

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

30 August 2016

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 Wednesday, 7th September, 2016 commencing at 7.30 pm

Yours faithfully

JULIE BEILBY

Chief Executive

A G E N D A

PART 1 - PUBLIC

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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.

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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 B J Luker (Chairman)
Cllr F G Tombolis (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr M C Base
Cllr R P Betts
Cllr T Bishop
Cllr J L Botten
Cllr T I B Cannon
Cllr S R J Jessel
Cllr S M King

Cllr R D Lancaster
Cllr Mrs S L Luck
Cllr L J O'Toole
Cllr Miss J L Sergison
Cllr C P Smith
Cllr B W Walker
Cllr T C Walker

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Apologies for absence

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Declarations of interest

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TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ECONOMIC REGENERATION ADVISORY BOARD

Wednesday, 24th February, 2016

Present: Cllr S M King (Chairman), Cllr Mrs S M Barker, Cllr T Bishop, Cllr T I B Cannon, Cllr M O Davis, Cllr Mrs S L Luck, Cllr Miss J L Sergison, Cllr C P Smith, Cllr F G Tombolis and Cllr T C Walker

Councillors Mrs J A Anderson, O C Baldock, P F Bolt, V M C Branson, D J Cure, N J Heslop, B J Luker and S C Perry were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S R J Jessel (Vice-Chairman), M C Base, R Betts, J L Botten, R D Lancaster and B W Walker

ERG 16/1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

ERG 16/2 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the notes of the meeting of the Economic Regeneration Advisory Board held on 9 September 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

ERG 16/3 LONDON PARAMOUNT UPDATE

Members were updated on the progress being made on the London Paramount development by the representative from the socio-economic consultants Volterra (Ellie Evans).

The presentation set out the potential opportunities for West Kent including direct and indirect local employment, international and domestic tourism and retail and leisure opportunities. It was intended that the theme park would have a wide range of rides and attractions, onsite hotels, entertainment, retail and food and beverage.

Construction would start in 2017 with an anticipated finish in 2021.

Members raised concerns that the Paramount Park development could have adverse implications for the local housing development/construction programme, increase demand for public transport around Ebbsfleet, require improvements to the surrounding road network and public transport links and have a potentially negative

effect on West Kent tourism. Reference was also made to the potential impacts as a result of the proposals for the Dartford Crossing.

It was indicated that active engagement was ongoing with various agencies, including Highways England, to reduce and mitigate any potential negative impacts and to encourage positive outcomes for as many as possible.

ERG 16/4 TONBRIDGE TOWN TEAM

The Chairman of the Tonbridge Town Team (Howard Porter) reminded Members that the Team had been established as a result of the Portas Review in 2011. The main aim of the organisation was to help make Tonbridge a vibrant and exciting place to live, work, visit and do business and to support the Borough Council's Economic Regeneration Strategy.

Successful initiatives since the establishment of the Town Team included the Taste of Tonbridge, the launch of a Loyalty Card to use in local shops, the popular Dragon Boat Race, the establishment of the Angel Centre Gardens, work with Dementia Friendly, Tonbridge and the recent introduction of the new What's on in Tonbridge magazine. All of these projects were intended to encourage footfall to the town by raising its profile and to support and develop local businesses.

Future ideas included the development of a Tonbridge app, a local Business Hub website and a brochure to encourage inward investment into the town.

Particular reference was made to the positive impact that Farmers Markets had on local retail centres as they were low risk, attracted visitors and encouraged business start-up. There were 50 markets in Kent with 600 producers involved. It was noted that Tonbridge and Malling had 6 Farmers Markets in: Tonbridge, which was the largest, West Malling, Hildenborough, Shipbourne, Offham and Aylesford. Average spend over a month was £50,000 which demonstrated what small pop up business could achieve.

Future challenges for the Farmers Market organisation were addressing the impacts of online shopping, improving promotion and marketing and adapting to new technologies such as social media.

Members discussed issues around the challenges in attracting and retaining good quality retailers to Tonbridge, promoting the town throughout the Borough and being careful not to negatively impact on other local retail centres.

The Town Team would continue to explore all funding opportunities and to support the Borough Council in attracting investment to the Town by encouraging a busy and vibrant High Street.

Finally, the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration recognised the value and contribution of the Tonbridge Town Team and any increase in the number of visitors to the town was to be welcomed.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

ERG 16/5 UPDATE ON THE BOROUGH ECONOMIC REGENERATION STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2015

Decision Notice: D160024MEM

The report of the Chief Executive provided a detailed overview of the progress made in delivering the Economic Regeneration Strategy Action Plan during 2015.

Overall good progress was being made on a wide range of initiatives as illustrated in Appendix 1 to the report. Particular reference was made to the Escalate 0% interest loan funding as the re-opening of the scheme had been delayed longer than initially expected. This was due to the insufficient loan payments generated back into Kent County Council which was needed to create a new funding 'pot' for further allocation. However, it was anticipated that the scheme would re-open in April 2016.

In addition, the proposed priorities for 2016/17 were set out and took account of the limited progress made in specific areas as well as the level of future financial resources.

Members expressed concern regarding funding for flood protection and the Leigh Flood Storage Area (LFSA). The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration indicated that further clarity around the deliverability of the LFSA scheme might be available at the Kent Flood Forum on 10 March 2016.

With regard to broadband services across the Borough it was reported that Phase 2 would focus on Kings Hill, where the current service was inconsistent. Members asked that the County Council liaise with local Borough and Parish Councillors as well as any landlord and landowner.

Finally, Members welcomed the new and improved signage at local retail centres such as Aylesford and Ditton which had received positive feedback for traders.

RECOMMENDED: That the Borough Economic Regeneration Strategy Action Plan update as set out in Appendix 1 to the report and the priorities for 2016/17 set out in paragraph 1.3 be endorsed.

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION**ERG 16/6 WEST KENT PARTNERSHIP - MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2016**

The Minutes of the West Kent Partnership meeting held on 22 January 2016 were reviewed and noted.

Reference was made to a 'Growth Hub' and Members were advised that this was a website based signposting service supported by Kent Invicta Chamber.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE**ERG 16/7 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no items considered in private.

The meeting ended at 9.40 pm

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

07 September 2016

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 WORK READINESS AND CAREERS ADVICE

This report provides some additional background to support the presentation by Mike Rayner, Participation and Progression Manager for West Kent at Kent County Council and to aid subsequent discussion on how the Advisory Board (or a sub-group of it) might add value to this agenda.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The issue of work readiness, or the lack of it, amongst some school leavers and job seekers has come up in numerous meetings with local businesses over the past 12 months. In simple terms, the feedback received from local businesses has been that:

- Careers advice from some schools does not give a good idea of the real options open to students, with some sectors are seen by advisors as only offering careers for unsuccessful students only and a disproportionate emphasis on getting young people into University.
- Numerous applicants simply have not got the softer skills (not punctual, don't come in some days, not dressed properly) required to flourish in the workplace. Employers aren't necessarily looking for the finished article but they do need someone that can be moulded into a role.

1.1.2 Our own experiences have been supported by the Workforce Skills Evidence Base (September 2015), which was commissioned by the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership.

1.1.3 With the above in mind, Mike Rayner, Participation and Progression Manager for West Kent at Kent County Council has been invited by the Chairman to provide a short presentation on the provision of careers advice, some of the key challenges faced and current initiatives to improve work readiness.

1.2 Potential Interventions

- 1.2.1 In order to aid discussion, a draft Skills Action Plan has been produced (Appendix 1) that incorporates some initiatives that could help support efforts to improve work readiness. This plan is scheduled to be presented to the Tonbridge & Malling Local Strategic Partnership on 16 September 2016.
- 1.2.2 It is suggested, subject to further discussion, that the Advisory Board (or a smaller sub-group of it) might wish to investigate skills and work readiness issues further in more detail via consultation with other partners and then report back to the Board on their findings.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

1.5 Risk Assessment

- 1.5.1 Not applicable.

