

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Held at:	Council Chamber - Civic Centre, Folkestone
Date	Tuesday, 10 September 2019
Present	Councillors Miss Susan Carey, Laura Davison, Michelle Dorrell (Vice-Chair), Peter Gane, Terence Mullard, Tim Prater, Patricia Rolfe, Rebecca Shoob (Chairman) and Lesley Whybrow
Apologies for Absence	None
Officers Present:	Andy Blaszkowicz (Assistant Director), Kate Clark (Committee Services Officer), Mark Damiral (Housing Options Manager), Adrian Hammond (Housing Strategy Manager), Graham Hammond (Senior Economic Development Officer), Katharine Harvey (Chief Economic Development Officer), John Bunnett (Corporate Director - Place and Commercial Services), Amandeep Khroud (Assistant Director), Llywelyn Lloyd (Chief Planning Officer), Tim Madden (Corporate Director - Customer, Support and Specialist Services), Susan Priest (Head of Paid Service), Andrew Rush (Corporate Contracts Manager), Andrina Smith (Chief HR Officer), Charlotte Spendley (Assistant Director) and David Whittington (Planning Policy Team Leader)
Others Present:	Deborah Upton (Chief Executive, East Kent Housing), Councillor David Godfrey

17. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Patricia Rolfe made a voluntary declaration with regard to Agenda items 5 and 6 as she owns a business in New Romney town and is Chair of the New Romney Coastal Community Team. She remained in the meeting and took part in discussions and voting.

Councillor Tim Prater made a voluntary declaration with regard to Agenda item 6 as he lives and works in Sandgate High Street. He remained in the meeting and took part in discussions and voting.

18. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting dated 16 July 2019 were approved subject to an amendment to Minute Item 16:

Proposed by Councillor Lesley Whybrow
Seconded by Councillor Laura Davison and

RESOLVED:

That Minute item 16 dated 16 July 2019 is amended to reflect the resolution below:

***Proposed by Councillor Lesley Whybrow
Seconded by Councillor Laura Davison and***

RESOLVED:

A very risk project, more information needs to come back to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee so that an opinion can be given in public.

(Voting: For 7; Against 1; Abstentions 1)

19. Key Performance Indicators Review 2019-20

Report C/19/20 sets out a proposed list of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be monitored during 2019/20 in line with the Council's Corporate Plan strategic priorities and objectives.

Comments from members as follows:

- Litter picks - officers advised that the removal of this KPI from "Health Matters" reflected changes to the team this service falls within, with the data now being captured under the Community environmental events as part of the "Appearance Matters" targets managed by the Area Officers team.
- Unauthorised encampments - a target of one is shown but the officer agreed that this should be 100% removal of unauthorised encampments.
- Flyposting - It was queried why no Flyposting KPI had been set as it was felt paramount that unauthorised posters are taken down quickly, officers advised this data is contained within the Fixed Penalty Notice KPI.
- More Homes - it was suggested that we look to strengthen the information particularly regarding the effects on children in temporary accommodation. Members were advised that homelessness prevention is the main priority.
- Housing Waiting List - It was suggested that this is part of the KPIs, officers advised this was possible, although it is a constantly fluctuating figure.
- FOI - members were advised the target of 90% is in line with KCC guidelines.

- Website/social media – is used as part of the Corporate Plan in Delivering Excellence. It is seen as an important communication method.
- Street Cleansing - Detritus KPI has been removed but officers advised that monitoring of street cleansing would continue with more emphasis on litter.
- Delivering Excellence - the KPI for customers seen within 10 minutes has been removed, officers advised this was due to there being no electronic queuing system available to capture this data.
- Benefit claims - days to process while monitored as an operational measure (PI), members suggested it would be useful for it to be part of the KPI.
- Caravan site inspections - officers advised this is covered under Licensed premises KPI now.
- Number of days to remove fly-tipping - officers advised this shows a maximum target and depending on the size & complexity of the fly-tipping will depend on the time to remove it.

