

AGENDA - online KMEP meeting - Tuesday 3 October 2023, 16.00 – 18.00

Online via Teams

	Approx. time	Page/Ref	Presenter
1. Welcome from Chairman	10:00		Liz Gibney
2. Apologies for absence & Declaration of interests			
3. Minutes & actions from previous meeting		Annex 1 (page 5-15)	
4. LEP Transition Update	10:05		Steve Samson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Transition Workstreams: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resources ○ Capital Programmes ○ Business Support ○ Partnerships & Networks ○ Data & Intel • Q&A • Decision: approval of Kent & Medway Transition Plan 			
5. Kent & Medway Economic Framework	16:50		David Smith, Ross Gill
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Areas Presentation 			
6. Getting Building Fund Prioritisation Update	17:20 11:45		Steve Samson Liz Gibney
7. Any other Business	11:50 17:25		Liz Gibney
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Rail Business Survey 			

Future KMEP meeting dates:

Tuesday 5th December 2023 from 3.30pm to 5.30pm (In person, Canterbury)

Monday 15th of January 2024 15:30 – 17:30 (Online)

Tuesday 5th March 2024 15:30 – 17:30 (In person TBC)

Subject: MINUTES of the 3 October 2023 Kent & Medway Economic Partnership
(KMEP) meeting held online on MS Teams

Attendees:

KMEP Board Members:

Liz Gibney (KMEP Chairman & Lee Evans Partnership)	Cllr Derek Murphey (Kent CC)
Jo James (Vice Chair & Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce)	Cllr Robert Thomas (Kent CC)
Vince Lucas (VA Rail)	Cllr John Burden (Gravesham BC)
Andrew Metcalf (Maxim PR)	Cllr Monique Bonney (Swale BC)
Jo Nolan (Screen South)	Cllr Alan Baldock (Canterbury CC)
Nick Fenton (Kent Housing and Development Group)	Cllr Rick Everitt (Thanet DC)
Graham Razey (East Kent College)	Cllr Ben Chapelard (Tunbridge Wells DC)
Matthew Arnold (Stagecoach)	Cllr Paul Cooper (Maidstone BC)
David Milham (FSB)	Cllr Noel Ovenden (Ashford BC)
Miranda Chapman (Pillory Barn)	Cllr Vince Maple (Medway Council)
Sweena Badham (IoD)	

Additional Attendees:

Christopher Townend (Dover DC on behalf of Cllr Kevin Mills)
Stephanie Holt-Castle (Kent CC)
Steve Samson (Kent CC)
David Smith (Kent CC)
Ross Gill (SQW)
Emma Watson (Kent CC)
Jeremy Whittaker (Tonbridge and Malling BC)
David Candlin (Tunbridge Wells DC)
Detlev Munster (Sevenoaks DC)
Joanne Johnson (Swale DC)
Andrew Osborne (Ashford BC)
Chris Inwood (Maidstone BC)
Richard Longman (Greater North Kent Partnership)
Kirsty Roberts (East Kent Leadership Group)
Tracey Kerly (Ashford BC)
Tudor Price (Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce)

Board Member Apologies:

Cllr Lauren Edwards (replaced by Cllr Vince Maple); Cllr Julia Thornton; Cllr Jim Martin; Roland Cooper; Cllr David Burton (replaced by Cllr Paul Cooper); Cllr Kevin Mills (replaced by Christopher Townend); Mario Caccamo; Cllr Jim Martin (replaced by Kirsty Roberts); Carol Ford; John Keefe; Mayer Shreiber.

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)

Item 2 – Declaration of Interests

2.1 Jo James declared an interest for the purposes of the LEP transition discussion point covering the Kent & Medway Growth Hub as Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce is the current service provider.

2.2 Andrew Metcalf and Miranda Chapman declared an interest as KICC Board Members.

Item 3 – Minutes of previous meeting

3.1 The minutes of the 6 September 2023 meeting were agreed. The actions are listed below and were completed:

Actions from 19 July Meeting

- **SELEP Board Members:** Andrew Metcalf and David Milham to join SELEP board on behalf of Kent & Medway
- **GBF Projects:** KCC to circulate business cases, ranking survey etc. to assist with prioritisation process
- **GBF Project Sign Off:** KCC to ensure S151 officer sign off of prioritised bids by 22 Sep

3.2 Liz Gibney thanked the Board Members that took part in the successful GBF Bid Investment Panel Meeting on 19 September.

