

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL



EXECUTIVE SERVICES

Chief Executive

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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

24 May 2018

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 Monday, 4th June, 2018 commencing at 7.30 pm

Yours faithfully

JULIE BEILBY

Chief Executive

A G E N D A

PART 1 - PUBLIC

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To confirm as a correct record the Notes of the meeting of the Economic Regeneration Advisory Board held on 21 February 2018

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5. West Kent Priorities for Economic Growth 17 - 20

The report sets out initial thoughts on the refresh of the West Kent Priorities for Economic Growth Strategy and seeks views on future priorities.

6. Visit Kent Service Level Agreement 2018 21 - 24

The report provides information on the current Service Level Agreement with Visit Kent and sets out proposals for 2018/19.

7. Business Rates Retention Pilot - Housing and Commercial Growth Fund 25 - 28

The report provides an update on the Business Rates Retention Pilot and sets out details of possible initiatives which could be funded via the housing and commercial growth fund element.

Matters submitted for Information

8. West Kent Partnership - Minutes 29 - 36

The Minutes of the meeting of the West Kent Partnership held on 27 April 2018 are attached for information.

9. Urgent Items 37 - 38

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

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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.

PART 2 - PRIVATE

11. Urgent Items

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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 R P Betts (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr T Bishop
Cllr J L Botten
Cllr T I B Cannon
Cllr R W Dalton
Cllr S M Hammond
Cllr R D Lancaster
Cllr Mrs S L Luck

Cllr L J O'Toole
Cllr Miss J L Sergison
Cllr Miss S O Shrubsole
Cllr C P Smith
Cllr F G Tombolis
Cllr B W Walker
Cllr T C Walker

Apologies for absence

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Declarations of interest

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TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ECONOMIC REGENERATION ADVISORY BOARD

Wednesday, 21st February, 2018

Present: Cllr B J Luker (Chairman), Cllr F G Tombolis (Vice-Chairman), Cllr R P Betts, Cllr T Bishop, Cllr T I B Cannon, Cllr L J O'Toole, Cllr Miss J L Sergison, Cllr C P Smith and Cllr T C Walker

Councillors Mrs J A Anderson, M A Coffin, O C Baldock, P F Bolt, N J Heslop and M R Rhodes were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M C Base, J L Botten, S R J Jessel, S M King, R D Lancaster, Mrs S L Luck and B W Walker

ERG 18/1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Coffin declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest on the Update on the Borough Economic Regeneration Strategy Action Plan for 2017/18 and Priorities for 2018/19 on the grounds that his business had applied for LEADER funding which was referenced in the report. He withdrew from the meeting during discussion of this item to avoid any potential conflict.

ERG 18/2 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the notes of the meeting of the Economic Regeneration Advisory Board held on 6 September 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

ERG 18/3 UPDATE ON THE BOROUGH ECONOMIC REGENERATION STRATEGY ACTION PLAN FOR 2017/18 AND PRIORITIES FOR 2018/19

Decision Notice D180018MEM

A detailed overview of the progress made in delivering the Economic Regeneration Strategy Action Plan during 2017/18 was provided in the report of the Chief Executive. It was reported that overall good progress was being made across a wide range of initiatives.

A number of targets had proved challenging and particular reference was made to the Kent and Medway Business Fund where only four Tonbridge and Malling businesses had accessed loans to date. It was

hoped that further promotion would encourage more businesses to apply for funding.

It was reported that four local rural businesses had secured West Kent LEADER funding, with a further eight pending. There was still time to meet the target of 25 local rural businesses before the closure of the programme, which was now anticipated at the end of 2019. However, Members indicated that it was important to retain flexibility regarding the process to ensure that businesses were viable and were able to pay back loans. It was felt that targets should not be rigorously adhered to where it was not appropriate to do so.

Finally, the potential reasons for the increase in the number of VAT de-registrations would be explored further. It was noted that this trend was reflected in other parts of Kent and nationally.

The proposed priorities for 2018/19 were also set out and these were influenced by progress made in specific areas, as well as the level of future financial resources. Actions key to the effective delivery of the Economic Regeneration Strategy were detailed at 1.3.1 of the report.

Members asked whether the new Cannon Lane shop development in Tonbridge had affected trade in the High Street. It was noted that at the planning application stage no negative impact had been identified and there was no awareness of reduced footfall in the town centre.

