

FOR INFORMATION ITEM B

Date: 24 September 2019

Subject: 2050 Kent and Medway Enterprise and Productivity Strategy

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Summary:

The purpose of this note is to provide members of KMEP with a progress update on the 2050 Kent and Medway Enterprise and Productivity Strategy, and to share for information the emerging vision and priority areas for the strategy. If board members would like to provide any comments, we would be happy to receive those. We intend to discuss the strategy in detail at the November KMEP board meeting. In the meantime, we are working with business representatives, local authorities and wider local partners iteratively over the next 3 months to gather views and input on the ambition and the detail of the strategy. We are also working closely with the LEP to ensure the two strategies complement one another, and that we are presenting a united front to Government. We are teasing out what makes sense for us to take action on within our federated area through our strategy, and what makes sense for SELEP to focus on at a SELEP wide level.

As we have set out previously, the strategy takes its lead from the Government's National Industrial Strategy. Whilst there has been a change in Prime Minister, and most Cabinet Ministers, which will undoubtedly have some impact on this agenda, it is clear from early speeches that the priority areas within the Industrial Strategy continue to be priorities, which places will be expected to respond to. As we leave the European Union, irrespective of what scenario, it is prudent that we locally have a coherent view, backed by other local authorities, and other key business and public sector partners on what our priorities are now and in the future, and what we are doing in response. The narrative and evidence we prepare through this strategy should form the building blocks of any future discussion with Government over funding and support.

Recommendation:

The KMEP Board is asked to note progress to date and the emerging vision for the strategy.

1. Progress update

1.1 Since we last updated KMEP, Arup (who we commissioned to support the delivery of an evidence base) have prepared a report, which we are in the final stages of

amending and agreeing. That report will underpin the strategy and is consistent with the findings in the emerging draft LEP evidence report which will in turn inform the Local Industrial Strategy for the SELEP area.

- 1.2 Since January, we have engaged widely with the business, local authority, and wider local partner audience through a series of 1:1 discussions, interviews and a workshop which has provided us with a bottom up picture on the themes and priorities the strategy should focus on, our challenges and opportunity areas, the impact of national policy and local action the strategy should take in response.

2. Vision for Kent and Medway

- 2.1 Attached at annex A is an emerging draft vision for the 2050 Enterprise and Productivity Strategy based on evidence gathered and engagement to date. This is at an early stage still, with plenty of scope for comment and change.
- 2.2 Kent has always been known as the 'Garden of England' but this was not an identity that business or investors particularly identified with from an economic perspective, though it may resonate more with residents who enjoy the attractive living environment that we offer. Developing a forward looking USP/ vision which unifies the Kent and Medway area, encourages investment, whilst telling a compelling story around sustainable, clean growth which helps business and residents understand the benefits it can offer is crucial. That vision needs to be relevant now, but also speak to a medium- and longer-term agenda. Balancing these different considerations is not easy. If KMEP board members have views they would like to share at this stage, please get in touch with Johanna.howarth@kent.gov.uk

3. Next Steps

- 3.1 During September, we are be gathering input from local authorities, business, and public sector partners on the draft strategy and vision. We will update the strategy (including the vision) in early October, for discussion at and the various Local Authority boards (clusters, Kent chiefs/ Kent Leaders), and KMEP during October and November. The strategy will be updated again in December, with a view to going out to public consultation in the New Year, and then final sign off (by KMEP and individual local authority committees), by March 2020, to time with the SELEP Local Industrial Strategy. KMEP will be engaged on the draft as its differing stages of development.

Annex A: Kent and Medway 2050 Enterprise and Productivity ambition

Our ambition for 2050 is to fully realise our economic potential, generating [x additional GVA] by making more of our strategic geographic location and maintaining, and enhancing our attractive living and business environment, ensuring a more reciprocal relationship with London. We will do this by taking action across a number of priority themes:

Priority Area 1: Skills and Employability: *Delivering a step change in our future skills base – moving from a level 2-3 economy to a level 3-4 economy – Improving the distribution and number of high-quality education institutions and leading universities – influencing skilled employees and higher value businesses to locate in Kent and Medway*

We will do this by:

- Enabling better links between schools, FE providers and employers, ensuring every young person receives a rounded education, is motivated and supported to make the right post 16 education choices for them, making the transition into employment seamless
- Fostering a culture of lifelong learning, supporting SMEs to deliver continuous professional develop to upskill and reskill delivering a more resilient and agile future workforce
- Strengthening the voice and capacity of industry ensuring their voice is representative and informed to better influence provision
- Supporting vulnerable people to access opportunities including through the voluntary sector and become more economically active

Priority 2: Creating places people want to live work and visit: *Embracing our diversity – supporting the different types of places that make up Kent & Medway to make the most of our distinctive culture and heritage, and their natural assets and talents to fully realise their potential*

We will do this by:

- Driving a more sustainable approach to growth through greater, timely investment in our infrastructure and achieving a more appropriate balance between housing and employment growth
- Delivering our clean growth agenda, with zero carbon emissions by 2050, to protect the attractive living environment which is one of our top economic assets
- Local and central government working together to support a long-term shared ambition for Kent and Medway, using our combined resources and powers to mutual better effect
- Creating well designed places that people want to live, work and visit. This would see local government taking an active stake in places, using combined land and building assets, to leverage better quality/ designed developments and delivering on a shared urban regeneration agenda, bringing our town centres back to life and supporting our coastal area realise its potential

Priority 3: Supporting business of all sizes to grow and innovate - *embracing technological advances and improved R&D investment and collaboration from Kent & Medway's educational institutions to realise productivity gains, supported by trade arrangements that allow frictionless movement of goods*

We will do this by:

- Supporting the development of clusters and sector specific networks to enable business growth and innovation, making more of agglomeration effects, supply chain efficiencies and sharing knowledge on exports and routes to market
- Scaling up our existing efforts to support the market deliver high quality commercial spaces in the right locations to fulfil the needs of all firms, from SMEs to HQs at all stages of their journey from incubation to scale-up.
- Delivering an improved business support offer for all industries and sectors, returning to more hands-on support focused on leadership and better business planning
- Strengthening the voice of business through a coordinated, genuine and more reciprocal relationship with the public sector – informing provision of skills, business support and access to finance.