

**AGENDA – In-person KMEP meeting - Tuesday 5 December 2023, 15.30 – 17.30  
Canterbury Christ Church University,  
Old Sessions House, North Holmes Road Main Campus (CT1 1PW) and on MS TEAMS**

	Approx time	Page/Presenter
<b>0. Coffee &amp; Networking on arrival in OS.1.17 (Old Sessions House, First Floor, Room 17)</b>	<b>15:30</b>	
<b>1. Room OS1.01, First Floor, Room 01 Welcome from Chairman Apologies for absence &amp; Declaration of interests</b>	<b>15:45</b>	<b>Liz Gibney</b>
<b>2. LEP Transition &amp; KMEP 2024 Update</b>	<b>15:50</b>	<b>Steve Samson / Liz Gibney</b>
<b>3. Getting Building Fund Update</b>	<b>16:30</b>	<b>Steve Samson</b>
<b>4. Kent &amp; Medway Economic Framework Update</b>	<b>16:35</b>	<b>Ross Gill</b>
<b>5. International Rail Services</b>	<b>16:55</b>	<b>Andrew Osborne / Mark Welch</b>
<b>6. Any other Business</b>		

**Future Meeting Dates:**

- Monday 15 January, 15:30-17:30 online
- Tuesday 5 March, 15:30-17:30 online or in person TBC

**Attendees:**

**KMEP Board Members:**

Liz Gibney (KMEP Chairman & Lee Evans Partnership)	Cllr Robert Thomas (Kent CC)
Jo James (Vice Chair & Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce)	Cllr Alan Baldock (Canterbury CC)
Vince Lucas (VA Rail)	Cllr Noel Ovenden (Ashford BC)
Andrew Metcalf (Maxim PR)	Cllr Lauren Edwards (Medway Council)
Graham Razey (East Kent College)	Cllr Roger Gough (Kent CC)
Miranda Chapman (Pillory Barn)	Cllr Perry Cole (Sevenoaks District Council)
Andrew Metcalf (Maxim PR) – online	
Roland Cooper (Considine)	
Carol Ford (Horticultural Task Force)	

## **Additional Attendees:**

Stephanie Holt-Castle (Kent CC)  
Steve Samson (Kent CC)  
Ross Gill (SQW)  
Andrew Osbourne (Ashford BC)  
Mark Welch (Kent CC)  
Karen Britton (Maidstone BC)  
Emma Watson (Kent CC)

## **Board Member Apologies:**

Matthew Arnold (Stage Coach), Mario Caccamo (NIAB), Nick Fenton (Nick Fenton Associates), Jane Harrington (University of Greenwich), Graham Razey (East Kent College) , Cllr Kevin Mills (DDC), Cllr Chris Townend (DDC), Cllr Jim Martin (FHDC), Cllr David Burton, Cllr Julia Thornton (replaced in person by Cllr Perry Cole (SDC), Cllr Rick Everitt (TDC), Cllr Matt Boughton (TMDC), Cllr Ben Chapelard TWBC)

## **Item 1 – Welcome, introduction and apologies.**

- 1.1 Liz Gibney (the KMEP Chairman) welcomed attendees to the meeting. Apologies were stated by Steve Samson (listed above)
- 1.2 There were no declarations of interest made.
- 1.3 The minutes of the 3 October 2023 meeting were agreed. The actions are listed below and still outstanding :

- **All:** Share business & residents surveys for Eurostar services
- **KCC:** consider a future KMEP agenda item relating to bus services in Kent & Medway
- **KCC:** Steve to circulate updated SOCG for LTC

## **Item 2 - LEP Transition Update**

- 2.1 Steve Samson provided an update on the LEP Transition Process, Timetable and Workstreams, which was covered in the slides below:

## LEP Transition Update: Timetable

- 22 November: Autumn Statement – no LEP transition updates except for confirmation that Growth Hubs will continue in 24 -25
- 30 November: K&M Integration Plan Template sent to DLUHC
- 8 Dec: Updated SELEP Transition Plan considered at Strategic Board meeting
- Dec 23/Jan 24: Further DLUHC guidance for local authorities (much for ‘local decision’)
- March 2024: closure of SELEP with new arrangements in place from April 2024

