercial space – lack of space and employment opportunities would help address the second lowest gross value added per head in Kent.
- Housing pressure – lack of sites and, as many are small, it is difficult to secure funding for additional school spaces.
- Lower Thames crossing – Gravesham Borough Council keen to work with KCC and other stakeholders on getting the best from Lower Thames Crossing and associated infrastructure.
- Development of maritime related skills via support for the Port of London Authority.
- Empty properties - keen to build on KCC's No Use Empty scheme.

These issues will be followed up by Officers as appropriate and with the relevant organisations.

3. Programme of Further Visits

- 3.1 Further Member visits to Kent districts are being arranged in collaboration with district and borough officers. The format for each visit involves a day-long tour of the principal economic development and infrastructure developments within each district.
- 3.2 The next visit is planned for 26 February 2019 to Ashford. The itinerary has yet to be finalised with district council colleagues, but it is anticipated the town centre, transport, housing and the southern expansion of the town will be the main features.
- 3.3 Owing to the scale and complexity of proposed development, a separate visit to the Ebbsfleet Garden City has been arranged.
- 3.4 No visits are planned for March and April owing to District Council Elections on 2nd May.
- 3.5 The indicative visit programme is:

Ashford Borough Council	26th February
Ebbsfleet Development Corporation	10th May
Folkestone & Hythe District Council	14th June
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	2nd July
Thanet District Council	6th September

Further visits are being planned for the remaining districts.

- 3.6 At the last meeting of the Committee it was agreed that, should places be available, invitations will be extended to the Chair and Members of the Environment & Transportation Cabinet Committee.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 The cost of coach hire is approximately £350 per visit.

5. Recommendation

Recommendation: The Cabinet Committee is asked to receive and endorse the report.

6. Contact details

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