

## West Kent Partnership Meeting – 22 July 2016

## MINUTES

**Present**

Nicolas Heslop, TMBC, Chair  
 Richard Hayden, M&TW NHS Trust  
 David Joyner, KCC  
 Hilary Smith, TWBC  
 Roddy Hogarth, SDC  
 Jon Regan, Hugh Lowe Farms  
 Henry Warde, Squerryes  
 Mark Raymond, TMBC  
 Brian Luker, TMBC  
 Ross Gill, KCC  
 Jane March, TWBC  
 Peter Fleming, SDC  
 Mark Dance, KCC  
 Jo Fowler, Hadlow Group  
 Cath Goodall, BEIS  
 Tudor Price, KICC  
 Wendy Wood, WKP

**Guests**

Susan Berdo, KCC  
 Jay Atkins, Core Health & Leisure  
 Clive Dean, Water Process Solutions  
 Claire Day, Water Process Solutions  
 Chris Seale, Chimera Climbing  
 Andre Hedger, Chimera Climbing

**Apologies**

Pav Ramewal, SDC  
 Sarah Nurden, KMEP  
 Paul Hannan, Hadlow Group  
 Lesley Bowles, SDC  
 Robin Cooper, SDC  
 Jonathan MacDonald, TWBC  
 David Candlin, TWBC  
 William Benson, TWBC  
 Adam Bryan, SELEP  
 Roger House, NCMB  
 Julia Chapman, Kent Police  
 Julie Beilby, TMBC

1	<p>Round table introductions took place and the Chairman welcomed guests and new Partner attenders to the meeting.</p> <p><b>Minutes and Matters Arising April 22 Meeting</b></p> <p><b>Item 2 – SELEP Tour</b> - The Chairman updated Partners on the very successful day long tour of West Kent undertaken by Christian Brody, Chairman of SELEP. The tour provided an opportunity to showcase locations for growth in the area. Thanks were recorded to Mark Raymond for the excellent organisation and execution.</p> <p><b>Item 3 – KMEP</b> – LGF3 submissions have now been made – covered at item 8 on Agenda. WKP’s first regular update was provided to June meeting and West Kent officers now have a place</p>	
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## Partner Perspective – Richard Hayden, Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust

Richard gave a brief update on the Trust's five year workforce strategy behind which lies a detailed work programme across the following areas: recruitment and retention, temporary staffing, Culture (including staff engagement ), staff health and wellbeing, education and equality & diversity. He commented that as with every organisation, new challenges arise daily that impact on the workforce for example Brexit.

Richard touched briefly on the financial special measures announced the day before and outlined the background. Richard explained that the Trust is working closely with NHSI to support the development and delivery of financial efficiency schemes, and are accelerating their implementation to reduce the Trust's expected year-end deficit for 2016/17. A plan is in place and being delivered to make efficiency savings of £23 million, however this still leaves the Trust with a gap of a further £23 million between its income and expenditure to address. The Trust's work with NHSI will look at ways to close this gap and reduce the Trust's deficit beyond what it has already planned and started to deliver.

Richard highlighted that one of the biggest challenges has been around recruitment and over the past year it has been necessary to recruit from overseas as a result of the national shortages within certain staff groups and to ensure that we promote both the Trust and Kent as a great place to live and work.

Training plays a key role and this is ever more challenging with reduction in central budgets. The apprenticeship levy with high targets for public sector organisations brings opportunities to focus more on bringing young people into the National Health Service and new pathways into some of the professions will be needed. Promoting the various career opportunities to young people in schools is vital to recruitment and a dedicated resource is now in place to deliver this.

The Trust is exploring different options to communicate with staff and assist with work-life balance to aid in staff retention and promoting the organisation as a good place to work.

Discussion followed on several issues:

**Affordability of housing as an issue in staff recruitment and retention** - London weighting being payable in areas with similarly high housing costs does impact on recruitment. The Trust has been able to provide temporary accommodation for overseas nurses as part of a recruitment package although staff often transition quickly into housing locally.

**Supply Chain collaboration** – The Trust seeks to deliver cost efficiencies as is keen to collaborate where possible to drive further cost reductions. KICC have found that where there is a forum available for a supply base ways to reduce costs can often be found rather than lose a customer.

**Apprenticeship Levy** –It will be challenging to meet targets but will be collaborating with neighbouring health organisations and developing plans.

**3 Partner perspective – Hadlow Group**

Full destination data will be presented at the October WKP meeting. However, Jo presented some headline figures for last year for Hadlow College where 95% of students progressed into further learning, higher education or work.

The Hadlow Group are experiencing late applications for some courses but those at risk are now viable. This included Horticulture at Hadlow College and Health and Social Care and Early Years at West Kent College. Late applications is a trend in Kent, rather than elsewhere, with year 11's leaving decisions on future routes until after GCSEs. This highlights the need to actively promote progression pathways to students and potential students.

**4 Business Support**

**West Kent Business Support Programme**

Wendy delivered an overview of the current programme which has been very successful in finding innovative routes to deliver support to businesses in West Kent using Growth Hub Local Supplementary Funds.

Partners endorsed the value of the programme and the creative approach to delivery to different sectors in West Kent.