1.6 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.

1.7 Recommendations

- 1.7.1 That, subject to discussion, the Advisory Board establishes a working group to explore work readiness and skills issues in greater depth.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and the Chief Executive confirm that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

None

contact: Jeremy Whittaker,
Economic Regeneration
Officer

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive

Tonbridge & Malling Skills Action Plan:

September 2016

Thematic Area	Description of Issue	What added value can TMBC and its partners deliver?	Lead	Timescale
Tackling Perceptions	A number of sectors such as the construction, manufacturing and care currently suffer from poor perceptions amongst young people, a number of which are incorrect or overly biased towards negative issues such as pay levels, hours of employment or the working environment.	Work directly with the embryonic KCC Guilds to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve level of business representation. • Have representatives from the T&M borough on Guilds where possible • Support campaigns to boost awareness of reality of working in particular sectors – using social media/press releases/editorial in local papers. 	KCC Skills and Employability, TMBC and local businesses	Ongoing
Careers Advice and Guidance	Linked to the above issue, many businesses feel that the careers advice from some schools does not give a good idea of the real options open to students. Particular issues include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some sectors are seen by advisors as only offering careers for unsuccessful students only. • Lack of engagement between schools and businesses in some instances. • Lack of promotion of all the pathways to employment – there appears to be a disproportionate emphasis on getting young people into University. 	Inclusion of discussion on careers advice and work readiness at the Economic Regeneration Advisory Board, with a view to establishing a focus on this topic.	TMBC in partnership with KCC Skills and Employability.	September 2016
		Support KCC Apprenticeship Campaigns which will target employers and young people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMBC to take on apprentices • Promotion of initiative to T&M businesses 	KCC Skills and Employability, TMBC and local businesses	Ongoing
		Through the West Kent Partnership, work with the Kent Education Business Partnership on promoting and delivering a Skills Festival to enable West Kent schools the opportunity to find out first hand from local businesses, the careers opportunities that exist locally. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial contribution from TMBC of circa £250 • Logistics Support through involvement in working groups • Promotion and Marketing Support 	Kent Education Business Partnership in partnership with KCC, West Kent Partnership, the 3 West Kent Local Authorities and local businesses.	October 2016
		Develop and build upon recent Jobs and Training Fair Programme to help link prospective employees with local businesses and to build awareness of employment and training opportunities locally. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial contribution from TMBC of circa £750 per annum • Logistics Support through involvement in working groups • Promotion and Marketing Support 	TMBC in partnership with JobCentre Plus and local businesses	Ongoing (West Kent Jobs and Training Fair – annually in September & Tonbridge Jobs and Training Fair annually in March)
		Work with Jobs Clubs in the Borough to provide information on pathways to work in specific sectors in T&M. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply information regarding new employment opportunities (such as new 	Circle Housing Russet and JobCentre Plus and local businesses	Ongoing

		employment sites/expanding businesses/inward investment)		
Training Provision	Whilst generic training provision is good at a local level, there are a number of examples of staff/apprentices having to travel some distance to access relevant skills centres or specific training courses.	HE Provision in West Kent – support research into building the case for expanding Higher Education provision in West Kent.	KCC and West Kent Partnership	November 2016
Measures of Success	Schools are measured on how many students get 5 or more A*-C grades and how many go to University. This is supported by a bias that many parents in West Kent have about not wanting their children to go into apprenticeships. However, there are some fantastic examples where students have gone into local businesses and have had very successful careers.	It was suggested that schools should be measured also on the % of students that go into employment in order to have a more balanced approach to what defines 'success'. As such, as a starting point it is suggested that the local MP be approached about flagging this issue up to the appropriate Ministers.	TMBC	October 2016
Softer Skills	Often when job opportunities are advertised, there are plenty of people that apply but in many instances the quality is lacking. Numerous applicants simply have not got the softer skills (not punctual, don't come in some days, not dressed properly) required to flourish in the workplace. Employers aren't necessarily looking for the finished article but they do need someone that can be moulded into a role.	Support the development of softer skills through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMBC involvement with the local colleges and schools in 'Work Ready Interviews' Programmes • Put forward suggestion of interviews at the workplace rather than at colleges/schools. 	FE Colleges and KCC Skills and Employability	Ongoing annually (interviews Feb-March)
		Investigate the potential of a Pilot a scheme to work on softer skills along the lines of the ENGAGE (Tomorrows People) Programme - http://www.tomorrows-people.org.uk/adults	KCC Skills and Employability in partnership with TMBC	September 2016

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

07 September 2016

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 SUPPORT FOR VILLAGE STORES INITIATIVE

To provide an overview of the proposed 12-month scheme to support Village Stores in the borough. If approved, this scheme would act as a follow-on from the District and Local Centres Initiatives.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 In recent months, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council has delivered a range of initiatives aimed at helping to ensure our traders have a positive and supportive environment within which to do business. This includes the District and Local Centres initiatives, which have seen the council work closely with local traders to carry out a variety of environmental improvements in retail areas.

1.1.2 Now that a number of these schemes have been implemented, it would seem like a natural progression to look at another vital element of the retail offer in the borough - the Village Store. Not only do these stores play a key role in the local economy but they often act as a hub for the local community. However, with changes over time in the ways that people tend to procure goods and services, these Village Stores often find it a challenge to sustain the profitability of their business.

1.2 Progress to Date with the District and Local Centres Initiatives

1.2.1 The Economic Regeneration Advisory Board has had previous updates on the progress with these initiatives. Since the last update, the following developments have taken place at the district centres:

Quarry Hill (Tonbridge) – good progress has been made by the Quarry Hill traders in partnership with the Council and Kent Highways. Having employed a Structural Engineer to draw up a design for the artwork foundation in the raised bed outside St Stephens, the TMBC Senior Engineer has engaged with contractors to get this built. The traders have been working with local artist Guy Portelli and local Primary Schools to incorporate children's designs into the

artwork and a design is being drawn up for a low maintenance planting scheme for the raised planter.

Snodland – progress has been slow as Snodland Chamber of Commerce has struggled to allocate the necessary time and resources into their wi-fi and signage project. The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and the Economic Regeneration Officer have both been actively trying to push this project forward (see Appendix 1). The latest response from the Chamber of Commerce has been a request for an additional few weeks to get the project further advanced before any decision is made regarding the funding. As of August 2016, discussions are ongoing with the Chamber of Commerce and the Town Council, who have also expressed concern regarding the speed of progress made with this project.

West Malling – There have been delays in this project. The Parish Council have now taken the project on from the local Chamber of Commerce, yet progress has continued to be slow. In response to the letter in Appendix 2, the Parish Council have stated that they are in the process of submitting a planning application for the proposed signage and noticeboards. However, as of August 2016, no planning application has been submitted.

- 1.2.2 For both of these projects, we believe it is now appropriate to set a final deadline of the end of September and if sufficient progress has not been achieved by then, the funding would be allocated to other appropriate projects.
- 1.2.3 A number of initiatives at the local centres were completed at the time of the previous report to ERAB. However, the following initiatives have since been progressed:
- 1.2.4 **Martin Hardie Way (Tonbridge):** following on from the community clean-up, signage and resurfacing works, the manager at the Co-Op has been approached to allow a defibrillator to be located on their building and contractors have been contacted regarding installation.
- 1.2.5 **Wateringbury:** a defibrillator in the centre of Wateringbury was installed in March 2016.
- 1.2.6 **Plaxtol:** improvements to the village car park, including alterations to the entrance, have been approved and completed.

