

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
ECONOMIC REGENERATION ADVISORY BOARD

11 September 2013

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)

1 UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL – KENT AND MEDWAY GROWTH STRATEGY

To set out the process by which future growth funding is to be distributed via the LEPs and how West Kent is being invited to influence local decisions on infrastructure and business growth priorities.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Government has recently announced that the proposed Single Growth Fund and some future ERDF European funding streams will be allocated to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) for them to take local decisions on how such funding should be spent and allocated in their respective areas. A prerequisite for each LEP is for them to prepare a Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) setting out the priorities for investment including local infrastructure needs and future support for business growth. A separate strategy to guide the delivery of European funding will also be required. The Government has issued guidance to the LEPs on how to prepare such plans and this is appended as Annex A to this report.

1.1.2 In terms of potential funding available, via this process, just over £185M has been allocated to the South East LEP from European funds for the period 2014-20. Nationally, the Single Growth Fund will be worth £2bn in 2015/16. No formal decisions have been made as to how this funding will be distributed between individual LEPs but a rough per capita distribution, carried out by the County Council, estimates £150M of this fund coming to the South East LEP and potentially, £65M of this being available to Kent and Medway.

1.2 Unlocking the Potential

1.2.1 In order to influence the SEP being prepared by the South East LEP, Kent County Council and Medway Council are jointly preparing a growth plan for the County entitled Unlocking the Potential. Sub-regional partnerships across Kent, including the West Kent Partnership, have been invited to make submissions to the County setting out their own priorities for growth and future investment. These submissions will then be used to inform the content of Unlocking the Potential.

- 1.2.2 The timescales for all of this important work are very tight. Government is requiring a first draft of the Strategic Economic Plan from each LEP to be produced by the end of September. This means that urgent work needs to be undertaken locally for Kent to be able to inform the SELEP's Plan and for bodies like the West Kent Partnership to inform the Kent plan.

1.3 West Kent Priorities

- 1.3.1 The West Kent Partnership is leading work to assemble a Growth Paper setting out the key locations for future growth in the area (mainly drawn from existing or emerging Local Plans), key infrastructure improvements required locally, and the need for additional support and funding to support local business growth. The West Kent Investment Strategy 2010-2015, prepared by the West Kent Partnership is a key source document to inform this work. The Growth Paper will be used to influence the content of Unlocking the Potential. In order to meet the above timescales, an early draft of this paper is needed by mid September. A verbal update on progress will be given at the meeting.
- 1.3.2 As a precursor to this, attached as Annex B to this report, is a suggested summary of the Borough's key future infrastructure requirements. The endorsement of the Board for this summary is requested so that it can be included in the emerging growth paper for West Kent. Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells Councils are preparing their own lists of priorities. Business growth priorities will also be informed by the West Kent Investment Strategy.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 None

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 There is a key opportunity for some of the key infrastructure and business needs in West Kent to be funded from either the Single Growth Fund or future European monies. This will depend on a strong case being made for these to be included in the Kent Growth Plan, Unlocking the Potential, and subsequently, for these to be adopted by the South East LEP. There will of course be strong competition for funding between LEPs and between areas within each LEP.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 N/A

1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.7.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report

1.8 Recommendations

1.8.1 That the priorities for local infrastructure improvements, as set out in Annex B to this report **BE ENDORSED** and **INCLUDED** in the emerging West Kent Priorities for Growth paper.

The Chief Executive confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and policy Framework.

Background papers:

contact: Mark Raymond

Nil

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive

| Screening for equality impacts: | | |
|---|---------------|--|
| Question | Answer | Explanation of impacts |
| a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? | No | Future investment will be focused on meeting all relevant local needs. |
| b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? | N/A | |
| c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above? | | |

In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.