In addition, Members referred to the value of social media as a promotional tool and suggested that consideration be given to developing the use of LinkedIn and targeted hashtags on Twitter aimed specifically at businesses.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) the Economic Regeneration Strategy Action Plan, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be endorsed; and
- (2) the priorities for 2018/19, as set out at paragraph 1.3.1 of the report, be agreed.

ERG 18/4 SKILLS AND WORK READINESS UPDATE

Decision Notice D180019MEM

The report provided an update on added value activities that the Borough Council had been delivering under the 'skills and work readiness' agenda and proposed future activity for 2018/19.

Members were pleased to note the good progress being made in a number of areas and particularly welcomed the positive outcomes related to the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network. It was suggested

that a future meeting of the Advisory Board should focus on this initiative and consideration be given to inviting the local co-ordinator, employers, the Federation of Small Businesses, West Kent College and users of the course to share their experiences.

A Jobs and Training Fair had been held in Aylesford in November 2017 and the event had been well attended by employers, training providers and job seekers.

The Employment Street Pilot was an intensive one-week course focused on eight residents with challenging barriers to employment and included confidence building, lifestyle advice and practical support. Members welcomed this partnership approach between the Borough Council, Royal British Legion Industries and 360 Recruitment in delivering an excellent project. It was hoped that projects of this kind continued as they offered support and encouragement to hard to reach people.

Finally, Members recognised the importance of creating links between education, skills and job development and many of the initiatives identified in the report supported this ambition.

RECOMMENDED: That the proposals for 2018/19, as detailed in paragraph 1.4.1 of the report, be endorsed

ERG 18/5 TONBRIDGE FAIRTRADE TOWN - PROPOSAL

Decision Notice D180020MEM

The report set out proposals aimed at making Tonbridge a Fairtrade town and the Borough Council's support of the initiative was sought. In addition, a local Fairtrade Steering Group, with a nominated Borough Council representative, was required to ensure continued development and support.

A draft resolution in support of the Fairtrade town initiative was set out at paragraph 1.4.1 of the report. For clarity, whilst the draft resolution encouraged the supply of Fairtrade products in the Borough Council offices it was noted that the organisation no longer had canteen facilities on site.

Members were supportive of the proposals for a Fairtrade Town and strongly encouraged balanced representation of the business community on the Steering Group. It was important that local businesses and products were not disadvantaged as a result of the proposals.

In addition, Members recognised the local and national benefits related to Fairtrade and hoped that the Borough Council could offer Fairtrade products where possible. It was also suggested that consideration be given to supporting 'Direct Trade' which was often viewed as complementary to Fairtrade certification.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) the resolution set out in paragraph 1.4.1 of the report be supported; and
- (2) a representative from Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council be appointed to the Tonbridge Fairtrade Steering Group.

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION**ERG 18/6 INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY WHITE PAPER**

The report of the Chief Executive set out an overview of the Government's Industrial Strategy White Paper, launched in November 2017, and aimed to boost productivity and competitiveness.

Key policies highlighted within the Industrial Strategy were detailed in paragraph 1.3.1 of the report.

Particular reference was made to local industrial strategies and, in the case of Tonbridge and Malling this would be led by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership. These local strategies required strong public and private partnerships if the aims and objectives set out in the Industrial Strategy were to be met. The involvement of universities, colleges and local institutions would be important to identify priorities to improve skills, increase innovation and enhance infrastructure and business growth.

ERG 18/7 WEST KENT PARTNERSHIP

The Minutes of the West Kent Partnership held on 18 January 2018 were presented for information and these were noted by Members.

Of particular reference for Tonbridge and Malling was the recently issued invitation to tender for the new South East Rail franchise. This had indicated that current fast speed services via Snodland station could be reduced to two peak hour trains instead of three or, as an alternative, the entire fast speed service from Maidstone West could be removed entirely and replaced by a non-high speed service from Maidstone West to Abbey Wood.

The West Kent Partnership had expressed concern regarding the potential diminution of important services which served many settlements in the Medway Valley. It was also noted that new housing developments at Holborough and Peters Village, along with potential new development in the areas arising from the Local Plan, would mean demand for these services would significantly increase in the near future. These concerns had been raised with the three bidders for the franchise and other partners, including MPs.