Proposed by Councillor Rebecca Shoob
Seconded by Councillor Susan Carey and

RESOLVED:

1. To receive and note report C/19/20.

(Voting: For 5; Against 0; Abstentions 4)

20. **Romney Marsh Employment Hub (Land at Mountfield Road Industrial Estate, New Romney)**

Report C/19/19 seeks Cabinet agreement to a financial contribution from Folkestone & Hythe District Council towards the development of a new business centre at Mountfield Road Industrial Estate, New Romney and delegated authority to the Corporate Director for Place and Commercial to finalise the terms of the legal agreements with co-funders.

Members showed strong support for this project and were appreciative of the background information given. It will be a good boost for the Romney Marsh and a key project for various bodies including the Romney Marsh Partnership and New Romney Coastal Community Team.

With regard to the grant funding to be sought from Magnox, members were interested to know what would happen if this funding did not materialise. The project would struggle to happen if alternative funding was not available. However, commitment from all parties is key and members were informed that East Kent Spatial Development Company had earlier that day agreed to co-fund in principle.

Members were informed that as part of the Masterplanning process, consideration had been given to components of BREEAM although this had not proceeded to a formal pre-assessment required at the design stage. The

location of the proposed building and the poorer access to public transport than in urban areas meant some credits would be difficult to achieve. Members were advised the development will be considered with regard to the Climate Change motion.

It is important to consider that as the businesses and start-ups grow that there will be opportunity to expand within the overall development.

Members felt job creation is extremely important to the area. It was noted that there is land for sale in the development and any expressions of interest received need to be carefully considered and a broad approach taken.

Proposed by Councillor Peter Gane
Seconded by Councillor Michelle Dorrell and

RESOLVED:

- 1. To strongly support, receive and note report C/19/19.**
- 2. To recommend to Cabinet to add a resolution that if Magnox funding is not forthcoming then this proposal returns to Council for further discussion.**

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

21. Folkestone & Hythe District High Streets Fund

Report C/19/21 sets out proposals for investing and managing the Council's £3 million High Streets Regeneration Fund that has been established to support and help high streets in the district adapt for the future.

Dr Katharine Harvey, Chief Economic Development Officer, presented this report and advised members that it is proposed to earmark £2.5 million of the funding for Folkestone with the remainder for the High Streets across the District.

Members commented that there should be more funds for the more rural High Streets rather than concentrating on Folkestone High Street.

Members were advised that the split was based on Folkestone being the main town in the district, so the majority of the funding is proposed for Folkestone which is the most important town in the district and whose success will impact on the whole of the district. However, the split will also depend on the quality of the bids received for the funding and the applicants will normally have to 50% match fund

Members also queried the proposed decision making process and the appropriateness of funding decisions on schemes taken forward by FHDC in Folkestone being made by a smaller group - the Leader and the Corporate Director for Place and Commercial. Decisions on external applications for all other areas are to be taken by a wider group – the Leader, Cabinet lead member for the District Economy and a ward councillor for the area relating to

the application. Concerns were expressed about the decision-making group for the council-led investments in Folkestone. It was suggested that a cross party Folkestone Town Centre working group of councillors is proposed and that they would be consulted about any major capital investments in Folkestone.

The evaluation of externally proposed projects across the district needs to be fair and a consistent approach adopted. Therefore the membership of the wider decision-making group needs to be consistent in assessing all projects.

Dr Harvey confirmed that it is not proposed for these funds to support sub high streets, such as Golden Valley and Dover Road, and maps will be available to show the properties and areas within the named high streets that will be eligible for grant funding.

The assessment of projects should consider the wider impact with projects that improve the environment supported. Dr Harvey pointed to the assessment criteria shown in Appendix 2 which includes this.

Proposed by Councillor Tim Prater
Seconded by Councillor Laura Davison and

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Cabinet are requested to include in the recommendations that Sub Shopping areas are involved in the application process.**
- 2. That Cabinet are requested to consider altering the decision making process for the council-led investment proposed in Folkestone.**

(Voting: For 7; Against 1; Abstentions 1)

Further comments were made with regard to the split of funds but members were reminded that any monies are welcomed where investment for the future can be made.

