

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL



## EXECUTIVE SERVICES

---

### Chief Executive

Julie Beilby BSc (Hons) MBA

Gibson Building  
Gibson Drive  
Kings Hill, West Malling  
Kent ME19 4LZ  
West Malling (01732) 844522

---

**NB - This agenda contains proposals, recommendations and options. These do not represent Council policy or decisions until they have received proper consideration through the full decision making process.**

Contact: Committee Services  
[committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk)

15 June 2015

To: MEMBERS OF THE ECONOMIC REGENERATION ADVISORY BOARD  
(Copies to all Members of the Council)

Dear Sir/Madam

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the Economic Regeneration Advisory Board to be held in the Civic Suite, Gibson Building, Kings Hill, West Malling on Tuesday, 23rd June, 2015 commencing at 7.30 pm

Yours faithfully

JULIE BEILBY

Chief Executive

## A G E N D A

### PART 1 - PUBLIC

- |    |                          |       |
|----|--------------------------|-------|
| 1. | Apologies for absence    | 5 - 6 |
| 2. | Declarations of interest | 7 - 8 |

3. Minutes 9 - 12

To confirm as a correct record the Notes of the meeting of the Economic Regeneration Advisory Board held on 25 February 2015

4. Introductory Presentation 13 - 14  
5. Economic Overview of Tonbridge and Malling Borough 15 - 34

**Matters for Recommendation to the Cabinet**

6. Borough Economic Regeneration Strategy 35 - 56  
7. Business Support and Advice 57 - 60

**Matters submitted for Information**

8. Better Business for All 61 - 64  
9. Urgent Items 65 - 66

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent due to special circumstances and of which notice has been given to the Chief Executive.

**Matters for consideration in Private**

10. Exclusion of Press and Public 67 - 68

The Chairman to move that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting during consideration of any items the publication of which would disclose exempt information.

**PART 2 - PRIVATE**

11. Urgent Items 69 - 70

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent due to special circumstances and of which notice has been given to the Chief Executive.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Cllr S M King (Chairman)  
Cllr S R J Jessel (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Mrs S M Barker  
Cllr M C Base  
Cllr R P Betts  
Cllr T Bishop  
Cllr J L Botten  
Cllr T I B Cannon  
Cllr M O Davis

Cllr R D Lancaster  
Cllr Mrs S L Luck  
Cllr Miss J L Sergison  
Cllr C P Smith  
Cllr F G Tombolis  
Cllr B W Walker  
Cllr T C Walker

This page is intentionally left blank

Apologies for absence

This page is intentionally left blank

Declarations of interest

This page is intentionally left blank



## TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### ECONOMIC REGENERATION ADVISORY BOARD

Wednesday, 25th February, 2015

**Present:** Cllr C P Smith (Chairman), Cllr Miss S O Shrubsole (Vice-Chairman), Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr M O Davis, Cllr S M King, Cllr Mrs S Luck, Cllr M Parry-Waller, Cllr A G Sayer, Cllr Miss J L Sergison and Cllr R Taylor

Councillors J A L Balcombe, M A Coffin, B J Luker, Mrs S Murray, M R Rhodes and N J Heslop were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R D Lancaster

#### **ERG 15/1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

#### **ERG 15/2 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the notes of the meeting of the Economic Regeneration Advisory Board held on 3 September 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

#### **ERG 15/3 CONSULTANTS STUDY - THE CASE FOR WEST KENT**

Decision Notice D150022MEM

The key findings of 'The Case for West Kent' consultant's study into the importance of the West Kent economy, commissioned by the West Kent Partnership, were set out for Members consideration. It was reported that these recommendations would be assessed in detail and an action plan prepared to take them forward.

A review of the structure and Membership of the Partnership would also be undertaken with a view to attracting greater representation from local businesses.

Members noted the need to more actively promote opportunities to attract and retain additional inward investment, the development of a pipeline of projects ready to take forward when new funding became available and the recommendation that local authorities should invest additional resources in economic regeneration. The latter would be

addressed in Tonbridge and Malling by the engagement of an Economic Regeneration Officer.

Finally, the Leader referred to the circumstances regarding Aylesford News Print and advised that the administrators (KPMG) had confirmed that 233 employees had been made redundant with immediate effect; 65 staff would be retained to assist with the sale of assets and decommissioning of the site. The production facility was now closed and had been a victim of the increase of digital media and overcapacity in the print market.

Members were advised that the Borough Council was committed to supporting those affected in co-operation with other agencies. Arrangements had been made for Job Centre Plus to provide drop in centres to offer advice and assistance to those made redundant. A local briefing for key partners with KPMG was to be arranged and the Leader and Chief Executive would participate.

There were likely to be operational and financial implications for the Borough Council and Members would be updated in due course once these were fully understood.

**RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) the Case for West Kent consultant's report, attached in part as Appendix 1 to the report, be noted; and
- (2) a further report on the actions arising be made to the Advisory Board in due course

#### **ERG 15/4 DRAFT BOROUGH ECONOMIC REGENERATION STRATEGY**

Decision Notice D150023MEM

The report of the Chief Executive presented a draft Economic Regeneration Strategy for consideration and set out arrangements for consultation and adoption.

Members recognised the importance of effective infrastructure to local businesses and suggested that consideration be given to aligning future infrastructure funding priorities to Kent County Council's 'scoring matrix' when developing projects, to improve the chances of securing funding contributions.

As it was important to expose the draft strategy to external scrutiny prior to formal adoption it was suggested that a consultation be undertaken in March/April. Views of key economic partners, including members of the West Kent Partnership, local business support providers, business representative bodies such as the local Chambers and Federation of

Small Businesses and individual local businesses in the Borough would be sought.

Members welcomed the engagement of an Economic Regeneration Officer to support the work of the Strategy and establish effective and interactive communication with local businesses.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the draft Economic Regeneration Strategy, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved for the purposes of local consultation.

#### **ERG 15/5 BUSINESS LOAN FUNDING SCHEMES - UPDATE**

Decision Notice D150024MEM

The Chief Executive reported on the local take up of the Escalate loan fund and set out options for future support. Proposals for the introduction of a small business boost programme to support small and medium sized businesses and encourage more local firms to apply were also presented.

Future funding priorities were outlined and two options being considered included continuing the scheme on the same terms as the original Escalate programme and the introduction of a more focused element of loan funding, aimed at smaller businesses with a more streamlined application process. The latter had operated successfully in East Kent as a 'small business boost' programme.

It was reported that a 'small business boost' approach could continue to meet local needs and potentially encourage more local firms to apply given the small business focus and an easier application process.

**RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) the success of the Escalate business loan be noted; and
- (2) the County Council be informed of the Borough Council's preference for the introduction of a 'small business boost' element in any future loan programme.

#### **ERG 15/6 GRANT SUPPORT SCHEME - LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES**

Decision Notice D150025MEM

Proposals for extending grant support for local neighbourhood shopping centres, building on the district centre grant scheme launched in 2013, were set out in the joint report of the Chief Executive and the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration.

It was noted that a six month deadline for applications to be submitted would be applied. In addition, Members identified Quarry Hill Parade, Tonbridge as a potential eligible neighbourhood retail centre.

The previous scheme had generated a good deal of positive engagement with business communities and a wide range of proposals were developed by local traders' groups, including better signage, promotional materials including new websites and visitor information, and improved street furniture. It was hoped that this new scheme would generate a similar response and would help and support local retail trade. Funding criteria was set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the proposed grant scheme to support neighbourhood retail centres, as detailed in the report and its Annex, be approved.

### **MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION**

#### **ERG 15/7 WEST KENT PARTNERSHIP MINUTES**

The Minutes of the West Kent Partnership meeting held on 23 January 2015 were reviewed and noted with particular reference made to the work achieved at West Kent College. It was also noted that there was no detailed information currently available on European Regional Development Funds.

### **MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE**

#### **ERG 15/8 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no items considered in private.

The meeting ended at 8.19 pm

# Agenda Item 4

Introductory presentation on the economic regeneration agenda covering the wider economic context, West Kent partnership working and the delivery of local business support services.

This page is intentionally left blank

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
ECONOMIC REGENERATION ADVISORY BOARD**

**23 June 2015**

**Report of the Chief Executive**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Information**

**1 ECONOMIC OVERVIEW OF TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH**

**This report sets out an economic overview of the borough in order to demonstrate recent trends and to provide the most up-to-date statistics on the current performance of the local economy.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 From time to time, we report to the Board on the overall economic position of the Borough to keep Members informed of any emerging economic issues.

1.1.2 Over the past 15 years, Tonbridge and Malling has seen significant positive and negative changes – including the development of Kings Hill, the economic downturn in 2008 and the closure of Aylesford Newsprint. Despite these changes, the local economy continues to perform well overall within the county-wide and national context, although there are still inherent weaknesses – such as pockets of deprivation. The statistics provided in this report provide the most up-to-date statistics on the performance of the borough across a range of economic indicators.

**1.2 Economic Overview**

1.2.1 Appendix 1 provides a range of socio-economic statistics which provide an overall indication of the performance of the borough. The following is a brief analysis of these figures:

- **Economic Activity (2011):** The total number of people living in the borough aged 16-74 years is 86,435. Of these, just under 73% are economically active with the majority in full time employment. Of those that are economically inactive, over half are retired. Breaking this down into age groups, the largest number of economically active people are aged between 45 and 59 years of age. The number of economically active people drops off quickly after 60, although with recent changes in legislation, the contribution made by people aged 60 and over is no doubt increasing.

- **Employment Rate (2014):** whilst there is variation between males and females, as well as different age groups, over 81% of Tonbridge and Malling residents aged 16-64 years are in employment. This is much higher than the Kent average, which is around 74%.
- **Unemployment Rate (2014):** changes in the unemployment rate in Tonbridge and Malling have broadly mirrored figures for Kent and Great Britain over the period 2001-2014, with a clear increase in 2008/09, a plateau between 2009 and 2012, followed by a steep decrease as the economy started to recover in 2012/13. Unemployment in Tonbridge and Malling has consistently been lower than that for the county and the country as a whole, ranging from 0.9-2.2%, with Kent 1.6-3.2% and Great Britain 2.2-3.8%. In 2013, whilst over half of unemployed people in the borough were aged 25-49 years, a disproportionate number of under 25 year olds were unemployed, reflecting county and national trends.
- **Size of Firms (2014):** this data clearly shows that the economy of Tonbridge and Malling is predominantly made up of enterprises that employ 0-4 people (at 75.8% of all businesses in the borough). This is very similar to the situation for Kent and Great Britain. Conversely, fewer than 0.5% of all businesses in the borough employ over 250 staff, again broadly reflecting the countywide and national picture.
- **Employment by Industry (2011):** by far the biggest employer in the borough is wholesale and retail (including motor repairs), which accounts for around 16% of all jobs. Whilst high, the Employment Land Review has indicated that this sector is underrepresented in the Borough. This is followed by the care sector (around 10.5% of jobs); education (10.2%) and construction (9.5%). Significant contributions are also made by manufacturing (although this has decreased over a number of years); professional, scientific and technical services; and finance and insurance (which has grown hugely since the late 1990s as a result of the development of Kings Hill).
- **Employment by Occupation (2011):** this census data shows that a high proportion of people aged 16-74 years in the borough are in skilled employment, with 30% in management and profession occupations and a further 14% in associate professional and technical occupations.
- **Median Weekly Full Time Earnings – Workplace Based (2014):** these statistics illustrate that overall the median weekly full time earnings from jobs in Tonbridge and Malling (£529.20) is higher than for Kent (£489.70) and Great Britain (£520.20) as a whole; however there is quite a disparity between males and females in the borough.
- **Median Weekly Full Time Earnings – Resident Based (2014):** as with the workplace based statistics, residents in Tonbridge and Malling have a



higher earning power (£569.50) than is the case for Kent (£541.50) and Great Britain (£520.80) as a whole. Again, there is a considerable difference between males and females, not only in Tonbridge and Malling, but across the country.

