KMEP Kent & Medway Economic Partnership

A partnership between the business community, education sector, and local government
& a federated board of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership

ITEM 3

Subject: DRAFT MINUTES of the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP) meeting held in the Verena Holmes Building, Canterbury Christ Church University, on 25 November 21.

Board Member Attendees:

KMEP Board Members

Geoff Miles (Maidstone TV Studios & KMEP Chairman)
Matthew Arnold (Stagecoach)
Roland Cooper (Considine Ltd)
Nigel Earnshaw (IOD)
Karl Elliott (KMEP business alternate. Clague Architects)
Carol Ford (Horticultural Taskforce)
Ben Geering (KMEP business alternate. Quinn Estates)
David Milham (FSB)
Jo Nolan (ScreenSouth)
Mayer Schreiber (Discovery Park)
Paul Winter (Wire Belt Company Limited)

Cllr Ash Ashbee (Thanet District Council)
Cllr Trevor Bartlett (Dover DC)
Cllr David Burton (Maidstone Borough Council)
Cllr Tom Dawlings (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)
Cllr Roger Gough (Kent County Council)
Cllr Joe Howes (Canterbury City Council alternate)
Cllr Tim Valentine (Swale Borough Council alternate)

Board Member Apologies:

KMEP Board Members

Troy Barratt (Contracts Engineering)
Miranda Chapman (Pillory Barn)
Liz Gibney (Lee Evans Partnership)
Jo James (KMEP Vice-Chairman & Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce)
John Keefe (Getlink/Eurotunnel)
Vince Lucas (VA Rail)
Andrew Metcalf (Maxim PR)
Bob Russell (Copper Rivet Distillery)
Simon Cook (Mid-Kent College)
Prof. Jane Harrington (University of Greenwich)

Cllr Matt Boughton (Tonbridge & Malling BC)
Cllr John Burden (Gravesham Borough Council)
Cllr Rodney Chambers (Medway Council)
Cllr Gerry Clarkson (Ashford BC)
Cllr Peter Fleming (Sevenoaks District Council)
Cllr Jeremy Kite (Dartford Borough Council)
Cllr David Monk (Folkestone & Hythe District Council)

KMEP tour of the Kent & Medway Medical School and the Kent & Medway Engineering, Design, Growth and Enterprise (EDGE) Hub

0.1 The KMEP Board were welcomed by Professor Rama Thirunamachandran, the Vice-Chancellor & Principal of Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU), and Professor Helen James, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of CCCU. The attendees were split into three tour groups, which were led by:

- Professor Rama Thirunamachandran, CCCU Vice-Chancellor & Principal
- Professor Mohamed Abdel-Maguid, Pro Vice-Chancellor (STEM) & Dean of Science, Engineering & Social Sciences
- Professor Paula Kersten, the new Pro Vice-Chancellor & Dean, Faculty of Medicine, Health & Social Care

0.2 Prof. Rama Thirunamachandran explained that the new 17,000sqm Verena Holmes building cost circa £65m. The funding came from a variety of sources, including directly from Canterbury Christ Church University and £16.021m came from the Local Growth Fund. The Vice-Chancellor expressed his deep gratitude to KMEP, SELEP, and central government for making the decision to invest the Local Growth Funds in the facility, which houses the brand-new Medical School (which is the first within Kent and Medway). The Medical School is a joint initiative between CCCU and the University of Kent. The building is also home to the EDGE Hub, which delivers technical, professional opportunities (from degree apprenticeships to doctoral programmes) in Engineering, Product Design and Technology.

0.3 The Vice-Chancellor said there are three key ambitions for the facility, which are:

- To create a building where different disciplines could come together – not only Medical and EDGE Hub students, but also students of forensics, bioscience, sport science, etc.
- To serve the region of Kent & Medway and beyond. The facility will act as a cornerstone to attract businesses to work with the university and grow the wider economy.
- To inspire school children. CCCU's aim is to have one school group visit the facility every day during the working week in school term time. These school visits will help inspire the next generation to become involved in science, engineering, technology, and medicine at young age.

0.3 A press release with a few photos of the visit is available at: http://kmep.org.uk/news

KMEP Board Meeting:

Item 1 – Welcome, introduction and apologies.

1.1 Geoff Miles (the KMEP Chairman) welcomed attendees to the meeting. He accepted the apologies for absence as listed above.