## LEP Transition: Resources

### Finances:

- No further news – awaiting DLUHC guidance (by January)

### Staffing:

- Proposed role descriptions submitted and being considered by SELEP and ECC (current employer): 5 from Kent & Medway, 5 from Essex, 1 from East Sussex

### Proposed Roles:

1. KCC – Strategic Programme Manager (Economic Strategy & Programmes)
2. KCC - Programme Manager (Skills & Business)
3. KCC – Programme Manager (Sector & Partnerships)
4. MC – Programme Manager (Business Support & Funding)
5. MC - Project Officer (Economic Data & Intelligence)

2.2 Cllr Roger Gough asked if the offer from Essex CC overlaps with what Kent and Medway are offering?

Steve Samson said although we have not seen the role profile the understanding is that the offer is very similar and there is potential competition.

2.3 Cllr Lauren Edwards asked where the candidates were based and pointed out that this might also impact on uptake in our region.

2.4 Jo James asked what the impact of not recruiting these roles is?

Steve Samson said this was not clear and confirmed that there were 7 FTE roles currently, so it would not be possible to fill all the roles put forward by Kent and Medway.

2.5 Stephanie Holt-Castle said that there would also be a small pot of money that we will get and that we want to spend on delivering programmes.

2.6 As the process is still with SELEP Liz Gibney proposed coming forward with a plan B.

Steve Samson said that SELEP board members may want to raise this during the SELEP meeting of Friday 8 December.

## LEP Transition: Capital Programmes

**Growing Places Fund:** 13 Oct SELEP board agreed to apportion GPF funding as follows:

Local Authority	Population (as per 2021 census)	Per capita share of total GPF pot £m	Remaining balance owed on existing GPF loans at 31.03.2024 £m	Difference between per capita share and remaining balance owed £m	Funding to be transferred at 1 April 2024 (indicative figure)* £m
East Sussex	545,847	5.002	4.232	0.771	0.698
Essex	1,503,521	13.779	2.000	11.779	11.579
Kent	1,576,069	14.444	14.802	-0.358	0.000
Medway	279,773	2.564	0.350	2.214	2.177
Southend	180,686	1.656	1.000	0.656	0.632
Thurrock	176,000	1.613	0.000	1.613	1.589
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,261,896</b>	<b>39.058</b>	<b>22.384</b>	<b>16.675</b>	<b>16.675</b>

- Kent pot (£14.8m) currently out with live projects
- Next repayments due Q4 24-25
- New programme details to be worked up early 2024

2.7 Steve Samson said that £3m will come back in Q4 24-25 and £6 million the year after that. They are currently being monitored by KCC and are rated green.

2.8 Cllr Lauren Edwards said that they have asked for maximum flexibility in terms of how the money is spent in Medway. But particularly keen to use this for inward investment purposes.

2.9 SELEP does not need to report directly to government on this fund.

## LEP Transition: Partnerships & Networks

- **Greater South East Net Zero Hub** – working to secure a seat for Kent & Medway on the board
- **Discussions underway about future arrangements for the 3 groups to continue:**
  - SECEN
  - Housing
  - Major Projects
- **Local work ongoing to establish Kent & Medway groups**

2.10 With regards to the Greater South East Net Zero Hub SELEP will retain its seat until March and then would need to decide between 6 local authorities to put forward a Rep. This Rep would be for the whole set and former set of area until the terms of reference or until the Great SE deciding they're able to give a fair opportunity to this.