1.3 Support for Village Stores

- 1.3.1 In May 2016, officers had an exploratory meeting with Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) to find out about their work and the potential support they could offer to our Village Shops.
- 1.3.2 It is proposed that support be offered by ACRK's Kent Rural Retail Service to 20 retail businesses across Tonbridge & Malling Borough for support to maintain

custom, improve viability and introduce new services. The offer will specifically include 1-to-1 guidance and support from a specialist retail advisor on:

- business planning
- store layout
- product sourcing
- networking with other retailers
- diversification

1.3.3 A first stage will be for the specialist retail advisor to offer a diagnostic for the business (including a site visit at a time suitable for them in order to make it as convenient as possible) followed by a series of options for supporting the management of change in that retail operation – those options include telephone, email and up to two further on-site consultations.

1.3.4 It is expected that of the 20 retail businesses around 6 or 7 will take up the full range of services within the offer, with the others requiring various degrees of support.

1.3.5 The project will comprise three main costed elements:

Elements	Actions	Number of Days
Production and Promotion of Offer	- Mail out to shops - Email/Social Media with Parish Councils, Village Halls, TMBC Ward Councillors and shops.	1 day
Delivery of Support	- Diagnostic (including site visits) - Caseload with shops	11 days
Evaluation	- Production of report setting out findings, successes and areas for future action.	1 day
Total		13 days

1.3.6 ACRK has costed the initiative at £3,698.50 for a twelve month period, but will contribute 25% of the cost themselves through other funded programmes. As such, the contribution being sought from the Borough Council is **£2,773.87**. This cost can be accommodated through existing budgets.

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 programme is funded through existing budgets.

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 progress to date on the District and Local Retail Centres **BE NOTED**.

1.8.2 That a proposal to withdraw the funding for the current projects in Snodland and West Malling **BE APPROVED** should there be no evidence of tangible progress on either of these initiatives by the end of September 2016 at the latest.

1.8.3 That the Village Shops Initiative, as detailed in this report **BE APPROVED**.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and the Chief Executive confirm that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

None

contact: Jeremy Whittaker,
Economic Regeneration
Officer

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive



**TONBRIDGE & MALLING
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Nicolas Heslop

Leader of The Council

**Cabinet Member for
Economic Regeneration**

**Borough Councillor
for Cage Green Ward**

Robert Beswarick
Snodland Chamber of Commerce
c/o Hicks Estate Agents
30 High Street
Snodland
Kent ME6 5DF

11 July 2016

Dear Mr Beswarick,

HIGH STREET INNOVATION FUND – SNODLAND

At a meeting of the Borough Council's Economic Regeneration Advisory Board held on 17 July 2013, members resolved to engage five trading groups with the aim of supporting their local centres. All five were in the north of the Borough. They were Borough Green Chamber of Commerce, Snodland Chamber of Commerce, Martin Square Traders Association, West Malling Chamber of Commerce/Town Malling Day Ltd and Wrotham Traders.

Each centre was offered a grant of £7,500 and local traders were encouraged to put forward their project proposals for how this funding could best be spent. The vast majority of these initiatives and subsequent local centres initiatives across the borough have now been delivered.

Having not received an update from the Snodland Chamber of Commerce for some time, information was provided in December last year which indicated that progress was being made, and as a result of this, funding was sent to Snodland Town Council to cover payments for the work. A further request for information in May 2016 did result in a progress update which indicated that local contractors were being brought into the project in order to speed up delivery. However, since then, there has been no further information provided.

I am extremely concerned that the borough council has made this funding available for the benefit of traders in Snodland and to date there has been no delivery. I am very keen to understand why the project has not been delivered to date, and would welcome an update explaining when the project will be completed.

If this reassurance cannot be provided, then the borough council will have to consider withdrawing funding for this project.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Karen Sowten, Chief Executive of Snodland Town Council.

Yours sincerely,

NICOLAS HESLOP

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**TONBRIDGE & MALLING
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Nicolas Heslop
Leader of The Council
**Cabinet Member for
Economic Regeneration**
**Borough Councillor
for Cage Green Ward**

Mrs Trudy Dean
Chairman
West Malling Parish Council
9 High Street
West Malling
Kent ME19 6QH

7 June 2016

Dear Trudy,

HIGH STREET INNOVATION FUND – WEST MALLING

You may be aware of the High Street Innovation Fund that the Borough Council received from national Government in the 2012/13 financial year to support retail centres across the Borough.

At a meeting of the Borough Council's Economic Regeneration Advisory Board held on 17 July 2013, members resolved to engage five trading groups with the aim of supporting their local centres. All five were in the north of the Borough. They were Borough Green Chamber of Commerce, Snodland Chamber of Commerce, Martin Square Traders Association, West Malling Chamber of Commerce/Town Malling Day Ltd and Wrotham Traders.

Each centre was offered a grant of £7,500 and local traders were encouraged to put forward their project proposals for how this funding could best be spent.

John Balcombe, who held the economic regeneration portfolio at the Borough Council and Mark Raymond, the Borough Council's Corporate Services Manager met with the Chamber of Commerce soon after the allocation was agreed in September 2013.

When Jane Marshall was its Chairman, the Chamber was developing ideas about a Town business directory and promotional website. However, when she stepped down, there was no one to take this forward and I understand the Parish Council stepped in and decided to invest the grant on new directional signing.

The Borough Council has paid the grant out based on quotes back in April 2014, and has contacted the Parish Council subsequently for an update on progress, but to date, nothing seems to have been implemented.

I am very concerned that nearly three years after the grant was made available to West Malling, we have not seen evidence of the funding being utilised. I am very keen to understand what plans the Parish Council has to make use of the grant and the timescales for doing so.

Yours sincerely,

Nicolas Heslop

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

07 September 2016

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 INCUBATOR PROPOSAL

To set out proposals for the creation of a business incubator facility within vacant office space at the Gibson Building.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 A key economic objective for the Borough Council, as set out in the Economic Regeneration Strategy, is to provide support for new businesses wishing to set up and to help smaller, recently established, businesses to expand and grow. We work with our West Kent partners to provide 1-to-1 advice and support to these clients, free to those who need assistance. Over the past year, a total of 118 West Kent businesses have accessed this support, 40 of which were home-based, and 82% have indicated that they were satisfied/very satisfied with the quality of support provided.

1.2 Business Incubators

1.2.1 Most new start-up businesses begin as home-based enterprises. A major step for these new businesses is the decision to move out of the home environment and commit to leasing separate office accommodation. Many such businesses first look for business accommodation which is relatively cheap and with a flexible lease/licence which allow easy in/easy out terms without any longer term commitment.

1.2.2 To meet the needs of this market sector, there are various providers who offer 'business incubation' facilities aimed at fledgling businesses which provide flexible accommodation and sometimes with in-house support and shared back office facilities. There are many different types of incubation facilities across Kent, as illustrated in Appendix 1.

1.2.3 These facilities have proven to be very popular and often such facilities are quickly taken up when they come on to the market. Increasing such provision in the Borough would therefore assist in the delivery of our business support objectives.

