

Enabling innovative, productive
and creative businesses

Tudor Price & Steve Samson



1. Developing an enhanced place-based innovation partnership

Current Issue

- Kent & Medway businesses' expenditure on R&D was 64% of the UK average in 2018.
- K&M received £60m in grant from Innovate UK from 2013 to 2023 (half the sum Essex did).

Desired Outcome

- More Innovate UK investment
- Higher R&D spend by businesses improving productivity and leading to growth
- More commercialisation of university R&D, licensing of Intellectual Property, and spinning out of businesses
- Cluster development

Recent Growth Board Activity

- Met Innovate UK
- Met university partners
- Secured agreement on:
 - Setting up an innovation partnership
 - Draft terms of reference & proposed membership
 - Hosting first IP board meeting in January, with potential launch to businesses in March.

DECISION FOR KMEP TODAY

- **Agree Innovation Partnership should be established and be a KMEP sub-group.**
- **Agree Tudor Price and Steve Samson (as KMEP Thematic Leads for business) join the innovation partnership to represent KMEP.**

Next Steps

- Subject to KMEP's agreement:
- First Innovation Partnership Board to happen in January.
 - Host Innovation Partnership launch event – with businesses from identified clusters invited to attend.

Widening opportunities and unlocking talent

Simon Cook & Dan Ratcliffe



5-8. Embed the LSIP; Invest in skills infrastructure; & Focus on shared priorities.

Current Issue

LSIP identified key challenges that must be addressed to improve the local skills landscape. These include:

- Skills Shortages.
- Recruitment Barriers.
- Sector-Specific Needs.
- Cross-Cutting new skills needs affecting multiple-sectors, such as the need for decarbonisation and digitalisation.
- Employer Engagement in training design & delivery.

Desired Outcome

- A more highly skilled workforce with the qualifications and experience required for economic growth.
- Businesses engaged with education to inform and support the development of the future workforce

Recent ETF Activity

KMEP agreed in July that ETF to remain core forum for skills activity.

ETF met on 9 Sept & discussed:

- Setting the agenda
- Work & Health Strategy (future slide)
- Careers Hub

ETF met on 29 Oct & discussed:

- Supported Employment Programme (future slide)
- Industrial Strategy (previous slide)
- Health & Social Care
- Apprenticeships

DECISION FOR KMEP TODAY

- **Note the Employment Task Force Update**
- **Give feedback on any pressing skills issues**
- **Note and support the strategic work taking place around apprenticeships**

Next Steps

- Apprenticeships sub-group to continue to meet and drive social care pilot

7. Collaborate to make most effective use of skills budgets – Supported employment programme

Current Issue	Desired Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none">20.9% of Kent & Medway’s population in 2023 was economically inactive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The percentage of K&M’s population that is economically inactive reduces to pre-pandemic levels.Reduced unemployment helps fill skills gaps across important sectors



Securing resilient infrastructure for
planned, sustainable growth

Vince Lucas & Tom Marchant



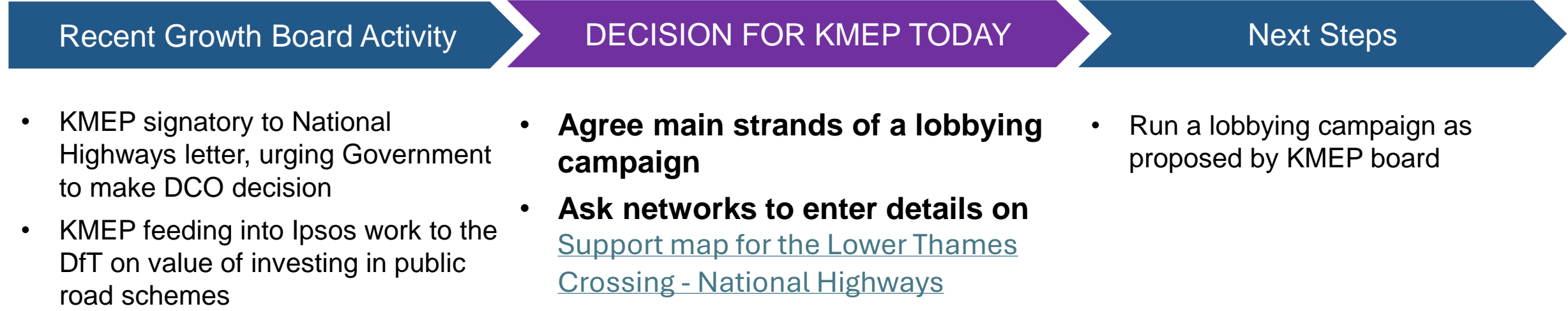
9: Maximising the benefit of international connectivity - Eurostar