- **VAT and/or PAYE based Enterprises (2014):** this shows the business make-up of the borough is diverse, with a strong representation from professional, scientific and technical businesses (995); construction businesses (735); information and communication businesses (430) and administration and support services businesses (400). Although there are 285 retail businesses in the borough, this equates to a much smaller percentage of all businesses compared to that for both Kent and Great Britain.
- **Business Survival Rates (2013):** the statistics indicate that on average in the first three years of its life, a business set up in Tonbridge and Malling has a lower chance of closing (22.4%) than on average for businesses in Kent (30.7%) and Great Britain (33.9%). If a business makes it successfully through its first three years, then the figures show that after five years the survival rates are also better for Tonbridge and Malling based businesses on average than for Kent and Great Britain.
- **Qualification Attainment (2011):** Whilst lower than the percentage for Kent as a whole, 20% of residents aged 16 years and above in the borough had no qualifications in 2011.

### 1.3 Comparison across West Kent

- 1.3.1 Although the information under section 1.2 provides some comparators with the picture across Kent and Great Britain, Table 1 also provides an overview of how Tonbridge and Malling Borough compares to Sevenoaks District and Tunbridge Wells Borough in order to provide an indication of how Tonbridge and Malling fares within the West Kent context.
- 1.3.2 One of the key findings from this overview comparison is that both the employment rate (% of 16-64 year olds in employment) and the unemployment rate (claimant count) in Tonbridge and Malling are higher than in the other two areas of West Kent.
- 1.3.3 Whilst businesses employing 0-4 employees make up a high percentage of Tonbridge and Malling enterprises, the figure is even higher for Sevenoaks District and Tunbridge Wells Borough.
- 1.3.4 The workplace based earnings are similar in all three areas of West Kent, however the resident based earnings are higher in Sevenoaks District and Tunbridge Wells Borough, suggesting that these two areas have a higher percentage of commuters into Central London.

- 1.3.5 Tonbridge and Malling Borough performs better than the other two areas of West Kent for the 3year business survival rates. Tonbridge and Malling also fares slightly better than Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells on the 5 year survival rates (46.2% survival compared to 45 and 45.2% respectively).
- 1.3.6 20% of people aged 16 years and over in the borough do not have any qualifications. This is slightly higher than in Sevenoaks District (19.2%) and higher than in Tunbridge Wells Borough (17.1%).

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Tonbridge and Malling Borough</b>	<b>Sevenoaks District</b>	<b>Tunbridge Wells Borough</b>
% Economically Active Population (aged 16-74) (2011)	72.9%	71.5%	73.1%
Employment Rate (2014)	81.2%	72.5%	72.6%
Unemployment Rate (2014)	1.2%	1.1%	0.9%
% firms employing 0-4 people (2014)	75.8%	78.7%	78.0%
Median Weekly Full Time Earnings (Workplace Based) (2014)	£529.20	£535.80	£520.50
Median Weekly Full Time Earnings (Resident Based) (2014)	£569.50	£628.10	£646.40
3 Year Business Survival Rates (2013)	77.6%	64.7%	74.8%
% of people aged 16 years and above with with no qualifications (2011)	20%	19.2%	17.1%

**Table 1: Economic Performance of West Kent Boroughs and District**

## **1.4 Legal Implications**

1.4.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

1.5.1 There are no financial and value for money considerations arising from this report.

## **1.6 Risk Assessment**

1.6.1 Not applicable.

## **1.7 Equality Impact Assessment**

1.7.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Background papers:

Appendix 1: Economic Overview – Tonbridge and Malling

contact: Jeremy Whittaker,  
Economic Regeneration  
Officer

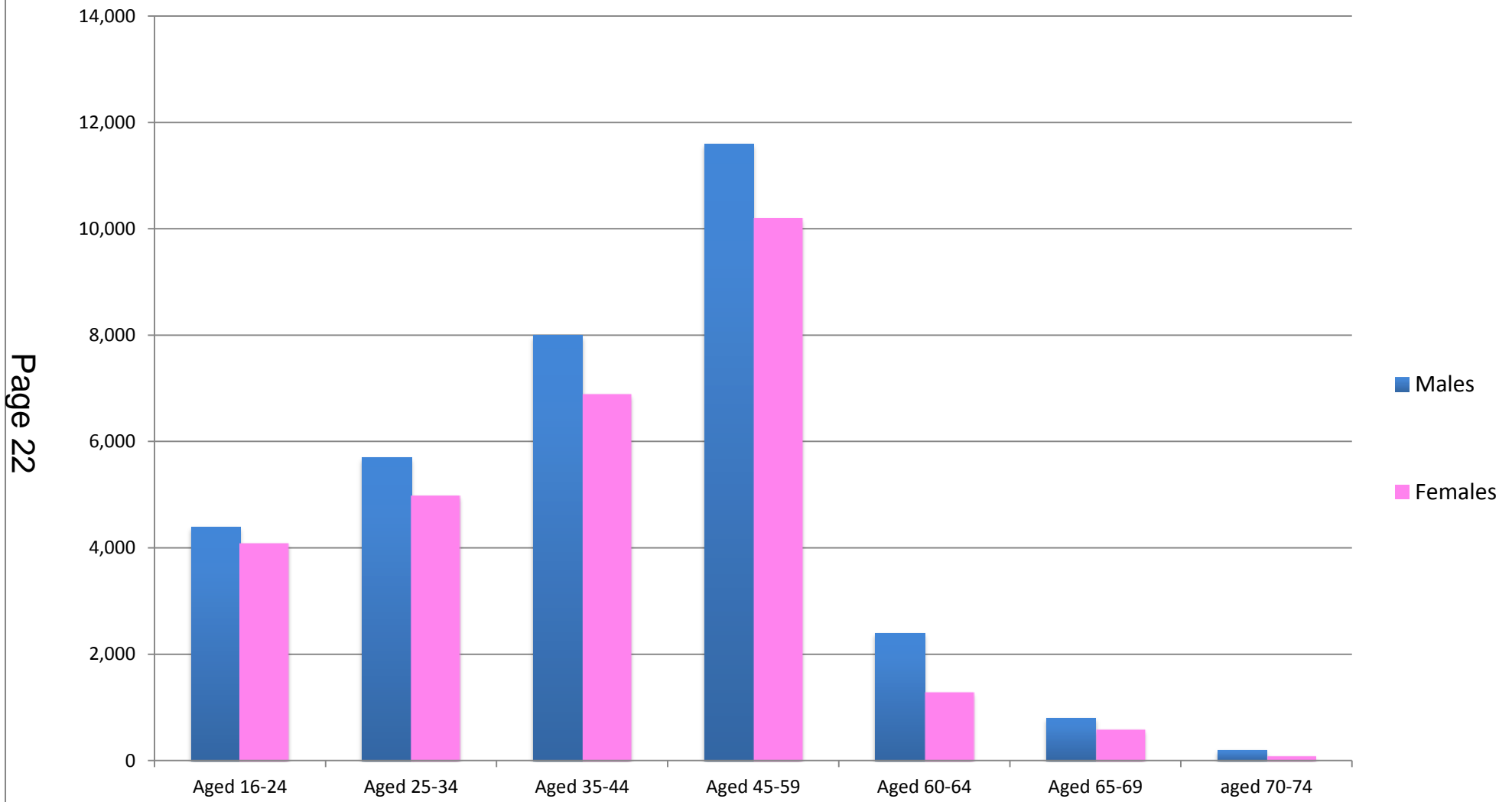
Julie Beilby  
Chief Executive

This page is intentionally left blank

## APPENDIX 1: Economic Overview – Tonbridge and Malling

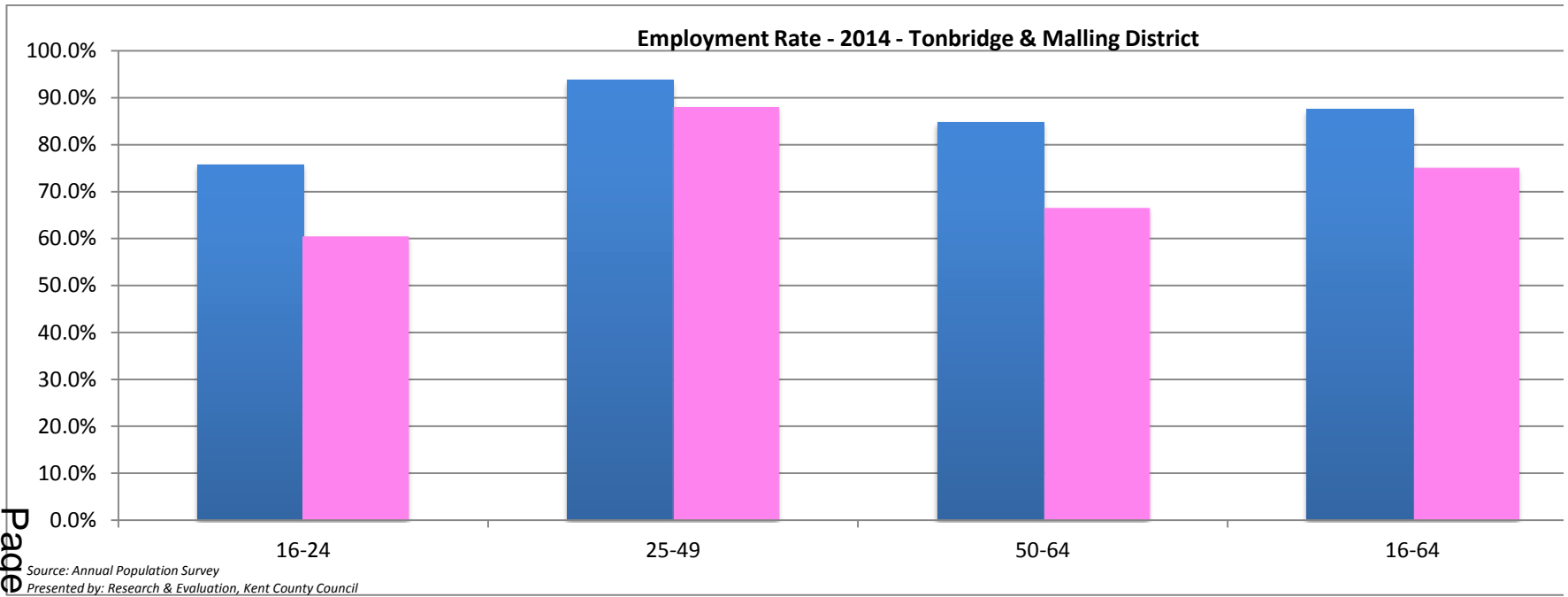
	All People		Males		Females	
Tonbridge & Malling	Number	% of all people 16-74	Number	% of 16-74 Males	Number	% of 16-74 Females
<b>Aged 16-74</b>	<b>86,435</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>42382</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>44053</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Economically Active</b>	<b>63,039</b>	<b>72.9%</b>	<b>33,427</b>	<b>78.9%</b>	<b>29,612</b>	<b>67.2%</b>
<i>Employee: Part-time</i>	12,690	14.7%	2,199	5.2%	10,491	23.8%
<i>Employee: Full-time</i>	35,663	41.3%	21,943	51.8%	13,720	31.1%
<i>Self-employed</i>	9,768	11.3%	6,782	16.0%	2,986	6.8%
<i>Unemployed</i>	2,580	3.0%	1,506	3.6%	1,074	2.4%
<i>Full-time student</i>	2,338	2.7%	997	2.4%	1,341	3.0%
<b>Economically Inactive</b>	<b>23,396</b>	<b>27.1%</b>	<b>8,955</b>	<b>21.1%</b>	<b>14,441</b>	<b>32.8%</b>
<i>Retired</i>	12,531	14.5%	5,293	12.5%	7,238	16.4%
<i>Student (including full-time students)</i>	3,426	4.0%	1,809	4.3%	1,617	3.7%
<i>Looking after home or family</i>	4,073	4.7%	229	0.5%	3,844	8.7%
<i>Long-term sick or disabled</i>	2,123	2.5%	1,111	2.6%	1,012	2.3%
<i>Other</i>	1,243	1.4%	513	1.2%	730	1.7%