1.2 The Chairman thanked Prof. Rama Thirunamachandran and his colleagues for hosting the KMEP meeting at their site.

Item 2 – Declaration of Interests

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

Item 3 – Minutes of previous meeting

3.1 With the addition of Cllr Roger Gough's apologies to KMEP on 16th September 21, the minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

3.2 With respect to the actions from the last meeting:

- The reconstituted Kent Rural Board will meet for the first time early in the New Year. Carol Ford will be the KMEP representative to sit on the group.
- KMEP has liaised with Southern Water about the issues raised by Prep World regarding the trade effluent. The CEO of Prep World has advised that positive progress has been made with Southern Water since that intervention, and a resolution is expected to be found shortly. The CEO of Prep World expressed appreciation to KMEP Board Members for their assistance.
- Broadband, 5G, and mobile connectivity will be a future item on a KMEP agenda in the first half of 2022.

Item 4 – Any Other Business

Kent & Medway MPs

4.1 Sarah Nurden (KMEP Manager) advised that the Kent and Medway Members of Parliament have invited the KMEP Chairman, KMEP Vice-Chairman, KMEP Manager, and SELEP CEO, to attend their next joint MP session on 14th December to discuss the LEP Review.

4.2 Sarah Nurden asked KMEP board members to advise her if they had any issues that they would like to have raised during the MPs' meeting.

Getting Building Funding

4.3 Tom Dawlings (TWBC Leader) thanked Roger Gough (KCC Leader), Sarah Dance (SELEP Accountability Board Chairman), and Sarah Nurden (KMEP Manager) for their support in securing £1.4 million of Getting Building Funding (GBF) from SELEP for the Amelia Scott project in Tunbridge Wells. This decision was made by the SELEP Accountability Board on 19th November 21.

4.4 The Amelia Scott is a transformative project in the heart of Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre. The project transforms two dilapidated grade-two buildings to be fit-for purpose and creates a new integrated and expanded building that will include an enhanced library, museum, 'Gateway', visitor information, registration services and education space.

4.5 This Getting Building Funding became available for reallocation to the projects at the top of SELEP's GBF reserve pipeline (such as the Amelia Scott), due to a project in East Sussex returning its GBF funding award.

4.6 Tom Dawlings invited the KMEP board to host a meeting at the Amelia Scott following its opening in spring 2022. The KMEP Chairman accepted this invitation.

Levelling-Up Funding

4.7 Geoff Miles (the KMEP Chairman) congratulated the local councils that were included on the list of 105 places across the UK that are to benefit from £1.7bn of Levelling-Up Funding (LUF) announced by the Chancellor in late October 21.

4.8 This announcement relates to the first round of LUF awards. In total, the Government have announced that there will be £4.8bn of Levelling-Up Funding awarded between 2021-2022 and 2024-2025.

4.9 The round one success projects within Kent and Medway, the lead bidder, and the amount of LUF awarded are as follows:

- Ashford International Studios at Newtown Works – Ashford Borough Council - £14,773,745
- Chatham Package (Town Regeneration) – Medway Council - £14,400,000
- Margate Digital – Thanet District Council - £6,306,078
- Ramsgate Future – Thanet District Council - £19,840,000

Item 5 – The progress achieved by the EDGE Hub in supporting local companies to innovate and adopt the latest research in a commercialised setting

5.1 The Chairman welcomed Professor Helen James OBE, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU), and Professor Mohamed Abdel-Maguid, Pro Vice-Chancellor (STEM) & Dean of Science, Engineering & Social Sciences, to speak about the difference being made since the creation of the EDGE Hub.

5.2 A copy of the slides presented are available here.

5.3 Professor Helen James OBE explained the vision that drove the creation of the EDGE Hub:

- Before the EDGE Hub, young people were moving out of the region to access high-level engineering, technology, and computing, as the courses were not on offer locally.
- Industry told CCCU that they could not attract the quality of the professional engineers and professionals, or if they could recruit staff, they could not retain them for more than a couple of years, as the STEM ecosystem was absent.
- The number of young people studying STEM subjects locally was woefully behind other regions of the UK.
- There was a dearth of mechanical engineering courses locally, and mechanical engineers help to inform so many other engineering and medical disciplines and industries that it was felt something had to change.
- All this came together to spur CCCU and partners to create a vision to establish this STEM and medical ecosystem.
- Dialogue took place with businesses, academic researchers, and the education ecosystem to inform the design.
- Students are now accessing state-of-the-art equipment to build up their skills.
- A key component has been engaging school teachers, so they appreciate the benefit of engaging students in STEM subjects early on, which will lead to a whole economy benefit later on.

- CCCU took a holistic approach, where all different engineering, technology, computing and medical disciplines could interface together within one facility. Taking this cluster approach is helping to generate new initiatives and the sharing of ideas, growing intellectual property across Kent and Medway. This is very unique to Kent and Medway, as most other UK universities have buildings that house specific disciplines, and do not have this cross-fertilisation approach.
- A core tenant for CCCU is the promotion of equality and diversity. 40% of the academics at the EDGE Hub are female. This is pretty unique, with no other UK universities having such a gender balance for STEM subjects. This is a purposeful strategy of CCCU.

