

Economic Regeneration Portfolio

- Supporting local entrepreneurship
- Encouraging and supporting growth of existing businesses
- Attracting new business investment into the Borough
- Engaging and listening to the local business community
- Representing the Borough Council on the West Kent Partnership
- Working to improve the vitality of the Borough's town and local centres
- Promoting the Borough as a popular tourism destination

Economic Development Tasks

Supporting Local Business

Commission and fund free 1-2-1 business advice sessions
Commission and fund business support seminars
Provide on-line advice for businesses in search of funding
Help to foster business networking via an online business directory
Signposting businesses to support provided by partner agencies
Use the Council's own procurement processes to support local business
Ensure payments by the Council for services from local business are paid promptly
Maximise use of the Council own property portfolio to support local business
Engage with businesses to ensure compliance with food hygiene regulations.

Business Engagement

Holding regular engagement events for local business
Contribute to existing business networks and fora active in the Borough
Support locally held business award initiatives

Promoting Inward Investment

Signpost to on-line advice for businesses in search of new premises/sites
Engage with developers to ensure new employment-related development is well planned
Bring forward new sites for employment use as set out in the LDF
Work with Locate in Kent to promote the take up of vacant business property

Partnership Working

Contribute to the economic work of the West Kent Partnership
Assist with the delivery of the West Kent Investment Strategy
Achieve a higher economic priority for the area in relation to the wider LEP

Rural Business Sector

Commission and fund support for home-based businesses
Commission and fund support for the land-based sector

Contribute to a new LEADER grant programme for the land-based sector from 2015
Promote the enhancement of local broadband services in areas of need

Skills and Employability

Work with Job Centre Plus and other partners to tackle local worklessness issues
Develop and support Job Clubs in areas of particular need
Help promote the take up of local apprenticeships available in the Borough
Offer regular Borough Council apprenticeships to local young people
Commission services to promote entrepreneurship in deprived communities
Work with local schools and colleges to develop work-readiness skills

Supporting Town Centres

Bring forward a major redevelopment of Tonbridge Town Centre
Contribute to the promotional work of the Town Team in Tonbridge and in other local centres
Tackle the need to find new uses for empty shop premises
Support opportunities for additional retail activities eg Farmers Markets
Encourage the improvement of the environment and appearance of town and local centres
Allocation of Innovation Fund.

Supporting the Tourism Sector

Work with Visit Kent to promote the Borough's visitor attractions and accommodation
Operate the Tourist Information Centre at Tonbridge
Manage Tonbridge Castle as a key visitor attraction
Deliver an annual programme of cultural events
Work with operators to help promote cultural and entertainment events
Prepare online visitor information