In addition, the new Maidstone East train service to Blackfriars had been delayed until 2019 to the detriment of residents and businesses.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration advised Members that both cases outlined above would be robustly challenged and lobbied against.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE

ERG 18/8 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items considered in private.

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm

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Agenda Item 4

- Presentation by Simon Harris on the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network and the progress that has been made since it began in September 2017

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TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
ECONOMIC REGENERATION ADVISORY BOARD

04 June 2018

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 WEST KENT PRIORITIES FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

This report sets out the initial thoughts on the refresh of the West Kent Priorities for Economic Growth Strategy and seeks views on future priority areas.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 In September 2015, the council endorsed the transformational priorities set out in the West Kent Priorities for Economic Growth 2015-2018 strategy document. This document has subsequently been used to illustrate a strong strategic case for investment within the borough (within the context of West Kent), and has helped in securing Local Growth Fund Round 3 funding for improvements to key infrastructure, such as flood defences and the road network.

1.1.2 The progress that has been made provides a strong foundation for further developing and refining the case in order to attract further investment within West Kent. In addition, since the Industrial Strategy White Paper was published in November 2017, there is a need to ensure that there is greater alignment with the current thinking nationally on how to boost productivity and grow the economy.

1.1.3 As such, the West Kent Partnership have decided to carry out a refresh of the existing strategy and to give consideration to an updated set of priorities for investment which are required to create the right environment for local businesses to thrive and create local growth.

1.2 Proposed Focus

1.2.1 As the refresh of the document is in its embryonic stages, little more than a proposed structure and key potential areas of focus have been produced. However, there is sufficient information at this stage to obtain a clear indication of the direction of travel.

1.2.2 The proposed objective for the West Kent Partnership is to create:

“A dynamic and well connected economy, a key location for business growth where businesses are supported to innovate and thrive and our local population has access to quality jobs and skills development”

1.2.3 The West Kent Partnership is proposing to use the ‘5 pillars’ of the Industrial Strategy in order to meet this objective and structure the strategy, essentially supporting businesses to maintain and enhance productivity through:

- **Ideas:** securing investment and funding to underpin innovation and growth through helping facilitate business access to innovation investment and promote strong local links with the Research & Development sector and Further and Higher Education establishments.
- **People:** delivering the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network to secure our future workforce and championing (re)training in the workplace for older people
- **Infrastructure:** demonstrating the need for infrastructure and transport investment for West Kent at a local, county and regional level – including improvements to the road and rail network, as well as upgrades to the broadband infrastructure.
- **Business Environment:** delivering an environment that supports start-ups and stimulates growth through the provision of live/work space, business incubator and grow-on space; the availability of business support and advice; and regular communication and networking.
- **Place:** engendering a strong West Kent sense of place and ensuring quality of life is maintained with a balanced approach to development and equal opportunity for all by supporting vibrant town centres, bringing forward key locations for growth and reducing levels of deprivation in priority wards.

1.2.4 In addition, it is proposed that the following place-specific initiatives within our borough are flagged up as priority investment projects:

- River Medway Flood Storage Area
- NIAB East Malling Research Biotech Hub
- Innovation Park Medway (Rochester Airfield)
- Tonbridge Town Centre Regeneration

1.3 Next Steps

1.3.1 The West Kent Partnership is aiming to produce a draft of the refreshed West Kent Priorities for Economic Growth Strategy by autumn 2018. This document will then

come to the next Economic Regeneration Advisory Board in September 2018 for further comment.

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 These are no financial implications arising from the 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.

1.8 Recommendations

1.9.1 That the proposed outline structure, objectives and priorities of the refreshed West Kent Priorities for Economic Growth Strategy as set out in this report **BE SUPPORTED**.

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.

contact: Jeremy Whittaker,
Economic Regeneration
Officer

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive

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

04 June 2018

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 VISIT KENT SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT 2018

This report provides information on the Service Level Agreement that the Council currently has with Visit Kent and sets out proposals for 2018/19.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The most recent statistics relating to tourism in Tonbridge & Malling come from the Cambridge Economic Impact Research (published in December 2016). These statistics show that in 2015:

- Around 2.8 million people visited the borough, of these around 2.6 million were day visitors.
- 47,000 overseas visitors stayed overnight in the borough.
- Spending from these visits added approximately £160 million into the local economy.
- Tourism activity in the borough supports in the region of 3,150 jobs.