1.3 Proposed New Business Incubator at the Gibson Building

- 1.3.1 A central part of the Council's Economic Regeneration Strategy is the facilitation of economic growth in the borough. Through the use of its own facilities, the Council has the opportunity to support the growth of small, local enterprises, not only through the provision of accommodation, but also through tying these businesses into a range of other business support that is provided locally.
- 1.3.2 In addition, as part of the Council's Savings and Transformation Strategy, we are keen to explore more effective use of our own property assets both to generate new income streams and achieve associated benefits. Most recently, the Leader's former office in the Gibson Building has been converted for business use and a local business that was formerly located at the River Walk offices in Tonbridge, has relocated there. This has enabled that business to remain trading in the Borough and, along with the relocation of the Citizens' Advice office to the Tonbridge Castle, has freed up the River Walk site for future disposal.
- 1.3.3 A further opportunity to explore additional new accommodation for local small businesses has arisen at the Gibson (West) Building following relocation of the Audit team. This relatively self-contained office area could, with some adjustments, provide office space for a small number of new and growing businesses on an open plan format. Depending on the size of the fledgling business, we estimate that this facility could provide desk space for up to 10 businesses (subject to final design).
- 1.3.4 As is evident in Appendix 1, there are already some incubation facilities in and around the borough. The potential incubator at the Gibson (West) Building would add value to these by being geared towards businesses that are currently home-based but are unable to commit straightaway to higher end facilities such as Regus or Churchill Square Business Centre, and as such could act as a useful 'stepping stone' to help local businesses grow.
- 1.3.5 Detailed quotes are still being sought, but we currently estimate an initial capital investment of around £20,000 will be required to establish the incubator facility to accommodate adjustments to the existing office space to meet disability access requirements, telephony and wi-fi installation and to enhance internal security/access. A structural engineer has been commissioned to draw up a scheme for disabled access, and exact costings for the construction of this will not be known until this initial work has been completed.
- 1.3.6 Taking into account monthly fees charged by other such facilities, including the new business hub recently installed at the civic offices of Maidstone Borough Council, we would suggest a monthly inclusive 'rental' of £80 on a per desk space and between £200-400 per month on a small office space. Assuming a 70% occupancy is achieved after Year 1, the initial capital costs could be offset after around 2 years.

1.3 Next Steps

- 1.3.1 Members of this Board are invited to consider in principle whether this proposal is something worthy of support. On the basis that this is forthcoming, we suggest that a further report, including detailed costings, be made to the Finance and Property Advisory Board to agree licence arrangements etc. and for a final report to be made to the Cabinet.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 To be considered by the Finance and Property Advisory Board.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 As set out above, an initial capital outlay will be required estimated at £20,000 with a potential payback period of around 2 years.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 The viability of the proposal depends upon attracting new businesses to the facility. Appropriate advertising and publicity will be undertaken to help achieve our occupancy targets at the end of year 1 along with engagement of other partners who might also signpost businesses to the facility. The proposed inclusive 'rental' will be set initially at a competitive rate relative to other such facilities to attract new occupants.

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 Gibson Building Business Incubator **BE SUPPORTED** in principle;
- 1.8.2 That, subject to support for this proposal, that engagement by the Economic Development Officer with key partners **BE SUPPORTED** in order to help promote take up of the new facility by local businesses.
- 1.8.3 That a further report to the Finance and Property Board **BE MADE** regarding proposed financial arrangements related to the new facility.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and the Chief Executive confirm 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
Chief Corporate Policy Officer
Jeremy Whittaker
Economic Regeneration

None




Officer

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive

APPENDIX 1: Examples across Kent

Name	Location	Description	Charging	Flexibility	Level of Success	Web Link	Image
The Factory Floor	Folkestone	<p>Hot desking or permanent desk space in an open plan environment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huge internet capacity and speed (500 MBPs 21cn BT fibre link) • Voice Over IP phone platform for cost effective calls • Deals for parking • Guaranteed free invites to monthly mentor events • Meeting room access (discounted rate) • Free lending-finance consultation • Free 1hr accountants consultation • Free 1/2hr solicitors consultation • Free 1hr marketing consultation • Introduction to Panel Business Banks • Free business planning consultation with approved local adviser • Unlimited tea and coffee 	£30 per week introductory offer (unclear after that)	Workspace reserved for solely flexible contracts	Relatively successful – was at 75% occupied recently. Issue has been availability of parking.	http://www.thefactoryfloorfolkestone.co.uk/home	
Regus	Kings Hill	A private, shared or open plan workspace with 24 hour access. A fully-equipped office space with the latest technology. Dedicated specialist support as well as business lounges, meeting rooms and video conferencing facilities.	One bill with all charges included	Can choose full or part time space for as short or long as needed.	High – only small amount of space available	http://www.regus.co.uk/locations/office-space/west-malling-kings-hill	
The Fruitworks	Canterbury	Geared towards creative/tech start-ups. 2,000 sq ft Victorian warehouse refurbished into co-working space with 20+ desks available on a hot-desking or resident basis. Access to superfast wi-fi, fully stocked beer fridge, pool table, ping-pong table and a 100" gaming screen. Also meeting room for 4-6 people.	£60 per month for 2 days a week access, going up to £200 per month for unlimited access. (£144 per year if only using it as a virtual office)	No deposit or contract, just a month to month membership	High – currently has 62 members.	http://fruitworks.co/	

APPENDIX 1: Examples across Kent

Churchill Square Business Centre	Kings Hill	<p>Individual offices geared towards established small businesses with the following additional support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone answering • Administrative support • Hi-Speed Internet • AV equipment available to hire • Meeting and conference facilities • Reception services • Buildings excellently maintained • Printing and postal services <p>NB No hot desking facility offered.</p>	Starting from £285 per month	Monthly terms on easy-in easy-out licences or longer as required	Successful – currently 3 small offices available.	http://www.apitalspace.co.uk/Kings-Hill/Churchill-Square-Business-Centre	
Riverside Business Centre	Tonbridge	49 small individual offices with uncontended broadband access, communal kitchen, shower facilities, staffed reception, IT support and 24/7 access to the building.	Start from £370 per month	Flexible licence agreements	Fully Occupied	http://www.riversidebusinesscentre.co.uk/	
Business Terrace	Maidstone	<p>A mixture of hot-desking and office space in Maidstone Town Centre.</p> <p>“With its business-lounge atmosphere and 100MB Wi-Fi throughout, The Business Terrace provides a dynamic, inspiring and highly supportive environment where you can chat, connect and collaborate comfortably in a relaxed, professional environment over a great cup of coffee”</p>	<p>Offices 2 person office - £210 per month 3 person office - £390 per month 4 person office - £672 per month</p> <p>Hot-desking £48 per month for 30 hours £75 per month for 50 hours (& 2 hours of meeting room) £144 per month for 100 hours (& 5 hours of meeting room) £195 per month - unlimited use.</p>	Easy in, Easy out terms and no long contracts.	Fully occupied	https://www.businessinmaidstone.co.uk/the-business-terrace/	

APPENDIX 1: Examples across Kent

			Prices are fully inclusive.				
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Conclusions from Comparators:

- Fully inclusive pricing structure simplifies costs.
- Short term contracts/licence arrangements allow for flexibility.
- Many offer up a range of space
- Scope for offering a less expensive/less resource intensive (for TMBC) venue for start-ups – many offer admin support, but for such a small venue this would be uneconomical.
- High quality broadband is a strong selling point.

Advantages as a business hub:

- Location (good rental levels achieved in the area and image of Kings Hill)
- Parking is available (could be priced into the rental)
- Business Address

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

07 September 2016

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 UPDATE ON PRIORITIES FOR 2016/17

This report provides an update on the Economic Regeneration priorities for 2016/17 as agreed in Report ERG 16/5.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 At the Economic Regeneration Advisory Board in February 2016, it was agreed that the priorities for 2016/17 would be as follows:

- Subject to funding, to help co-ordinate submissions to the Local Growth Fund Round 3 for infrastructure projects, including the Leigh Flood Storage Area.
- To work with Kent County Council to effectively market and promote the ESCALATE Programme in the Borough once it becomes operational.
- In an effort to address the small rise in ESA clients during 2015, to place a greater focus on work readiness initiatives – specifically expanding on the Jobs and Training Fairs and working with Circle Housing Russet on Jobs Clubs.
- To promote the new LEADER Programme to Tonbridge & Malling businesses and to co-ordinate business advice for prospective applicants.
- To build upon the existing town and retail centres activity, specifically through further phases of the Tonbridge Town Centre public realm works and re-engaging with businesses in the district centres.
- To further develop the skills development discussions in the Borough and feed these in to the West Kent Partnership to create a skills action plan.
- To work with Kent County Council in addressing remaining broadband issues and mobile blackspots in the Borough.