### Economically active population by age - 2012 - Tonbridge & Malling



Page 22

Source: ONS  
Presented by: Research & Evaluation, Kent County Council

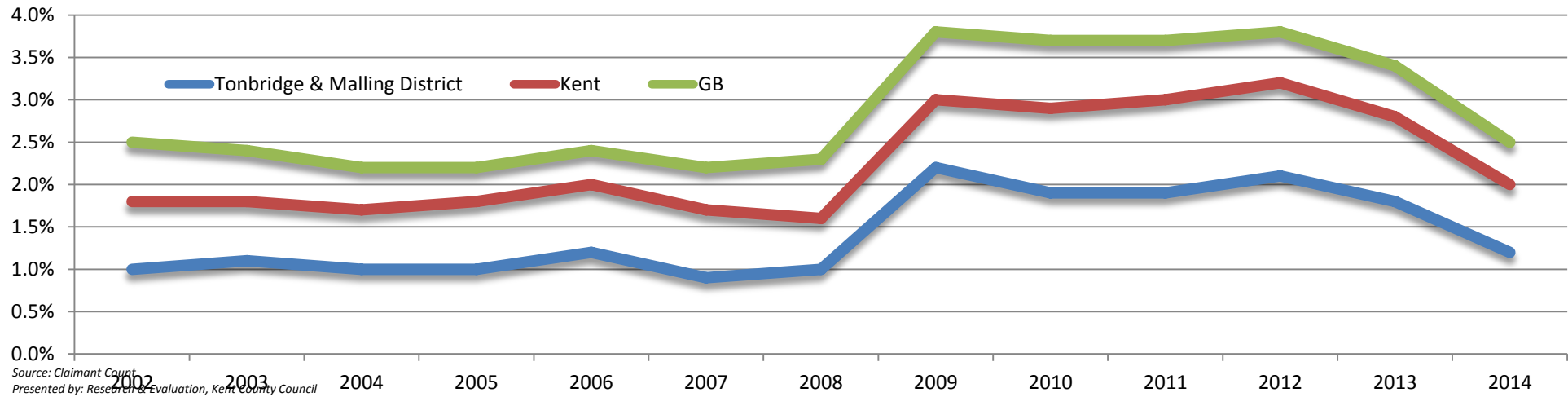


**Employment Rate - 2014 - Tonbridge & Malling**

Source: NOMIS - Annual Population Survey

	Males	Females	Total
<b>16-24</b>	<i>75.8%</i>	<i>60.5%</i>	<i>67.0%</i>
<b>25-49</b>	<i>93.8%</i>	<i>88.0%</i>	<i>90.9%</i>
<b>50-64</b>	<i>84.8%</i>	<i>66.6%</i>	<i>75.9%</i>
<b>16-64</b>	<i>87.6%</i>	<i>75.1%</i>	<i>81.2%</i>

### Annual Average Unemployment Rate - 2002-2014

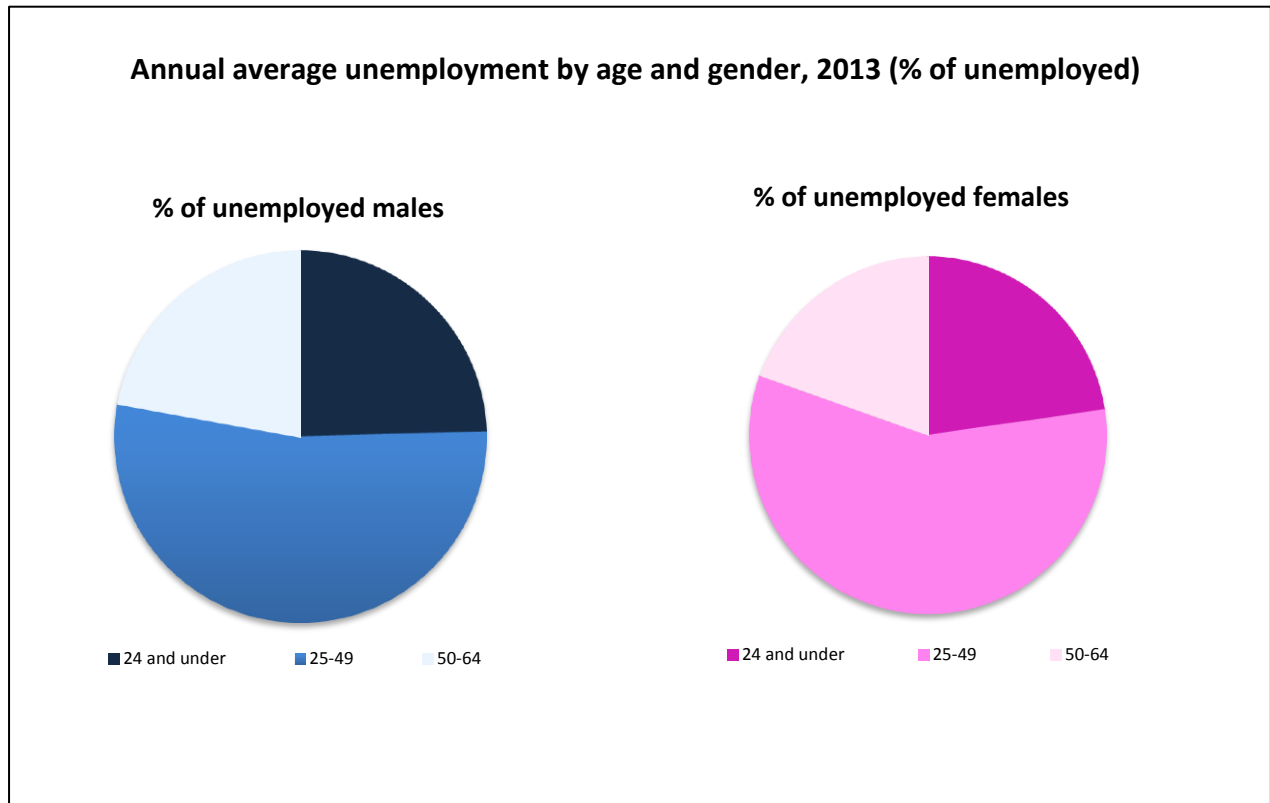


Source: Claimant Count  
Presented by: Research & Evaluation, Kent County Council

Source: NOMIS – Claimant Count

	Tonbridge & Malling	Kent	GB
2001	1.0%	1.8%	2.6%
2002	1.0%	1.8%	2.5%
2003	1.1%	1.8%	2.4%
2004	1.0%	1.7%	2.2%
2005	1.0%	1.8%	2.2%
2006	1.2%	2.0%	2.4%
2007	0.9%	1.7%	2.2%
2008	1.0%	1.6%	2.3%
2009	2.2%	3.0%	3.8%
2010	1.9%	2.9%	3.7%
2011	1.9%	3.0%	3.7%
2012	2.1%	3.2%	3.8%
2013	1.8%	2.8%	3.4%
2014	1.2%	2.0%	2.5%



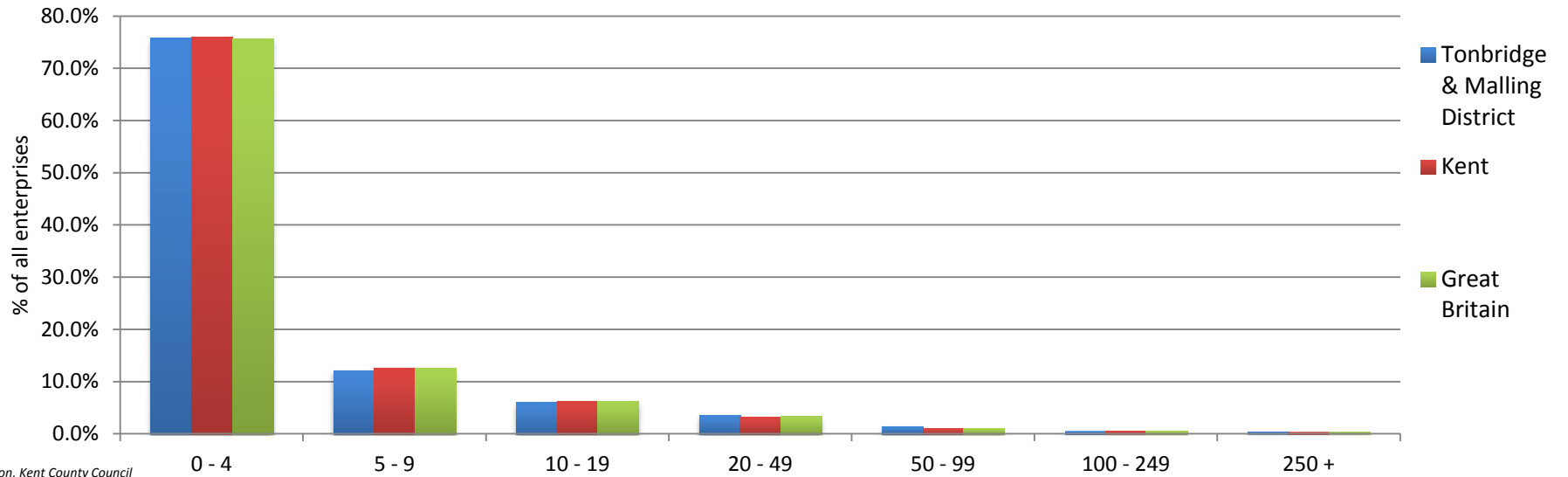


**Annual average unemployment by age and gender, 2013 (% of unemployed)**

*Source: NOMIS - Claimant Count*

<b>Tonbridge &amp; Malling</b>	<b>Males</b>		<b>Females</b>		<b>Total</b>	
24 and under	205	24.7%	110	22.5%	315	23.9%
25-49	445	53.5%	280	57.4%	725	54.9%
50-64	185	22.3%	95	19.5%	280	21.2%
16-64	831	100.0%	488	100.0%	1,320	100.0%

VAT and/or PAYE based enterprises by number of employees - 2014



Source: ONS UK Business Survey  
Presented by: Research & Evaluation, Kent County Council