2.11 Vince Lucas said that in terms of Transport in the Southeast a group including East Sussex would be of value.

## LEP Transition: Data & Intel

### **Work ongoing to finalise data requirements for Kent & Medway to:**

1. Monitor the state of the local economy and respond to new challenges
2. Establish a baseling and enable monitoring for KMEP and sector / thematic Groups
3. Monitor KMEF implementation progress
4. Provide evidence base for government funding bids

### **Potential to:**

- Combine all data into single Kent & Medway Economic Dashboard (monthly)
- Produce annual 'State of the Kent & Medway Economy' report integrating sector analyses

## LEP Transition Business Support

- Continuation of **Kent & Medway Growth Hub** service – 24-25 funding TBC
- KCC considering future delivery model & arrangements (current contract ends March 2024)
- Plan to widen current KMGH Steering Group to a ‘Kent & Medway Business Support Group’. Role:
  - Business Support Gap analysis
  - Enhancing Growth Hub service with advice on key topics
- Possible ‘**Made Smarter**’ programme for Kent & Medway

2.12 Jo James highlighted the fact that procurement takes time and that there is potential for a gap in delivery of the Growth Hub service

## Post-SELEP: Shaping the Future of KMEP

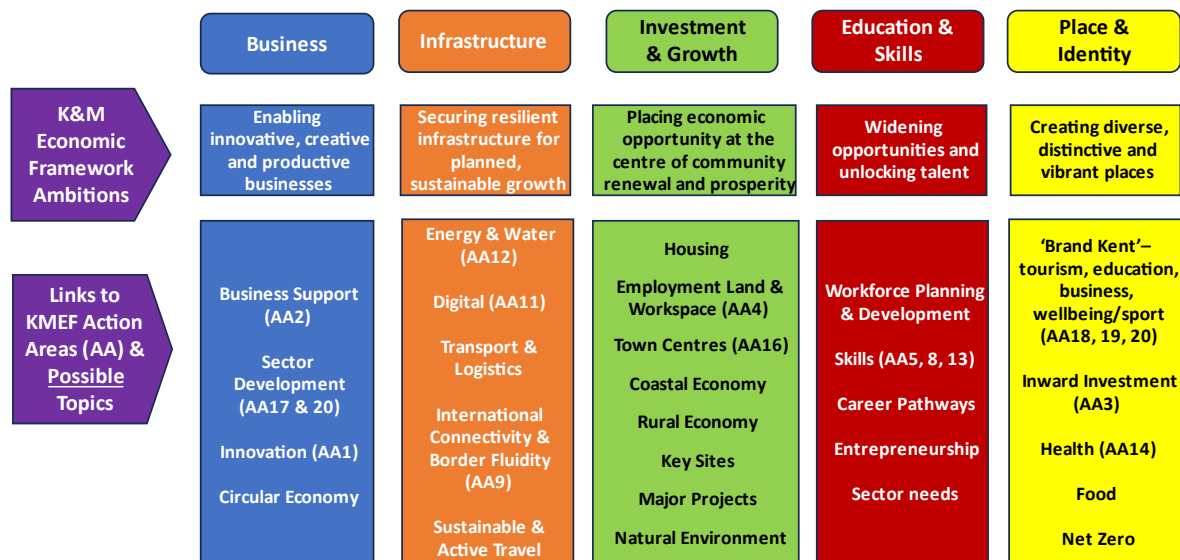
- Focus on new Kent & Medway responsibilities post -SELEP:
  - [Economic Strategy](#)
  - [Business Engagement](#)
  - [Government Programmes](#)
- Work towards new structure from April 2024 – KMEP as official Kent & Medway Growth board supported by thematic groups
- Align activity with [five ambitions](#) and [20 action areas](#) in the Kent & Medway Economic Framework
- Strengthen partnerships in Kent & Medway to support sustainable, economic growth

2.13 Delivering Growth Hub will fall under government programmes possibly also Business Engagement.

2.14 Lack of certainty as Growth Hub contracts are only 1 year.

2.15 Jo James said that Covid support programmes provided a good model of business support shame this did not continue with Growth Hub as doing this county wide provides economies of scale.

## DRAFT Potential KMEP Workstreams



- 2.16 Liz Gibney pointed out that all funding coming to KMEP will fall under one of these 5 headings and need to make sure all projects have a route to funding through this structure.
- 2.17 Make sure that there is a representative for KMEP for each of these 5 sections
- 2.18 Ultimately the aim is that KMEP has, through this structure and much clearer and more join up approach to drawing down funding.
- 2.19 This structure is a potential direction of travel and will very much be open for discussion
- 2.20 Carol Ford said that she felt that Education and Skills theme should be LSIP led.
- 2.21 Steve Samson said that we first need agreement on 'What' and then think about the 'Who'.