Proposed by Councillor Michelle Dorrell
Seconded by Councillor Terry Mullard and

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Cabinet consider amending the split of funds for this proposal to £2 million for Folkestone Town and £1 million for remaining High Streets in the District.**

(Voting: For 7; Against 1; Abstentions 1)

Proposed by Councillor Peter Gane
Seconded by Councillor Miss Susan Carey and

RESOLVED:

- 1. To receive and note report C/19/21.**

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

22. **East Kent Housing Update**

Report C/19/03 provided members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the performance of East Kent Housing (EKH) during the first quarter of 2019/20. Deborah Upton, Chief Executive of EKH, was in attendance to address questions and points of interest raised by members.

Dr Susan Priest, Head of Paid Service, explained to members the reasons for the exempt items on this agenda item.

The exempt items make reference to a separate entity and refers to properties outside the District which are yet to be considered by other Local Authorities. The EKH item will be coming back to the Committee in October for further updates.

The report made reference to complaints received from April 2019 and members asked for complaints prior to this. Ms Upton, Chief Executive of East Kent Housing, explained that complaint numbers are similar in 2018/19, but she asked that members bear in mind the thousands of repairs made.

Cllr Davison was concerned about the complaints policy version provided to members as this differs from the policy that is shown online. Ms Upton will check this and would be happy to meet Cllr Davison to discuss any further concerns.

Ms Upton went on to explain to members the reporting problems and inconsistency of data which has led to the problems at East Kent Housing. Spreadsheets have now been recreated and locked to prevent any erroneous deleting or additions. Contractors have been asked to feed into these and weekly reports are provided to the four Local Authorities.

Questions arose about the exempt items and when the documents can be made public. It was suggested that the reports could be made public in a co-ordinated way with the other three Local Authorities. Report OS/19/04 which is exempt relates to this district only and members believed this should not be exempt.

In making the exempt reports public members felt this may give a clearer, less concerning, picture to tenants and an opportunity to come forward with concise and informed comments. The Local Tenants Group are aware of the issues raised in the internal audit.

Turning to finances, Ms Upton confirmed that rent collection targets have been met and this is due to staff helping residents especially through their transition to Universal Credit.

Proposed by Councillor Tim Prater
Seconded by Councillor Michelle Dorrell and

RESOLVED:

- 1. To release exempt papers Appendix 3 and Appendix 3 (2) of report OS/19/03 to the public.**
- 2. To release exempt report OS/19/04 and East Kent Housing Compliance Report (4 Sept 2019) to the public.**
- 3. To invite tenants to make representations to this Committee with regard to their experiences with East Kent Housing.**

(Voting: For 6; Against 3; Abstentions 0)

Members agreed, that in making all exempt papers public that all tenants are aware of this information as soon as possible. Ms Upton advised that tenants are actively being contacted to discuss various health and safety items on a regular basis.

Looking at Appendix 3, members raised concerns with regard to the gas and other safety issues which has been a problem for some time. Members agreed that there are actions and remedies being taken and Ms Upton assured members that she is working closely with the four Local Authorities and the East Kent Housing Board.

Actions taken:

- Data gathering
- Procedure manuals
- Random checking by management
- QA by Compliance managers
- For future, it is planned that further Internal Audits are used to carry out checks.

Members suggested that maybe tenants could be more involved, i.e. with checking and signing safety certificates.

Other reports and audit responses are being carried out including a HQN report, also a four way Council led investigation and this report will be ready in November 2019. There is also an options report with regard to the future management of EKH which will come to this Committee initially. This report will include a consultation report which will be sent to every tenant.

Dr Priest advised that a full time secondee from the Council has been placed at East Kent Housing along with additional funding from the HRA to help resolve issues in Folkestone & Hythe Council properties. Stock condition surveys have been carried out but high, second and low priority issues do still need to be dealt with.