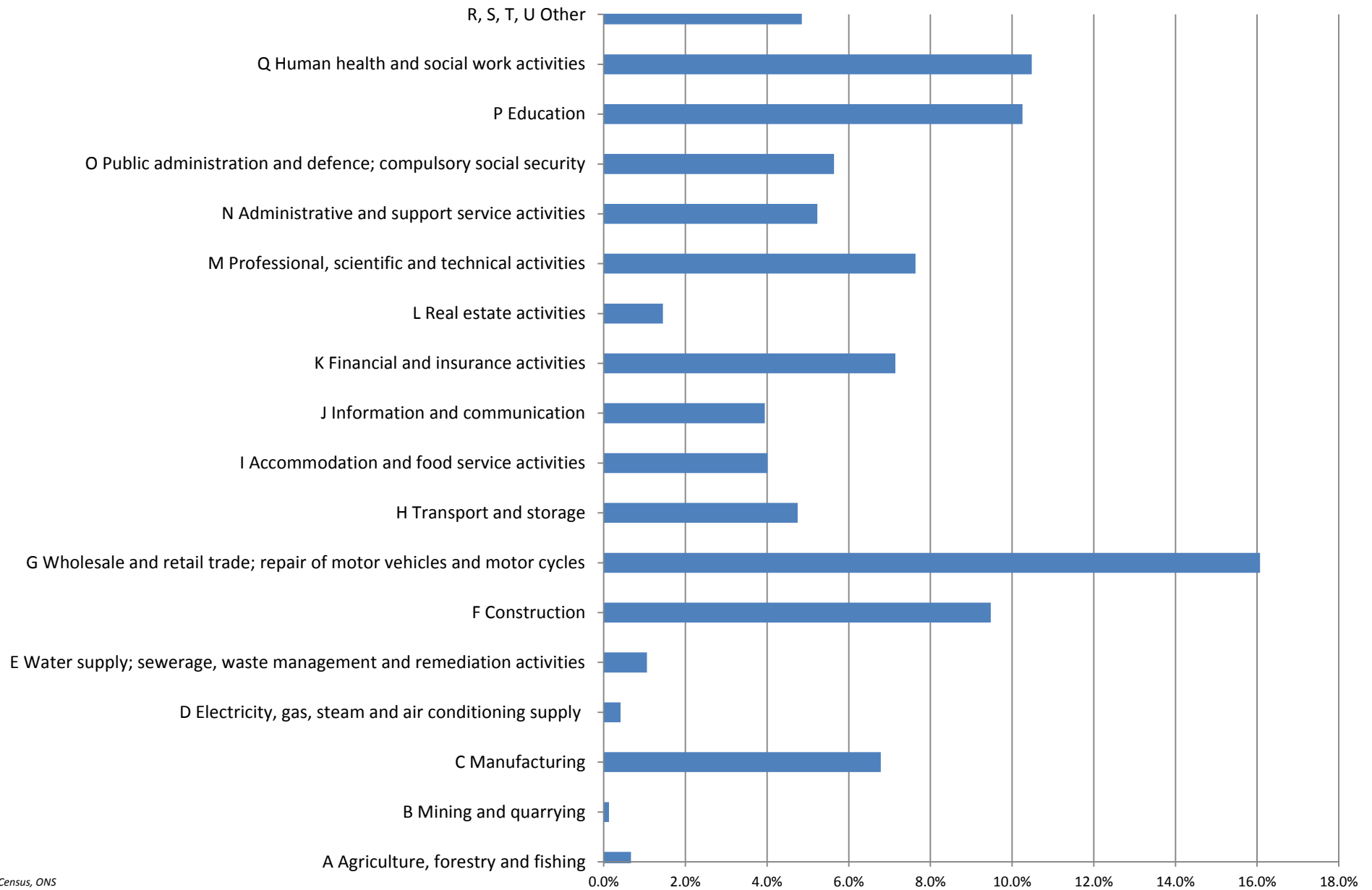
VAT and/or PAYE based enterprises by number of employees - 2014

Source: UK Business Survey, ONS

2014	Tonbridge & Malling District	Kent	Great Britain
0 - 4	3,685	39,935	1,662,690
5 - 9	590	6,610	276,805
10 - 19	290	3,290	138,320
20 - 49	175	1,705	73,680
50 - 99	70	570	23,340
100 - 249	25	295	13,290
250 +	20	180	8,875
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,860</b>	<b>52,580</b>	<b>2,197,000</b>

## Employment by Industry 2011

## Tonbridge and Malling

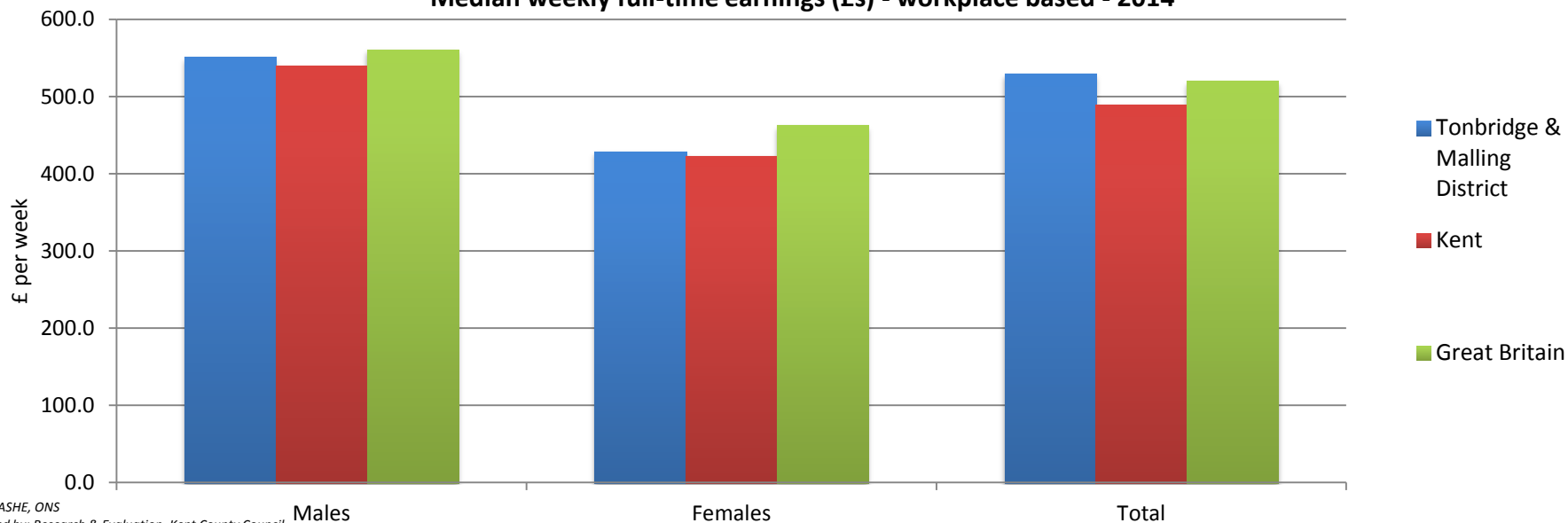


## Employment by Occupation, 2011

Source: 2011 Census Table KS608EW

Tonbridge & Malling	Number	% of all people 16-74 in employment
<b>All Occupations</b>	<b>59,993</b>	<b>100%</b>
Managers, directors and senior officials	7,768	12.9%
Professional occupations	10,283	17.1%
Associate professional and technical occupations	8,380	14.0%
Administrative and secretarial occupations	7,652	12.8%
Skilled trades occupations	6,798	11.3%
Caring, leisure and other service occupations	5,229	8.7%
Sales and customer service occupations	4,530	7.6%
Process, plant and machine operatives	3,544	5.9%
Elementary occupations	5,809	9.7%