Item 4 - LEP Transition Update

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

LEP Transition Update: Timetable

- [Draft Kent & Medway Integration Plan](#) circulated with KMEP papers 25 Sep
- KCC Growth & Economic Development Cabinet Committee Meeting 26 September:
 - Agreed the transfer of relevant SELEP responsibilities to KCC from April 2024 including:
 - Business representation
 - Strategic economic planning
 - The delivery of government programmes (where directed)
- [SELEP Transition Plan](#) being developed for board endorsement on 13 October
- Draft [K&M Integration Plan](#) and [K&M Economic Framework](#) to be sent to DLUHC- ASAP
- 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

4.1 Cllr Derek Murphey commented that the Draft Kent and Medway Integration Plan had been well received by the KCC Growth & Economic Development Cabinet Committee. The plan would provide local control over funding decisions.

LEP Transition: Resources

Finances:

Make the case to DLUHC for [a fair annual allocation](#) to UTLAs including KCC
(e.g. Wiltshire population 435,000 could receive more than Kent & Medway due to historic LEP footprint)

Staffing:

- Discussions underway with Kent, Medway and Essex HR teams
- Role profiles being finalised and recruitment Process being planned

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)

LEP Transition: Capital Programmes

Getting Building Fund:

Assumption that future monitoring of any new projects to be carried out by KCC (& MC) directly along with legacy LGF

Growing Places Fund:

- 13 Oct – presentation to SELEP Strategic board expected to clarify options for apportioning remaining (and future) funding to federated areas including K&M
- Kent & Medway to seek flexibility from DLUHC to develop approach for new local programme from April 2024

4.2 Jo Nolan asked whether the funds that were mentioned were loans, loan guarantees or grants and what the breakdown was.

4.3 Steve Samson responded that GPF was initially set up as an evergreen loan scheme, and that that has how it has been used by SELEP. There is potentially local discretion around how this can be used going forward. Internal discussions at KCC have been about the potential continuation of a loan fund that can support capital projects. But this is a point for clarification from government. Medway Council have expressed a preference for potentially looking at grants rather than loans. However, there is an overall understanding it would need to be used for capital programmes.

LEP Transition: Partnerships & Networks

SELEP sector groups – no significant updates since last meeting

Local work in progress:

- Mapping current relevant sector / thematic partnership groups in Kent & Medway
e.g. Housing, Manufacturing, Life Sciences, Rural etc.
- Considering new/revised groups required to support the implementation of the Kent & Medway Economic Framework / KMEP agenda
e.g. energy, business support etc.
- How to establish formal links to KMEP

- 4.4 Liz Gibney said that work around this is currently being worked up and will be shortly circulated for comment. The aim is to provide clear routes for future funding from any projects.
- 4.5 Steve Samson added that it should build on areas where there is a real need in Kent and Medway and perhaps a task and finish type approach rather than the discussion forums that have previously existed.
- 4.6 Liz Gibney mentioned that for each of the sectors KMEP will likely ask a KMEP board member to be the champion of that sector.

LEP Transition: Data & Intel

Establish data requirements in order to:

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

Potential to:

- Continue Kent & Medway Economic Dashboard (monthly)
- Produce annual 'State of the Kent & Medway Economy' report integrating sector analyses (subject to resource)

KMEP Workstream / Kent & Medway Economic Framework Link	Kent & Medway Data Requirement
KMEF Ambition: Enable innovative, productive and creative businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GVA Business count (Size, turnover, births & deaths, survival, cash Reserves, PAYE, vulnerability) Payrolled employees Sector reports (creative, life sciences, food & drink production, manufacturing, transportation & services, emerging / growth sectors (cost for data)) Exports, Innovation (R&D Tax Credits)
KMEF Ambition: Secure resilient infrastructure for planned, sustainable growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce arrangements (hybrid/home/workplace), travel to work patterns Energy Prices Port Passengers, Imports & Exports Broadband Access Carbon Emissions EV Charging
KMEF Ambition: Place economic opportunity at the centre of community wellbeing and prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unemployment / Employment Rates Economic Inactivity data Employment Structure (sectors) Self Employed data Earnings
KMEF Ambition: Create diverse, distinctive and vibrant places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism industry in Kent Town Centre footfall data Office Space data
KMEF Ambition: Widen opportunities and unlock talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualifications Higher Education starters, graduate retention, graduates into local jobs (cost for data) Jobs (knowledge intensive sectors, low pay sectors) Apprenticeship starts Labour demand by sector