5.4 Professor Mohamed Abdel-Maguid made the following comments during his presentation:

- The EDGE Hub is addressing the key regional challenges. These include creating a talent pipeline of work-ready graduates, preventing the brain drain away from Kent and Medway, and encouraging inclusion and diversity.
- The EDGE Hub engages 2,000 primary school children annually through its outreach and engagement programmes, such as 'If you were an engineer – what would you do?'.
- CCCU runs a Community Lab at the Discovery Park. Staff from companies based at the Discovery Park (e.g. Pfizer) give demonstrations to secondary school and FE students to help the students' understanding of and engagement with STEM subjects. So far over 3,500 young people have visited the community lab.
- CCCU has delivered 1 million interactions to young people.
- In 2015, the Kent and Medway population were 20% behind the national average in applying to study a level 3 STEM subject. The EDGE and Medical School have played a pivotal role in changing this, along with the concerted efforts of many other local partners. In 2020, the gap had reduced to 3.55% behind the national average.
- There is a gender gap in the students studying a level 3 STEM subject. However, Kent and Medway perform slightly better than the national average.
- Having work-ready graduates is essential for local companies. CCCU has therefore completely redesigned its programmes, so they all follow the CDIO (Conceive, Design, Implement, Operate) model. It has moved away from the old practice of setting students theoretical problems generated by academics, and replaced it with real problems that local SMEs are experiencing. These local SMEs may not have the time or resources to invest in exploring the problems. The students can consider these problems, and, learn by thinking (conceive and design), learn by doing (implement), learn by operation (operate), and then present their solutions to the industry. The industry takes part in the assessment of the students. From the very start of their studies, students are embedded in the real world.
- A range of courses are on offer at CCCU (including Chemical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, Product Design Engineering, Manufacturing Systems and Technology, Games Design, Software Engineering, Computer Science, Computer, Computer Security and Forensics, Business Information and Systems, and Data Intelligence).
- All courses come with an integrated foundation year, so this lowers the barrier to entry. When selecting prospective students, CCCU do not just consider their grades but seek more well-rounded candidates.

- Apprenticeships are important, and CCCU will shortly be offering the following opportunities (Manufacturing Engineer (Degree) Apprenticeship, Control/Technical Support Engineer (Degree) Apprenticeship, Product Design and Development Engineer (Degree) Apprenticeship, Science Industry Process/Plant Engineer (Degree) Apprenticeship, Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship, Senior Level Apprenticeship).
- Student enrolment figures have improved from 66 in 18/19, to 231 in 21/22, and generally actual enrolments have exceeded target enrolment numbers. There was a small anomaly in 21/22 due to the COVID pandemic.
- The EDGE Hub has created 34 new jobs within the university itself.
- With respect to research and consultancy paid for by industry, the EDGE Hub generated £33,392 back in 2019, and this has now increased to £567,682 in 2021.
- The EDGE Hub offer short courses and CPD learners to the regional business community, with 48 learners in 2021.
- The number of students' CDIO projects set by industry has increased from 10 in 2019, to 64 in 2021.
- He concluded by saying that the EDGE Hub wants to act as a gateway to help industry engage with the wider higher education ecosystem. Partnership working is key.

5.5 During the question and answer session, the following comments were made:

- Roland Cooper expressed disappointment that the EDGE Hub did not yet offer civil engineer courses, for which there is growing industrial demand. Dr Anne Nortcliffe, CCCU's Head of School of Engineering, Technology and Design, explained that the next developmental stage for the EDGE Hub will be to create a civil engineering course. Professor Mohamed Abdel-Maguid explained CCCU is currently advertising for a new 'Director of Engineering and the Built Environment' with today being the closing date for job advert.
- Ian McAulay (Southern Water CEO) spoke about the need for environmental engineers. Professor Helen James explained that the Engineering Council has revised its guidelines for new accreditations, and that inclusivity, sustainability (including environmental sustainability) and ethics must be included within the engineering courses. Already at CCCU, second-year students consider the engineering product life-cycle and environmental impacts (for example, they must calculate the CO_2 consumption of the rigs they use, and consider how to reduce consumption).
- Jo Nolan spoke from a creative and digital perspective. She spoke about the crossover between the work of the EDGE Hub and the creative/digital sector. The creative sector requires many engineering skills, from digital skills, gaming, motion capture, and product design. She encouraged CCCU to explore partnership working with the creative sector, as it could help Intellectual Property development locally. Maybe a 'crossover lab' could be considered. Professor Helen James OBE replied that CCCU is considering whether a future course should be Stage Production Engineering, given the significant investment in Ashford International Studios.
- Andrew Osborne mentioned the recent award of Post-16 Capacity Funding to East Kent College, which will help them extend their engineering functions. Professor Helen James OBE replied that leadership from East Kent College have already visited the EDGE Hub, and discussions are underway between the two institutions.

