

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 Online on Tuesday, 19 July 2022.

PRESENT: Mr R C Love, OBE (Chairman), Mr N Baker (Vice-Chairman), Mrs R Binks, Mr C Broadley, Mr T Cannon, Ms M Dawkins, Mr S Holden, Mr M A J Hood, Ms J Meade, Mr J Meade, Mr A M Ridgers, Mr D Robey, Mr M J Sole and Mr S Webb

ALSO PRESENT: Mr D Murphy, Mr P M Hill, OBE and Mrs S V Hohler

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs S Holt-Castle (Director of Growth and Communities), Mr M Dentten (Democratic Services Officer), Mr S Jones (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport) and Hayley Savage (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

74. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Manion and there were no substitutes.

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

(Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

76. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2022

(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2022 were a correct record.

77. Verbal updates by the Cabinet Members and Corporate Director

(Item 5)

1. Mr Hill, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services, gave a verbal update on the following:
 - (a) Demand on the Community Warden Service had increased due to issues such as financial family hardship, anti-social behaviour and safeguarding and welfare concerns.
 - (b) The Kent Libraries 'Summer Reading Challenge 2022 – Gadgeteers' focused on science and technology and ran from 9 July to 10 September 2022.

Children could sign up to the summer reading challenge by visiting a Kent library or online summerreadingchallenge.org.uk.

- (c) On 17 May 2022 Mr Hill opened the new Business Intellectual Property Centre at the Kent History and Library Centre in Maidstone. The Business IP Centre was a partnership with the British Library and supported by funding from The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). It was a physical and virtual hub for Kent's entrepreneurs to access low-cost information for supporting and protecting a business idea.
 - (d) Mr Hill opened Paddock Wood Library on 11 June 2022 and Cheriton Library on 19 May 2022 following refurbishment and both events had been well attended by residents.
 - (e) The new play area at Brockhill Country Park was opened on 7 June 2022 and the play area at Shorne Country Park was opened on 13 June 2022. Two further changing places facilities, to assist disabled visitors, would be installed at Brockhill Country Park and Lullingstone Country Park.
 - (f) On 8 July 2022 Mr Hill attended an event in Gravesham to celebrate the Queen's Baton Relay through Kent.
2. Mr Murphy, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, gave a verbal update on the following:
- (a) Mr Murphy attended an urban planning conference on 6 July 2022 which included colleagues from the Netherlands, Belgium and France, and had a particular emphasis on the hinterlands around Dover, Eurotunnel Folkestone and Sevington. In May 2023 the Council would be hosting colleagues from the Netherlands, Belgium and France for the Straits Committee.
 - (b) Implementation of the Entry/Exit Scheme (EES) which involved the screening of residents and traffic going through Dover docks and the Eurotunnel had been pushed back to 2023.
 - (c) Mr Murphy presented to farmers at the Kent County Show on 8 July 2022 regarding support for the rural sector and rural communities, including, for example, broadband rollout, transport, and schools.
 - (d) Ongoing discussions on infrastructure utilities such as UK Power Networks were progressing and briefings on the hydrogen initiative in the Thames Estuary had taken place.
 - (e) Mr Murphy was pleased to welcome Dover District Council's levelling up bid which in conjunction with the Council's levelling up bid focused on increasing customs capacity at the port of Dover.
 - (f) Panattoni had announced a long-term lease had been agreed with Marley Tiles and DPD at Wrotham, and a further 250 jobs would be created.

- (g) Barclays Eagle Labs would be opening a facility at Discovery Park, Sandwich. The Lab was a space to help entrepreneurs and businesses to collaborate and get their businesses up and running.
 - (h) Regular meetings were taking place with East Kent College to understand their strategy alongside that of the Council.
 - (i) Mr Murphy provided updates on miscellaneous projects including Dungeness Power Station, Otterpool, Newtown Works, the Stodmarsh water quality issue, Section 106 developer contributions, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, and the broadband rollout.
3. Mr Jones, Corporate Director for Growth Environment and Transport, then gave a verbal update on the following:
- (a) Services were supporting Kent residents during the extreme hot weather ensuring communities stayed safe. There had been an increase in staff testing positive for Covid-19, and whilst services continued to operate, staff and residents were monitored to ensure they kept safe.
 - (b) The Libraries, Registrations and Archives division were at their busiest time of year, in particular the ceremonies team.
 - (c) Kent Sport had recently been rebranded and was now known as Active Kent and Medway. The '#Outdoors is Free campaign' had been launched at the Kent and Medway Primary PE Conference 2022 and was a campaign to promote free active opportunities over the summer period.
 - (d) The Trading Standards Team had been offering accredited covid safety training called 'Raising the Standard' to Kent traders in the home improvement and maintenance sector. A Doorstep Crime Awareness week focused on Herne Bay, Whitstable and Birchington, took place in June. The team engaged with over 800 residents, traders, and banks and worked alongside Age UK. The event received positive feedback from residents and businesses and included pop up stalls in local supermarkets and active incidents were dealt with. During the event several banks expressed their interest to get involved.
 - (e) The Public Protection staff attended the Kent Police Open Day on Saturday 2 and Sunday 3 July 2022 to talk about services including Trading Standards Check, Positive Wellbeing and Social Prescribing. There were 21,000 visitors over the two days and the Council's stands were well attended.
 - (f) The Kent Scientific Services team was working with Mid Kent College to provide vocational industry placements for 45 days as part of the new T Level qualification.
 - (g) On 15 July 2022 the Kent Community Safety Team undertook the third Domestic Homicide Review on behalf of the Kent Community and Safety Partnership. The topic was domestic abuse and suicide, and cases were presented to front line professionals to help raise awareness. The links between domestic abuse and suicide had been included in the recently published statutory guidance for domestic abuse.