1.1.2 Over the course of the last 6 months, a number of these priorities have seen strong progress, with others seeing some progress but requiring further work.

1.2 Update on Priorities

1.2.1 **Local Growth Fund Round 3:** This area has been the main work priority over the past 6 months, given the pressing need to meet funding deadlines.

- 1.2.2 At the Economic Regeneration Advisory Board meeting on 09 September 2015, Report ERG 15/19 provided information on West Kent Priorities. It was agreed that the transformational priorities set out in the West Kent Priorities for Economic Growth document be endorsed and the scheme for enhanced capacity to the Leigh Flood Storage Area and flooding works at East Peckham be identified as Tonbridge and Malling's highest priority.
- 1.2.3 On 22 March 2016, the Communities Secretary announced the launch of the Local Growth Fund Round 3 – a £1.8 billion national pot of funding to support projects that boost local economic growth and create jobs.
- 1.2.4 Working closely with the Environment Agency and Kent County Council, the borough council has taken the lead in developing a strong bid for the Leigh Flood Storage Area (including Hildenborough) and East Peckham Flood Alleviation Scheme. Just over £4.5m has been requested from this fund to increase the capacity of the flood defences, not only protecting existing homes and businesses, but also unlocking new sites for new homes and jobs.
- 1.2.5 Indeed, it is estimated that this investment (as part of a scheme costing £24.7m) will deliver the following:
- Completion of East Peckham Defences by April 2019
 - Completion of Leigh Flood Storage Area (including Hildenborough) works by July 2022

Leading to:

- 2,308 homes defended from the 1 in 100 year event by 2022
 - 283 businesses defended from the 1 in 100 year event by 2022
 - 200 homes completed by 2022 (1,950 new homes completed by 2031)*
 - 70 direct jobs created and safeguarded by 2022
 - 500 associated jobs created by 2022 (2,900 new jobs created on unlocked employment sites by 2031)*
 - 2.5ha of new employment land by 2022 (Over 13ha of new employment land in use by 2031)*
- 1.2.6 In addition, the borough council has also supported NIAB EMR in the submission of a bid which supports the other transformational priority in the borough – the creation of a biotech hub at East Malling. The submission asks for just over £6m to build new industry standard greenhouses, an energy centre and laboratories in order to help expand their horticultural research. This investment would lead to:
- Support for more than 30 companies
 - The launch of 8 new fruit varieties
 - The introduction of 1 new crop to the UK
 - 4 new engineering products being supported to market

- 4 new chemical or bio products being supported to market
- 25 trials to support product development
- 25 new innovative projects.

Using

- 3,154m2 of state of the art facilities created by 2019
- 25 FTE high skilled jobs created by 2019
- 87 FTE high skilled jobs safeguarded by 2019

To Catalyse:

- 950 indirect jobs created nationally, with the largest impact in the South East by 2025
- 7,500 indirect jobs safeguarded in Kent in horticultural businesses by 2025
- £47m boost to industry per annum by 2025

1.2.7 At the time of writing this report, both of these bids have so far gone through the following process so far:

Stage in Process	Timescale
Submission of outline project proposal	05 May 2016
Submission of draft business case	02 June 2016
Kent & Medway Economic Partnership prioritisation – with only prioritised business cases proceed to full business case.	14 June 2016
Submission of finalised business cases	22 June 2016
Following an invitation by the West Kent Partnership, a visit by the South East LEP Chair, Christian Brodie, and other board members to West Kent to get a better understanding of our priorities.	08 July 2016
Independent technical appraisal of business cases completed.	11 July 2016
South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) prioritisation of all priority bids from Kent & Medway, East Sussex and Essex.	15 July 2016
Submission of any final minor amendments to business cases.	20 July 2016
All business cases submitted by SELEP to Central Government.	28 July 2016

1.2.8 In addition to inviting the Chairman of the South East LEP to come and see our priorities, the Borough Council has also ensured that our local MP and

Government Ministers have a good understanding of potential impacts of these projects (See Appendices 1 and 2).

1.2.9 Central Government will notify the South East LEP regarding successful funding awards in advance of the Autumn Statement in December 2016.

1.2.10 **ESCALATE Programme:** Having distributed £20 million of 0% loans to 70 businesses across parts of Kent, East Sussex and Thurrock, and creating over 2,300 jobs, the ESCALATE Programme closed in November 2014. The programme, or a similar 0% loan scheme, was expected to re-open in Spring 2016, however the pay back of loans to Kent County Council was slower than expected and as such this has been delayed.

1.2.11 However, in preparation for the new programme, consultants Regeneris were commissioned by Kent County Council to undertake an assessment of the demand for financial instruments in Kent and Medway in order to inform future strategy on how best to use recycled funds. This report was completed in July 2016, with the re-launch of a 0% loan scheme scheduled for November 2016.

1.2.12 **Work Readiness Initiatives:** the Borough Council has been working closely with JobCentre Plus, Housing Associations and adjoining Local Authorities to deliver more Jobs and Training Fairs in order to help break down barriers between job seekers and local businesses and training providers, and helping to boost confidence. The next event in the series is a West Kent Jobs and Training Fair which will take place on 15 September in Tunbridge Wells, a further Jobs and Training Fair is scheduled for March 2017 in Tonbridge.

However, despite limited resources, it is clear that there are opportunities to do more in this area, especially in partnership with the Skills and Employability Team at Kent County Council.

1.2.13 **LEADER Programme:** through the West Kent Business Advice and Support Programme, external funding has been used to provide businesses that are looking to apply for LEADER grants with extra support in filling out the application forms. This support came about as a direct result of the fact that the application process has evolved to become more difficult for businesses to understand. To date 6 businesses have taken advantage of this support.

In addition, the borough council has helped to promote the scheme through the dissemination of flyers, links on the TMBC website and through social media.

As the LEADER Programme is funded through EU finance, there is currently a moratorium on the allocation of grants until the implications of the United Kingdom leaving the EU are clearer.

1.2.14 **Town and Retail Centres Activity:** over the past 6 months the borough council has supported the following activities:

- Tonbridge Town Centre – building upon Phase 1 of the High Street works, which were completed in June 2016, work is now underway on the designs for River Walk and Tonbridge Station forecourt.
- District Centres – support is ongoing to Snodland, West Malling and Quarry Hill in the development of their initiatives.
- Local Centres Schemes – most of these have now been substantially completed.

1.2.15 **Skills Action Plan:** A draft skills action plan has now been produced which includes the following initiatives:

- Engagement with Guilds to help tackle negative perceptions of some sectors amongst young people.
- Work on Jobs and Training Fairs, Skills Festivals and Jobs Clubs.
- Research into Higher Education Provision in West Kent
- Development of softer skills, through engagements with schools and colleges on interview programmes.

This action plan is scheduled to be presented to the Tonbridge & Malling Local Strategic Partnership on 16 September 2016.

1.2.16 **Broadband Issues:** The implementation of Superfast broadband across Kent is being led by Kent County Council, with the support of the borough and district councils. Over the past 6 months, the borough council has provided support on the following issues:

- Complaints of slow broadband speeds in **Kings Hill** – having been raised with Kent County Council, in this instance it proved to be that the Digital Subscriber Line checker was not showing that a ‘fibre to the cabinet’ (FTTC) service was available when the premises were with 500m of a cabinet. This was subsequently rectified by BT and a FTTC solution offered.
- Complaints of slow broadband speeds in **Ivy Hatch** – initially Gigaclear stated that they would be delivering ‘fibre to the premises’ (FTTP) to this area and as such, because of this, it was demonstrated that this area was not subject to market failure and would therefore not benefit from public sector intervention. As such, the fibre upgrade for Plaxtol PCP3 (which serves Ivy Hatch) was not included in the KCC programme.

