

APPENDIX 1

Minutes - West Kent Partnership – Friday 28 April, 2017

Present

Nicolas Helsop, TMBC, Chairman
Peter Fleming, SDC
Jane March TWBC
Brian Luker, TMBC
Roddy Hogarth, SDC
Sean Holden, KCC
Adam Bryan, SELEP
Jon Regan, Hugh Lowe Farms
Tudor Price, KICC
Paul Hannan, Hadlow Group
Tracy-Anne Barker, Hadlow Group
William Benson, TWBC
David Candlin, TWBC
Nigel Smith, KCC
David Joyner, KCC
Mark Raymond, TMBC
Emily Haswell, SDC
Wendy Wood, WKP

Apologies

Pav Ramewal, SDC
Lesley Bowles, SDC – Emily Haswell attends
Mark Dance, KCC – Sean Holden attends
Julia Chapman. Roscoe Walford, Kent Police
Richard Hayden, MTW Health Trust
Caroline Shaw/Jon Rosser, IMAGO
Julie Beilby, TMBC
Henry Warde, Squerryes
Iain McNab, BEIS
Catherine Brunger, AXA PPP
Roger House

Guests

Tony Witton, KCC
Lucy Keeley, KCC
Dominic Johnson, Miramedia
Deborah Terry, Treatout
John McMahon, MCM

Introductions were made and the Chairman welcomed guests to the meeting.

Minutes and Matters Arising

Paul Hannan updated Partners on the Area Review. The report will be available on 30 June. KCC will continue to be involved in strategic planning post 16. There are to be some changes to the management of Colleges. Mid Kent and North Kent will continue to stand alone and funding will be made available for Canterbury and East Kent to merge. The governing bodies of West Kent, Hadlow and Ashford – the Hadlow Group – are to review governance and give consideration to a full merger of all three Colleges. Provision and branding would be unchanged, but a merger could be seen to provide stability and represent less risk.

Creative Industries

Partners received a regional perspective from Lucy and Tony and then heard of initiatives and challenges from three local creative businesses.

South East Creative Economy Network and Creative and Media Guild – Lucy Keeley and Tony Witton, KCC

Kent Cultural Strategy

Tony provided partners with an overview of the Kent Cultural Strategy which is owned by the sector with KCC acting as an enabler, undertaking governance and managing strategy. More than 18 months of consultation is informing the development of a new strategy with a 10 year vision – an aspiration for arts and culture to be integrated in every day society under the 3 pillars of Create, Innovate and Sustain.

Tony to supply data on creative businesses in West Kent

South East Creative Economy Network

TW

Lucy introduced the South East Creative Economy Network which is a SELEP initiative arising out of the Strategic Economic Plan recognising that building a thriving creative economy is critical to economic success. The Network has been in place for 2-3 years and is designed to among other objectives, harness the creative talent pool in London who are relocating to the LEP area.

The Network has 4 main work areas –

Workspace – an audit has been completed in Kent to ensure there is workspace fit for the needs of creative industries. The Kent Workspace Strategy will tie in with others in the LEP Including integrating with new housing developments.

Business support – an ERDF funding bid to bring investment for the creative sector has been submitted to DCLG and further work is being undertaken before resubmission. The programme includes forming cultural hubs, a grants programme aimed at stimulating cooperation and sharing best practice between businesses and advice services for the creative sector.

Talent accelerator – a programme from the Arts Council to grow a skilled workforce across the SELEP identifying interventions and training from 0-25 years old working with employers and schools.

Cultural tourism – Culture Kent build relationships between creative industries and tourism sectors. A bid to the Arts Council is being developed with the Turner Gallery in coastal Kent but should that be successful the learning will be applied across the county.

Tudor mentioned an innovative exchange programme to sell services to Europe for creative industries.

Creative and Media Guild

LK

Lucy gave an overview of the Guilds which aim to create closer links between industry and education and help prepare students for the world of work. The Creative and Media Guild is one of 8 guilds established through KMEP. Set up a year ago it now numbers 40 members, is chaired by an employer and includes young people. Further employers, particularly from digital and media are being

recruited. Programmes include an inspire vocational programme run in schools, careers advice, accreditation using the model of children's university and a passport record of personal learning. The Guild supports delivery of talent accelerator and cultural learning and creative skills are proven to build creative thinking and confidence.

Partners recognised that there is quite a cross-over of programmes and initiatives in supporting young people with careers choices. This will now include the forthcoming West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network. It was noted that there are real opportunities to streamline the activity in the West Kent area through close cooperation between the West Kent Network, the Guilds and providers

The House, Tunbridge Wells – Dominic Johnson, Miramedia

WW

One of the workspace initiatives brought forward through the South East Creative Economy Network in partnership with business is a creative shared space at The House, in Tunbridge Wells.

Dominic explained how he came to be involved in the project. As a digital agency his staff are young, and whilst recruitment is straightforward, retention is more difficult. The House provides all the advantages of a larger 'cool' employer, with a strong social element and opportunity to learn new skills through mixing with other businesses.

The House allows smaller companies to not only access those qualities which build a creative vibe but delivers economies of scale and is hassle free. It provides access to freelancers and potential sub contractors and is an opportunity to share contacts. The model allows a smaller agency to compete for full service agency work without having to directly employ specialist staff. Office space can shrink and grow depending on size of a team and there is easy access to meeting space and other shared resources such as communal space including a garden. All office services such as IT support and cleaning are included in the rental cost. The model allows Dominic to stay small and dedicated but access larger business benefits.

Looking to the future Dominic sees opportunities to extend the benefits with more collaborative working, maybe a house apprentice working with different businesses, additional shared House services such as a bookkeeper, HR support and harnessing joint purchasing power.