LEP Transition Business Support

- Continuation of **Kent & Medway Growth Hub** service
- DBT to announce future funding (Autumn?)
- KCC to consider future delivery model & contracting arrangements (current contract ends March 2024)
- Potential to widen current KMGH Steering Group to a ‘Kent & Medway Business Support Group’. Role:
 - Business Support Gap analysis
 - Enhancing Growth Hub service
- Establish ‘Business Advisory Board’ working groups e.g. local procurement
- Establish / link KMEP to industry sector groups

4.7 Liz Gibney invited board members for any feedback or questions about the workstreams covered by Steve Samson in the previous slides.

4.8 Jo James wanted to raise the point that as the current Growth Hub contract comes to an end on the 31st of March and there has been no clear indication from government yet on future funding. In addition, there will be a full procurement exercise to go through which takes several months. She is concerned that this will result in a gap in service at a time when business needs support and consistency.

- 4.9 Cllr Vince Maple recognised the need for flexibility going forward and the need to work across Kent and Medway collectively and collaboratively. But the emphasis on this being a collaboration between the two should not be lost when submitting various papers to DLUHC and others.
- 4.10 Derek Murphy responded by saying that Kent and Medway are equal partners in this all the way through.
- 4.11 Liz Gibney confirmed, through a majority show of hands, that the draft LEP transition paper had been endorsed by KMEP board members and could be sent to DLUHC
- 4.12 Andrew Metcalf asked for clarification on the issue of arguing for fair allocation of the SELEP funding based on population and what the times scales for this would be. He also asked if KMEP would be arguing on the same basis then for the split of the Growing Places Fund pot with Essex and East Sussex purely again on population.
- 4.13 Steve Samson replied with the suggestion to include a note or letter within the information sent with the draft integration plan to DLUHC. It should be considered that when the government looks at how they allocate funding to the new areas, that population or size of area is taken into account to make sure it is fair. In terms of a fair allocation of future GPF funding allocations – some options were due to be presented to the SELEP board for consideration on 13 October.

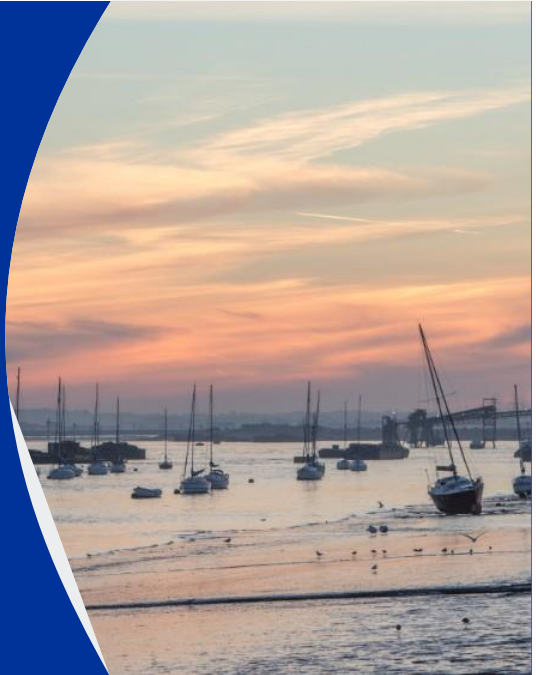
5 Item 5 – Kent and Medway Economic Framework