### Considerations for Future Workstreams and Sector/Partnership/Thematic Groups



- What existing work can we support or build on in Kent & Medway?
- What groups or structures are needed?
- With which existing groups can KMEP forge better links?
- What is in place that doesn't need changing?
- What new groups might we need and who are the key players to involve?
- What are the formal mechanisms for linking groups to KMEP (strategic direction and reporting in)?
- What might be key areas of focus for each workstream?
- Building on a baseline, how do we monitor and measure success?

- 2.22 Liz Gibney pointed out that all the details will be worked on at a workstream level but that they would feed back into KMEP to ensure that everybody feels that they are engaged.
- 2.23 Jo James said that KMEP members would need to do more than just attend board meetings to achieve this structure, which will be a challenge if there is no funding involved.
- 2.24 Liz Gibney said that hopefully it will mean that when the funding comes there will be a mechanism for delivery.
- 2.25 Vince Lucas said that it is important that services were represented as well as just infrastructure projects. Considering community needs for these services.
- 2.26 Andrew Metcalf suggested renaming the Infrastructure Workstream Infrastructure and Delivery.
- 2.27 Andrew Metcalf also asked who was going to deliver this work given the financial burden that local authorities are already under.
- 2.28 Liz Gibney said that we just need to work out what the key mechanism is so that issues can be addressed when they need to be. Everything doesn't necessarily have to happen all at once.
- 2.29 There was an agreement that the Green Economy should be involved in all sector groups.
- 2.30 Jo James said that raising the profile of the Green Economy throughout the structure should be our gold flag, become embedded and become a real talking point for our strategy.

## Example: Potential KMEP Business Workstream





## Example: Potential Business Workstream Sector Groups

- Opportunity to raise and tackle sector-specific challenges.
- Consider membership– business-led? KMEP partner-led?
- Potential Business Sector Groups (some exist already, some will need establishing):



## KMEP: Suggested Next Steps

- Map existing groups and previous / current Kent & Medway activity for each potential workstream
- Seek partner and stakeholder input to:
  - Develop list of potential sector/partner/thematic working groups
  - Identify key players and potential lead organisations / KMEP board members
  - Propose key topics / challenges / opportunities for each work stream / group
  - Establish baseline data / evidence for key topics
- Consider links to KMEP, governance, TORs etc.
- Establish common threads / cross-cutting themes (e.g. net zero)

**Item 3 - Getting Building Fund update.**

## Getting Building Fund Update

- 17 Nov: KMEP Investment Panel met to rank 6 projects
- 20 Nov: Final Independent Technical Evaluations (ITEs) completed
- 22 Nov: Final K&M list sent to SELEP
- 1 Dec: SELEP Investment Panel met to agree final pipeline. Pipeline ranking based on:
  - Eligibility
  - ITE recommendations
  - Benefits
  - Federated Board prioritisation
- Dec: SELEP seeking DLUHC approval of pipeline via GBF change request
- 12 Jan 2024: Funding decisions to be taken by SELEP Accountability Board
- By March 2024: Agreements in place with UTLAs (KCC / MC)

## Proposed Pipeline

	Project name	Fed Area	Fed Area priority	GBF Ask	Cumulative total
Band 1	Tech Hub Flexible Workspace, Gravesend	KMEP	1	£370,000	£370,000
	Mercury Rising 2	SE	1	£500,000	£870,000
Band 2a	Innovation Hub: Diversification of Chatham Town Centre	KMEP	2	£300,000	£1,170,000
	Maidstone Business Suite Phase 2	KMEP	3	£300,000	£1,470,000
	The Victoria Centre, Southend	OSE	3	£600,000	£2,070,000
	Basilidon Boom	OSE	1	£300,000	£2,370,000
	Camber Sands Welcome Centre	TES	1	£691,973	£3,061,973
	High Street Pop Up Parks, Southend	OSE	2	£276,045	£3,338,018
Band 3	Flightpath Phase 3	SE	2	£500,000	£3,838,018
	Enabling 5G in Dover and East Kent	KMEP	5	£465,000	£4,303,018
	No Use Empty (Residential), Southend	OSE	5	£1,000,000	£5,303,018
	Renewable Heating Systems for the Creative Media Centre, Hastings	TES	2	£253,000	£5,556,018
	No Use Empty (Commercial), South Essex	OSE	4	£1,100,000	£6,656,018
	Tunbridge Wells Town Hall co-working space	KMEP	4	£400,000	£7,056,018
	A249 Bearsted Road Highway Improvement Scheme	KMEP	6	£500,000	£7,556,018