5.6 The KMEP Chairman thanked Professor Helen James OBE and Professor Mohamed Abdel-Maguid for their presentation, and congratulated the CCCU team on the success of their new facility.

Item 6 - Southern Water's plans to upgrade the waste-water treatment facilities through the AMP process, and to ensure there is a resilient waste-water network that can cope with the predicted future demand caused by housing growth.

6.1 The Chairman welcomed Ian McAulay, CEO of Southern Water. Mr McAulay explained Dr Toby Willison sent his apologies, as he had tested positive for COVID that afternoon.

6.2 A copy of the slides presented are available here.

6.3 Ian McAulay made the following comments during his presentation:

- Climate change is predicted to reduce the supply of water by 600 litres per day by 2054. (For context, Southern Water put 540 litres per day into the system).
- Climate change is having a real impact, and coupled with an increasing population, there is a severe pressure on the water system. South East England is the most water stressed region that Ian McAulay has worked in (and he has worked in the USA, Belgium and Australia before).
- The National Infrastructure Commission reports a 1 in 4 chance of severe drought before 2050.
- The current levels of abstraction are unsustainable with huge risks for the previous chalk stream habitats. Ian McAulay emphasises that the management of the chalk streams must improve and change. The current practice is not sustainable.
- A problem for Southern Water is that it has inherited a sewage system that was designed in the Victorian era. This mixes together the surface water run-off with foul water, and drastically increases the volume of water that needs to be treated by wastewater treatment facilities. Modern residential buildings separate the drainage of surface water run-off from foul water, so processing wastewater from the extra 300,000 extra homes built each year is not as much as a challenge as dealing with the outflow from existing infrastructure.
- Southern Water plans to install event duration monitoring (EDM) technology at 100% of its sites by 2025. This technology measures the storm overflows, and currently 98% of sites have this technology.
- Southern Water is promoting Target 100. The average customer consumes 150 litres of water per day on average, and target 100 encourages customers to reduce consumption to 100 litres. It also encourages customers to know their own personal consumption levels – to educate them about how their consumer behaviour impacts the environment.
- In Kent, Southern Water will invest £298m of investment between 2020-25 in the 61 local wastewater treatment facilities. The number may increase above £298m following the recent purchase of Southern Water. The fifth and sixth slides show some of the local sites where the money will be invested.
- Ian McAulay explained removing nitrate and phosphates is a significant issue locally. There are a variety of ways of dealing with nutrient neutrality.
- The first way is offsetting nitrates by changing land use (e.g. by creating wetlands).
- Another way is using low phosphate technologies, such as those installed at Hailsham Wastewater treatment facility. Since the technology was introduced, the

phosphates have reduced from 5mg/litre to 0.1mg/l at Halisham. Is it the solution for phosphorous? Ian McAulay said yes if one only considers phosphates, but it is not necessarily the right solution if you consider wider factors. The low phosphate technologies consume vast quantities of high-strength chemicals and energy. Much concrete and steel is required for their construction and it produces much carbon dioxide. There is a need to strike the right balance.

- A third option is biological nutrient removal, however, this only works if there is highly concentrated sewage with a low flow rate, so may not be applicable in many situations (particularly where foul and surface water is mixed together).
- Ian McAulay explained how combined sewers and overflows work:
  - On a dry day, wastewater flows from domestic and industrial properties to the wastewater treatment facility, where it is treated, and then released into the rivers/sea.
  - On a rainy day, the surface water run-off increases, so the total volume of water flowing from domestic and industrial properties to the wastewater treatment facility is greater. There is a diversion for some of this wastewater, so it can be held temporarily in a storm tank (situated upstream of the treatment works). When the rain ceases and flow volumes decrease, the wastewater sitting in the storm (holding) tank can then be put back into the pipes, and flow downstream to the wastewater treatment works, where it is treated, before being released into the rivers/sea.
  - In a storm/very heavy rainfall, more wastewater is diverted to the storm holding tank. If the wastewater volumes continue to increase, and exceed the capacity of the storm tank, there is no option but to release the untreated wastewater from the storm tank directly into the rivers/sea. This has been happening at a greater frequency, as there is more foul water due to population growth, but mainly due to climate change affecting weather patterns. On certain days during summer 21, there was 60mm of rain per hour in Kent. The summer is often worse than the winter now, due to freak weather events.
- Most storm overflows occur when there is 97% rainwater in the system.
- The plan is to adapt the water system so it can better cope with the changing climate. Sustainable drainage systems, infiltration reduction, surface water separation, smart networks, and educating consumers are some of the new initiatives being proposed to improve the wastewater system.
- The most cost effective and environmentally beneficial way of reducing storm overflows is to separate the surface water and prevent it entering into the foul water sewage system. A 40% reduction in surface water from highways results in an 80% reduction in storm overflows, so there is a need to change road drainage. Natural solutions, like wetlands and reed beds, will also significantly help.
- On the Isle of Wight, £200m is currently being invested in increasing storm tank capacity, and £40m is being invested in road drainage solutions to separate surface water run-off from foul water. The impact of this investment is being closely monitored, as it will help inform if investing in road drainage is the better solution long-term.
- In homes with sustainable drainage, 13% of the drains go into the sewer, compared to 100% in homes without sustainable drainage.
- A CSO Task Force has been established to reduce storm overflows by 80% by 2030. It is bringing different partners to the table, involves budgets getting combined, and a new way of thinking. Five surface water separation pilot projects include