Unfortunately, Gigaclear subsequently announced that they will not be deploying their FTTP solution in Ivy Hatch because they have encountered significant costs in the locality (specifically through Stone Street) and they cannot afford to complete the network they were intending to build. This has left Ivy Hatch in limbo in that they are not being dealt with by Gigaclear and they are not included in our BT contracts.

Discussions are ongoing between KCC and BDUK to allow BT to consider modelling this area for inclusion, and this would require a formal approval from Central Government. At present funding is all committed for upgrades in other areas, however this could possibly change as the current contract develops, potentially allowing some scope to deliver an upgrade in the future.

1.3 Legal Implications

1.3.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.4.1 The programme is funded through existing budgets.

1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 Not applicable.

1.6 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:

None

contact: Jeremy Whittaker,
Economic Regeneration
Officer

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive



**TONBRIDGE & MALLING
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Nicolas Heslop

Leader of The Council

**Cabinet Member for
Economic Regeneration**

**Borough Councillor
for Cage Green Ward**

Tom Tugendhat MBE, MP
House of Commons
Westminster
London
SW1A 0AA

13 July 2016

Dear Tom,

Local Growth Fund Round 3

I wanted to make you aware of the bids submitted to the Local Growth Fund, submitted by the Borough Council in partnership with other key organisations.

In line with our strategic priorities, submitted business cases for the increased capacity of flood defences at Leigh, Hildenborough and East Peckham and the creation of a Biotech Hub at NIAB EMR in East Malling have been put forward to the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership.

The SELEP Accountability Board will receive a technical prioritised list for consideration at a meeting this Friday (15th July 2016). The good news for Tonbridge and Malling is that the Leigh Flood Storage Area & East Peckham business case has been ranked as the 13th priority for SELEP, and the NIAB EMR Biotech Hub has been ranked as the 20th priority for SELEP. I must point out that this is still subject to change, as the SELEP Chairman, 3 SELEP Vice Chairs, Upper Tier Authority Leaders and Federated Board chairs will be asked to endorse the proposed list. Furthermore, if we assume that SELEP might get about £180M, then our two schemes are well above the cut off and have a good chance of being funded.

I hope you would be prepared to speak up for both submissions and thought it would be helpful to provide an overview of each project:

Leigh Flood Storage Area and works to East Peckham:

As you are aware, the Borough Council is at a key stage in the development of the Local Plan. Work is being undertaken to identify a supply of sites that will meet the housing and employment needs of the borough up to 2031. However, there are significant parts of the borough that fall within the flood zone and, without any new works being undertaken, will not only continue to put existing homes and businesses at risk but also prevent sites coming forward for much needed new development growth in strategically important areas.

An illustration of the very real need for this investment is the flooding that took place during 2013/14. This event followed on from previous flooding events in 1947, 1958, 1960, 1963, 1968, 1974, 1979, and 2000. During 2013/14, 311 homes and over 110 businesses suffered from direct flooding, and large areas of countryside became submerged. It is only a matter of time before another flooding event takes place in the area, causing more damage, and continuing to limit any growth potential.

Urgent work is therefore needed to increase the capacity of the storage areas across the catchment and to undertake works at East Peckham in order to achieve greater protection for both existing homes and businesses and to enable new residential and commercial development to take place to meet the objectively assessed need of the area and stimulate sustainable economic growth.

The proposal from TMBC, KCC and the Environment Agency is that Government provide capital funding of just over £4.5m for investment in the flood defences. This investment will be match-funded by DEFRA, KCC, TMBC and private landowners and businesses.

The outputs proposed are:

- Completion of East Peckham Defences by April 2019
- Completion of Leigh Flood Storage Area works by July 2022
- 2,308 homes defended from the 1 in 100 year event by 2022
- 283 businesses defended from the 1 in 100 year event by 2022
- 200 homes completed by 2022 (1,950 new homes completed by 2031)*
- 70 direct jobs created and safeguarded by 2022
- 500 associated jobs created by 2022 (2,900 new jobs created on unlocked employment sites by 2031)*
- 2.5ha of new employment land by 2022 (Over 13ha of new employment land in use by 2031)*

*Figures for the period up to 2031 have been provided to illustrate the considerable beneficial impact the scheme would potentially have on the delivery of the emerging Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan.

NIAB EMR Biotech Hub:

You will know that East Malling was created by the regional fruit industry to provide essential R&D and remains an essential part of the sustainable economic success in the regional fruit industry and represents the key asset necessary for industry to diversify into high value markets in food and drink.

The need for R&D and new product development continues to accelerate. Downward pressure on margins from retailers, increased costs of labour, withdrawal of chemical defences and international competition all require improved productivity together with an increased focus on food security and health. The potential for fresh fruit, bio-tech and engineering products to contribute to GVA and the potential for export growth represent a very real opportunity. In all these areas NIAB EMR is the key catalyst and provides capability available to the industry necessary to seize the opportunity for significant economic growth through product and market innovation.

Despite the key role of R&D, there is a fundamental weakness in the UK economy in bridging the gap between fundamental research and the translation of that research into commercial business propositions. NIAB EMR are addressing this market failure in the biotech sector but growth of NIAB EMR's services is constrained by a lack of funding for capital investment, specifically greenhouse capacity and infrastructure, with a particular need for a modern greenhouse and energy centre that is up to the standard currently used by growers.

If such infrastructure was available, it is estimated that over a five year period an additional £2.5 million of R&D projects and services to businesses could be delivered, which will translate into improvements in productivity and development of new products amounting to some £47 million. This would, in turn, be associated with a significant uplift in industry profitability that would provide the basis for further investment by the industry.

This investment in R&D in the soft and top fruit industry at East Malling will greatly complement NIAB EMR's work in Cambridge – firstly, there is a strong concentration of soft and top fruit producers in Kent, making East Malling ideally placed to support the industry and secondly, the work in Cambridge is very much focussed on grain crops in response to the cluster of arable businesses located within that region.

The following has been submitted by EMR/NIAB in support of the business case:

"Whilst the acquisition by Cambridge-based NIAB is a much needed step that offers economies of scale, it is within Kent that the fruit and perennial crops industry is centred and relevant research and development would have to be undertaken. Over 50% of the UK's fruit production is in Kent and the south-east – much of it within a 30 mile radius of East Malling. The majority of the support businesses for the sector, including import/export organisations and the fresh produce ports, are similarly primarily located in the same area – meaning that the majority of the jobs created would be in Kent and the south-east.

It would be far from preferable to have an industry-facing centre of fruit and perennial crops based up in Cambridge, which is why NIAB have invested in the acquisition of East Malling, rather than establishing a new centre at the head office"

The proposal is that Government provide capital funding of just over £6m for investment in capital equipment at NIAB EMR, that will be match-funded by significant private sector investment by Driscolls Genetics.

The outputs proposed are:

- More than 30 companies supported in NPD or improved productivity
- 8 new fruit varieties launched with 2 subject to export
- 1 new crop introduced to the UK with EMS support
- 4 new engineering products supported to market
- 4 new chemical or bio products supported to market
- 25 trials to support product
- 25 innovative projects.

Using

- 3,154m2 of state of the art facilities created by 2019
- 25 FTE high skilled jobs created by 2019
- 87 FTE high skilled jobs safeguarded by 2019

To Catalyse:

- 950 indirect jobs created nationally, with the largest impact in the South East by 2025
- 7,500 indirect jobs safeguarded in Kent in horticultural businesses by 2025
- £47m boost to industry per annum by 2025

I apologise for such a detailed letter but trust it provides an informative explanation of both schemes.