3.1 Out of the 16 projects 3 of KMEP projects are in the top 5 and are likely to be approved in January.

3.2 Further funds may also be made available in January and the list as it stands would remain.

## Item 4 Kent & Medway Economic Framework Update



### Kent and Medway Economic Framework: Consultation feedback

Kent and Medway Economic Partnership



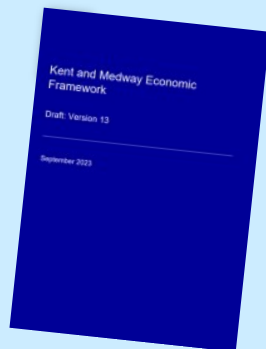
- 
- 5 December 2023

## The process...

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Key themes discussed by KMEP in March...

First draft Framework considered by KMEP in October...



Subsequently, comments received from...

- Business Advisory Board
- DLUHC Area Team
- Economic Recovery Group
- Gravesham Borough Council
- Greater North Kent
- Kent Economic Development Officers Group
- Kent Business Advisors
- Kent & Medway Integrated Care Partnership
- KMEP and BAB individual business members
- Kent Further Education
- Kent Rural Board
- Maidstone Borough Council
- Swale Borough Council
- University of Kent
- Visit Kent

+ *informal discussion*

## A quick recap...

What it is	The strategic framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A high-level framework– setting out an overall narrative and a series of ambitions on which partners can work together</li> <li>• A partnership strategy- owned by Kent and Medway together</li> <li>• A framework to add value to partners' strategies and plans</li> <li>• Medium-to-long term, looking out to 2030</li> </ul>	<p><i>Three objectives: By 2030, we want our economy to be more...</i></p> <p><b>Productive   Sustainable   Inclusive</b></p> <hr/> <p><i>To 2030: Five ambitions to...</i></p> <p><b>Enable innovative, productive and creative businesses</b></p> <p><b>Widen opportunities and unlock talent</b></p> <p><b>Secure resilient infrastructure for planned, sustainable growth</b></p> <p><b>Place economic opportunity at the centre of community renewal and prosperity</b></p> <p><b>Create diverse, distinctive and vibrant places</b></p> <hr/> <p><i>Leading to...</i>   <i>Economic and wider environmental, health and wellbeing outcomes</i></p>
<th style="background-color: #0070C0; color: white;">What it isn't</th>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory – no requirement or guidance from Government</li> <li>• A detailed action plan – it sets out a series of 'action areas' but not a list of projects</li> <li>• Funded – it makes the case for funding, but there's no central pot</li> <li>• An investment promotion document a strategic framework, not (in itself) a marketing resource</li> </ul>	

## General feedback on the draft Framework

- Generally positive on the overall framework, structure and relevance of the key themes
- Consensus on the general narrative and balance between specificity and flexibility

However, two key points of general feedback:

'Capturing the big picture'	'Capturing local relevance'
<p><i>"Although there are broad references to our unique geographic position and our "Garden of England" brand, I do wonder whether the document would benefit from an overarching "pitch" about our strengths as a county"</i></p> <p><i>"Without taking too many risks on the crystal ball gazing, it would be helpful to describe or illustrate what we might expect to see changed or delivered within the time horizon of the framework. That could help capture people's imagination"</i></p> <p>➤ Summary narrative at the start</p>	<p><i>"I felt [the draft Framework] goes quite a long way to anchor itself in the Kent &amp; Medway socio-economic and physical geography. But... part of the challenge is then enabling people looking at it from a more localised perspective (whether geographic or sectoral) to be able to identify with it"</i></p> <p><i>"Need to demonstrate what it's going to mean for business"</i></p> <p>➤ Additional case studies to add flavour</p>