Current Issue	Desired Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eurostar services stopped in Kent from 2006-2020. Up to 614,000 passengers used these services every year.• Eurostar services ceased stopping in Kent at the start of pandemic.• Eurostar has not specified a date when services will resume.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Return of stopping services to Ebbsfleet International and Ashford International Railway Stations.• A viable service is required – allowing business & visitor day trips



9: Maximising the benefit of international connectivity – Lower Thames Crossing

Current Issue	Desired Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government delayed a decision on whether to go ahead with the new £9 billion Lower Thames Crossing until May 2025. • Congestion on the Dartford Crossing costs the UK more than £200 million every year in time lost sitting in traffic. • Dartford Crossing is designed to handle 135,000 vehicles a day, it now averages 150,000 a day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Lower Thames Crossing DCO is agreed • The LTC is built as swiftly as pragmatically possible • Reduced journey times • Improved safety record • Better economic growth



12: Supporting Kent and Medway's energy potential

Current Issue

- The supply of energy is inhibiting some business expansion and relocation.
- Several businesses are struggling to get a UK Power Network connection to the grid.
- New technologies (e.g. electric vehicles) are rapidly becoming available. Energy infrastructure to support these technologies may not be progressing at the same pace.

Desired Outcome

- Energy supply is not a barrier to investment and expansion.
- Businesses are well-informed on the advantages of adopting new energy technologies, and the necessary infrastructure to support this adoption is in place.

Recent Growth Board Activity

- KMEP response sent to Ofgem's consultation on Regional Energy Strategic Plan
- Energy survey devised
- Worked with Uni of Kent on High Speed 1 private wire proposal

DECISION FOR KMEP TODAY

- KMEP states a new energy working group should be established.
- Since then, Ofgem's consultation proposes new regional Strategic Boards that contain county & unitary authorities and network companies (including electricity & gas network operators).
- **KMEP to agree how it wishes to link to the new strategic boards**

Next Steps

- Working with Uni of Kent on Kemsley Cluster Local Industrial Decarbonisation Plan
- Work with National Energy System Operator, Ofgem, Kent & Medway councils, and network operators during 2025 to establish the priorities and governance arrangements of the regional energy plan

Placing economic opportunity at the
centre of community wellbeing and
prosperity

Nick Fenton & Andrew Osborne



14: Developing a strategic partnership for health and the economy

Current Issue

- 18.4% of K&M's population was recorded as economically inactive due to ill health in 2020. By 2024 this had increased to 26% (up 7.6%).
- 48% of K&M employers surveyed in 2023 for the LSIP said recruiting staff was problematic (19.7% said staff recruitment is a major problem).

Desired Outcome

- More people with health conditions start, stay and succeed in work.
- The percentage of K&M's population that is economically inactive reduces to pre-pandemic levels.

Recent Growth Board Activity

- KMEP & ICS Officers have met 115 stakeholders.
- Employers have shared their perspective on current challenges and what is from the strategy (next slide).
- Strategic Partnership met on 1 Oct
- Strategic Partnership agreed four aspirations to guide strategy (next slide).