NICOLAS HESLOP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

1 August 2016

Andrew Percy MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department for Communities and Local Government
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Dear Andrew,

As part of the Local Growth Fund Round 3 submissions to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, two projects in my constituency have been submitted; first, the Leigh Flood Storage Area (including Hildenborough) and works to the East Peckham scheme, and second, the NIAB East Malling Research Biotech Hub. I would like to emphasise how important both are to the community in Tonbridge and Malling.

At Christmas 2013, Tonbridge, Hildenborough, East Peckham and many other smaller communities were severely impacted by flooding when the River Medway and its tributaries burst their banks. Houses had to be evacuated and villages became cut off during the festive season. Over two and a half years later, we are still seeing the consequences with many residents unable to get sufficient insurance, and others still rebuilding their homes and lives.

Securing sufficient flood mitigation has become a priority for the local community, and should funding be forthcoming this will contribute significantly towards ensuring that some more dependable solutions can be put in place. This area has a history of flooding over the past few decades making it absolutely vital that urgent work take place to invest to increase storage capacity and prevent it happening again. As Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council embarks on its Local Plan process, many sites for allocation lie on the flood plain and without these measures going ahead in full, growth in the area will be exceedingly difficult.

In the Malling area, East Malling Research (EMR) provides essential research and development for the regional fruit industry and to agriculture across the world. The need for this scientific support will only continue to grow with margins from retailers narrowing, and labour costs increasing. Internationally, the centre is a renowned hub for expertise and as both prestige and an important knowledge resource to the UK. As productivity must improve, so must product development with the potential for fresh fruit, biotech and engineering products an opportunity for export growth.

Member of Parliament for Tonbridge and Malling

130 Vale Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1SP

01732 441 563 - tom.tugendhat.mp@parliament.uk - www.tomtugendhat.org.uk



NIAB EMR's growth potential is constrained by a lack of funding for capital investment. They address the weakness in the national economy in bridging the gap between fundamental research and commercial business propositions. Funding for capital infrastructure would deliver an additional £2.5 million in research and development products and services to businesses. Investment here in East Malling would complement NIAB EMR's work in Cambridge as there is a strong concentration of fruit growers in Kent, making East Malling ideally located to support the industry with the work in Cambridge primarily focused on grain crops due to the cluster of arable businesses in the region.

I hope you understand the importance of both these schemes to the Kent economy, and hope that they will both be looked upon favourably. They are essential to the economic security of our community and offer a major opportunity for further growth.

Best wishes,

Tom Tugendhat

TOM TUGENDHAT

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

07 September 2016

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 WEST KENT PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

To receive the minutes of the recent meeting of the West Kent Partnership and to outline a recent visit of the Chairman of SELEP to West Kent.

1.1 West Kent Partnership

1.1.1 The minutes of the West Kent Partnership meeting held on 22nd July are attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

1.1.2 The meeting focused on the following key issues:

- Skills and recruitment issues for West Kent with presentations from the Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone NHS Trust and Hadlow College
- Business support including growth hub recommissioning now underway and a report on the successful West Kent business support programme (detailed elsewhere on this agenda)
- Post Brexit issues for local businesses and partners
- Feedback from three local businesses who had received loan support from the West Kent 'Escalate' programme and the positive effects these have had on business growth.

1.2 SELEP Visit to West Kent

1.2.1 The Chairman of SELEP, Christian Brodie, was invited to visit key sites in West Kent and the visit took place on 8th July 2016. The Chairman of the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership, Geoff Miles, also attended. The purpose of the visit was showcase key economic regeneration opportunities in West Kent to link with local bids submitted to the third round of the Local Growth Fund (dealt with in a separate item on this agenda).

1.2.2 The visit involved engagement with a number of key local partners and included the following locations:

- NIAB-EMR, East Malling – investment proposals
- Tonbridge Town Centre - regeneration
- Swanley Town Centre - regeneration
- Fort Halstead – key location for growth
- North Farm, Tunbridge Wells – transport/access issues
- Tunbridge Wells town centre – major development opportunities.

1.2.3 Attached as Appendix 2 to this report is a letter from the SELEP Chairman to the the West Kent Partnership Chairman which demonstrates the overall success of the visit.

contact: Mark Raymond

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive

West Kent Partnership Meeting – 22 July 2016

MINUTES

Present

Nicolas Heslop, TMBC, Chair
 Richard Hayden, M&TW NHS Trust
 David Joyner, KCC
 Hilary Smith, TWBC
 Roddy Hogarth, SDC
 Jon Regan, Hugh Lowe Farms
 Henry Warde, Squerryes
 Mark Raymond, TMBC
 Brian Luker, TMBC
 Ross Gill, KCC
 Jane March, TWBC
 Peter Fleming, SDC
 Mark Dance, KCC
 Jo Fowler, Hadlow Group
 Cath Goodall, BEIS
 Tudor Price, KICC
 Wendy Wood, WKP

Guests

Susan Berdo, KCC
 Jay Atkins, Core Health & Leisure
 Clive Dean, Water Process Solutions
 Claire Day, Water Process Solutions
 Chris Seale, Chimera Climbing
 Andre Hedger, Chimera Climbing

Apologies

Pav Ramewal, SDC
 Sarah Nurden, KMEP
 Paul Hannan, Hadlow Group
 Lesley Bowles, SDC
 Robin Cooper, SDC
 Jonathan MacDonald, TWBC
 David Candlin, TWBC
 William Benson, TWBC
 Adam Bryan, SELEP
 Roger House, NCMB
 Julia Chapman, Kent Police
 Julie Beilby, TMBC

1	<p>Round table introductions took place and the Chairman welcomed guests and new Partner attenders to the meeting.</p> <p>Minutes and Matters Arising April 22 Meeting</p> <p>Item 2 – SELEP Tour - The Chairman updated Partners on the very successful day long tour of West Kent undertaken by Christian Brody, Chairman of SELEP. The tour provided an opportunity to showcase locations for growth in the area. Thanks were recorded to Mark Raymond for the excellent organisation and execution.</p> <p>Item 3 – KMEP – LGF3 submissions have now been made – covered at item 8 on Agenda. WKP’s first regular update was provided to June meeting and West Kent officers now have a place</p>	
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2

Partner Perspective – Richard Hayden, Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust

Richard gave a brief update on the Trust's five year workforce strategy behind which lies a detailed work programme across the following areas: recruitment and retention, temporary staffing, Culture (including staff engagement), staff health and wellbeing, education and equality & diversity. He commented that as with every organisation, new challenges arise daily that impact on the workforce for example Brexit.

Richard touched briefly on the financial special measures announced the day before and outlined the background. Richard explained that the Trust is working closely with NHSI to support the development and delivery of financial efficiency schemes, and are accelerating their implementation to reduce the Trust's expected year-end deficit for 2016/17. A plan is in place and being delivered to make efficiency savings of £23 million, however this still leaves the Trust with a gap of a further £23 million between its income and expenditure to address. The Trust's work with NHSI will look at ways to close this gap and reduce the Trust's deficit beyond what it has already planned and started to deliver.

Richard highlighted that one of the biggest challenges has been around recruitment and over the past year it has been necessary to recruit from overseas as a result of the national shortages within certain staff groups and to ensure that we promote both the Trust and Kent as a great place to live and work.

Training plays a key role and this is ever more challenging with reduction in central budgets. The apprenticeship levy with high targets for public sector organisations brings opportunities to focus more on bringing young people into the National Health Service and new pathways into some of the professions will be needed. Promoting the various career opportunities to young people in schools is vital to recruitment and a dedicated resource is now in place to deliver this.

The Trust is exploring different options to communicate with staff and assist with work-life balance to aid in staff retention and promoting the organisation as a good place to work.

