



Locate in Kent
Perfect for Europe. Perfect for Business.

Marketing Kent as a business location

Mandy Bearne
Locate in Kent

Aim of the project



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.....to raise the profile of Kent as a business location in order to create more jobs and support the development of the Kent economy.

- Job creation
- Decrease in FDI/UK relocations
- Increased competition
- Changed public sector environment
- Need to improve awareness
- Engage business as Kent champions
- Align public sector messages
- All businesses benefit from increased company investment in Kent

Perceptions?



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- An 'economic backwater'
- Peripheral, too far from London, a peninsula
- Too far away from Gatwick/Heathrow
- 'Country bumpkins'/retired people
- In the SE therefore must be expensive
- Congestion, Operation Stack, Dartford
- Improving, but much more to do

Project so far



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- Engaged thinking place, place specialists
- Shared ideas with key organisations
- Two workshops with approx 80 mainly private sector people
- One to one discussions with key companies
- Kent collateral & website review

Stakeholder Conversations



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Creabilis

South Eastern Trains

Visit Kent

Chatham Historic
Dockyard

Land Securities

Oxford Innovation

Hornby

Shepherd Neame

FSB

KM Group

Prologis

Vanessa Clark (agent)



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Findings....

Plus Points



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- Proximity to London
- North Kent IS London
- Access to Europe
- Connectivity – HS1, ports, motorways
- VFM (Compared to SE)
- Quality of life – housing, schools, leisure, retail, countryside & heritage



- Land and space
- Quality places – Canterbury, Maidstone etc
- Business networks
- Close to Markets
- Big Brands
- Universities & graduates/skill base?
- Sectors/clusters – pharmaceuticals, renewables, creative, ICT

But....



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- Lack of collective pride in Kent (as a business location)
- No single Kent story/proposition/view
- Areas of Kent/local rivalries
- Not taking responsibility/ownership
- Not able to demonstrate value to business
- Perceptions of Kent
- 'Kent' on most websites is a 'vacuum' or 'the Garden of England'

Also...



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- Complacency – ‘its not that bad’
- Lack of clarity on skills base
- No strong sectors perceived
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of identity/proposition for business
- ‘Affordable’ v ‘cheap’



- Agreed need for a Kent economic story
- A shared responsibility
- Build on what is here now
- Different thinking & actions – ‘team Kent’
- Alignment of messages & activity
- Empower & enable

Key talking points



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- Garden of England?
- SE positioning
- geographic positioning

Garden of England

- Strength that Kent is known for
- A conversation starter
- But seen as too narrow for business and speaks of a traditional, slow paced place
- ‘Kent Contemporary’ has possibilities
- More forward looking, modern, enterprising

SE Positioning



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- SE viewed as congested, high pressure
- THE UK growth area
- London – capital
- Lacking a good quality of life
- Limited family/leisure time
- Urban, grey, concrete
- Kent offers a different balance

Geographic Positioning



- Reflects administrative or internally created boundaries (N/W/E Kent)
- Looks fragmented
- Positioning of the offer based on EZ or RGF
- Kent is **the** attractor
- More important relationships of London & Europe to define & exploit







If Kent is to be more successful in attracting and retaining business, what are the key themes to focus on to change its image and reputation?

Need to:



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- Display differentiation
- Be strategic
- Drive expression
- Influence experience

Themes



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Business fit



- Big names & brands
- Sectoral strengths
- Business networks
- Business parks
- Land and space
- Enterprise Zone and grants



21st century live & work



- Work AND live, not work TO live
- Quality places – towns and villages
- Culture, leisure & retail
- Coastline
- Countryside
- Easy access to London & Europe
- More family/leisure time
- Quality of schools
- ‘Breathing space’



London value



- More affordable (in comparison to SE)
- Lower salary costs
- Staff loyalty
- Lower housing costs
- More commercial space for less
- Lower cost of land
- Better return on investment

Themes



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Capital Connections



- High speed rail
- International rail connections (London, Paris +)
- Ports
- Motorways
- Access to Gatwick & Heathrow (worldwide)
- Manston potential

'Big Idea'

- What Kent is about
- What it stands for
- What it believes in

- Clarity, consistency, self-awareness



An emotive, 'strategic signature' and
statement of intent

'Big Idea'



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London-local-Europe



London-local-Europe



business fit



**21st century live
& work**



London value



capital connections

Where are we now



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- Agreement of need for an economic story
- Understanding of the value to Kent
- Enthusiasm to get involved
- Raised expectations
- Identification of need to deliver tools
- Expectations of follow up



What happens next?

Implementing & Embedding



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- Momentum
- Cascading understanding
- Spreading ownership
- Sustainability planning
- Empower & enable



- Locate in Kent to align its tools, websites etc and lead generation activity
- Engage Kent businesses as Champions
- Provide tools
- Relationship development with Kent organisations that can deliver most benefit
- Added value marketing

Coming up:

- Testing with a small number of businesses, 11 Jan
- Locate in Kent Board, 12 January
- Kent Forum, 8 February
- Major event/launch, late February



- Comments
- Questions?