

REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

28 JANUARY 2016

ATTENDANCE OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR INWARD INVESTMENT, STRATEGIC REGENERATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Report from: Portfolio Holder for Inward Investment, Strategic
Regeneration and Partnerships Councillor Rodney
Chambers

Summary

This report sets out progress made within the areas covered by the Portfolio Holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships which fall within the remit of this Committee.

1. Background

1.1 The areas within the terms of reference of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee covered by the Portfolio Holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships are:

- Heritage Champion
- Inward Investment
- Medway Ambassador
- Strategic Partnerships
- Strategic Regeneration and Planning

1.2 Achievements for 2014/15 are detailed by service areas below.

2. Heritage Champion

2.1 Operational responsibility for heritage is with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services.

2.2 The role of Heritage Champion is more strategic, promoting heritage in Medway and working with key partners to ensure a joined up approach

and to encourage links between heritage, regeneration, planning and inward investment.

3. Inward Investment

3.1 Medway now has an impressive offer for businesses wishing to relocate here from elsewhere:

- High quality office accommodation at Innovation Centre Medway, as well as providing high speed broadband and good transport connectivity.
- Direct financial incentives via Partners for Growth grants and loans, future continuation of the TIGER interest free loan programme and, more recently, with the declaration of Enterprise Zone status, business rates relief for new development at Rochester Airport.
- Innovation vouchers and masterclasses for high growth businesses.
- Commercial property search assistance and introduction to commercial agents.
- Informal 'pre' pre-app discussion with Planning Team and other officers for informal advice where required.

3.2 A number of businesses have moved to Medway in the past year:

- Redrow Homes moved into an office in Chatham Maritime, bringing 60 jobs.
- Netbox Digital, with 40 employees, moved to Laker Rd.
- Digital Contact, a big data analytics company and TIGER recipient, moved from Dartford into Medway City Estate and has also established collaborative start-up space, DC Labs, within its office.
- Recapture Plastics, a specialist in materials recovery from other processing plants and the first company in the UK that manufactures recyclable plastics, has moved to Kingsnorth Industrial Estate, bringing 16 jobs. Their recycling process adds between £350 and £800 per tonne to the value of the plastic. There is capacity to recycle up to 16,000 tonnes of plastic per year, which would otherwise go to landfill.

3.3 It is also important that companies that move to Medway stay in Medway. Henry Schein moved to Gillingham Business Park several years ago. The company has recently completed a new facility there and has doubled the number of its employees from 300-600. Hochiki, another company that moved to Gillingham Business Park 20 years ago (when it was an Enterprise Zone), is expanding its workforce from 120 to 160.

3.4 Kent County Council has submitted a bid to the European Regional Development Fund for an inward investment project, worth £3.5m over three years, for which Medway Council will be a delivery partner. Overall it is expected to create 350 additional jobs through foreign direct investment (FDI) in Kent and Medway.

3.5 External funding

3.6 A cross-authority external funding group has been established to co-ordinate the development of funding bids and ensure that they are aligned to Council priorities. It will also help to develop a more strategic relationship with funders.

3.7 Successful bids in 2015 drew in £212,000 revenue and delivered £180,000 savings.

3.8 These bids were:

- Social Housing Mobility Fund: £160,000 to help Medway Council tenants to secure a mortgage and progress to home ownership, thus enabling new tenants to access Medway Council properties.
- Coastal Community Team Fund: £10,000 towards the Medway Place Making Strategy. Positioning to better access Coastal Revival Fund and next round of Coastal Communities Fund.
- Domestic Abuse Fund: £42,000 to renovate social housing properties and divert victims of domestic abuse from going into temporary accommodation, which could lead to financial savings of £180,000 per annum on a recurring basis.

3.9 Bids submitted and awaiting outcome are:

- Building Better Opportunities (BBO): Medway Council supported Kent County Council to prepare four bids for BBO with a value of £7million. If bids are successful, these services will provide intensive support for 230 Medway residents and create savings to statutory services as a result of preventative investment.
- Creative Industries Growth Hubs ERDF (LEP): Officers have worked closely with Andrea Stark and the Creative Industries Group of the LEP to be included in this proposal. Due to match funding constraints, we have brought the University of Greenwich into the bid as a partner. This could bring £90,000 of support for creative businesses in Medway.
- Studententrepreneur bid with University of Greenwich: £58,000: This is a programme of business support at the Innovation Centre to support students to start their own business. Match funds Careers Enterprise Fund bid.
- Careers Enterprise Fund: £36,000: Support towards engaging with schools and linking with apprenticeship provision. If successful, this will bring 36 Skills Fairs to Medway. Match funds Studententrepreneur bid.
- Pocket Parks: £15,000 bid towards Luton Millennium Park via charity partners BIG Local Arches and Medway Plus.