DECISION FOR KMEP TODAY

- **Endorse the four aspirations**
- **Note that Public Engagement will commence in December 2024**
- **Alert Sarah if you wish to sit on Strategic Partnership**

Next Steps



Employer perspective – what we heard

Challenges

Fear of:

- Financial/business losses
- Getting it wrong
- Creating staff prejudice
- Legal action
- Staff with significant absence due to sickness

Lack of:

- HR support
- Occupational health support
- Time within an already pressured environment

Needs

Recruitment and retention:

- Alternative recruitment/interview processes
- Reasonable adjustments, access to work
- Right match of employee to organisation/role

Support:

- Employer/manager training
- Toolkit
- Signposting to resources
- Occupational health for SMEs
- Self employed
- To be Disability Confident
- Funding
- Wellbeing training/helping employees to be physically active

Working together:

- Communication/listening to people
- Collaboration between organisations
- Engagement of organisations/employers

Aspirations agreed by Strategic Partnership on 1st October

A. Building employer confidence

Commitments:

1. Building employer confidence in the ways they support employees with LTHC and disabilities and access to relevant support.
2. Building strong working relationships between employers and employees and a culture of a collaborative approach to achieving business and employee needs.

B. Development, training and skills

Commitments:

1. Creating the environment in which people are supported and willing to undertake development training and skills to facilitate their engagement with meaningful work.
2. Providing opportunities, for people to receive appropriate careers guidance and take part in development, training and skills support to seek new roles which align with their circumstances and values.
3. Providing employers with access to knowledge about development, training and skills opportunities across the system which can enhance their own offer to facilitate each employee reaching their potential.

C. Person centred approach

Commitments:

1. Promoting a multidisciplinary approach to addressing the work and health needs of each individual with a long term condition or disability, supporting them to start, stay and succeed in work.
2. Promote flexible working options and reasonable adjustments which take account of the needs of the individual alongside business requirements.
3. Promoting a holistic approach to each individual which takes account of the wider determinants of health
4. Building employee confidence in their capability and competence to engage in meaningful work that is appropriate to their circumstances and to be able to seek support when needed.

D. Healthy, thriving workforce

Commitments:

1. Engender a culture in which employer and employee take a proactive approach to promoting good physical and mental wellbeing at work.
2. Collaboration within and beyond organisations to mitigate the impact of the wider determinants of health, e.g. healthy food, fuel poverty, housing.
3. Take a life stage approach which considers the impact of different life phases on the individual at work, e.g. menopause, ageing workforce.

Creating diverse, distinctive
and vibrant places

Miranda Chapman & Adam Bryan



17. Growing Kent and Medway's dynamic creative and cultural economy

Current Issue

- Significant growth in the creative sector across Kent & Medway but a lack of direct support for cluster development.
- The successful Create South East programme, which has supported high-growth potential creative businesses to become investment-ready, is coming to the end.

Desired Outcome

- The development and support of high-growth creative clusters – potentially utilising the Creative Opportunity Zones model.
- The continuation of the Create South East programme or an effective legacy operation.

Recent Growth Board Activity

- Met with Creative Kent.
- Met with the South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN).
- Sit on the Steering Group of Create South East and have made the case for additional funding.

DECISION FOR KMEP TODAY

- **Support the Create South East programme's bid for the continuation of funding to DCMS.**
- **Note the ambition to develop high-growth creative clusters.**

Next Steps

- Meet with Creative Medway to discuss next steps.
- Meet with the SECEN Creative Opportunity Zones sub-group.
- Await Government's next steps on the Create Growth Programme.

Grow In Kent branding

Current Issue

- Recognition that there is a lack of a collective, county-wide 'brand' that attracts national and international investment by promoting all that the county has to offer for business, learning, leisure, and tourism.

Desired Outcome

- A shared economic growth brand that will provide a more organised and synergistic approach to partnership across Kent and Medway.
- Underpin strategic engagement with Government depts.
- Support and drive inward investment from businesses and government.
- An amplified local voice.

Recent Growth Board Activity

- Grow in Kent Officer Steering Group established.
- Delivery plan for brand development and engagement endorsed.
- Initial stakeholder engagement with GET officers and the Kent Ambassadors.

DECISION FOR KMEP TODAY

- **Note the progress of the Grow in Kent project.**
- **Request for members to advise on any meetings/events taking place between November '24-February '25 that this project should be raised at.**

Next Steps

- Establish a brand development sub-group to oversee Strategic Communications Plan and delivery of brand assets e.g. logo, brand use guidelines.
- Stakeholder engagement phase from November '24 -February '25.