Swalecliffe, Deal, Margate, Sandown and Pan Parishes (Andover). The plan for Swalecliffe is to remove 5,000 cubic metres (17%) of water from the system (through surface water separation), which should reduce the use of outfalls by 80%).

- New long-term drainage and wastewater management plans – spanning 25 years of more – are being created.
- Ian McAulay encouraged the construction of water-neutral residential developments, which reduce water use through water efficient devices, smart metering, and water saving culture, as well as reusing water through rainwater harvesting, greywater recycling and blackwater recycling.
- He concluded his presentation by mentioning the cost of people disposing of 'unflushables' (wet wipes, nappies, cotton buds and sanitary items) into the sewage system. 60% of sewer blockages are caused by human behaviour. Wet-wipes alone cost the water sector £200m per annum to deal with, which could otherwise be invested in upgrading infrastructure.

Item 7 - Progress Update of the Stodmarsh Nutrient Neutrality Work

7.1 The Chairman welcomed Simon Thomas, Head of Planning at Canterbury City Council, to give an overview of his paper, setting out progress regarding the Stodmarsh nutrient neutrality issue.

7.2 During his update, Simon Thomas made the following points:

- The problem is that the water quality in the Stodmarsh lakes, a protected wildlife site, has been found to be unfavourable by Natural England, which monitors the water supply. The problem relates to two chemicals, phosphorous and nitrogen.
- Evidence suggests a large amount of these chemicals are coming out of the wastewater treatment works.
- The longer-term proposals to upgrade the wastewater treatment works at Canterbury will help deal with phosphorous, and to some extent nitrogen, but that upgrade is likely to be at least 8 years in the future.
- There are some upgrades to other wastewater treatment works expected over the next 2-3 years, which may have some effect on the nutrient levels.
- The changes to the wastewater treatment works are not expected to make significant changes to the nitrate levels, so there will be a need for environmental enhancements, for example wetland creation.
- The leaders of the East Kent district councils, Kent County Council, and the KMEP Chairman wrote to the Secretaries of State in April 2021 setting out the problem, and raising the funding request, for support in paying for wetland creation and onsite treatment works. No response to this letter was received.
- The proposal is for those leaders to rewrite to the new Secretary of State, Rt. Hon. Michael Gove M.P., to give an update on the situation, and reiterate that request for government support.
- In terms of progress, there has been some progress in establishing a solution for large strategic sites. The solutions to date have been in the form of on-site wastewater treatment works along with environmental enhancements that together achieve nutrient neutrality. For example, Canterbury was recently able to grant permission for a site of approx. 1000 houses.

- However, there is a cost attached that can potentially impact on the viability of these strategic housing developments. Providing on-site treatment works costs circa £1,500 per dwelling on larger sites.
- There is no known solution yet for smaller sites and high-street/town centre sites, as they do not have space to provide on-site treatment works or wetland creation.
- Council officers are working with Natural England and the Environment Agency on strategic solutions for these smaller sites. The authorities most affected (Ashford and Canterbury) are working together on a strategic solution, which is likely to be some sort of wetland creation, but there are other ideas under consideration. There will be a large cost involved, and the local authorities would most likely have to forward fund the buying of land for wetland creation, and its maintenance in perpetuity.
- Natural England is promoting environmental enhancements and is working with farmers to reduce agricultural run-off.
- Consequently, there is a need for an approved regional strategic strategy, that says, whilst new dwelling on smaller sites may have an impact on nutrient neutrality, this is offset by the wider beneficial impacts of a combination of measures across the area (e.g. wetland creation).
- Ashford Borough and Canterbury City Councils have both employed the same consultant, and are working together to create an in-combination solution.
- Simon Thomas concluded by summarising the three aspects of work: 1) creating a framework solution, 2) establishing a strategic solution to the creation of wetlands, and 3) writing to Rt. Hon. Michael Gove, M.P.