4. Medway Ambassadors

- 4.1 Ambassador numbers stand at 13 with one new recruit this year.
- 4.2 Ambassadors are provided with monthly updates and are invited to attend site visits, events as appropriate. This year-
- 4.3 2 Ambassadors were trained and signed as Medway Health Champions, 1 Ambassador was involved in the panel working on the IN-SITE public art project on Rochester Riverside, 2 Ambassadors spent the summer supporting the Siege project dressed as King John and his Knight at Rochester Castle.
- 4.4 Ambassadors attended the opening of Medway Council's new homes in Gillingham, the opening of the outdoor gym on Rochester Riverside, the opening of the new homes on the Theatre Royal site and a tour of the UTC site.
- 4.5 Several of the Ambassadors attended 2 Command of the Oceans meetings at Chatham Historic Dockyard and also were present at several of the EU project closing events, held at the Corn Exchange and the St George's Centre.

5 Strategic Partnerships

- 5.1 Medway Council has secured a significant amount of Local Growth Funding through the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), including
- 5.2 £28.6m for five key transport projects:
 - Improving traffic flow through three roundabouts (Four Elms, Sans Pareil and Anthony's Way) on the A289 corridor between M2 junction 1 and the Medway Tunnel. The three roundabouts are used by approximately 5000 vehicles per hour in peak periods.
 - Improving the links between Chatham railway station and Chatham centre and waterfront area, resulting in improved access from the station to large areas of employment, retail, leisure and education and provide an attractive gateway to the regional centre of Medway. It will include joint funded improvements to Chatham railway station.
 - Proposals for journey time and accessibility enhancements and public realm and retail centre improvements that will facilitate regeneration and growth within Strood. It will include joint funded improvements to Strood railway station.
 - A range of measures designed to improve access to cycling in the Medway area and improve upon and expand existing cycling facilities.
 - Commuter link improvements to the Medway City Estate (MCE), the central commercial and industrial area of Medway. These improvements will assist with maintaining continued growth on

MCE, a key employment area for the Medway Towns and beyond, as well as assist in reducing the impact of current high peak-time traffic flows on the Estate's existing entrance and exit road network.

- 5.3 £4m for the first stage of infrastructure improvements at Rochester Airport to unlock development of a technology park, creating up to 1000 jobs.
- 5.4 Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP), via the Employment, Learning and Skills Partnership Board (now the Kent and Medway Skills Commission) has produced a Workforce Skills Evidence Base report, which will help to tailor skills development to meet the current and future needs of employers in Kent and Medway.

6 Strategic Regeneration and Planning

- 6.1 Medway Council's ambitious regeneration programme continues to deliver real improvements.
- 6.2 The selection process for a preferred developer for **Rochester Riverside** is almost complete and the successful developer will be announced in March 2016. The £26m station at Rochester opened in December, which will provide a real boost to the town, named in October by Homes and Property as one of the top 20 commuter towns for Londoners. A brand new multi-storey car park, with more than 300 spaces, will open in Spring 2016. A public art project, IN-SITE, attracted hundreds of local residents to Rochester Riverside during the summer for a range of activities. Options are being investigated for the relocation of the coach park.
- 6.3 A draft placemaking masterplan has been prepared for **Chatham**, proposing a range of public realm improvements to the station area and The Brook. This was published for consultation with key stakeholders and the public in January. Negotiations are progressing well to acquire the various landholdings at Chatham Waterfront, to enable a high quality residential and commercial development to proceed. Stage two of the River Walk will be completed by April 2016. Several national live broadcasts were shown on the big screen over the summer, which were very popular.
- 6.4 A review has been carried out of the masterplan and development brief for **Strood** Riverside, Kingswear Gardens and Watermill Gardens. There is potential for delivery in two phases. Discussions are continuing with Moat and Orbit regarding the possibility of including their land. A tender for a design and build contractor to deliver 15 business units at Watermill Wharf has been advertised and a contractor will be appointed in March 2016.
- 6.5 Enterprise Zone status has been secured for Rochester Airport, which will enable Medway Council to offer discounted business rates to incoming companies, increasing its attractiveness as a destination to do business.

Appendices

None

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Background documents

None