- 5.1 David Smith provided an introduction of the Framework. It is being called a Framework rather than a Strategy to introduce an element of flexibility and is a framework that has a longer time horizon, up until 2030. It needs to be relevant to the work already taking place and deliver the Kent, Medway, and districts priorities. This is in terms of getting funding from the government, getting legislative, and sometimes, regulatory support. It is a set of presentational themes and work is currently being undertaken on the introductory section which will tell the reader why the document is relevant to the economic success of Kent and Medway going forward. The next version of the Framework will be presented at the next KMEP meeting on 5 December and the Kent Leaders Meeting on 13 December. Then the next version will be taken to the KCC Economic Cabinet Committee for endorsement. The final version will be completed with approval from all KMEP parties.
- 5.2 Ross Gill then delivered the presentation on the Framework:

Introducing the Kent and Medway Economic Framework

Kent and Medway Economic Partnership

3 October 2023



Why we're developing a new Economic Framework

Providing an up-to-date statement of priorities	<i>Replacing the former Economic Renewal and Resilience Plan</i>
Supporting Kent and Medway in the new economic development landscape	<i>A framework to guide Kent & Medway's priorities following the South East LEP</i>
Making the case for investment	<i>The strategic context to guide funding proposals and emerging ideas</i>
Responding to economic change and new opportunities	<i>Taking account of the big changes – in relation to net zero, digitalisation, etc</i>

What it is... and what it isn't

What it is	What it isn't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high-level framework – setting out an overall narrative and a series of ambitions on which partners can work together • A partnership strategy – owned by Kent and Medway together • A framework to add value to partners' strategies and plans • Medium -to-long term, looking out to 2030 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory – no requirement or guidance from Government • A detailed action plan – it sets out a series of 'action areas' but not a list of projects • Funded – it makes the case for funding, but there's no central pot • An investment promotion document – a strategic framework, not (in itself) a marketing resource

Currently in draft, for comments from strategic partners

The 'core narrative'

The Framework describes an economy which is:

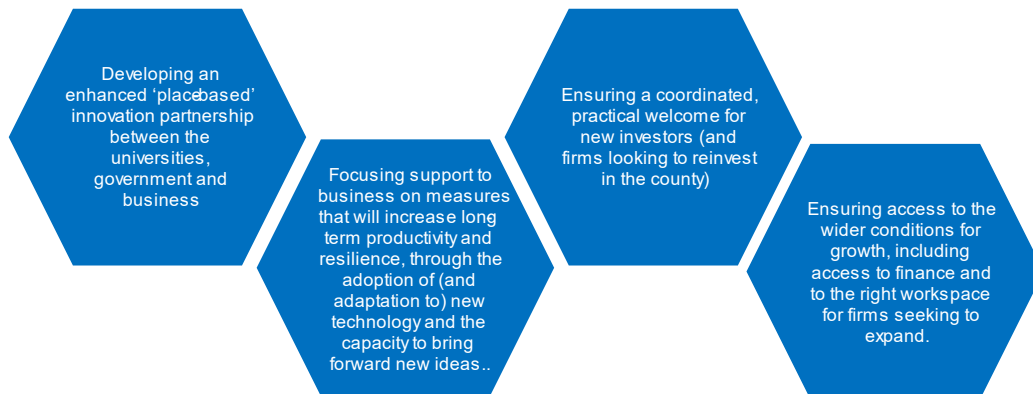
- Diverse and dynamic: successful in increasing its employment and business stock over the past decade and with a strong track record in securing and pipeline of commercial investment.
- Growing rapidly, with population growth (including 'working age' population growth) substantially in excess of the national average, and linked with some of the country's most significant growth locations
- 'Polycentric' and complex, with urban, rural and coastal dimensions and a complex pattern of connections between the county's network of settlements....
- ... But with some very distinctive assets and characteristics. These include the county's international gateway role (and the economic role that this plays and the challenges it brings), the cultural and creative renaissance of its coastal towns, and the highly productive land -based sector in the 'garden of England'.
- ... Which are accompanied by important opportunities for innovation and economic growth. These include the growing university base at Canterbury and Medway, and key centres for innovation, such as Discovery Park in relation to life sciences, in the context of a broad -base, largely small-business dominated economy with opportunities for growth that are widely dispersed and often 'under the radar'
- Impacted by workforce skills challenges and pressures – but in the context of significant progress in recent years
- Spatially, quite unequal – which is visible at high level in the sub -regional disparities between West and East Kent, but which also impacts at local level and correlates with wider outcome inequalities.