Further question received from members with regard to legal action against East Kent Housing, it was confirmed that legal advice has been sought however no further details could be given.

Members requested that all reports are shared with the Committee in a timely way which would give a clear indication of the progress being made with health

and safety issues, management and funding issues. Dr Priest explained that funding is available to EKH however in the past, capital investment budgets have typically underspent. Only recently funding to support an Improvement Plan had been made available for EKH, and subsequently health and safety compliance issues have come to light requiring further investment from the HRA. She explained that a review of the HRA business plan and budgets was ongoing and would be presented to members in due course.

Proposed by Councillor Peter Gane
Seconded by Councillor Patricia Rolfe and

RESOLVED:

- 1. To receive and note report OS/19/03.**
- 2. To ensure all points raised by members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee are actioned.**
- 3. To contact all EKH tenants to update with current information surrounding the health and safety issues.**
- 4. HRA funding to be reported to this Committee.**
- 5. To scrutinise the contents of the reports provided by EKH, attached as Appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4.**

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 0)



ROMNEY MARSH EMPLOYMENT HUB

Mountfield Road Industrial Estate, New Romney – Phase 4

Briefing for Overview & Scrutiny Committee
10 September 2019

AIM OF PRESENTATION

- To recap on the case for bringing forward the development at Mountfield Road Industrial Estate
- To provide an update on progress to date and proposed way forward
- To seek FHDC investment contribution to bring forward the scheme