- (h) Community Wardens were offering support and advice to residents during the extreme hot weather with particular focus on the elderly and vulnerable. The wardens had also been working alongside partners under the Homes for Ukrainians Scheme and had assisted with initial welfare visits to guests and their hosts.
4. Mr Murphy, Mr Hill and Mr Jones responded to the following questions and comments from Members:
- (a) Asked on what basis the Short Straits would be registered as a World Heritage Site, Mr Murphy said it was part of the UNESCO Sites Across the Channel (USAC) project to look at improving tourism and outcomes for residents. Mr Jones said there was also a historic and geological significance regarding a ribbon of chalk across the channel. Mr Murphy said he was happy to share more information outside of the meeting.
- (b) Asked about bank closures in towns and adequate banking provision for residents and businesses, Mr Jones said he would liaise with the Council's business investment teams about the role of banks in preserving financial connectivity for Kent's communities.
- (c) Asked about work experience opportunities within the Council, Mr Jones said professional consulting, engineering and technical skills work experience was offered by teams within the directorate and work experience was being explored further in line with the work of the Employment Taskforce and skills development.
- (d) A Member asked whether more information on T-levels could be provided and highlighted the importance of a T-Level accreditation in green skills.

RESOLVED that the verbal updates be noted.

78. District Visits Programme - Members' Recent Visit to Sevenoaks District
(Item 6)

Mr Rob Hancock, Programme Manager, was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Murphy highlighted the importance of the visits in promoting understanding between districts, towns, and the Council to improve better working relationships.
2. Mr Hancock introduced the report which covered the recent visit to Sevenoaks District Council and outlined future visits for 2022/2023. Mr Hancock and Members appreciated the Leader of Sevenoaks District Council's time during the visit, and for the kind gift made by Sevenoaks District Council to the Council of framed posters of local railway stations.
3. Members expressed their gratitude for the organisation of the visits and agreed they were useful at looking at different approaches taken by district councils.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Committee reflected on the visit and made recommendations to the Cabinet Member on the future visits programme.

79. Performance Dashboard

(Item 7)

Ms Rachel Kennard, Chief Analyst, was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Murphy highlighted the Key Performance Indicator - *ED08: Developer contributions secured against total contributions sought* - was red due to a development being under review.
2. Ms Kennard introduced the Performance Dashboard for Quarter 4 of 2021/22 and highlighted the key areas of performance.
3. Ms Kennard, Mr Smith, and Mr Murphy responded to the following questions and comments from Members:
 - (a) Asked about the methodology for KPI's TS01 and TS02 and a target that was not affected by factors outside of the Council's control, Ms Kennard and Mr Hill agreed this would be reviewed.
 - (b) Asked about the potential expansion of the No Use Empty scheme Mr Murphy said the Council was assisting Essex County Council with the scheme and noted it was a Kent initiative that had won national awards. Mr Murphy said he would continue his efforts in identifying more funding for the scheme.
 - (c) Asked about the increase in percentage of 16 to 17 year olds who are NEET (not in education, employment or training), Mr Smith said this was a priority that involved a number of services within the Council and the Employment Taskforce, which included schools, colleges, universities and private sector training companies, aimed to put in place measures to increase the numbers of 16 to 17 year olds in employment, education or training. Members discussed the benefit of a report at a future meeting of the Cabinet Committee, jointly authored by services across the Council, to include potential engagement and initiatives with a broad number of groups such as parents, schools, and social services. The Chair noted the importance of liaising with the Chair of the CYPE Cabinet Committee and other interested parties to determine how best work on this should be taken forward.

RESOLVED that the performance report for Quarter 4 of 2021/22 be noted.

80. 22/00070 - KCC Equity Investments: New Investment Trust

(Item 8)

David Smith, Head of Business and Enterprise, Martyn Riley, Programme Manager, and Susan Berdo were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Murphy introduced the proposed key decision and Mr Robey gave an overview to the background of the decision and highlighted key points.
2. Mr Smith introduced the report and said the proposal to transfer ownership of current investments into a London stock exchange listed investment trust company did not include a further eight investments which the Council had made

outside of the proposed fund framework. Mr Smith said the key decision would not be triggered until there was the correct commercial situation, and legal and tax advice supporting the decision had been taken.