**5 Growth Hub – Ross Gill, KCC**

Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce have been delivering a pilot Growth Hub service in Kent and Medway as part of the SELEP Growth Hub network. The Growth Hub concept is being delivered nationally to signpost businesses to support. Different models have been developed across the country but all have to meet certain Government criteria

Ross explained that a tendering process for the next Contract is now underway, with a specification workshop completed, an external firm, EBS retained to manage the specification and a timetable agreed for tendering which would see a two year contract awarded in November.

Tudor was invited to comment on the pilot programme and observed that managing expectations has been challenging given the small budget. He welcomed the consultation process for the new contract as a way of managing those expectations and could envisage a future model where the Growth Hub could operate as a strategic partner with various business support models from the private sector. He cautioned that from 2018 Growth Hubs will need to be sustainable and that this was a challenge.

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**Government Programmes – Cath Goodall, Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)**

Given the recent departmental changes, Cath gave a generic update on Government objectives rather than specific programmes which could be subject to change.

Government policy has a focus on Growth Hubs with local needs being met at a local level. Growth Hubs also have a role as a gateway to innovation products, tax incentives etc. Sustainability going forward is a key issue and any bids for ERDF funds will still be considered as EU membership still in force.

Post- Referendum

- UKTI have written to all LEPs encouraging collaborative working with inward investors to retain investment in the UK
- Greg Clark heads up the new BEIS department and has a strong interest in place and locality
- Local Growth Fund continues to operate as before, bids in for end of July for Round 3 which announcements around the time of the Autumn statement
- Skills has moved across from the former BIS to become part of education

There was discussion around the need to manage the period between Government programmes so that momentum isn't lost with a change of policy and direction. For example, planning for business data to be transferred from one programme to another without compromising data protection and utilising alumni businesses as advocates/mentors in the future.

In the context of European funding programmes, Cath agreed to take back a question regarding ownership of intellectual property and tangible assets that are written down over a 5 year period. Who would own the property should the programmes be terminated before the 5 years have expired – UK or Europe? Tudor also agreed to raise with European committees.

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**Escalate – Susan Berdo, KCC**

The Chairman welcomed Susan and the 3 businesses attending who had been recipients of Escalate funding. Susan gave an overview of what Escalate achieved and introduced the Innovation Investment Loan which has a short window opening in August. The powerpoint is attached to the Minutes.

Discussion followed and various points were made:

- West Kent bids to Escalate tend to be smaller than elsewhere in the Escalate area and Kent generally – a request was made that for the Innovation Investment Loan and other finance programmes the minimum level of loan was kept at a level which would make it accessible to West Kent businesses
- Escalate loans didn't require a security process to be undertaken to protect the

investment. This had both pros and cons but for businesses gave them more flexibility. It didn't seem to impact on bad debts adversely.

- There are over a 100 expressions of interest across Escalate and Tiger so demand for any new finance scheme – ie Innovation Investment Loan, will be high. Concern was expressed about the management of expectations with the programme being widely promoted with such a short application window and limited funds

Presentations were then received from the 3 guest businesses who were all able to demonstrate the considerable benefit to their business that Escalate funding had delivered and the lessons learned from their Escalate journey

#### **Chimera, Tunbridge Wells – Chris Searle and Andre Hedger**

- Without the funding wouldn't have been so successful so quickly
- Created 7 full time, 5 part time and 2 freelance jobs
- Focus on start up imperatives – fitting out, business organisation etc – would have benefitted from support so that marketing the businesses was addressed at the outset

#### **Core Health and Leisure, Maidstone – Jay Atkins**

- Support and signposting received very early on from KICC
- Incredible support from Escalate team, particularly Sue, to not lose heart when difficulties securing a suitable property and help in introducing to networks
- Declined by every high street bank at least 3 times – having Escalate commitment gave credibility and enabled negotiation with potential landlord who undertook property upgrade

#### **Water Process Solutions, Tonbridge & Malling – Clive Dean and Claire Day**

- Used local suppliers since setting up premises, established good local networks
- Escalate less demanding in terms of due diligence than expected, considering loan was unsecured
- Need for working capital restricting growth – KCC finance schemes don't lend working capital. Greater and faster growth could be achieved if more materials can be bought to manufacture

The Chairman thanked the businesses for their time and their insights and identified several actions following their presentations

- Future finance schemes to consider how they can signpost successful applicants to practical business support such as marketing
- Future finance schemes to consider financing working capital for manufacturers if produces greater and sustainable growth
- Business presentations invaluable in connecting Partners with businesses on ground and helping to identify ways in which WKP can support – Guest

businesses relevant to meeting theme to be part of meetings going forward.

**8 Update - KMEP**

The paper from Sarah was noted.

**9 Update – West Kent Priorities**

Partners noted the paper. David Joyner explained that the work of the infrastructure and transport sub group includes adding value through collaborative working on major issues such as congestion busting and public transport integration initiatives such as smart ticketing.

**10 AOB – there was no other business**

**11 Dates of Next Meetings – email invitations for 2017 will be sent**

- Friday 21 October, 2016 – Inward Investment
- Friday 27 January, 2017
- Friday 28 April, 2017
- Friday 21 July, 2017
- Friday 20 October, 2017