Joint question & answer session for items 7 and 8

7.3 During the question and answer session, the following comments were made:

- Roland Cooper (Considine Ltd) agreed that new residential developments cause the least damage to the water system, because they separate surface water run-off from foul water, and include devices to help consumers comply with the T100 target.
- Roland Cooper did mention his concerns about the veracity of Natural England's findings that the Stodmarsh lakes and river Stour water quality is inextricably linked.
- Roland Cooper asked Ian McAulay for his assistance in switching back on planning applications in the South East. Wetlands take a long time to engineer and to become efficient, but there is the opportunity to improve wastewater treatment works sooner. He asked Southern Water if they could provide firm dates when the Canterbury wastewater treatment works (WWTW) will be upgraded, along with other contributing WWTW sites. Natural England have said that they would accept a statement which shows a collection of various improvements over the short, medium, and long term, and this would allow planning consents to be provided once more. It takes approximately a year to build a house, so if short term solutions could start to be implemented within 12 months, the construction sector could start to function again. It is crucial for the sector that this happens, as currently 50,000 houses per annum cannot be built. Roland Cooper asked if Southern Water could provide the upgrade dates, and become a cosignatory for the regional strategy being produced.
- In response to these points, Ian McAulay stated that 40% of the nitrogen is already in the system, and has been there for nearly 100 years; southern water is

not starting with a clean slate, but must work to remediate historical damage to the work supplies made by our ancestors. Whilst he agreed with some of the things Roland Cooper said, he did not believe the solution is to build bigger wastewater treatment works. The solution must be more holistic. There is a need to plan water as a system, and create a combination of solutions. Ian McAulay said he was more than happy to get involved with the conversation, but we must deal with it holistically, and deal with it a system.

- Roland Cooper emphasised that there is a need for a solution in the short-term, alongside the medium- and longer-term solutions. He asked is we can petition the Government together to invest in plans to stop urban run-off and surface water run-off entering into the system to begin with. He agreed that what is being built today is not the problem, it is the inherited system and water-quality. However, switching off all new house building is not the solution. He extoled partners to work together to remove surface water out of the system. He agreed that there needed to be new wetlands, but repeated his concern that none of these are quick wins. The Canterbury wastewater treatment works have the biggest impact on the water quality in the Stodmarsh lakes, and that WWTW is only due to be upgraded in 8 years. He asked if it was acceptable to say that there is going to be no new houses built in the affected parts of Kent for the next 8 years. He spoke about the revenue stream that would come from these 50,000 houses a year, that could go towards upgrading WWTWs.
- Ian McAulay replies that 50,000 houses do not create sufficient revenue to fund the necessary infrastructure works. Water company revenue streams do not cover the cost of infrastructure investment, which is why all water companies borrow. Investment in infrastructure is multi-generational. There is a need for short- and long- term solutions. There is also a need to reflect on the whole environmental impact.
- Ian McAulay said that Southern Water is hosting a workshop in December looking at the system for new developments. At this workshop, partners will consider the water system and how best to work together.
- Cllr Joe Howes (Canterbury City Council) said there is a need to educate people about the water cycle, and their impact on it. There are many people buying artificial grass and tarmacking their driveways and they do not realise the environmental damage being caused, and the way this increases surface level run off entering the system. He said local councils need to do more to educate people. Also, there is a need to think about soft-engineering solutions. Cllr Joe Howes is an advocate of using clams and oysters to clean water like they do in the States, he was not certain if that will work here, but he encouraged all partners to explore and invest in alternative schemes.
- In response to Cllr Joe Howes, Ian McAulay explained that Southern Water conducted school visits prior to the pandemic. Cllr Joe Howes commented that the key audience must be local residents and homeowners, who can take action now to improve behaviour. Any education of school pupils will take many years to have effect, as they are not the people mainly responsible for the water usage.
- Cllr Ash Ashbee (Thanet District Council) offered to work with Southern Water to help educate the residents. She felt the County council, and district councils, had the responsibility to educate the residents, for example, to encourage them to use water butts. This can be done now, and then all parties, including Southern Water, could discuss the next steps for the water system, which may mean changing the road drainage.