## Specific feedback in relation to...

The economic landscape (Chapter 2)	Innovative, productive and creative businesses
<p>In relation to <b>strategic alignment</b></p> <p><i>"I'm a little unclear how this aligns with [KCC's], Medway's and the Districts' plans"</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Further reference to the local, sub-county and Kent and Medway-wide policy context</li> </ul> <p>Recognition and support for the <b>transformational trends</b> identified– esp. in relation to decarbonisation but:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further opportunities associated with changes in working practices and the potential this could present for the county (especially associated with the quality of life offer)</li> <li>• Emphasising the links between food &gt; health &gt; quality of life &gt; economic opportunity</li> </ul>	<p>Support for the greater focus on <b>innovation</b> (relative to previous strategies) and <b>productivity</b></p> <p>In relation to <b>commercial space and employment land</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognising the need for direct intervention in some cases where the market won't deliver (and making the case for investment)</li> <li>• Demonstrating demand through effective use of data</li> </ul>

## Specific feedback in relation to...

Widening opportunities and unlocking talent	Securing resilient infrastructure for planned, sustainable growth
<p>Support for a range of policies and actions linking together – building on the Local Skills Improvement Plan, Employment Task Force, recent capital investment, etc.</p> <p>Strong recognition that this is a core strategic theme.</p> <p>But <b>scope for extending the breadth of ambition</b> to embrace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting young people into <b>sustainable and rewarding work</b>– beyond the relatively narrow focus in the draft on Apprenticeships</li> <li>• Increased flexibility and responsiveness across the system</li> </ul>	<p>Recognition of alignment with emerging Kent Local Transport Plan</p> <p>Key infrastructure priorities and challenges <b>well established</b> and Framework adds weight</p> <p>But scope for additional content, in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledging the importance of <b>cooperation and coordination</b> within the <b>planning system</b></li> <li>• The potential of <b>rail freight</b></li> <li>• The challenge presented by <b>health infrastructure</b> constraints (also relevant to the next 'Ambition'...</li> </ul>

## Specific feedback in relation to...

### Placing economic opportunity at the centre of community renewal and prosperity

Relatively little comment in relation to this theme, but support for the focus on Health and the links with economic development– with scope for...

- Making the connection to **health infrastructure** constraints (as in previous Ambition)
- The importance of the **wider determinants of health'** (housing, food, skills, etc.) and the extent to which they involve a wide range of partners

*"I particularly welcome the point that not all valuable activity generates monetised output... shared ambitions therefore to put and attract investment into activities and uses of assets because of the social, environmental and wellbeing value they return"*

### Creating diverse, distinctive and vibrant places

Support for the combination of factors that contribute to this Ambition– linking environmental quality, town centre renewal, heritage assets and the visitor economy.

But scope for greater reference to:

- The **rural economy** potentially defining an additional Action Area
- Strengthened narrative in relation to the **visitor economy**, linking up Kent and Medway's key assets and opportunities

## Next steps

### Delivering the Framework

Intended to be 'high level' and with light touch, but regular review

Suggestion in feedback for monitoring/ oversight role for Kent Economic Development Officers Group (supporting KMEP and Leaders and Chief Executives)

Evidence base recognised as important and also requested by DLUHC



- Revised version of Framework for Leaders and for circulation to KMEP
- Final comments to inform final version
- (Within KCC) consideration by Cabinet Committee in January

4.1 Roger Gough asked how District Strategic Plans can be represented in KMEF level plan which takes a broad brush approach?

4.2 Ross Gill said that there is a sub section on the strategic landscape and the Framework talks about this there which can be built out.

- 4.3 Miranda Chapman asked in terms of the evidence base what does this actually look like? Ross Gill said that it was a substantive PowerPoint pack with graphs and statistics that can be lifted from the document for use elsewhere.
- 4.4 Miranda Chapman also asked if we are talking with young people enough about skills and have we taken their views into account when putting together the Framework and should we have?
- 4.5 Ross Gill said that it is probably not wise to open another channel of consultation at this stage, however, this can be made part in taking the Framework forward and Next Steps
- 4.6 Liz Gibney also mentioned that it would be beneficial to engage with the economically inactive around skills. It is important that the Framework delivers the right thing for the right people.