Median weekly full-time earnings (£s) - workplace based - 2014

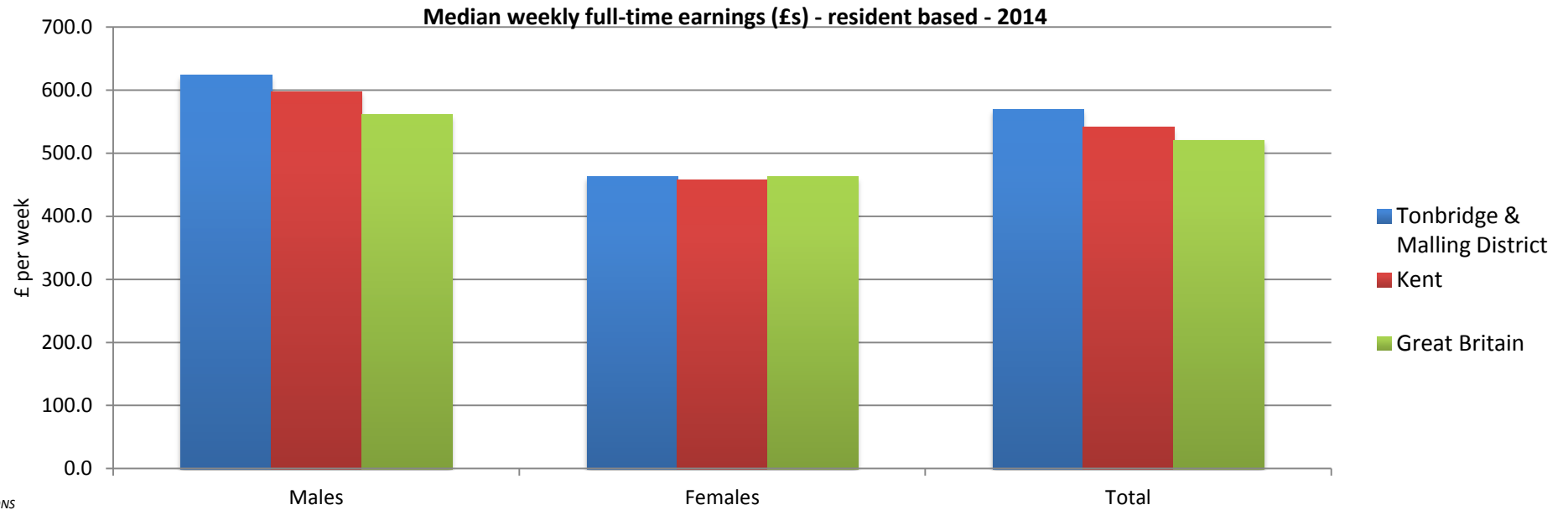


Source: ASHE, ONS  
Presented by: Research & Evaluation, Kent County Council

Median weekly full-time earnings (£s) - workplace based - 2014

Source: NOMIS - Annual Survey of Hours & Earnings

2014	Tonbridge & Malling	Kent	Great Britain
Males	551.2	539.5	560.6
Females	428.6	422.8	462.5
Total	529.2	489.7	520.2



Source: ASHE, ONS  
Presented by: Research & Evaluation, Kent County Council

### Median weekly full-time earnings (£s) - resident based - 2014

Source: NOMIS - Annual Survey of Hours & Earnings

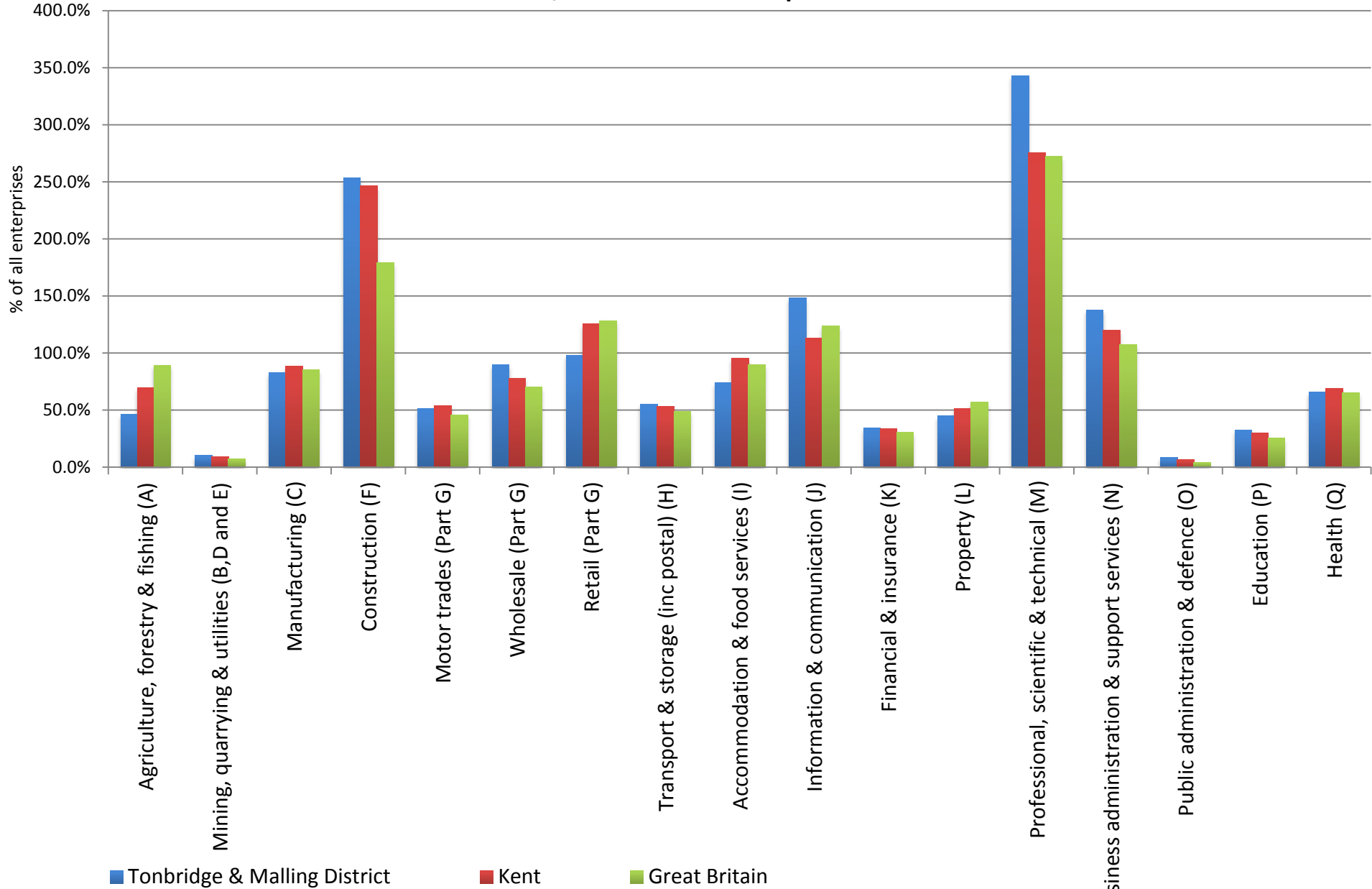
2014	Tonbridge & Malling	Kent	Great Britain
Males	623.7	597.9	561.5
Females	463.2	457.5	463.0
Total	569.5	541.5	520.8

## VAT and/or PAYE based enterprises - 2014

Source: UK Business Survey, ONS

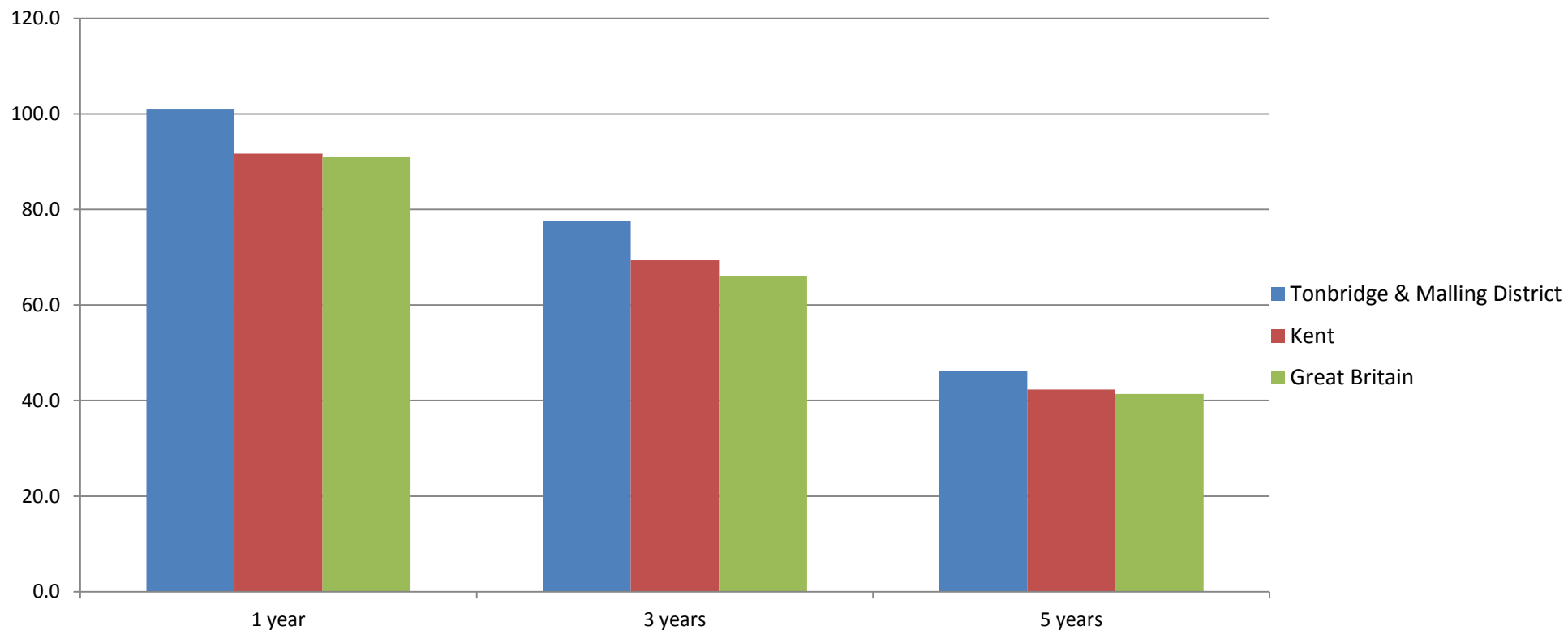
<b>2014</b>	<b>Tonbridge &amp; Malling District</b>	<b>Kent</b>	<b>Great Britain</b>
Agriculture, forestry & fishing (A)	135	2,260	128,335
Mining, quarrying & utilities (B,D and E)	30	300	10,515
Manufacturing (C)	240	2,870	122,610
Construction (F)	735	8,005	257,170
Motor trades (Part G)	150	1,740	66,085
Wholesale (Part G)	260	2,535	100,720
Retail (Part G)	285	4,085	184,375
Transport & storage (inc postal) (H)	160	1,730	69,950
Accommodation & food services (I)	215	3,105	129,200
Information & communication (J)	430	3,670	177,665
Financial & insurance (K)	100	1,105	43,925
Property (L)	130	1,665	81,750
Professional, scientific & technical (M)	995	8,945	390,755
Business administration & support services (N)	400	3,890	154,580
Public administration & defence (O)	25	220	5,760
Education (P)	95	980	36,675
Health (Q)	190	2,245	93,485
Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services (R,S,T and U)	290	3,245	143,435
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,860</b>	<b>52,580</b>	<b>2,197,000</b>

## VAT and/or PAYE based enterprises - 2014





### Business Survival Rates, 2013



Source: UK Business Demography, ONS

Presented by: Research & Evaluation, Kent County Council

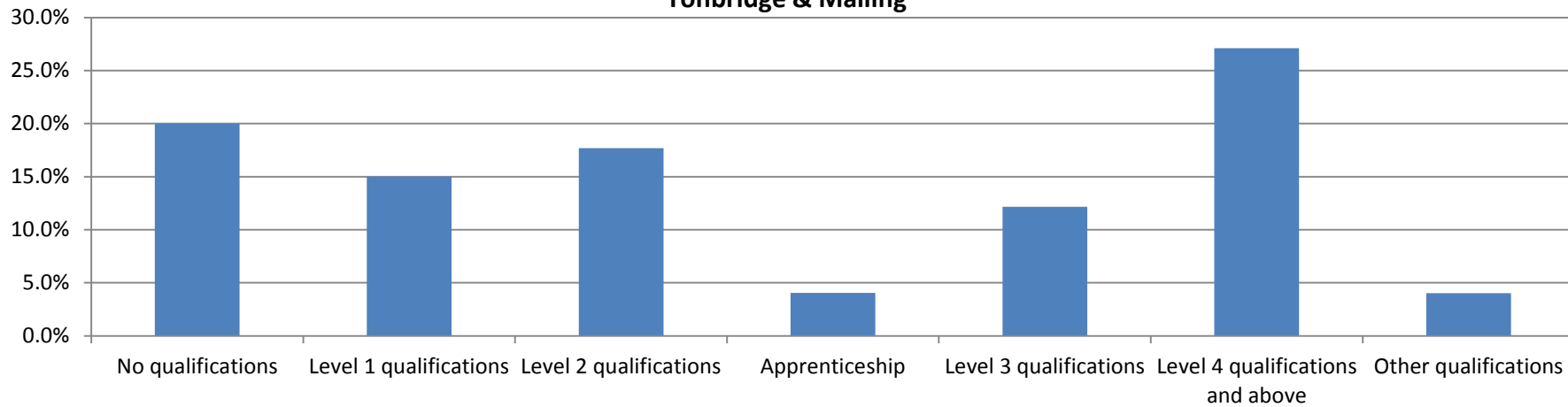
### Business Survival Rates, 2013

Source: UK Business Demography, ONS

2013	Tonbridge & Malling District		Kent		Great Britain	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1 year	550	100.9	5,800	91.7	241,460	90.9
3 years	380	77.6	3,730	69.3	152,350	66.1
5 years	270	46.2	2,610	42.3	108,405	41.4

**Highest level of Qualification (resident population aged 16+), 2011**

**Tonbridge & Malling**



**All People**

<b>Tonbridge &amp; Malling</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of all people 16+</b>
<b>Population aged 16+</b>	<b>95,821</b>	<b>100%</b>
No qualifications	19,135	20.0%
Level 1 qualifications	14,401	15.0%
Level 2 qualifications	16,945	17.7%
Apprenticeship	3,874	4.0%
Level 3 qualifications	11,646	12.2%
Level 4 qualifications and above	25,967	27.1%
Other qualifications	3,853	4.0%

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
ECONOMIC REGENERATION ADVISORY BOARD**

**23 June 2015**

**Report of the Chief Executive**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision**

**1 BOROUGH ECONOMIC REGENERATION STRATEGY**

**To set out proposed amendments to the draft strategy in the light of comments received on the consultation draft and to recommend adoption of the strategy as amended.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 A report was made to this Board on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2015 setting out a draft strategy to guide our work on economic regeneration. The need for a clear and concise strategy was recommended by the Council's Peer Challenge review which took place in 2014. This involved an independent team of senior council officers and Members from other local authorities, appointed by the Local Government Association, who reviewed the Council's corporate business but with a particular focus on our work on economic regeneration. Specifically, the Peer Challenge team recommended that a more formal economic regeneration strategy was required which:

'links and guides the Council's investment across a range of services and projects, jointly owned by elected members and officers across the Council'.

1.1.2 The draft Strategy has now been the subject of consultation and the purpose of this report is to present a final draft for approval, amended to take account of the comments received and to reflect views of local businesses on future economic priorities for the West Kent area.