1.1.2 These figures, when compared to the previous statistics in 2013, show a 2.9% growth in the number of visitors, a 1.8% increase in expenditure and a 0.4% increase in jobs over the two year period.

1.1.3 Although tourism is comparatively a small contributor to the local economy in comparison to other parts of the county, the Borough Council currently has an annual Service Level Agreement with Visit Kent that aims to promote and increase awareness of Tonbridge & Malling as a tourism destination.

1.2 Overview of the Service Level Agreements for 2017/18

1.2.1 The Visit Kent Service Level Agreement was £3,500 in 2017/18, having been reduced over the course of a few years from just over £13,000 in 2015/16. In 2017/18, the agreement covered the following areas:

- Digital Marketing – including dedicated destination pages for Tonbridge and Malling on the Visit Kent website; as well as enhanced promotional features (feature boxes) and itinerary pages.
- Public Relations –including dedicated press releases and features in the InsideKENT magazine.
- Marketing Campaigns – encouraging local SME businesses to get involved with campaigns such as the ‘Big Weekend’, ‘2for1’ and ‘Gardens and Gourmet’.
- Research – access to data from the Business Barometer and opportunities to partner in research projects as they arise.
- Network and Communications – District Officer meetings, Visit Kent networking events and monthly B2B e-newsletters.

1.3 Delivery during 2017/18

1.3.1 Over the course of 2017/18, Visit Kent delivered a range of activities to promote Tonbridge and Malling as a tourist destination. These are:

Digital Marketing - in total there were 14,340 page views on the Tonbridge destination page of the Visit Kent website and 8,186 page views on the Malling destination page. In addition Tonbridge and Malling featured on the homepage on two separate occasions, as well as Oldbury Hill Camping and Caravanning Club (in May 2017) and Café 1809 (in December 2017).

In addition, Tonbridge and Malling attractions were listed in themed content on the website on 12 occasions during this period.

Public Relations - 2 attractions (Tonbridge Castle and Ightham Mote) were included in press itineraries. In June 2017, Belgian Journalists from Pasar Magazine visited Tonbridge Castle, and in July 2017, Dutch Journalists from Reizen Magazine visited Ightham Mote. In addition, Visit Kent disseminated 8 press releases featuring Tonbridge and Malling businesses.

Campaigns – A total of 6 local businesses signed up to (and benefitted from) the Big Weekend – Great Comp Garden, the Hop Farm, Ightham Mote, Nemes Diving & Water Sports Academy, Tonbridge Castle and Tonbridge River Tours. This campaign had a total media reach of over 1 million people. In addition, 5 local businesses engaged with other smaller campaigns such as the ‘2 for 1’ campaign and Gardens and Gourmet.

Travel Trade - there were a number of features within the 2017 Group Travel Guide, including the 200th Anniversary of the death of Jane Austen (and her links to Tonbridge); The War & Peace Revival at The Hop Farm; Karting at Buckmore Park and the portrait of the ‘Young Lady in White’ by John Singer Sargent at Ightham Mote.

Research – 22 businesses in Tonbridge and Malling now contribute to the Business Barometer and receive the resulting research analysis.

1.4 Proposed Next Steps

1.4.1 Although Visit Kent have clearly done a considerable amount of work to promote the borough as a tourism destination, given the continued pressures on budgets it is proposed that the Borough Council maintains the same level of expenditure for the 2018/19 Service Level Agreement (£3,500), with this cost being met through existing economic development budgets.

1.4.2 As a minimum, the Borough Council would look to include the following as a minimum within the agreement:

- Dedicated presence for both Tonbridge and Malling on www.visitkent.co.uk
- Greater publicity for the Borough, and especially Borough Council owned attractions, in order to help raise its profile and increase visitor numbers.
- Increased opportunities for local tourism businesses to link in to Visit Kent campaigns.
- Inclusion of the Borough and local attractions within Press Releases and Social Media
- Receipt of regular e-bulletins and useful business intelligence.

1.5 Legal Implications

1.5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.6.1 These are addressed in Section 1.4.1 of this report.

1.7 Risk Assessment

1.7.1 Not applicable.

1.8 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.