The Framework: Objectives and Ambitions



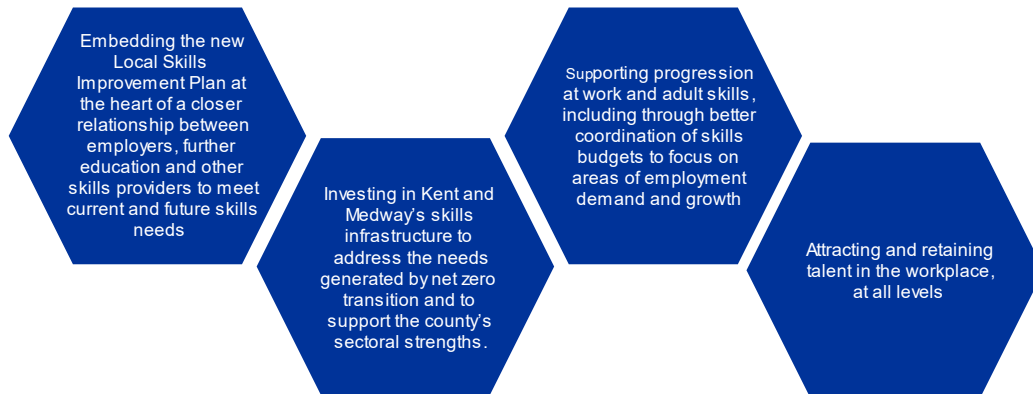
Enabling productive, innovative and creative businesses

Focusing on increasing business investment and growing innovative capacity and resilience, both within the leading edge of technology and across the economy.



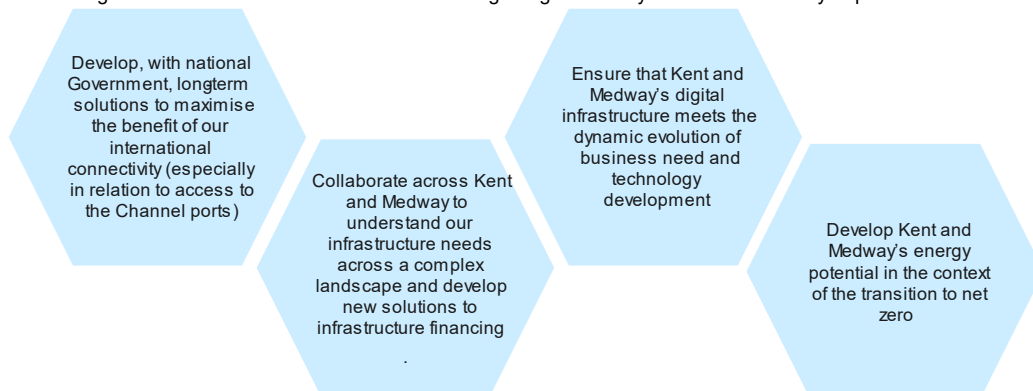
Widening opportunities and unlocking talent

Focusing on the skills and talent of the workforce – supporting greater employer engagement and leadership in the skills system, joining up the offer and ensuring continued investment in the skills that are needed to respond to decarbonisation, digitalisation and other transformational changes.



Securing resilient infrastructure for planned, sustainable growth

Focusing on securing the infrastructure that Kent and Medway needs to support long -term sustainable growth – including action at national as well as local level recognising the county's stock of nationally important assets



Placing economic opportunity at the centre of community renewal and prosperity

Focusing on ensuring that people are able to contribute to Kent and Medway's growth potential and that the benefits of that growth are widely shared, are visible across the county and contribute to overall quality of life



Creating diverse, distinctive and vibrant places

Focusing on maximising the potential of Kent's distinctiveness and unique characteristics – and the distinct characteristics and opportunities of towns and communities across the county.