- Carol Ford (Fresh Food Taskforce) said circa 60% of Kent and Medway is farmland, so if the conversation regarding the design of the water system is to be inclusive, then farmers and growers must be included in the conversation. The horticultural and agricultural sector can help create and implement holistic solutions to improve water quality.
- In response, Ian McAulay said farmers should be paid to farm water, as they are good at it. This is something that should be mentioned to Rt. Hon. Michael Gove M.P.
- Carol Ford asked that the food sector was brought into the conversation, and that a section of the regional strategy looks specifically at managing agricultural run-off.
- Andrew Osborne (Ashford Borough Council's officer alternate) said that the affected local councils are working together to proactively design solutions. They are exploring buying land, so that wetlands can be created. However, local councils are only one piece of the jigsaw puzzle, and he asked Southern Water to please work closely with local councils, as some parts of the solution can only be delivered by the utility firm. He also said local council communication staff could help Southern Water with their consumer behaviour educational campaigns.

7.4 The KMEP Chairman drew the question and answer session to a close. He said that the purpose of tonight's discussion was to get the appropriate people around the table, and to start the discussion between all the relevant parties. There had been a sense that, until now, discussions had been happening in silos, and he was delighted to hear about the workshop in December, as he considered that this could be the start of joint working between all the component parties in delivering short-, medium- and long-term solutions and delivering a co-signed regional strategy. He thanked Ian McAulay and Simon Thomas for their presentations.

Item 8 - South East Creative Economy Networks' (SECEN) Statement of Intent

8.1 The Chairman welcomed Sarah Dance (Vice-Chairman of the South East LEP, and the Co-Chair of the South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN), representing Kent and Medway).

8.2 A copy of the slides presented are available here.

8.3 Sarah Dance made the following comments in her presentation:

- South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN) is an open working group of SELEP, which brings together difference creative and cultural businesses and freelancers, with local councils and educators. It was established in 2012 to give a coherent voice for the sector.
- SECEN has recently created a Statement of Intent that has come out of co-operation and collaboration between members of SECEN. It follows up on the National Prospectus for the Creative Economy in the South East, which was launched a few years ago. That prospectus was key to leveraging in £10m for the creative sector in the local area.
- Some examples of programmes that were realised because of this prospectus include:
    - The South East Creatives Business Support Programme, which was granted £4m from Europe. This programme was a real lifeline for creative businesses

during the pandemic. There were two business support hubs in Kent: one at the Resort Studios in Thanet, and one led by Creative Folkestone in Folkestone.
    - England's Creative Coast was another project.
- The Prospectus has also been key to kick-starting the concept of the Thames Estuary Production Corridor, which has led to an investment of over £4m in Kent and Essex for production hubs.
- The SECEN Statement of Intent was nearly complete prior to the pandemic. SECEN has taken the decision to publish it online now, very much with the idea that we don't yet know the full extent of what will happen to the creative sector.
- Some parts of the creative sector have been really badly hit by the pandemic. There is a need to make sure the statement is updated through an iterative process.
- The creative sector prior to the pandemic was worth £116bn in GVA. It was the fastest growing sector in UK economy. It was greater than the automotive, aerospace, life-sciences, oil and gas sectors combined, so is a really important sector.
- The creative sector is not just important economically, it also contributes to the holistic make-up of our lives, to quality of life, to tourism, to the economy, to wellbeing, and social benefits.
- There have been two things that have really impacted the sector: the pandemic and movements. Movements such as climate change, but also black lives matter.
- The SECEN Statement of Intent is about taking those principles of diversity and climate change and embedding them throughout the document.
- A few examples of investments that have been funded by central government, via KMEP and SELEP, include Jasmin Vardimon Company's Production Laboratory, Newtown Works in Ashford, and new performance space at North Kent College.
- The SECEN Statement of Intent outlines the future ambitions for the sector. Two core areas are: creative places, and creative people.
- SECEN is absolutely committed as a group of businesses to delivering a really high quality of life for local communities, to rejuvenate town centres, to look at our coastal towns, to look at our high streets, and think about the solutions in a creative way.
- The impact of the pandemic has been uneven on the creative sector, leading to boom times in creative tech, but performance places, where people congregate together, have been really badly hit.
- The creative sector knows there are great opportunities opening up. The Acacia site in the centre of Dartford could be repurposed to deliver creative economy and social outcomes that would benefit all the residents of Dartford. The Amelia Scott in Tunbridge Wells which is already in delivery is expected to really make a step change for the town centre. There are also fantastic opportunities through the Margate town deal, and the Levelling-Up Fund investments in Ashford and Medway.
- SECEN is looking at those opportunities and how we can make great places through them.
- In order to thrive, the creative sector needs workspaces to work within, particularly workspaces suitable for freelancers. There are 50,000+ creative businesses in the local sector, and an additional 96,000 freelancers as well.
- SECEN is interested in studying the data of how the creative sector supports and interacts with other sectors (such as transport and tourism), so it can consider how to maximise opportunities.
- The creative sector thrives in clusters. A recent Nesta report looked at micro creative clusters, and showed these micro clusters can have the same economic impact as really large-scale clusters. People often overlook the value of these micro clusters, but

the impact they have is really significant, and creative micro clusters should be supported by local place-making decisions.