**1.2 Results of Consultation**

1.2.1 A number of formal responses were received during the consultation period which can be summarised as follows:

- The need to strengthen references to the role of Council's procurement processes in supporting local businesses and social enterprises;
- A need to refer to the key role of the new local plan in allocating sufficient land to meet future employment needs;

- Reference needed to the employment training role of East Malling Research;
- References needed to the role of Town and Parish councils in supporting economic regeneration including via neighbourhood plans;
- Inclusion of needed improvements to the A20 corridor to relieve local congestion;
- A need to encourage the provision of new housing to meet local skills needs including that for key workers;
- Wider recognition of tourism as a borough-wide activity.

1.2.2 In addition to these comments, a number of organisations have indicated their support for the strategy including Mid Kent College, the Centre for Micro Business, West Kent Partnership, Sevenoaks District Council and Circle Russet Housing.

1.2.3 Feedback from local businesses is also important in helping to shape the final version of the strategy. The West Kent Partnership hosted a business breakfast in Tonbridge as part of a West Kent Business2Business event in March of this year and this event was used to consult on local economic priorities. Some 80 participants attended the event. In summary, the following key issues for local businesses were highlighted:

- a need to attract new businesses and additional inward investment into West Kent via marketing and promotion and the identification of new site opportunities for business and industrial use;
- Improving connectivity and traffic congestion by focusing investment on tackling key pinch points in the road network;
- A need to improve both broadband and mobile phone coverage focusing on specific locations where services are currently poor;
- Recognising and dealing with local skills shortages including lower level skills and the housing difficulties faced by workers on lower incomes;
- The provision of additional support for businesses both for start-ups and those wishing to expand.

1.2.4 A number of the issues raised are already generally covered in the Strategy's draft action plan. However, references to the need to better promote the area for inward investment, dealing with traffic congestion pinch points including the A20, and the need to improve local mobile phone coverage could usefully be included as new actions.

1.2.5 In addition to the above amendments, a new section has been inserted into the strategy dealing with future monitoring arrangements and suggesting a small number of key economic indicators to help judge future progress.

1.2.6 A final draft of the revised strategy is attached as Annex 1 to this report.

### **1.3 Legal Implications**

1.3.1 None

### **1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

1.4.1 The actions set out in the strategy can be funded from existing budgets.

### **1.5 Risk Assessment**

1.5.1 n/a

### **1.6 Equality Impact Assessment**

1.6.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

### **1.7 Recommendations**

1.7.1 That the Borough Economic Regeneration Strategy, as set out at Annex 1 to this report, **BE APPROVED.**

Background papers:

Nil

contact: Mark Raymond  
Chief Corporate Policy Officer

Julie Beilby  
Chief Executive

This page is intentionally left blank

Annex 1

Economic Regeneration Advisory Board

23 June 2015

Page 39

---

# **Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council**

---

**Economic Regeneration Strategy  
Revised Draft for Approval**

---

2015/16 - 2018/19

---



[www.tmbc.gov.uk](http://www.tmbc.gov.uk)



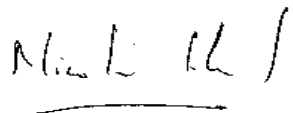


## Foreword - Economic Regeneration in Tonbridge and Malling: The Need for a Strategy

Economic regeneration was adopted as a new key priority for the Borough Council in 2012/13 as a response to the continued national and local economic challenges facing the Borough. Working with our partners across the County and in West Kent, a range of new, local initiatives to support business growth have been introduced since then. With the local economic recovery now firmly established, there is a need set out what how the Borough Council can help support the local economy over the next three years, to build on what has been achieved, and to focus our interventions to help achieve further growth and promote business competitiveness. The Strategy has six key objectives:

- It sets out clearly what actions and activities the Council plan to undertake across the Borough and ensures that these focus the support the Borough Council can give where it is most needed and is targeted at the local business sectors who would benefit from it.
- It sets out how the Borough Council will to work with, and engage, local partners to strengthen services and avoid any overlap in the provision of economic support services undertaken by other agencies.
- It reflects the results of consultation with our local business community and commits the Council to further, ongoing business engagement to identify local business priorities and needs.
- To commit the Borough Council to adopting an 'open for business' approach across all of our Council services.
- To focus on local job creation, training and apprenticeships, particularly aimed at helping those who are workless and in need of support to get back into the local job market and to meet the needs of our businesses who have unfilled vacancies and labour shortages
- To ensure the right support is provided and to work with partners to secure resources to enable planned local initiatives and projects to go ahead and deliver the outcomes we wish to see.

The strategy will therefore guide us in the economic initiatives we undertake as a Council and in our partnership working activities in West Kent and across the County. We will keep the strategy under close review and report on progress on the actions we set out on an annual basis.



Nicolas Heslop, Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration

## **Contents:**

<b>1</b>	<b>Our Local Economy</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Working with Our Partners</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Planning for Growth</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Funding for Key Infrastructure</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Supporting Business</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Our Town and Local Retail Centres</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council – Open for Business</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Monitoring and Reviewing the Strategy</b>	<b>16</b>

## 1. Our Local Economy

To ensure we can provide the right support to local businesses most in need and to address any economic weaknesses, we need to understand the key components of the Borough's local economy. Analysis of the Borough's current economic profile highlights the following:

- There has been sustained local growth in employment in recent years. Between 2009 and 2011, the total number of employees in the Borough increased by 3% to a total of 57,400. Over this period, West Kent districts experienced overall growth in employment whereas North and East Kent suffered reductions. On this indicator, Tonbridge and Malling has the second biggest local economy in the County second only to Canterbury. Our current rate of unemployment is 1.2%, a 32.4% reduction from the previous year. This strong economic position indicates that there is considerable potential to achieve on-going future growth. The challenge will be, however, to identify and focus future business support on those parts of the local economy which might be under-performing relative to other areas in the County.
- Small businesses continue to form the backbone of the Borough's economic community. In 2014, over 75% of Tonbridge and Malling businesses had less than 5 employees and a further 12% had 5 -9 employees. Only 0.93% of local businesses employed more than 100 or more employees. There clearly needs to be a focus on supporting our entrepreneurs and our smaller businesses and helping them to develop and grow. The number of recorded new business registrations in 2013 in Tonbridge and Malling was significantly lower compared to both Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells. Although above the Kent average, new business survival rates for the Borough after 1 year and 3 years have been slightly lower for Tonbridge and Malling compared to the other West Kent districts in recent years, although figures for 2013 show improvement in this respect.
- Key sectors in Tonbridge and Malling include wholesale and retail, construction, health and social activities and education. The main key issue for our larger firms who employ 20 or more people is the lack of affordable business funding to aid expansion. Further support from the public sector to offer 0% interest financing to firms with growth potential is needed to sustain local employment and create new jobs.
- Compared to the Kent average, the Borough has a highly skilled workforce with 27% of the working-age resident population having qualifications at level 4 and above compared to 24% for the county as whole. There remains, however, 20% of the Borough's population who have no formal qualifications. To improve workforce skills and employability, further targeted support and training including work experience and formal apprenticeships needs to be given to those without qualifications. There are also lower levels of skills attainment within the Borough's more deprived communities.

- Along with West Kent generally, the Borough is an attractive location for business close to the M25 and London markets. The on-going success of Kings Hill is a good example of what the Borough is able offer those firms looking to relocate to Kent from elsewhere.
- Rural businesses, including farming and forestry enterprises, are also an important element of our local economy. Since 2009, we have been able to support many rural businesses and to help them expand and develop new products via the West Kent LEADER grant scheme which has been jointly funded by DEFRA and the EU. A new programme will start in 2015/16.
- The local tourism sector continues to be a major asset to our local economy. A recent impact study indicated that the total value of tourism to the Borough's economy was estimated to be £157,481,000.

Whilst our local economy has numerous strengths, and continues to be a key economic driver for the Kent economy as a whole, a recent economic report commissioned by the West Kent Partnership has made the case for additional investment to be made. The report has highlighted a number of key issues that need to be addressed including:

- The need to encourage additional inward investment and to market available vacant sites and business premises
- Addressing problems of local traffic congestion which affects local businesses in terms of delivery times and aid commuting
- A need to nurture high-value businesses linked to local research, technology development and further/higher education provision
- Investment to prevent local flooding which affects businesses in Tonbridge, East Peckham and the Medway Gap
- Continued support for new and small businesses to help them grow and expand
- The development of higher levels of skills within the local workforce focusing on meeting the employment needs of the Borough's key sectors
- Via the Local Plan process, identify sufficient new employment sites to help grow the local economy and provide for local businesses wishing to expand
- Further investment in our key retail areas to improve local access and bring forward additional retail and mixed use development
- Work with partners to secure additional external funding to support economic regeneration objectives and seek to demonstrate that investment in the West Kent economy would be to the benefit of the whole County
- Do more to engage local businesses and galvanise their support for local economic initiatives and future bids for funding.

There are also economic opportunities outside the Borough which will potentially provide new jobs and opportunities for local procurement. For example, the Paramount development at Ebbsfleet will generate significant employment opportunities and there is considerable potential for local firms, including those located in the Borough, to benefit from both construction and on-going operational contracts linked to the new theme park.

## 2. Working with Our Partners

The Borough Council has a key role to play in supporting the local economy, bringing forward employment-generating new development at the right locations, and addressing specific local issues, for example, in relation to the viability of its main town and local retail centres. Increasingly, however, achieving sustained economic regeneration will need to rely on joint working with partner organisations, particularly regarding the need to secure funding for locally delivered, key infrastructure and business support projects. We are therefore committed to working with a wide range of partners to achieve the actions set out in this Strategy. These include the following:

**South East Local Enterprise Partnership and Kent and Medway Economic Board** – Government is seeking to devolve responsibility for the funding of new infrastructure and business support initiatives to Local Enterprise Partnerships. Tonbridge and Malling is part of the South East LEP area which covers all of Kent and Medway, Essex and East Sussex. Operating under a federated model, the Borough's interests fall within the remit of the **Kent and Medway Economic Partnership**.

**Kent County Council** takes a lead on economic matters across the County and helps fund and deliver a number of wider business support programmes.

**The West Kent Partnership** is a private/public partnership covering Tonbridge and Malling, Sevenoaks District and the Borough or Royal Tunbridge Wells. Its remit is to focus on those key economic and transportation issues which affect West Kent as a whole. The Partnership has been successful in obtaining funding for a number of projects including the successful rural grant programme – LEADER. More recently, funding has also been secured from the Local Enterprise Partnership for a number of key infrastructure projects.

**Business Support Partners** – The Borough Council works with a range of partners who deliver support to the business community. **Locate in Kent** provides property information and advice for companies wishing to relocate to the County or existing Kent businesses who are looking for alternative premises. Local Chambers of Commerce, including the **Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce and Industry** and the **West Kent Chamber of Commerce and Industry** provide a range of services to their members, organise business networking events and seminars and deliver support and advice services. A similar role is undertaken by the **Federation of Small Businesses** who work to promote the needs of, and act as an advocate for, this important sector. Other key partners include the **Centre for Micro Business**, currently providing specialist support to local businesses operating from home and mentoring for people currently out of work who are considering self-employment as an option, and local groups focusing on promoting retail vitality including the **Tonbridge Town Team**, and a wide range of **local Chambers and groups** for the Boroughs larger local centres.

Our **Town and Parish Councils** have a wealth of knowledge and expertise that can help in taking forward local economic initiatives, such as the grant scheme for local neighbourhood centres, as well as creating the right environment for sustainable economic development through the formulation of Neighbourhood Plans.