Next steps



- 5.3 Ross Gill said that some views and comments shared by colleagues have been received, including those from several local authorities, through economic development teams, which have been very helpful. However, none of those comments appear in the draft presented today as it has not yet been updated.
- 5.4 Vince Lucas had an observation on Ambition 3 and a feeling that came strongly through in the last Kent Business Advisory Board is that there probably is something in the infrastructure about maximizing the utilisation of HS1 because currently we've got fewer services via the Medway towns than we had previously. This is highly political now, but quite a good point to make is that we have got this asset and it's not being fully used.
- 5.5 Ross Gill replied that this was a good point and not one that had been raised before.
- 5.6 Cllr Vince Maple said that he supports Vince Lucas' point and added that from a governance perspective, he would certainly anticipate taking this Framework to the Medway Council Cabinet, either on the 19th of December or 16th of January, depending on timings and welcomes further engagement.
- 5.7 Jo James said with the major changes ahead and the new role for KMEP, when looking further down the line at devolution, the time is now right to relook at a strategy and particularly this new economic framework. However, there is a need to ensure we fully engage the business community and the Kent and Medway Business Advisory Board in the process. The business voice in this is as vital as the public sector and education sector voices are. She also noted that throughout the Framework there is a focus on sectors. This is fine as an overall strategy, but digitalisation and decarbonisation are going to impact all businesses, all sizes, all sectors, all geography. But overall, she is supportive of the work that's been done to date with the framework.
- 5.8 Cllr Monique Bonney mentioned rail freight and that this Framework provides an opportunity, county wide, to get the traffic from road to rail and would have it huge impact on the area.

- 5.9 Cllr Monique Bonney highlighted changing working practices and the need to be reflective of what is going on in the real world around working patterns. So, companies locating outside of towns will have an impact.
- 5.10 Cllr Monique Bonney commented on health infrastructure and that this is lacking across Kent and Medway and is a major driver for people moving away from the area.
- 5.11 Cllr Monique Bonney made the point that it would be useful for the planning system to be reflected in the Framework, because a lot depends on the planning system.
- 5.12 Cllr Monique Bonney recommended that there should be a list of actions as appendices for monitoring purposes.
- 5.13 Cllr Monique Bonney said that Ross Gill had already received a copy of the aforementioned comments regarding the Framework.
- 5.14 David Smith thanked everyone for their comments and wanted to pick up on rail freight. In discussions with colleagues who are working on transport, both in Medway and in Kent County Council, it has been picked up that the rail network bridges are too low and too unfriendly to transferring a large amount of road freight onto rail. But we can include this in our reviews and make sure that we keep up to date with any difficulties.
- 5.15 David Smith also picked up on the health and care infrastructure point raised by Cllr Bonney. Some ideas have been shared with the Integrated Care Partnership and we are now looking to an integration of the economic agenda with the health and care agenda. He also agreed with Cllr Bonney's suggestion of an action plan with target dates and deliverables.
- 5.16 Monique Bonney replied that she had had detailed discussions with colleagues at Network Rail and does not think low bridges should pose a problem because there are carriages that can be used and are capable of being used for rail freight of different dimensions so there are other options.
- 5.17 Vince Lucas responded by saying that he agreed with Cllr Bonney and that there should be more room for further development on this as the infrastructure is partly in place, but you would mean having to expand the lower low body vehicles fleet.
- 5.18 Liz Gibney that we should note this and take it forward for further discussion.
- 5.19 Andrew Metcalf questioned what the framework would mean to business, and how we inform business about what Kent and Medway are doing to improve the economy, improve skills, improve provision of infrastructure. This needs to be thought of now rather than January because businesses need support and reassurance now.
- 5.20 Andrew Metcalf also commented that there was not much reference to the planning system in the document. As many businesses feel that investment is being held up by planning system issues.
- 5.21 Liz Gibney referred to Tracey Kerly's question in the chat 'that LIK are producing an investment document and presume their document is complementary with this framework and objectives?'
- 5.22 Liz Gibney responded by saying that all the strategies should align and be relevant to business and relevant organisations.
- 5.23 David Smith commented that the LIK document speaks directly to business and will be issued before January. It will be consistent with what is in the Kent and Medway Economic Framework.