- Coastal areas have been facing significant challenges over recent decades. SECEN is interested in how the group can work with the coastal communities working group of SELEP, and explore the potential creation of creative opportunity zones, and examine how effective they are, and whether they do accelerate good growth.
- 139m tourists visit the South East, and they spend £88.9bn. Sarah Dance spoke of how the creative sector is fundamental to supporting local tourism. People do visit the local area for the great landscape, but Kent and Medway have some fantastic buildings and creative assets (e.g., The Turner Contemporary). SECEN is interested on how it can work with local councils to support further initiatives to support tourism (for example, replicating the sector's involvement with Kent County Council in the past, when they jointly conceived the Turner Contemporary, which has dramatically affected the local tourism economy).
- Sarah Dance has been speaking to CCCU about how cultural tourism needs to rethink itself, how to network and package together the creatives spaces and events, and reflect on the whole visitor experience.
- Research from CCCU shows that cultural tourists have a propensity to stay longer in an area than an ordinary leisure tourist, suggesting cultural tourists might spend more. It would be beneficial to think about the holistic cultural package within an area. Also, there is a need to look at transport links to support sustainable and accessible tourism.
- SECEN is interested in ensuring the local area retains and builds upon its competitive offer, and keeps skilled individuals living and working in the area.
- Work of the Thames Estuary Production Corridor has discovered that circa 100,000 people, who work in the creative sector, live in the Thames Estuary. However, 50,000 (i.e. half) of these people commute outside of the Thames Estuary for work. There is a massive opportunity to create viable workplaces and clusters more locally, so more of these people work in the local economy.
- The GVA contribution created by a creative professional is almost double the GVA contribution of an average employee across the South East's wider economy. This evidences how important it is to support the creative sector.
- 42% of creative industry employers in UK report a skills gap. We need to work with young people, schools, FE, and HE, and businesses to change this. Local stakeholders need to look at modular and rotational apprenticeships that are manageable for creative businesses and freelancers to engage with.

8.4 Following the presentation, Jo Nolan reflected on the importance of the creative sector, and how it had been raised in all the various KMEP conversations today. She proposed that a lab was needed, which could bring together the creative industries, sustainable industries, the construction sector, etc. She felt it is important to pull together a group of people around the environmental water issues raise earlier and bring representatives of the creative sector together. Professor Mohamed Abdel-Maguid said he would be delighted to contribute and facilitate a discussion into this. Adult behavioural change can be changed by younger generations influencing their parents.

8.5 The Chairman thanked Sarah Dance for her presentation.

Item 9 - Brief update on responses to KMEP survey re: meeting arrangements for 2022.

9.1 Sarah Nurden (KMEP Manager) thanked KMEP Board Members for their responses to the survey of their meeting preferences.

9.2 Regarding the venue for meetings, there was a split in opinions. Approximately half of board members wish to have only virtual meetings, and the other half preferring an alternating approach.

9.3 Regarding the timings of meetings, there was again a split in opinions. A slight majority preferred early evening meetings, although a large cohort expressed a preference for morning meetings. Hardly any responders wanted afternoon meetings.

9.4 In light of this feedback, the proposal put to the KMEP board was that future meetings follow this cycle, before the cycle is then repeated.

- First meeting – Held virtually in the early evening
- Second meeting - Held virtually in the early evening
- Third meeting – Held in person at a venue of interest in the morning.

The third meeting for 2022 would be held at the Amelia Scott, Tunbridge Wells following Tom Dawlings' kind offer.

9.5 The Board agreed this proposal, and Sarah Nurden will send around 2022 meeting dates via email before Christmas.

Item 10 – Closing comments

10.1 The Chairman thanked everyone for attending, and shared his decision to stand down as the KMEP Chairman at the end of March 2021. He asked board members, particularly those representing business, to consider how KMEP will work going forward. He is a strong advocate of KMEP, which existed before SELEP, and he feels KMEP has an important role going forward, bringing businesses, councils and educators together, irrespective of what happens to SELEP as a result of the LEP review.

10.2 He described his pride in the decisions and activities that KMEP have undertaken, which have transformed the local economy, and he cited the new Medical School and EDGE Hub as examples of the difference that KMEP has made. He explained that he thought the timing is right to step down. He has been promising his wife for several years now that they will travel in our retirement, and by stepping down, he will have time available to do this.

10.3 On behalf of KMEP, Sarah Nurden thanked Geoff Miles for his service, and the KMEP Board Members showed their appreciation for his efforts through a rousing round of applause.

10.4 The Chairman drew the meeting to a close at 7.15pm.