Discussion followed on several issues:

Affordability of housing as an issue in staff recruitment and retention - London weighting being payable in areas with similarly high housing costs does impact on recruitment. The Trust has been able to provide temporary accommodation for overseas nurses as part of a recruitment package although staff often transition quickly into housing locally.

Supply Chain collaboration – The Trust seeks to deliver cost efficiencies as is keen to collaborate where possible to drive further cost reductions. KICC have found that where there is a forum available for a supply base ways to reduce costs can often be found rather than lose a customer.

	<p>Apprenticeship Levy –It will be challenging to meet targets but will be collaborating with neighbouring health organisations and developing plans.</p>	
3	<p>Partner perspective – Hadlow Group</p> <p>Full destination data will be presented at the October WKP meeting. However, Jo presented some headline figures for last year for Hadlow College where 95% of students progressed into further learning, higher education or work.</p> <p>The Hadlow Group are experiencing late applications for some courses but those at risk are now viable. This included Horticulture at Hadlow College and Health and Social Care and Early Years at West Kent College. Late applications is a trend in Kent, rather than elsewhere, with year 11’s leaving decisions on future routes until after GCSEs. This highlights the need to actively promote progression pathways to students and potential students.</p>	
4	<p>Business Support</p> <p>West Kent Business Support Programme</p> <p>Wendy delivered an overview of the current programme which has been very successful in finding innovative routes to deliver support to businesses in West Kent using Growth Hub Local Supplementary Funds.</p> <p>Partners endorsed the value of the programme and the creative approach to delivery to different sectors in West Kent.</p>	
5	<p>Growth Hub – Ross Gill, KCC</p> <p>Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce have been delivering a pilot Growth Hub service in Kent and Medway as part of the SELEP Growth Hub network. The Growth Hub concept is being delivered nationally to signpost businesses to support. Different models have been developed across the country but all have to meet certain Government criteria</p> <p>Ross explained that a tendering process for the next Contract is now underway, with a specification workshop completed, an external firm, EBS retained to manage the specification and a timetable agreed for tendering which would see a two year contract awarded in November.</p> <p>Tudor was invited to comment on the pilot programme and observed that managing expectations has been challenging given the small budget. He welcomed the consultation process for the new contract as a way of managing those expectations and could envisage a future model where the Growth Hub could operate as a strategic partner with various business support models from the private sector. He cautioned that from 2018 Growth Hubs will need to be sustainable and that this was a challenge.</p>	

<p>6</p>	<p>Government Programmes – Cath Goodall, Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)</p> <p>Given the recent departmental changes, Cath gave a generic update on Government objectives rather than specific programmes which could be subject to change.</p> <p>Government policy has a focus on Growth Hubs with local needs being met at a local level. Growth Hubs also have a role as a gateway to innovation products, tax incentives etc. Sustainability going forward is a key issue and any bids for ERDF funds will still be considered as EU membership still in force.</p> <p>Post- Referendum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKTI have written to all LEPs encouraging collaborative working with inward investors to retain investment in the UK • Greg Clark heads up the new BEIS department and has a strong interest in place and locality • Local Growth Fund continues to operate as before, bids in for end of July for Round 3 which announcements around the time of the Autumn statement • Skills has moved across from the former BIS to become part of education <p>There was discussion around the need to manage the period between Government programmes so that momentum isn't lost with a change of policy and direction. For example, planning for business data to be transferred from one programme to another without compromising data protection and utilising alumni businesses as advocates/mentors in the future.</p> <p>In the context of European funding programmes, Cath agreed to take back a question regarding ownership of intellectual property and tangible assets that are written down over a 5 year period. Who would own the property should the programmes be terminated before the 5 years have expired – UK or Europe? Tudor also agreed to raise with European committees.</p>	
<p>7</p>	<p>Escalate – Susan Berdo, KCC</p> <p>The Chairman welcomed Susan and the 3 businesses attending who had been recipients of Escalate funding. Susan gave an overview of what Escalate achieved and introduced the Innovation Investment Loan which has a short window opening in August. The powerpoint is attached to the Minutes.</p> <p>Discussion followed and various points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Kent bids to Escalate tend to be smaller than elsewhere in the Escalate area and Kent generally – a request was made that for the Innovation Investment Loan and other finance programmes the minimum level of loan was kept at a level which would make it accessible to West Kent businesses • Escalate loans didn't require a security process to be undertaken to protect the 	

investment. This had both pros and cons but for businesses gave them more flexibility. It didn't seem to impact on bad debts adversely.

- There are over a 100 expressions of interest across Escalate and Tiger so demand for any new finance scheme – ie Innovation Investment Loan, will be high. Concern was expressed about the management of expectations with the programme being widely promoted with such a short application window and limited funds

Presentations were then received from the 3 guest businesses who were all able to demonstrate the considerable benefit to their business that Escalate funding had delivered and the lessons learned from their Escalate journey

Chimera, Tunbridge Wells – Chris Searle and Andre Hedger

- Without the funding wouldn't have been so successful so quickly
- Created 7 full time, 5 part time and 2 freelance jobs
- Focus on start up imperatives – fitting out, business organisation etc – would have benefitted from support so that marketing the businesses was addressed at the outset

Core Health and Leisure, Maidstone – Jay Atkins

- Support and signposting received very early on from KICC
- Incredible support from Escalate team, particularly Sue, to not lose heart when difficulties securing a suitable property and help in introducing to networks
- Declined by every high street bank at least 3 times – having Escalate commitment gave credibility and enabled negotiation with potential landlord who undertook property upgrade

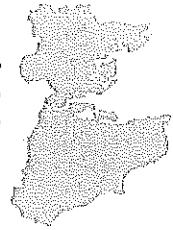
Water Process Solutions, Tonbridge & Malling – Clive Dean and Claire Day

- Used local suppliers since setting up premises, established good local networks
- Escalate less demanding in terms of due diligence than expected, considering loan was unsecured
- Need for working capital restricting growth – KCC finance schemes don't lend working capital. Greater and faster growth could be achieved if more materials can be bought to manufacture

The Chairman thanked the businesses for their time and their insights and identified several actions following their presentations

- Future finance schemes to consider how they can signpost successful applicants to practical business support such as marketing
- Future finance schemes to consider financing working capital for manufacturers if produces greater and sustainable growth
- Business presentations invaluable in connecting Partners with businesses on ground and helping to identify ways in which WKP can support – Guest

	businesses relevant to meeting theme to be part of meetings going forward.	
8	Update - KMEP The paper from Sarah was noted.	
9	Update – West Kent Priorities Partners noted the paper. David Joyner explained that the work of the infrastructure and transport sub group includes adding value through collaborative working on major issues such as congestion busting and public transport integration initiatives such as smart ticketing.	
10	AOB – there was no other business	
11	Dates of Next Meetings – email invitations for 2017 will be sent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday 21 October, 2016 – Inward Investment • Friday 27 January, 2017 • Friday 28 April, 2017 • Friday 21 July, 2017 • Friday 20 October, 2017 	



LEP Secretariat
c/o Essex County Council
D208, County Hall
Market Road
Chelmsford
CM1 1LX

9th August 2016

Nicolas Heslop
Leader of the Council
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
Gibson Building
Gibson Drive
Kings Hill
ME19 4LZ

Dear Nick

Please let me take this opportunity to thank you for organising my valuable trip to West Kent a couple of weeks ago and for sending on to me your priority areas for growth. Both things will be very valuable to me and to my team as the South East LEP moves forward.

I am very keen to keep very open lines of engagement with all Leaders across the area, so please do not hesitate to contact me or the South East LEP team at any point.

Thank you again and I look forward to continuing to work with you and ensuring that we play our part in enabling growth in West Kent.

Yours sincerely,

Christian Brodie
South East LEP Chair

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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.

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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**

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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.

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