1.9 Recommendations

1.9.1 That the proposal to continue the Service Level Agreement with Visit Kent in 2018/19 at the same level as 2017/18 (a maximum of £3,500) **BE AGREED.**

1.9.2 That the inclusion of the activities set out in 1.4.2 **BE AGREED.**

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
ECONOMIC REGENERATION ADVISORY BOARD**

04 June 2018

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 RATES RETENTION PILOT – HOUSING AND COMMERCIAL GROWTH FUND

To set out the background to the Business Rates Retention Pilot and to suggest possible initiatives to be funded via the housing and commercial growth fund element.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Following a report to the Cabinet in October 2017 on the proposed Business Rates Retention pilot for Kent and Medway, and as reported as part of the budget report in February, a successful bid was made and the pilot is now being taken forward. There are two main components of the Kent and Medway pilot:

(a) A Financial Stability Fund made up by 70% of the of business rates growth across the County with direct funding being paid to Kent's Local Authorities;

(b) A Housing and Commercial Growth Fund made up by 30% of business rates growth to help achieve the following four priorities:

- unlock local housing development
- unlock local commercial development
- promote investment and trade
- speeding up the planning process.

1.1.2 This report focuses only on the Housing and Commercial Growth Fund given the links applying to local economic regeneration initiatives.

1.2 Housing and Commercial Growth Fund

1.2.1 The model adopted for the above fund is to focus activity on three clusters in the County: West Kent (the areas of Tonbridge and Malling, Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells), North Kent (including Maidstone) and East Kent. Kent County

Council will be part of each cluster group. Maidstone Borough Council, as the lead authority for the pilot, will administer the growth fund.

- 1.2.2 Funding is to be distributed across the cluster groups based on current business rate baselines and each cluster group will be able to determine how that funding can best be invested locally. Final allocations will not yet be known although the following estimates were included in the original bid document:

West Kent - £1,055,000

North Kent - £3,291,000

East Kent - £3,054,000

For West Kent, this potential level of funding would equate to approximately £350K per district area.

- 1.2.3 Initial meetings have been held at Officer level across the West Kent Cluster group (including KCC) to discuss possible themes for the above fund. The following criteria have been suggested:

Strategic Fit – spend must relate to one of the priorities set out above at 1.1.1(b);

Value for Money – must attract match funding and deliver growth e.g. in jobs and commercial floor space;

Delivery and Risk – projects ready to start in 18/19 and deliver proven outputs.

- 1.2.4 Based on recent discussions within the West Kent Cluster, two initial themes for the fund have been identified.

- 1.2.5 As Members will be aware, there is a need across West Kent to boost the provision of business premises, particularly those suitable for smaller businesses looking to expand. Recent changes to planning policy, which has allowed commercial premises to change to residential use without the need for planning permission, has begun to exacerbate this lack of suitable business accommodation available locally.

- 1.2.6 In addition, it was thought there was a need to invest to improve retail centres across the West Kent area. Whilst most retail premises are well maintained, a number, especially in some smaller centres and those on the periphery of a larger centre, could benefit from improvements to their shop fronts. A grant scheme to improve and enhance shop fronts was therefore suggested as a possible means to encourage such enhancement. Further work on this option will be progressed via the West Kent cluster group.

- 1.2.7 As further priorities might emerge as the current initiative progresses, it would be prudent to maintain some flexibility with regard to the available funding.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 Maidstone Borough Council is the lead authority for the pilot as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding between all parties.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 The figures included above for the Housing and Commercial Growth Fund are estimates. The value is dependent on final income received by all Kent authorities during 2018/19 (after allowing for appeals etc).

1.5 Risk Assessment

- 1.5.1 As indicated above, figures quoted are estimates only and final figures will not be known until year end.

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 initial priorities as set out at 1.2.5 and 1.2.6 of this report **BE ENDORSED** and that further discussions within the West Kent Cluster Group **BE UNDERTAKEN**.

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

Background papers:

contact: Mark Raymond

Nil

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive

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

04 June 2018

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 WEST KENT PARTNERSHIP - MINUTES

To highlight the matters arising from the meeting of the West Kent Partnership meeting held on the 27th April 2018.

1.1 Matters Addressed

1.1.1 Minutes of the West Kent Partnership held on 27th April 2018 are attached as Annex 1 to this report.

1.1.2 The key matters addressed at the meeting included the following:

- A presentation from operators of Gatwick Airport. This engagement focused on the company's ambition to engage more actively with the West Kent business area and their desire to extend business support activities to the West Kent audience, including initiatives on employability, buyer events and business networking.
- A proposal from Kent County Council seeking support for a new transport initiative, initially to be trialled in Tunbridge Wells, making use of new technologies and focusing on combined transport services in rural areas for those without private transport.
- An update from the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership.
- The recently held West Kent Conference which included presentations from the Bank of England and Jonathan Neame of Shepherd Neame Brewery.
- A review of the West Kent Priorities document (as reported elsewhere on this agenda).
- An update of the Enterprise Adviser Network.