## Item 5 International Rail Services

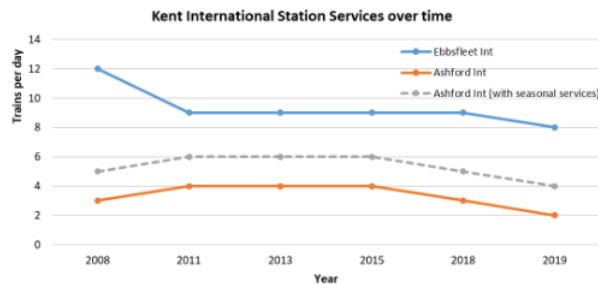


### **Kent International Rail Services: Briefing to KMEP**

Kent County Council & Ashford  
Borough Council  
December 2023

## Background

- Eurostar began serving Ashford in 1996. When Ebbsfleet opened in 2007 there was a reduction in services stopping at Ashford.
- By 2019 there were 8 services a day from Ebbsfleet Int, and Ashford Int services varied between two to four dependent on whether summer and winter seasonal services were in operation.
- Covid pandemic restrictions decimated the market, services were pulled from intermediate stations on the Eurostar network.



## Current situation

- Rolling postponement of service return- in August 2022, Eurostar announced its services would not stop in Kent before 2025 and this holds for now.
- Key dependency from Eurostar on EES roll out- so cannot make a decision until impacts established.
- EES has been continually postponed, now scheduled late 2024.
- Currently Eurostar runs 16 trains per day to Paris, 9 trains per day to Brussels (with 4 trains continuing to Amsterdam) and 7 trains per day to Lille-en-route to Brussels. All from St Pancras- no stops in Kent.
- Eurostar leisure market customers returned in high volume, especially London outbound returns. Post Brexit impacts on station throughput and service capacity largely resolved.





## The challenges

- Border controls and prioritisation of resources– latter point linked to...
- Eurostar state no commercial case to reopen the Kent Stations – passenger demand implications are low.
- Eurostar’s merger with Thalys prioritises services between major capital cities to grow their business– aim to hit 30 million passengers p.a. by 2030
- Eurostar focused on paying down Covid debt.
- Eurostar’s concerns about the journey time “penalty” (8 mins) incurred stopping services at Ashford and Ebbsfleet. Journey time is a key selling point for Eurostar.
- No competition on the line currently– but noises.
- Train operators pay for station costs (exc. Border resourcing), and infrastructure owner mothballed international elements – incentives focused on pathing income.



## What this means

- Despite regular dialogue with Eurostar, a decision about the Kent stations is unlikely to be made until 2025 at the earliest.
- Without Eurostar services in Kent, residents and businesses will make decisions about their location that could see them move away from the area or not invest in the town if there is no certainty about International Rail services returning.
- For example, Ashford has some major economic opportunities with strategic sites.
- This will not only impact on the County’s prosperity, but that of the wider Kent economy.
- The resulting economic impact on Ashford and Ebbsfleet needs to be quantified and the time is NOW right to make a compelling case to all concerned.

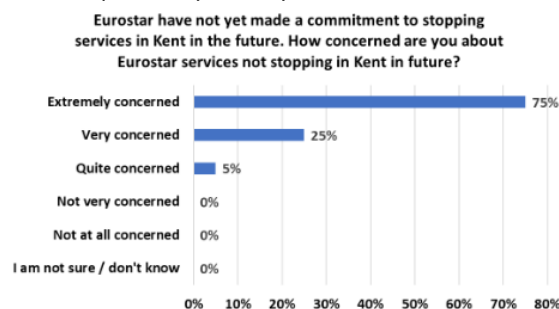
## What's happening? (1)