3. Mr Smith and Mr Robey responded to the following questions and comments from Members:

(a) Asked about the equity investment fund and specific investment in green energy, Mr Smith said the investment strategy looked at a variety of criteria and checks and in the past 10 years there had been several proposals from the low carbon sector. Mr Robey said a balanced approach was required with environmental considerations being part of the appraisal of any investment.

(b) A Member commented that the success of the fund depended on who was managing it and their choice of investments. Mr Smith said the proposed decision would provide companies with access to a significant amount of additional resource which the Council would otherwise not be able to provide. Mr Smith said the proposed decision included the option to sell the shares and therefore mitigate some risks such as funding being invested in companies outside of Kent. Mr Robey highlighted that the Council's role was to support businesses to reach a certain level, and the proposed investment trust fund would provide access to more funding to enable further growth.

RESOLVED that the proposed decision to delegate the authority to the Director of Growth and Communities:

1. To enter into the relevant contracts and legal agreements required to implement this decision allowing KCC to sell shares in unlisted companies within the Discovery Park Technology Investment Fund (DPTI) and the Kent Life Science Fund (KLS) in exchange for shares in a new listed Investment Trust company, only when market conditions are favourable and KCC has reviewed the Listing and Prospectus documents.
2. To enter into the relevant contracts and legal agreements required to close the DPTI and the KLS.
3. To ensure that the proceeds from the sale of KCC shares in the new listed Investment Company will be re-invested in local companies via the Kent and Medway Business Fund (KMBF).

was endorsed.

Ms Jackie Meade asked for her abstention to be noted in the minutes.

81. Kent Film Office

(Item 9)

Gabrielle Lindemann, Kent Film Officer, and Tony Witton, Culture and Creative Economy Manager, were in attendance for this item

1. Mr Hill introduced the report and highlighted the importance of the Kent Film Office (KFO) in promoting Kent and bringing increasing and significant sums of money into the Kent economy.
2. Ms Lindemann showed a short video which included a range of scenes filmed in Kent facilitated by the KFO. Ms Lindemann said the last two years had seen an increase in money invested in the Kent economy, largely due to the loss of production at the beginning of the pandemic. Ms Lindemann highlighted some of the feature films and drama series where the KFO had facilitated filming over the last two years and gave an overview of the service and support the KFO were able to provide using the film, Empire of Light, filmed in Margate as an example.
3. Ms Lindemann and Mr Witton responded to the following questions and comments from Members:
 - (a) Asked about increased suburbanisation in Kent leading to a reduction in industrial spaces and protected sites, and KFO's role in encouraging the preservation of vistas, Ms Lindemann said she was proactive in expressing the need to protect certain locations in Kent. Mr Witton said they worked with the Council's planning teams and contributed to discussions on wider planning issues within Kent. The Chair suggested that the compilation of a list of popular vistas used by production companies could be used to influence local planning decisions and increase publicity of the issue, and Mr Hill agreed this could be given some consideration outside of the meeting.
 - (b) Asked about KFO's agreement with Thanet, Folkestone and Hythe, Canterbury, Swale and Dartford district councils in comparison to the remaining districts, Ms Lindemann said that the KFO had an agreement with all the districts in Kent, as well as Medway Borough Council, but the districts mentioned above had handed over filming entirely to the KFO, and were charged a commissioning fee, which meant permission from district councils to arrange and film in their district was not required.
 - (c) Asked about KFO's involvement with the Ashford Film Studios development, Ms Lindemann said the KFO had provided support to the studios prior to planning permission being granted and opportunities for cross promotion between the two organisations had been discussed. Mr Witton said the KFO would be an integral part of the new development by supporting the film studios with locations and crews. The film studios also included an education facility which was likely to be run by East Kent College.
 - (d) Asked whether KFO could promote the county as a tourist destination, Ms Lindemann said the KFO website currently had a movie map and trails for example a Dickens trail and Darling Buds of May trail. Ms Lindemann said trails to promote film tourism would best be achieved through an app which provided visual interpretation between the location and how it was used on a film set. Ms Lindemann said the KFO were continually looking out for innovative products of this kind to become available on the market.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

82. Future Meeting Dates

(Item 10)

All meetings will be held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ.

Thursday 22 September 2022 at 2pm
Tuesday 15 November 2022 at 2pm
Wednesday 11 January 2023 at 10am
Tuesday 14 March 2023 at 10am
Tuesday 16 May 2023 at 2pm
Tuesday 4 July 2023 at 10am

RESOLVED that the future meeting dates be noted.

POST MEETING NOTE: Following discussion with the Chairman, the dates for the November 2022 and July 2023 meetings of the Cabinet Committee were subsequently changed to:

Tuesday 22 November 2022 at 2pm (was Tuesday 15 November 2022 at 2pm)
Wednesday 28 June 2023 at 10am (was Tuesday 4 July 2023 at 10am)

83. Work Programme 2022/23

(Item 11)

RESOLVED that the Work Programme 2022/23 be noted.