

Minutes - West Kent Partnership Meeting – Friday 28 July 2017

Present

Nicolas Heslop, Chairman
Peter Fleming, SDC
Jane March, TWBC
Brian Luker, TMBC
Andrew Stirling, SDC
Hilary Smith, TWBC
Anthony Dyer, Kent Police
Mark Raymond, TMBC
Sarah Nurden, KMEP
Tracy-Anne Barker, Hadlow Group
Tudor Price, Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
Wendy Wood, WKP

Guests

Louise Aitken, SELEP
Allan Baillie, KCC
Jacqui Ward, KCC
Rajmund Brent, KCC
Georgina Angele, Careers & Enterprise Co.

Apologies

Catherine Brunger, AXA PPP
Lesley Bowles SDC – Andrew Stirling attends
Pav Ramewal, SDC
Roddy Hogarth, SDC
Caroline Shaw/Jon Weller, IMAGO
Jon Regan, Hugh Lowe Farms
Julie Beilby, TMBC
David Joyner, KCC
Henry Warde, Squerries
Mark Dance/Sean Holden, KCC
Adam Bryan, SELEP
Roger House, Kent Association Local Councils
David Candlin, TWBC – Hilary Smith attends
William Benson, TWBC
David Jukes, TWBC

Introductions were made and the Chairman welcomed guests to the meeting. He explained the different meeting format with the meeting closing at 11.15. The launch of the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network would then take place with other stakeholders and businesses joining Partners. The Chairman remarked that this initiative demonstrates that the Partnership delivers projects to address local issues. Thanks were recorded to Hadlow Group for hosting the event.

1. Minutes and Matters Arising

The Minutes were agreed as a correct record. All actions were either picked up in Agenda or were for individuals outside of WKP ongoing involvement.

Skills

2. Apprenticeship Levy – Tracy-Anne Barker, Hadlow Group

Tracy-Anne provided a snapshot of the Hadlow Group and their breadth of offer across all sectors. The Group is commercially aware, operating a number of enterprises such as the Artisan restaurant, Broadview tea rooms and farm shops and all proceeds are reinvested in their core education provision.

Apprenticeships are now delivered as employer designed standards, incorporating an end point assessment delivered by a third party organisation. Apprentices have to pass this assessment to gain their award which is a big change in the system.

3. **SELEP Skills Strategy – SELEP and West Kent Perspective – Louise Aitken, SELEP**

Louise gave some background to the Skills Advisory Group and the work that is being undertaken on developing a supporting evidence base for the skills strategy which is in consultation.

Partners had an opportunity to see the type of local data that will be available to endorse the local picture, around such headings as Enterprise numbers, skills levels, work flows, growth, key sectors and vacancies. This links to a LEP wide view to position the LEP to lobby for funding.

4. **Guilds in West Kent – Allan Baillie, KCC**

Allan gave an overview of the Kent Guilds which provide an interface to create long term relationships between industry and education across 8 sectors –

- Construction and the Build Environment
- Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing
- Land Based
- Sciences
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Health and Social Care
- Creative and Media
- Financial services

The Chair of each Guild attends the Kent and Medway Skills Commission which feeds into KMEP.

5. **Skills Discussion**

Partners began to scope exactly what the skills challenge is in West Kent identifying factors including:

- Mainly SMEs, across range of diverse sectors, very few large employers,
- Focus on cross cutting themes such as Leadership and Management
- A need to streamline strategic links between employers and education providers so Guilds/emerging Network/college/ad hoc is all seamless for employers and schools
- Pull of London so need to be realistic and equip young people for those opportunities as well as meeting skills needs in local economy. (shared with other areas in LEP)
- Changing work patterns and infrastructure needs, future trends – equip our SMEs
- Losing office space under permitted development - therefore losing employers

- High housing costs impact on recruitment
- Role for the West Kent Adult Skills Forum (including Ashford)
- Find practical ways to keep workforce local in key sectors – eg – degree level apprenticeships in professional services
- Distinguish between skills issues now and in the future
- Can European skills funding be leveraged to help employers upsize premises?
- LEP funding available to get unemployed into work – message to businesses

SELEP West Kent data sets will be available in October. Louise accepted an invitation to return to the October WKP meeting and an item will be tabled to further explore the skills issues raised above, understand the local evidence base and identify ways in which the Partnership can help map action to address both current and future skills needs. **WW**

6. Kent and Medway Business Fund – Jacqui Ward, KCC

This is the successor scheme to Escalate and the other RGF schemes in Kent – Tiger and Expansion East Kent. Now one Kent-wide board with Peter Fleming representing West Kent. Escalate continues to be monitored and is doing well – delivered just over £5M to 40 companies. Five have gone into bad debt.

Recycled funds are ringfenced to be re-invested in the original area. £1.7M repaid to date. Round 2 has just closed with 27 applications from the Escalate area of which 23 are being progressed and will be invited to board in October. Offer to businesses is loan or equity investment with 50% match required from the business. Equity investment is new under this scheme and provides the potential for the investment to generate greater returns into the recycled funds. Peter asked if West Kent could potentially invest elsewhere in Kent to grow that investment to come back into West Kent. Jacqui will return to October meeting to advise Partners of options. **JW**

KMBF Round 2 Pre-Applications Overview						
Area	Former RGF	Status			KMBF Funding Requested £	Estimated Jobs Created/ Safeguarded
				Total		
East Kent	ExEK	Progressed	33	45	5,593,000	410
		Declined	12		1,588,000	175.5
North Kent and Medway	Tiger	Progressed	15	17	2,085,000	158
		Declined	2		150,000	15
West Kent	Escalate	Progressed	23	27	3,990,000	424.5
		Declined	4		660,000	61
No Location Confirmed		Progressed	3	3	1,050,000	76.5
		Declined	0		0	0
		Total Progressed	74	92	12,718,000	1,069
		Total Declined	18		2,398,000	251.5
		TOTAL			15,116,000	1,320.5

7. **KMEP Update - Sarah Nurden**

Sarah outlined the information in her Paper identifying potential actions for Partners

- SEP refresh – District and WKP response to questions issued as part of the consultation. Process for West Kent engagement with consultants to be advised.
- Housing Infrastructure Funds - Districts invited to liaise with Katie Stewart at KCC on funding bids
- Shared Prosperity Fund – There is an opportunity to contribute to the consultation on how this will look

Additionally

- A further £5M is being made available to Highways England network for investments to release housing developments
- Government Aviation Strategy consultation is underway. This includes use of existing runways. WKP may wish to respond in relation to Gatwick

8. **West Kent Priorities Update** – for information and noted.

9. **AOB** - None.

10 **Dates of next meeting**

- Friday 20 October, Alexandra Suite, Swanley, 10am
- Outlook calendar invitations to be sent for 2018

West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network Launch **MAC Theatre, West Kent College**

A launch event for partners, businesses and other stakeholders took place. The Chairman commented that establishing the Network demonstrates the WKP's capacity to deliver on economic issues for the local economy and is a direct result of a presentation and discussions at a recent WKP meeting. Through the Network the WKP aims to create powerful, lasting connections between local businesses and schools to provide greater opportunities for our young people and address the skills needs of our local economy. Enterprise Adviser Networks are a national initiative led by Careers and Enterprise Company that require match funding at a local level. Support and funding for the West Kent Network is through The West Kent Partnership, The Hadlow Group and KCC.