

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2016 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Hogarth (Chairman)

Cllr. Abraham (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Dr. Canet, Esler, Lake, Maskell, Pearsall and Scott

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Mrs. Bosley, Krogdahl and Raikes

Cllr. Mrs. Morris was also present.

31. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2016, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

32. Declarations of Interest

No additional declarations of interest were made.

33. Actions from Previous Meeting

There were none.

34. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder and Chairman of the Committee advised that he had taken part in an e-Safety day for local schools organised by the Community Safety Manager and IT Support Team Leader. He had been linked remotely from the Council Chamber to school classrooms. The children had been able to see each other but not him. Cllr Firth had also linked in with a sleep better at night campaign about switching electronic gadgets off at night. The feedback from the schools was that they would like more interaction with the council.

The Community Safety Manager had visited New Ash Green and Hextable schools to give out certificates, and pictures had been taken for InShape. There was an intention to set up future projects. He had enjoyed the interaction and Cllr Firth had some interesting ideas, and he encouraged to pass any ideas they may have to the Community Safety Manager.

The Portfolio Holder and Chairman of the Committee also reported that he had met with County Councillor Balfour, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, where a variety of issues such as pot holes, 20 mph zones had been discussed. He had gained a fuller understanding of the financial constraints on KCC. There had been some discussion with regards to issues around school parking. A Member referred to a previous experience where even though parents were warned of a safety awareness

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event, the police caught many drivers on mobile phones, without seatbelts and parking badly and suggested a similar thing could be carried out in the District. The Community Safety Manager agreed to consider this.

He had also attended a Business Leaders Meeting at Hever Castle arranged by Visit Kent, where there had been representatives of Channel Tunnel, P&O Ferries, and Leeds castle amongst others all within the travel/tourism industry. He had been made aware of the economic damage Operation Stack was doing to east Kent, and the expectation was that it would be worse this year.

The Vice Chairman reported that KALC was having a meeting with Highways England and KCC about illegal parking of heavy goods vehicles.

Sevenoaks District Council Voluntary & Community 'Making it Happen' Awards was taking place on Wednesday 15 June. Nominations were to be returned by Thursday 28 April 2016.

There was an intention to take an inward investment magazine to Cabinet for approval, to highlight the advantages of investing in the District. The Regeneration Advisor explained that he had produced a similar one for Medway; the idea was to produce a prospectus, once a year. He advised that it was about 56 pages long, produced by a company who did this only for the public sector and provided the journalists, took the photos etc. and members would get to agree the final content. It was part funded by advertising. Medway was on its tenth edition, and he passed around a copy for Members to look at. It was an opportunity to attract inward investment and change the perception of the District, at a time when the Council was going to be increasingly relying on business rates and council tax. Such a prospectus would have a London launch where investment firms would be invited, the Secretary of State has given the address attracting national press coverage at similar events. The Council would place its own advertisement and all it would cost the Council was £9,975 for the first edition and around £4,500 for subsequent years. It would then be mailed out to potential investors, which could be selected from a database of 40,000. If Cabinet were to agree to this it was hoped that the first edition would be available at the end of October/ early November 2016.

35. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

36. West Kent LEADER Update

Members considered a report, and received a [presentation](#) from the West Kent LEADER Programme Manager.

West Kent LEADER was a source of funding available to farmers, growers, foresters, rural businesses and communities to help secure a sustainable future for rural West Kent. The last LEADER programme closed at the end of 2013, with West Kent LEADER having awarded over £1.25 million grant funding to 62 projects. The West Kent LEADER Local Action Group had been awarded €2,266,000 for the period 2015-2020 and the scheme was now accepting outline applications.

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In response to questions, the West Kent LEADER Programme Manager advised that at the moment they were still working through the new application process, learning timescales and therefore there was a soft launch and they would be contacting Parish and Town Councils shortly. It was predominantly capital investments that were funded and the key was to illustrate job creation and/or growth. Funding was not provided upfront, but claimed back.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

37. Community Safety Action Plan 2016/17

The Community Safety Manager presented a report which sought approval for the 2016-17 Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan. The plan responded to the community safety priorities identified in the most recent Strategic Assessment.

