

Cllr Mark Dance

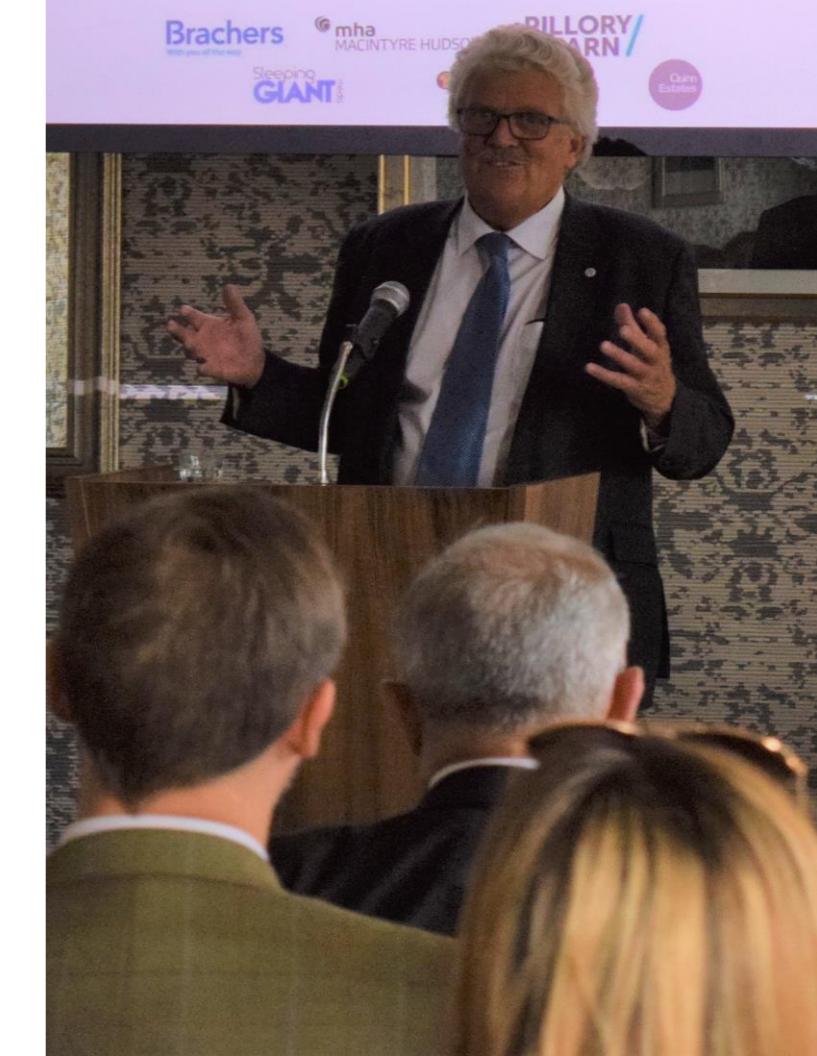
**Board Member, Visit Kent &
Cabinet Member for Economic
Development – Kent County Council**

European Regional Development Fund

- KCC encourage projects like PROFIT as they play a key role to help our businesses learn, innovate and grow in the fast changing digital world in which we live.
- The tourism visitor economy is a major sector for Kent, welcoming 65 million visitors per year, contributing £3.8billion to the local economy and supporting 77,000 jobs.
- The path that PROFIT and its innovation journey has developed is one that others can now follow to help our entrepreneurs create time and space for business innovation.

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- A critical time for the Visitor economy and something we must not overlook in our preparations for Brexit.
- Last week Kent County Council adopted its latest update on BREXIT preparedness. The report covered many of the bigger issues that will impact on tourism in the case of no deal. **(see section 7 page 16)**
- KCC has strong relationships at a political and service level in the near cross-channel neighbourhood and has longstanding memoranda of understanding with French and Belgian local authorities.



- The Leader and (Cabinet Member for Economic Development) have met KCC's formal partners from West Flanders (Belgium); the Hauts-de-France region and the Pas de Calais Council (France) to underline our shared desire to strengthen relationships and work together to keep our border fluid, support our economies and tackle the grand challenges that we share.
- KCC is exploring how to develop a new approach to these partnerships in the cross-border area with a view to developing proposals that could enable us to continue these projects in future in the period 2021 to 2027.
- Projects like these are vital to support our hard working tourism SMEs in Kent and to increase productivity and economic prosperity across the county. I look forward to hearing more from our colleagues now about its specific learnings and impacts in Kent.