Background papers:

contact: Mark Raymond

Nil

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive

Minutes - West Kent Partnership Meeting

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

27 April 2018

<p>Present</p> <p>Nicolas Heslop, TMBC (Chair) Jane March, TWBC David Candlin, TWBC Beth Parsons, TWBC William Benson, TWBC Andrew Metcalf, Kent Invicta Chamber Nigel Smith, KCC Peter Fleming, SDC Sean Holden, KCC Mark Raymond, TMBC Brian Luker, TMBC David Joyner, KCC Wendy Wood, WKP Kevin Maskell (for Roddy Hogarth) SDC Emily Haswell for Andrew Stirling, SDC Inspector Mark Hedges for Chief Superintendent Julia Chapman, Kent Police</p>	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Adam Bryan Sarah Nurden – both Sarah and Adam required at SELEP Accountability Board Henry Warde Jeanette Barlow Paul Hannan/Tracy Anne Barker Pav Ramewal Lesley Bowles Iain McNab/Esme Clifford-Astbury Catherine Brunger</p> <p>Guests</p> <p>Peter Tweddell, Bertie’s Woodfuel Jacqui Elliott, Total Transport Manager, KCC and Zoe Galvin, graduate placement</p>
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<p>1. Welcome</p> <p>2. The Chairman welcomed guest presenters Peter Tweddell and Jacqui Elliott and round table introductions took place.</p> <p>Business Case Study – Bertie’s Woodfuel – Peter Tweddell</p> <p>The Chairman welcomed Peter, whose business is based in Hadlow. Peter is a recipient of both LEADER and Escalate funding and won Young Entrepreneur of the Year at the West Kent Business Awards in 2011.</p> <p>Peter gave an overview of his business and some insight into the difference having access to the funding has made to realising growth opportunities.</p> <p>Peter started his kiln dried log business in 2010 with all woodfuels locally produced and</p>	
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delivered to retail locally. The South East is the most heavily wooded part of the country so there is no shortage in supply although most is sourced in the immediate vicinity. Peter had seen a gap in the traditional wood fuel market and his business is built around on line ordering with a delivery slot and card payment for a top end product. Demand quickly grew and a LEADER grant matched with his own resources and commercial borrowing facilitated investment in machines and infrastructure. Further investment followed with Escalate borrowing and the business has now grown from just Peter to a team of 6 with a substantial local customer base. One mail shot and one leaflet drop a year continues to expand the reach of the business. The investments allowed the business to grow to that size some 3-5 years earlier than would have been possible without it.

The Escalate loan of 60K came at a time when banks were wary of lending so it made big difference. The public sector support has now created a business which is considered a good risk by the banks and commercial unsecured loans are now available.

The business is highly sustainable. The kiln dried process needs to raise heat at front end so anything unusable goes into the kiln.

Lessons have been learned along the way. With hindsight it's important to focus on all the things around running a successful business as well as the core business activity. A warehouse fire may have been avoided if an electrical issue had been picked up earlier.

Peter is currently renegotiating his lease to stay in Hadlow and is rebuilding space lost in the fire. However, after 5 years a second site might be required as the capacity at Hadlow is limited.

Action – Bertie's Woodfuel would make an excellent case study clearly demonstrating how public sector investment has delivered jobs and growth and enabled a business to go on to access commercial investment. Peter was also encouraged to feed into the Local Plan process regarding grow on space.

WW

Minutes and Matters Arising

3. Item 3 – Case studies of LEADER success stories are being worked on. This to include Bertie's Woodfuel.

Item 4 – Kent & Medway Business Fund closes to applications on 30 April. However, round 3 of the Innovation and Investment Loan scheme supported by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership Local Growth Fund will open to pre applications on 1 June with £2M of 0% finance available to Kent businesses

Item 5 – Gatwick airport – A number of further meetings have taken place with Gatwick Airport as a result of which

- A Big Breakfast event featuring speed networking and sponsored by Gatwick Airport will take place in June in the Artisan Restaurant at West Kent College.