In addition to local schools, the Borough is home to **West Kent College** and **Hadlow College** (both now operated by the Hadlow Group) and **Mid Kent College** in Maidstone (which mainly serves the north of the Borough), who provide a range of courses and training up to degree level. In addition, East Malling Research also provides training opportunities for land-based disciplines and in horticultural research.

**The Local Business Community** in Tonbridge and Malling also plays a key role. Feedback from existing businesses and engagement both generally and on specific issues of concern such as the flooding problems in 2013/2014 will be an important element in shaping future service delivery.

### 3. Planning for Growth

The Borough Council's planning function and the delivery of local economic regeneration are inextricably linked.

In preparing a development plan for the area the Local Planning Authority has to set out a vision for future development looking 15 years ahead and be in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). At its core, the NPPF has a presumption in favour of sustainable development and it sees the planning system as performing a number of key roles to achieve this. One of these roles is an economic one:

*'contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure.'* (NPPF - Paragraph 7).

One of the 12 core planning principles set out in the NPPF builds on this by stating: 'Planning should proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth.' (NPPF - Paragraph 17)

In responding to these, the forthcoming Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan will need to ensure sufficient new employment sites are identified to meet projected industrial and business needs over the plan period and to compensate for any existing employment land lost to other uses. Housing supply is also key to sustained economic growth. A sufficient amount and range of housing, including affordable housing and initiatives aimed at supporting local key workers, ensures an adequate source of local labour supply to meet the needs of local business. The new plan will also promote and support our town centres and the rural economy through policies that reflect the NPPF. An initial draft of the Local Plan will be available for consultation in late 2015.

The Borough Council is the first point of contact for businesses seeking planning permission, for example, to expand or redevelop their existing premises. The philosophy that underpins our general approach is to seek to facilitate economic development where this is appropriate. We adopt a corporate approach in assessing new development proposals involving joint working and information sharing between relevant Council services. This enables us to assess the acceptability of new development and then help negotiate solutions to any issues that may arise. We are also committed to ensuring that any additional consents and approvals for new business development, such as licensing controls and building regulations, are brought to the attention of applicants at an early stage to avoid future delays and to help businesses get up and running as soon as possible after planning permission has been granted.

## 4. Funding for Key Infrastructure

A successful local economy depends on effective local transport infrastructure to enable business to access markets, make timely deliveries to clients and for commuters to get to and from their place of work. Excessive road congestion, and cancellations and delays to public transport services can all have an adverse economic impact. The West Kent economy, although generally buoyant, does suffer from the impact of congestion on our motorway and A-road networks at major 'pinch points' in the system. The Borough Council therefore needs to work with partners to make the case for greater local investment to protect local jobs and create the right opportunities for businesses to expand and create additional employment.

A significant level of public sector funding for transport infrastructure is now being devolved to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership. The Borough Council, working with our West Kent Partners, needs to ensure that timely and persuasive bids are submitted when funding rounds are launched to maximise infrastructure investment in the West Kent area. For Tonbridge and Malling, we have already had some success with £2.19M allocated for much needed improvements to Junction 4 on the M20, £2.37M to improve Tonbridge High Street and a further £4.89M allocated to West Kent to fund sustainable transport projects.

Out future infrastructure funding priorities include the following:

- Investment of over £13M needed to improve the Leigh Flood Storage area to provide better flood protection to Tonbridge, Hildenborough, and East Peckham. During the floods in 2013/2014, over 100 local businesses were directly affected by the floods.
- A programme of improvements to the Borough's local stations including Snodland and Tonbridge to improve access and provide better facilities for users.
- Further improvements to the A21, south of Pembury, to improve journey times south towards Hastings.
- Improvements to existing motorway junctions on the M20 and M25 to relieve local congestion and address adverse environmental impacts.
- Investment to enhance and develop new research facilities and promote new bio-tech businesses at East Malling Research.
- M2 junction 3 improvements at Blue Bell Hill to increase capacity and support development outside the borough in Medway.



- Improvements to the A227, A228 and A229 in the Malling area contingent upon the construction of the new lower Thames Crossing.
- Support for improvements to Colts Hill to improve access between the A21 and the M20/M2.

## 5. Supporting Business

There is an extensive range of support already available to local businesses ranging from private sector professionals to on-line advice from national business portals. Larger businesses tend to use professional support whereas smaller businesses and those looking to set up in business for the first time seek free advice from various sources and public agencies. Businesses tell us that the number and range of those agencies can be confusing and often difficult to navigate.

The Borough Council has successfully delivered a range of free business support activities as part of the West Kent Partnership with funding support from Kent County Council. We need to continue to focus that support, given the limited resources available, to those areas of the local business community who would receive most benefit. Our future priorities will therefore be:

- Providing free one-to-one advice for start-up businesses and micro businesses. These form the major part of our local economy, they are the businesses who tend to rely most on free support and we need to ensure that their survival rates are improved to enable them to expand and grow. A particular sector which requires specialist advice and opportunities to network with others are businesses which are home-based.
- Our medium-sized firms employing between 10-50 people need less direct support but a key issue for those firms wishing to expand is the difficulty in accessing loan funding. We will therefore work with partners to build on, and extend, the highly successful ESCALATE programme which offers 0% interest business loans with funding from Government.
- Local businesses need to attract employees with the right skills and experience to enable them to be competitive. Currently, many highly skilled workers commute out of the Borough to outer London and the City. We need to work with local training providers, including Mid Kent, Hadlow and West Kent Colleges, to ensure young people undertake courses linked to the local skills needs of our businesses. More involvement from businesses in course design and business engagement with local schools is needed. We will also seek to promote the further development of local apprenticeships and expand local programmes to provide work experience opportunities to local school-leavers.
- Whilst levels of local unemployment are very low, there remains a need to address the needs of those residents who are not in work and remain benefit-dependent. We will work with partners to address these issues with a focus on supporting people to become more 'work-ready'. Support for those out of work wishing to explore self-employment as an option will also be provided.
- We will support the establishment of a new 5 year LEADER programme to provide grant support for local farmers, foresters and other rural-based businesses from 2015 that enables rural diversification and a strengthening of the rural economy.

## 6. Our Town and Local Retail Centres

We need to ensure that our town and local retail centres continue to be viable, generate sufficient trade and footfall, provide good access and car parking, ensure any vacant retail premises become quickly re-occupied and provide shoppers and tourists with a positive visitor experience.

Tonbridge is our key town centre and will continue to be a focus for our support. There remains considerable scope to enhance the retail appeal of the centre by attracting further investment to provide accommodation for additional retail development, local housing, leisure facilities and car parking provision. We will explore the potential scope for developing our own land holdings in partnership with others and seek the investment required to achieve this. Initially we will invest in townscape improvements to the lower High Street to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment and will encourage other landowners to invest where appropriate.

A suitable mix of different uses is a vital element of any successful town centre. In addition to attracting new retail outlets to Tonbridge, other uses such as additional restaurants, leisure facilities, for example, a cinema or bowling alley, and new visitor hotel accommodation will also need to be considered as part of any major new development. We also need to build on Tonbridge as a key tourist destination making more use of the existing attractions in the town including the River Medway, recreational facilities and Tonbridge Castle. Events can also attract new visitors to the town.

Engagement with retailers, other town centre businesses and with the Tonbridge Town Team will be a vital element in our future approach to the town centre. We need to ensure that all local retailers are engaged and involved in helping to develop future plans for the town and we will support initiatives and events that help promote trade and visitor awareness.

We are already working closely with the Federation of Small Businesses, local Chambers, traders' groups and Parish Councils to support and help fund initiatives that enhance our more major local retail centres across the Borough including larger centres such as West Malling, Snodland and Martin Square, Larkfield and also small neighbourhood centres including those at Ditton, Aylesford and East Malling. We will continue to engage with these groups and also wish to extend the initiative to our smaller neighbourhood centres.

A good example of joint working is the Safer Towns initiative in Tonbridge and local centres such as West Malling which is helping to make those centres safer. 46 local businesses are currently signed up to the scheme which provides a radio network for users to share information about potential shoplifters and other community safety issues. Further expansion of the scheme is being planned.

## 7. Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council - Open for Business

The Borough Council has a key role to play, individually and in partnership with others, to provide positive support and advice to the local business community. In addition to this, the Council also must, at the same time, undertake a number of regulatory functions some of which are relevant to, and will impact on, local businesses.

The Borough Council is committed to undertaking such regulation with regard to local businesses in a measured, consistent and constructive way and to seek to reduce the burden of regulation where possible. Where necessary regulation impacts adversely on a local business, we will take time to communicate clearly why this is necessary and explore what measures might be open to business to overcome any barriers or problems they face. Based on work already being undertaken by the Council's Food and Safety team, and adopting the Better Business for All model being promoted by Better Regulation Delivery Office, we will aim to adopt an 'open for business' approach across all council services in the form of a 'one stop shop' where contact between businesses and the Council is fully joined up regardless of whether that contact relates to regulation or offering support. We are committed to recognising the challenges which face businesses, particularly smaller businesses, and do as much as we can to assist them when some form of regulation is required.

As part of 'open for business' approach, we will:

- Do more to engage and consult positively with the local business community in the Borough to ensure it has a voice over Council matters and is able to influence our approach to business issues. We will make use of existing networks and organisations and hold specific engagement events to supplement these.
- Ensure local businesses are fully informed of any discounts or reliefs that may be available to them include business rates reliefs, and one-off support such as flooding relief funding
- Continue to hold free training events for local businesses to explain regulatory processes including, for example, food law, licensing regulations and planning matters.
- Ensure that local businesses have an equal opportunity to bid for Council contracts, working within the legal procurement framework set by the EU and the principles of the Public Services Social Value Act. This could be achieved by encouraging suppliers, particularly when new services are procured, to include local Social Enterprises within their supply chains.
- Help local businesses by promoting the Borough and supporting tourism and holding events which generate visitors to the Borough.

## 8. Action Plan

Action	Resources	Partners	Success Measure
Deliver free business advice and support focusing on the needs of entrepreneurs, micro businesses and home based businesses	Local Growth Fund Borough Council funding WK Partnership funding	WK Partnership Local Providers	The number of local businesses supported. Target: 75 per year
Secure additional 0% interest loan funding to support local businesses with growth potential	Local Growth Fund	South East LEP Kent County Council	New fund established. External funding successfully obtained by 10 local businesses successfully applying for funding per year.
Help broker engagement between local employers and local training providers across the West Kent area	-	WK Partnership Hadlow/West Kent Colleges, Local schools	Establishment of an active West Kent Business Skills Forum
Work with partners to promote greater work readiness via training, apprenticeships and support for self-employment	European Social Investment Fund	Job Centre Plus Community Partnerships Circle Russet Homes Local Providers	15% reduction in the number of ESA clients over the strategy period
Identify a pipeline of potential projects to support key transport infrastructure and business support needs including improvements to the Leigh Flood Storage Area, other local flooding issues and traffic pinch points.	Local Growth Fund European Social Investment Fund European Regional Development Fund	West Kent Partnership SELEP	2 priority schemes funded over the strategy period including improvements to the LFSA.
Bring forward further retail and mixed use developments and townscape improvements to strengthen the retail appeal of Tonbridge town centre	Regional Growth Fund Private investment Borough Council assets	Private investors	Planning permission in place by end of the strategy period
Engage effectively with town centre and local centre traders and extend support to neighbourhood centres	Innovation Grant monies	Town Team/ Local Chambers/Traders Groups/FSB/ Town and Parish Councils	Establish a town centre business forum Launch a grant scheme for neighbourhood centres
Promote the take up of LEADER grants by rural borough businesses	DEFRA TMBC/WK Partnership	LEADER Local Action Group	25 grants awarded to borough rural businesses.