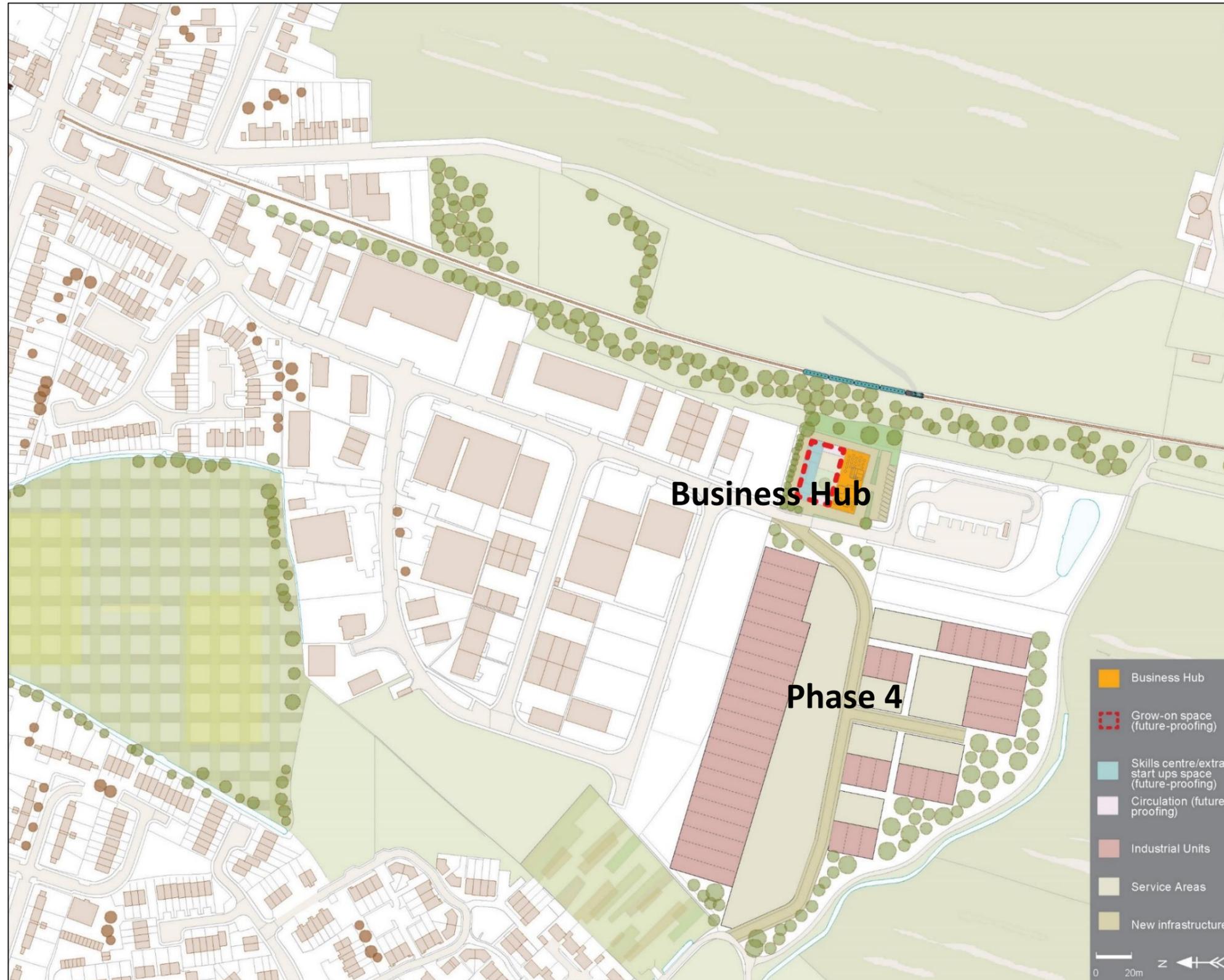
CASE FOR INVESTMENT

Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of 1000+ jobs and local contracts from closure of Dungeness A and closure of Dungeness B in 2028 • Need to diversify the economy from reliance on nuclear sector
Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified in the RMP Delivery Plan as the key opportunity site for diversifying the Romney Marsh economy • RMP is campaigning for ‘game-changer’ projects • Will increase the provision of good quality business space • Could create up to 700 jobs over 10 years. • The 6 hectare site is allocated in 2013 Local Plan for employment
Deliverability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning is in place for business centre & servicing the land • Once funding in place, construction could commence within 6months
Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for grow-on flexible workspace for fledgling enterprises • BBP report identified demand for modern business space in 2015 • Recent advice from Savills suggests demand and rent levels of about £14 per sq.ft • Flexibility for training space within building and potential extension
Viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unviable commercially owing to low market values compared to servicing costs. • Cost of servicing land twice the resulting market value • Grant funding required.

Progress to Date

- Feasibility and Masterplan completed with Magnox funding contribution in April 2018
- Cabinet reviewed site options for Business Centre and agreed to selected site in July 2018
- Business centre and infrastructure for Phase 4 land designed and planning consent gained
- Grant application to CCF shortlisted but unsuccessful
- Grant application to SELEP's LGF Round 3b is scored highly but funding unlikely to become available in the short-medium term
- Positive indications from Magnox and NDA towards a funding contribution
- EKSDC Board have agreed the principle of joint-funding with FHDC

Proposed Scheme at Mountfield Road



- Business Centre (red)
- Phase 4 – road infrastructure and services to unlock employment plots

Mountfield Road Business Centre



- 751 sq.m GEA
- 12-14 offices/rooms
- Potential for additional 427 sq.m extension

Business Centre: Costs and Proposed Funding

Partners	Contribution	Total £
East Kent Spatial Development Company	Finance of £735,000	735,000
FHDC	Finance of £570,500*	735,000
	Land value of £164,500	
Magnox Socio-economic programme	Grant funding of £500,000	500,000
TOTAL		1,970,000

* FHDC Capital Programme expenditure to be funded from the Kent 100% business rate retention pilot 2018/19 (total of £1m for economic development purposes).

Proposed Way Forward

- A phased approach is taken to developing out the scheme
- To prioritise bringing forward the construction of the business centre
- To bring forward the business centre (£1.97m) through:
 - FHDC agreeing to contribute the land value and £570,500
 - Taking forward joint investment agreement between EKSDC and FHDC
 - Applying to Magnox for a £500,000 grant contribution
- Invite expressions of interest to sell the remaining land for employment purposes without the infrastructure investment