6 Item 6 - Getting Building Fund Prioritisation Update

6.1 Steve Samson gave an update using the slide below:

GBF Project Prioritisation for Kent & Medway

- KMEP Investment Panel met 19 September
- Prioritised list:
 1. Suite of 4 workspace projects (£1.37m combined)
 2. Bearsted Road – clarifications provided (£500K)
 3. 5G Port of Dover – clarifications provided (£465K)
- 6 Independent Technical Evaluations Commissioned
- SELEP requires 4 workspace projects to be ranked

GBF Project Prioritisation for Kent & Medway

Bearsted Road Project Clarifications:

- **Progress:** construction contract awarded, enabling works underway, to merge into main contract works (Oct 23-Nov 24)
- **GBF Case:** without the £500K, another funding source would need to be sourced rapidly
- **GBF Contribution:** bridging gap caused by inflationary pressures (materials & labour), avoiding possible additional delays caused by value engineering project down to available budget

GBF Project Prioritisation for Kent & Medway

Dover 5G Project Clarifications:

What will project achieve?

5G connectivity to facilitate advanced traffic monitoring along crucial routes (A20 and A2) facilitating integration of data into real-time adjustments of vehicle transit pathways within the port.

Anticipated outcomes from GBF investment:

- 90% reduction in the frequency of traffic management schemes such as TAP
- Hauliers reducing operational costs and increasing frequency of time dependant services for fresh produce and 'just-in-time' deliveries
- A series of localised reductions in the level of pollutants at key traffic management sites
- An increase in the level of 5G connectivity of at least 800 Mbps.
- Conservative uplift of 5% new jobs (equivalent to 22 new jobs in the Port workforce and 1,100 indirect new jobs throughout the logistics chain driven by Dover)

6.2 Steve Samson added the independent Technical Evaluation service for those six projects has been commissioned, that will take place between now and early November and subject to those projects being deemed fully eligible, they'll be taken forward to the SELEP investment Panel meeting on the 1st of December and they will be competing against the other projects from Essex and from East Sussex. The final sign off by SELEP Accountability Board will be on the 13th of January and then any approved will need to hit the ground running and deliver by the end of next year.

Item 7 – AOB

7.1 Steve Samson mentioned a that colleagues at KCC have been talking to Ashford and the Chamber and Visit Kent and other colleagues about a petition that was put in place around reinstating services at Ashford International and are looking at expanding that into Ebbsfleet as well. As part of this, a service survey is being created for businesses locally and in surrounding counties, about the kind of the risks they face if international rail services do not return. The link to this will be available for sharing within a week.

ACTION: Please circulate the survey widely across networks with the aim to build a case for Eurostar to consider returning services to Ashford and Ebbsfleet stations.

7.2 Vince Lucas wondered if there was any existing intelligence on what business had been lost through Eurostar not stopping at Ashford and Ebbsfleet anymore.

7.3 Vince Maple said that for Medway the emphasis would be more on Ebbsfleet but sees this as a critical survey and will share through networks in Medway.

7.4 Nick Fenton wanted to reiterate the point that it was important that the LIK document matches the Kent and Medway Economic Framework and what is discussed at KMEP level.

7.5 Jo Nolan was at a previous as a recent local meeting in Folkestone and the buses issue came up in the Economic Partnership meeting. This issue is impacting access to work. This has not been

mentioned today. This is affecting the care home industry in the region and other sectors as well. She wanted to raise it as a concern from both business and community.

7.6 Matthew Arnold said that the industry had been hard hit by a bus driver shortage but expects Stagecoach to be fully staffed again within the next 6 to 8 weeks.

7.7 Jo Nolan suggested a message could be put out there in terms of a plan in the pipeline. It might help people who are at the point of resigning or being made redundant.

7.8 Steve Samson had one final AOB, an update on the Lower Thames Crossing. He had received an email from the Lower Thames Crossing Team regarding proposed updates to the KMEP statement of common ground. He will summarise the proposed changes and circulate that with the KMEP minutes.

7.9 Cllr Vince Maple was asking for reassurance that KMEP is in a position to act quickly on this if needed.

7.10 Nick Fenton confirmed that from a Kent Housing Development Group perspective they definitely are.

7.11 Cllr John Burden said that Gravesham has stated that they are opposed to the Lower Thames Crossing and this view still stands.

8 ACTION: consider a future KMEP agenda item relating to bus services in Kent & Medway

9 ACTION: Steve Samson to circulate the LTC update on the KMEP statement of common ground policies