Adopt a corporate 'open for business' approach across all council services	-	-	100% positive feedback from businesses engaging with the council.
Work with partners to secure high speed broadband services across the Borough to meet local business needs and to address local problems with mobile phone coverage.	-	TMBC/KCC/Town and Parish Councils/local service providers	90% coverage of the Borough by 2018/19.
Foster additional inward investment to the Borough via the promotion of vacant sites and existing premises	Locate in Kent	TMBC	20% increase in number of successful inward investment Borough projects handled by Locate In Kent
Support the development of the local tourism sector to increase local spend and promote employment	-	TMBC/Visit Kent/Local providers	10% increase in local spend by 2018/19.
Support the development of a new Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan, including the identification of new employment sites.	TMBC	TMBC/Adjoining Authorities/Specific Consultees/Town and Parish Councils	Adoption of the Local Plan in 2017.

## 9. Monitoring and Reviewing the Strategy

It will be important to ensure the Strategy is kept up to date and relevant to local business needs. We will therefore review progress on an annual basis both to note the progress being achieved with action plan and to adjust the plan to reflect any new economic issues arising.

In addition, set out below are a number of key economic indicators for the Borough which will also be reviewed on an annual basis (or otherwise when new data becomes available) to review the overall health of our local economy.

Economic Indicator	Previous Performance				Current Trend	Targets			
	2011	2012	2013	2014		2015	2016	2017	2018
VAT Registrations (Start-Ups)	550	545	675	NA		675	680	685	690
VAT De-registrations	450	515	510	NA		500	490	480	470
3 Year Survival Rates	65%	59%	77.6%	NA		80%	82%	84%	85%
Median Weekly Full-Time Earnings (Workplace Based)	£533.80	£491.90	£527.70	£529.20		£535	£545	£555	£565
Unemployment Rate (Claimant Count)	1.9%	2.1%	1.8%	1.2%		1.1%	1.0%	0.9%	0.8%
% 16-64 claiming out of work benefits	7.1%	7.4%	7.0%	NA		6.9%	6.8%	6.7%	6.6%

This page is intentionally left blank



**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**ECONOMIC REGENERATION ADVISORY BOARD**

**23 June 2015**

**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 BUSINESS SUPPORT AND ADVICE**

**To provide an overview of the current business support and advice programme and give consideration to the make-up of future business support activity.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 Statistics on the survival rates of local businesses in the Borough have shown a steady decrease between 2009 and 2012, with a sharp up-turn in 2013. As illustrated in Table 1 below, 3 year business survival rates went as low as 59% in 2012 before recovering to 77.6% in 2013 (the most recent figure). Whilst the period of decline was heavily influenced by the economic downturn and there has been a recovery since, the fact that survival rates did drop below the County average in 2012 suggests the need for greater support and advice for our local businesses to help them succeed and ensure that the area continues to perform above the Kent average.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Tonbridge and Malling</b>	<b>Kent</b>
2007	69.5%	68.3%
2008	66.4%	63.4%
2009	70.4%	65.1%
2010	67.4%	63.8%
2011	65.0%	60.5%
2012	59.0%	60.3%
2013	77.6%	69.3%

**Table 1: 3 year business survival rates**

1.1.2 The Borough Council, through the West Kent Partnership, works with training providers to help provide support and advice to our business community. The costs of this have been met through existing budgets but recently further funding support has been made available by the County Council.

1.1.3 This report therefore sets out proposals to further develop the business support programme to meet local business needs.

## 1.2 Current Business Support Programme

1.2.1 The current programme of support can be broken down into three key areas:

a) **One-to-One Business Advice:** this free service is funded via the West Kent Partnership and provided by the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce. This is an important element of business support as it allows an individual business to access information and advice that is specific to their needs, and helps build a strong relationship between advisor and business.

Over the past year, this service has supported 55 pre-start-ups and small businesses from Tonbridge and Malling, along with 52 based within Tunbridge Wells and 21 in Sevenoaks, as well as 50 Maidstone based businesses.

The overall satisfaction levels of people that have used the service have been in excess of 98%.

b) **Business Workshops:** a strong working relationship has been developed between the West Kent Councils and business support providers, Pro-Actions. To date, Pro-Actions have delivered the following free workshops:

- Improve Your Sales and Win More Business (Aylesford, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015)
- How to Market your Business Successfully (including Using Social Media) (Sevenoaks, 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015)
- Improve Your Sales and Win More Business (Tonbridge, 27<sup>th</sup> January 2015)
- Take your Business to the Next Level (Swanley, 30 September 2014)
- Do I Really Need Social Media for my Business? (Kings Hill, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2014)

Attendance to these sessions has been generally good, with the three sessions in the Borough being attended by 48 people.

c) **Sector Specific Support:** in addition to the above, the West Kent Partnership has also given funding to the Centre for Micro-Business to deliver a package of support to home-based businesses. This includes:

- Telephone Support – 0300 030 9660
- A website for home based businesses – [www.homedbasedkent.biz](http://www.homedbasedkent.biz)
- A programme of events at County libraries, which has resulted in consultation with 21 home-based businesses.

- One-to-One clinics for Home Based Businesses at West Kent College in Tonbridge which have been attended by 90 individuals (30% of whom have been on multiple occasions).

### **1.3 Future Business Support Activity**

1.3.1 As part of the Kent and Medway Growth Hub programme, Kent County Council has allocated £10,000 to each district and borough in the County and £20,000 to Medway to deliver business support at a localised level. KCC have encouraged districts and boroughs to work together to deliver programmes, and as such the council is looking to continue the delivery of business support through the West Kent Partnership.

1.3.2 In order to access this funding allocation, KCC have produced a proforma requesting information on our business support proposals which is to be submitted by 30 June 2015. Although the proforma is still being finalised, the key proposals are:

- Continuation of One-to-One sessions
- Development of Business Workshops across West Kent – with a focus on sales and marketing (which have historically worked well)
- Sector Specific Support – covering the following areas: home-based businesses, rural businesses (to tie in with the new LEADER programme), and retail businesses (to tie in with town centre regeneration initiatives)
- Web-based support – through the use of a web chat facility, provide support and advice to businesses that are unable to attend clinics and seminars.

1.3.3 In addition, the West Kent partners are aiming to improve their database of business contacts to help improve build awareness of the support available to local businesses.

1.3.4 A combination of the improved database and extra funding from the County Council will ensure that this programme of support will continue beyond Spring 2016 and be accessed by a larger number of businesses.

### **1.4 Legal Implications**

1.4.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

1.5.1 The externally funded business support activity builds upon an existing programme which has been well-received by local businesses.

### **1.6 Risk Assessment**

1.6.1 Not applicable.

## 1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

1.7.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

## 1.8 Recommendations

1.8.1 That the proposed approach to future business support activity, as detailed in this report, **BE APPROVED.**

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:

Nil

contact: Jeremy Whittaker,  
Economic Regeneration  
Officer

Julie Beilby  
Chief Executive

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
ECONOMIC REGENERATION ADVISORY BOARD**

**23 June 2015**

**Report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Information**

**1 BETTER BUSINESS FOR ALL**

**Summary**

**This report provides an update on the progress that is being made with the Better Business for All initiative in Kent and Medway, since it was last reported to this Board in February 2014.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 The aim of Better Business for All (BBfA) is to break down the barriers that exist between the regulatory and businesses communities, with the ambition of promoting economic growth and regeneration. There are a number of ways that the programme will seek to do this, which include:

- reducing the regulatory burden on businesses;
- promoting two way communication between businesses and regulatory services;
- improving the business perception of regulators;
- supporting regulators to find the right balance between encouragement, education and enforcement;
- developing a joint offer of support from regulatory services for businesses;
- building trust and confidence between regulators and businesses; and
- advising government on how to do things better for both businesses and regulators.

1.1.2 BBfA was initiated by the Better Regulatory Delivery Office; part of the Department for Business Innovation and Skills; working with two pilot areas - Leicestershire and Greater Birmingham and Solihull. This work resulted in strengthened relationships between businesses and regulators, the development of a single access for business to regulatory guidance and advice, the

development of a regulatory directory “Talk to Reg” and engagement with their local Growth Hubs.

- 1.1.3 In Kent we can clearly see the benefits of this approach for both our business communities and this has been demonstrated by the wide representation by local regulators on the BBfA Steering Group, the work of which has gained strong support from the Kent Chief Executives Group.
- 1.1.4 Since this was originally reported to Members in February 2014 huge strides have been made by the Steering Group to develop the programme, including setting up a long term Business Engagement group, the development of a website, which we anticipate going live in July, and a training group focusing on delivering a culture change programme for regulators.

## **1.2 Business Engagement**

- 1.2.1 It is important that as group of regulators we communicate our aspirations to the business community and listen to their feedback. Significant progress has been made on this front following the involvement of both the Federation of Small Businesses and Invicta Chamber of Commerce. They have provided strong support to the programme, including promotion with their members and we have a growing number of businesses that are supportive of the principles of BBfA.
- 1.2.2 In September representatives of the Steering Group, including our Chief Environmental Health Officer, will be making a presentation to the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership on BBfA and its merits, with a view to developing a Business Engagement Panel comprising some of their members.
- 1.2.3 The website, which is currently under construction, will provide businesses with a single point of access for regulatory advice and guidance. It is the intention that this will link with the Kent and Medway growth Hub when that comes on line.

## **1.3 Regulator Training**

- 1.3.1 One of the principle components to the successful delivery of this initiative is to encourage regulators to reflect on the way that regulation is delivered to businesses, particularly SME’s, that simply do not have the resources to navigate their way through the myriad of regulations that might apply to them.
- 1.3.2 The Council’s regulatory services include Planning, Environmental Health, Licensing and Building Control, representatives of each Team will be attending the training events of which the aim is two-fold; firstly to help regulators gain an insight into perceptions held of them by businesses and help them appreciate some of the constraints that small businesses work under on a daily basis and secondly for regulators across the County to explore how they can work together better for the benefit of the business community.

- 1.3.3 Three ambitious training events are planned over the next four months, in which approximately 300 regulators will be trained. Following the training we will be looking at how we might work differently to support this agenda across the Borough, for example identifying opportunities for better co-ordination, focussing on high risk and poor performing businesses, developing business support and guidance and sharing data between regulators on business performance.

#### **1.4 Legal Implications**

- 1.4.1 This initiative underpins the approach to regulation promoted by the Regulators Compliance Code and aims to support responsible and responsive businesses to improve compliance, whilst applying a consistent approach to enforcement to those small numbers of businesses that blatantly refuse to make efforts to meet minimum legal requirements, for gain.

#### **1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 1.5.1 None

#### **1.6 Risk Assessment**

- 1.6.1 None

Background papers:

contact: Jane Heeley

Nil

Steve Humphrey  
Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

This page is intentionally left blank



# Agenda Item 9

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent due to special circumstances and of which notice has been given to the Chief Executive.

This page is intentionally left blank

# Agenda Item 10

The Chairman to move that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting during consideration of any items the publication of which would disclose exempt information.

**ANY REPORTS APPEARING AFTER THIS PAGE CONTAIN EXEMPT  
INFORMATION**

This page is intentionally left blank

# Agenda Item 11

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent due to special circumstances and of which notice has been given to the Chief Executive.

This page is intentionally left blank