- Campaign to bring back International Services to Kent has been begun
- Co-ordinated by ABC and KCC- a partnership group of Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, Locate in Kent and Visit Kent is meeting on a monthly basis to take forward and support actions. Action Plan and Communications Plan being developed, and actions are also being coordinated with other Local Authorities.
- Latest position from Eurostar understood Eurostar General Secretary Gareth Williams attended Ashford JTB on 5 Sept, ABC corresponded with Eurostar CEO recently.
- Marketing & promotion of the public petition to Bring Back Eurostar Services- 39,126 signatures to date (30 Nov)



## What's happening? (2)

- In October, KCC, Ashford and Dartford Councils, along with Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce launched a business survey. Sample result below.
- Nearly 600 responses received. Providing evidence that there is a significant workforce > 25,000 people in Kent employed by companies concerned with and affected by the lack of services.
- Target is 1,000 responses by January.



## Upcoming activity

- Recruit business faces to add weight to public sector driven case.
- Wider work, using aspects such as survey as evidence, to compose elements of business case, focused on strategic and economic arguments, to lobby government in 2024.
- Covering aspects such as
  - Visitor economy
  - Travel time and cost disbenefits
  - Carbon impacts
  - Economic growth and regeneration case e.g. Levelling up type arguments
- Further discussion with Eurostar in 2024.
- Meet with Ministers over the public interest argument set out in the business case and to ensure EES infrastructure at Kent stations does not become a barrier.
- Secure discussion with new operators.

## How can KMEP support?

- 1 Publicise the business survey- <https://kcc.welcomesyourfeedback.net/s/KentBusinesses>
- 2 Publicise the petition - <https://www.change.org/p/bringback-eurostar-train-services-to-kent>
- 3 Support the campaign and its lobbying efforts to government next year
- 4 KMEP Chair champion the campaign

5.1 Is there sufficient space at Ebbsfleet and Ashford to deal with the new border requirements?

5.2 Current understanding is that there should be enough space at both Ebbsfleet and Ashford stations, the critical element will be how many officers that there will be available to facilitate St Pancras and both Kent/ stations.

5.3 Is there any certainty around the resilience of the journeys and how reliable they would be?

5.4 Carol Ford asked how the renewed train journey would impact Medway? The trains running would have an impact for a wide-ranging area including East Sussex and South London and

would certainly include Medway. The infrastructure is already in place and there would be no need to build anything new.

- 5.5 Carol Ford also asked if Eurostar is just a passenger service? Yes, it is but there are a limited number of freight services operating through the channel tunnel. The issue of freight through the channel tunnel would be a discussion for a different meeting.
- 5.6 Roger Gough asked if there was any input that he could provide for the Ambassador's event later that evening? Andrew Osbourne said it would be key to have the views of business leaders for them to become champions.
- 5.7 If it is not possible to get both stations back up and running, how do you avoid bias towards one or another? Andrew Osborne said that the immediate priority it to get the services return.
- 5.8 Miranda Chapman said she was happy to help in terms of engaging potential Ambassadors through LinkedIn and pointed out the value of promoting the Service though Tiktok.
- 5.9 Vince Lucas talked about the that in his view there have been 3 failures. A market failure against HS1, Policy failure and a market and policy failure, as there has been nothing done to protect the services. If these failures are not addressed that not much will happen. He is also not convinced that the competition is viable.
- 5.10 Jo James asked if Vince Lucas could email his above views as it is useful information.
- 5.11 Vince Lucas said that in the New Year he would write a paper on this an publish this.
- 5.12 Roger Gough pointed out that it could be interesting to talk to the competitions and markets authority (CMA) regarding Eurostar.
- 5.13 Vince Lucas said that it is important to have a public campaign but also work hard on addressing the underlying policy issues.

#### **Item 6 AOB**

- 6.1 Liz Gibney thanked Jo James for her role on the board as this is her last meeting before retirement.

## Any Other Business?

- Sea Link Consultation
- Gravesham LUF Award
- Kent & Medway Business Fund

#### **2024 KMEP Meeting Dates (TBC):**

- 15 January 15:30-17:30 – Online
- 6 March
- 9 April
- 9 May
- 4 July
- 5 Sep
- 5 Nov
- 5 Dec



A partnership between the business community, FE, HE, and local government &  
a federated board of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)

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