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National News

Sandwich economic task force gets down to work

Regional News

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North East

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (National)

North West



Yorkshire and the
East Midlands

The task force established by the Government to look at alternative uses for Pfizer's research and development campus at Sandwich held its first meeting today.

West Midlands

East

London

The Sandwich Economic Development Task Force, which is to be chaired by Kent County Council leader Paul Carter, met with Secretary of State for **Business, Innovation and Skills**, Vince Cable and **Minister of State for Universities and Science**, David Willetts. The Business department is supporting the Taskforce in its work.

South East

South West

Scotland


The Taskforce will provide a first report containing its proposals within 30 days to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Wales

Northern Ireland

Department News

Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills Vince Cable said:

RSS Feeds 

“Today we have gathered local leaders and key stakeholders to work together to find and deliver an ambitious solution for the Sandwich site.

“The Taskforce is working quickly and decisively to consider the interesting proposals that have been put forward to deliver solutions for the Sandwich site and ensure that there is minimal impact on the local area and the people who are affected.

Universities and Science Minister David Willetts said:

“The UK is an attractive location for the life sciences industry. The priority must be to ensure that we hold on to the highly skilled workers at Sandwich and ensure the world-class research they conduct there continues.”

”The Taskforce brings together experienced people from the life sciences, local business and

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enterprise organisations. The Department will work closely with the Taskforce and offer it every support."

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The Taskforce agreed on terms of reference and set out an ambitious plan to examine all the issues that will help the local people and communities deal with the decision.

In particular it will look at:

- Maximising employment opportunities for the site and assistance for the individuals facing potential redundancy.
- Activities to encourage new partnerships to emerge between Pfizer, contract research organisations and companies that could relocate/develop at the Sandwich site, building upon the work that the company is already doing.
- Longer term strategic partnering and site opportunity issues.

Sandwich Economic Development Task Force Chairman Paul Carter said:

"Today's meeting has been massively helpful in understanding Pfizer's work in exploring options for the future of the Sandwich site and the support that the Government can give to new enterprise and business.

"It's been all hands on deck since last week's announcement and the Task Force's main objective will be to find as much high quality employment on site as possible. Time is of the time is of the essence and we must continue to explore every realistic opportunity."

Dr Ruth McKernan, Pfizer's Senior Vice President and Site Head at Sandwich said:

"We welcome the assistance of Government and the Taskforce in working with us to evaluate options following this decision. Sandwich has a extremely talented workforce and excellent facilities. Our priority is to work together to explore external partnership opportunities in an effort to preserve jobs and activity on the site."

South Thanet MP Laura Sandys said:

"My East Kent MP colleagues and I are very pleased that this high level taskforce has been created with the objective to keep the site vibrant and jobs in Sandwich."

The Taskforce will provide weekly reports to Universities and Science Minister David Willetts.

Notes to editors:

1. The Terms of the reference for the Sandwich Economic Task Force are to examine all the issues that will help the local people and communities deal with the decision by Pfizer to exit from its site at Sandwich, including:

- Maximising employment opportunities for the site and assistance for the individuals facing

potential redundancy.

- Activities to encourage new partnerships to emerge between Pfizer, contract research organisations and companies that could relocate/develop at the Sandwich site, building upon the work that the company is already doing.

- Longer term strategic partnering and site opportunity issues.

2. Local MPs Laura Sandys (South Thanet), Roger Gale (North Thanet), and Charlie Elphicke (Dover and Deal) also attended the meeting this morning.

3. BIS' online newsroom contains the latest press notices, speeches, as well as video and images for download. It also features an up to date list of BIS press office contacts. See <http://www.bis.gov.uk/newsroom> for more information.

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