Tudor mentioned that study visits to European countries can be very useful for developing models and cited a collaborative consortium in Poland comprising designers and manufacturers. Details to be provided.

TP

Treatout – Deborah Terry

Deborah introduced the business, which is a subscription app designed to facilitate people with food intolerances to eat out with confidence. Developed with chefs at partner restaurants, diners will have inputted the food they can't eat and the app will tell them the dishes they can eat.

The company has been set up by 3 local Mums but most of the pre-start support

they have received has been out of area – Google campus for Mums in London and London mentors through contacts. Networking is vital to help access funding needed and has been provided through Entrepreneurial Sparks in Brighton.

Deborah would like to see local businesses able to access funding, grants, mentors and training locally.

Post meeting – SDC providing support to link Treatout to local support, grant and funding streams.

MCM - John McMahon

EH

John introduced his full service digital marketing agency which has been based in Tonbridge High Street for 20 years and now employs 20 people. He highlighted the rapid changes within the industry where now the vast majority of marketing is online. Activity is now highly scientific and MCM work as a Google Partner accessing their range of algorithms. The offer to agency clients is now around identifying their ideal client and then building a digital marketing plan using algorithms to reach the target audience. Websites are designed with the end user in mind, utilising search engine optimisation and sites need to be mobile friendly and load quickly.

Social media is a key tool in any marketing activity and Facebook is now able to build up a profile of people using their search history allowing targeted advertising on their home page.

John identified ongoing challenges for his business around finding and retaining staff where London, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells have a good offer. The cost of town centre parking is an issue and very little free parking now available. The town centre location is good for the business and for the town but brings bigger business rates. It is becoming easier to recruit young people locally as there is a bigger pool of people now the industry is more established and training is being delivered. It is so fast moving that the challenge in digital marketing is to keep updated enough to be relevant.

John stated that he was keen to support the development of relevant syllabuses and was pleased to connect with Hadlow Group at the meeting.

The business was involved in Growth Accelerator which was motivational for staff, involving them in the journey for the business.

TAB

SELEP – Strategic Economic Plan and Skills Strategy – Adam Bryan

SEP

Adam outlined the need for a new Strategic Economic Plan following the successful lobbying to Government for more flexibility over local spend of Local Growth Hub funds. There is now no need for Government sign off and there is an enhanced decision making capability for the Federated Boards around re-distribution of allocated funds to ensure spend within a given funding year. SELEP was also successful in receiving one of the largest LGF settlements which whilst reflecting

the size of the LEP, also demonstrates that Government is influenced by the case SELEP made of the need for investment funds.

The timescale is now to go out again to tender for consultants to ensure a quality approach with the SEP being signed off at the December SELEP Board Meeting.

The new SEP will

- Be a cohesive strategy
- Reflect current economic conditions
- Capitalise on the strong relationships with universities
- Maximise opportunities around Lower Thames Crossing
- Make a powerful case for funding
- Align with Industrial Strategy
- Have concrete, achievable outcomes
- Be developed out of comprehensive stakeholder engagement
- Plan for effective management of LGF
- Incorporate cross cutting themes and have reference among others, to impacts from neighbouring LEP areas, London growth, sub regional transport bodies and devolution

There was some discussion on how West Kent can help inform the development of the new SEP and Partners suggested that

- Consultants talk separately to each of the Districts as well as being offered an opportunity to engage at a WKP level
- Case for West Kent to be supplied AB
- Plan should make strong case for redistributed former EU funds to be made available to SELEP and not weighted to other areas WW
- Incorporate the unique constituency of West Kent economy AB
 - facilitate business support locally (ie – Treatout needed to travel to Brighton to access Bright Sparks scheme and London to access Google Campus for Mums)
 - recognise that West Kent looks to London more than to the rest of SELEP – strategic issues for London have more impact in West Kent

Skills strategy

AB

A new skills strategy is being developed in close cooperation with colleges and universities and will be underpinned by a very strong evidence base. Publication is expected in September/October.

The skills strategy evidence base will include a summary for every district. This model is already in place in Essex and has been adopted by business as a way to help understand the challenges and plan for college provision.

As part of the stakeholder engagement phase of the development of the plan, Partners were keen to input the needs of West Kent and Louise Aitken who is the LEP Skills Lead to be invited to attend the next WKP meeting to present the evidence base for West Kent to facilitate a discussion on the skills challenges for

the area.

WW

A skills and social inclusion event is planned on July 7 in Harlow with the Skills Minister, Robert Halfon who is the local MP. This event will also link to the SELEP enterprise adviser network which is now working with 200 schools.

Adam informed Partners there is an intention to utilise the Skills Adviser website built by East Kent College.

Update – KMEP – Paper A

Sarah highlighted some key information from Paper A

- Rail Summit at KCC on Monday 15 May
- Call for large schemes (over £100M in value) for Department for International Trade to offer to overseas investors
- Next KMEP meeting will focus on Industrial Strategy and the action plan developing from the Cultural Strategy

Update – West Kent Priorities – Paper B

Wendy summarised the key issues in Paper B

- Good progress against all 5 of key priorities – but particularly in the development of skills initiatives
 - Successful Job Fair format now delivering two events a year in partnership with Jobcentre Plus
 - Funding has now been secured from CEC and Hadlow Group for a West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network. Recruitment of coordinator will now take place so that work with schools can start in September. More detail at next WKP meeting.
 - West Kent Skillsfest will take place at The Assembly Halls on 10 October and is being delivered in partnership with WKP, AXA PPP, Education Business Partnership and West Kent Schools

AOB

None

Dates of next meetings

- Friday 28 July, 2017 – West Kent College
- Friday 20 October, 2017, Alexandra Suite, Swanley