Members discussed the recent tabloid stories of misunderstanding of PREVENT, for example in schools. The Community Safety Manager advised that there is some misunderstanding out there and that there is an opportunity to develop more work around listening to young people. Support has been offered to local schools. She also confirmed in response to a question that she attended cross border meetings with neighbouring local authorities in relation to gangs.

In response to comments on parking around schools, she is happy to liaise with local head teachers and write to parents if necessary. The Council has limited duty around this, but a letter to remind people of their responsibilities etc could help.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That the Community Safety Strategy & Action Plan for 2016-17, be recommended to Cabinet for approval.

38. Sevenoaks District Tourist Accommodation

Members considered a report which summarised the Economic Development aspects of a study by Hotel Solutions into tourist accommodation in the District. The report covered current supply, local drivers of demand growth and a review of national trends in hotel and visitor accommodation development and staying-tourist markets.

Members received a [presentation](#) from the Health & Communities Services Manager on the Tourist Accommodation Study, which set out future growth prospects for tourist accommodation in the Sevenoaks District. The District was well placed to capitalise on projected growth in the domestic short break and overseas tourist markets.

Action 1: Health & Communities Services Manager to forward details on the occupancy rate for the District.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

CHANGE IN AGENDA ITEM ORDER

With the agreement of the Committee, the Chairman brought forward consideration of agenda item 10.

39. Economic Development Strategy Monitoring

The Economic Development Strategy sets out an extensive action plan to be delivered in conjunction with partner organisations. The majority of actions are expected to be completed by the end of 2018. However it is recognised that this strategy has a number of ongoing activities and will need to evolve to fit economic conditions and external changes during the strategy lifetime.

Members considered the economic development strategy action plan monitoring which had been circulated after the agenda publication but before the meeting, that gave further monitoring information. The majority of the actions remained on target for delivery during the lifetime of the strategy.

In response to a question, the Economic Development Officer confirmed that there was an error with Strategic Objective 3.4, which would be reviewed and amended to reflect that the expansion of Darenth Car Park in Westerham was taking place.

Members welcomed the inclusion of Swanley Station in the Transport for London Zone 8 with Oyster card system, however it was felt that Zone 6 or 7 would be more appropriate. It was therefore moved by Cllr. Scott, duly seconded and carried that Officers be requested to challenge South Eastern to review their decision to only make Swanley Zone 8, rather than 6 or 7.

The issue of a skills training gap - lack of appropriate training /higher education providers within the District, and employers not being able to recruit locally as a result, was discussed as something that needed to be addressed within the Strategy. Creative thinking was needed as to how to open up opportunities for the provision/access to appropriate training, learning progression routes, whether by traditional methods or remote learning facilities.

Action 2: Officers work with Cllr. Maskell to get the right conceptualisation within the Strategy.

The Chief Officer Communities and Business, updated Members on the master planning for Swanley. 1,200 plus people had attended the recent Masterplan consultations in Swanley and Hextable.

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It was important that this Advisory Committee was aware of the work but many of the necessary decisions would fall to the Planning Advisory or Policy & Performance Advisory Committee. There was a small officer working group working on reporting back to residents. A newsletter was being produced at the beginning of April 2016, as it was important that residents were aware of decisions such as the demolition of the former Working Men's Club and CAB buildings on the High Street.

The Regeneration Advisor advised that the team would be looking at better ways of articulating the economic development strategy, and working at being more successful in funding bids from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), as one of only 14 Councils that was yet to be successful.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That

- i) Officers be requested to challenge South Eastern to review their decision to only make Swanley Zone 8, rather than 6 or 7; and
- ii) the progress made on delivering the Economic Development Strategy and its associated action plan, be noted.

40. Work Plan

The work plan was noted. It was agreed to add six monthly monitoring to the meeting in December for the Community Safety Plan, Economic Development Strategy and Community Plan.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.40 PM

CHAIRMAN