- A meeting is to take place with Gatwick Diamond to explore delivery of workshops in West Kent helping to prepare local businesses for active participation in their annual Meet the Buyer event in the autumn.
- Richard Higgins, Head of Surface Access Strategy at Gatwick Airport attended the recent Infrastructure and Transport Group meeting and useful lessons can be learned from such a large organisation operating so close to West Kent. The dialogue will be ongoing.
 - 45M passengers pa, 23,800 staff, 19M rail trips
 - 37% sustainable mode share for staff, 44% Public Transport mode share for passengers
 - Gatwick is the busiest station in the SE outside London and operates for 18 hours a day
 - £120m new station submitted for planning
 - Public Transport access to the airport for the peak early morning flights for both staff and passengers is currently very limited but Gatwick are in discussions with bus and coach operators to explore services which could address this.
 - Smart motorway scheme for M23 from June to March 2020 will cause disruption during construction
 - Planning is also underway for some public transport service disruption this summer with improvements being undertaken on the rail station concourse
 - Communicating travel disruption information effectively so that people allow sufficient extra time for their journeys will be essential
 - working on launching an App to assist in navigating around the airport
 - use of data to drive travel initiatives eg: home postcodes of employees to develop public transport initiatives.
 - They want to work with us to develop better access from the east including for rail and bus and other journeys.
- A pilot One Destination Gatwick Employability scheme is to be delivered in West Kent in partnership with West Kent College to recruit West Kent staff to work airside for Gatwick and partner businesses.
- A number of initiatives are being explored with Gatwick working with young people through the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network and Simon Harris will update Partners at a future meeting on progress with these.

Item 7 – Growth & Infrastructure Framework – this has now been published <http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/environment-waste-and-planning-policies/growth-and-infrastructure-framework-gif>

Item 13 - AOB

Apprenticeships – A promotional campaign encouraging employers to provide more apprenticeship opportunities locally is being planned for the autumn

Tunbridge Wells Civic Development – William Benson, TWBC

4. <http://www.twciviccentre.co.uk/who--tunbridge-wells-civic-centre.html>

William explained that as the Cultural capital of Kent and Sussex Weald, Tunbridge Wells is looking to be nationally recognised through eight big civic development projects. Businesses are very supportive of the proposals which will help the local economy and deliver office space as well as some residential. Planning consent will be sought in the coming months and the bigger picture embracing the cultural and economic benefits will be part of the application.

Total Transport Project – Jacqui Elliott, KCC

5. [Kent Connected DRT pilot WK Partnership Board 27 April FINAL](#)

Jacqui introduced the Pilot which is proposed for the whole of Tunbridge Wells borough in 2020 to mix paying customers with KCC clients using new technology. This is a new concept for Kent but not new elsewhere in country or world and is at draft outline business case stage working to gain strategic and political support and identify funding streams. Consultation on it is now part of a wider rural transport Big Conversation engagement being led by Paul Carter. It is proposed that if the Tunbridge Wells Pilot is successful it will be rolled out first to adjoining rural parts of Maidstone, Ashford and Tonbridge & Malling and then across the rest of Kent.

The Project will use Mini buses and cars, including electric vehicles and volunteer drivers for shared journeys for KCC clients and paying customers. It will be flexibly routed and can be booked in advance or just in time via an app and will use the Kent connected brand including smart card. A social enterprise transport provider will deliver the booking service. It will be designed to connect to mainstream services and can be utilised if the journey is shared. There are real advantages to pulling together all current services onto a single database to streamline services available to NHS clients, KCC clients and paying customers living in rural areas.

Partners raised the following concerns

- Once a service is operating it will be relied upon by people and so important that not then withdrawn
- Potential issues around use of voluntary drivers and insurance implications if they take payment for service
- Cannot rely on all bookings via app as many vulnerable people will want to phone
- Hours of operation will need to be carefully considered if wanting to provide a true community service that for example, young people will use.
- Where areas are outside of the pilot area existing good services could be impacted as contracts changed with existing providers

- Real time booking may not be viable in more rural areas – what should be customer expectation of the service?
- A proportion of KCC clients will always require sole occupancy transport due to their needs
- Is there a sufficient pool of volunteer drivers to deliver the service?

It was acknowledged that an enormous amount of detail and work has been put in so far and that the project is still at a planning stage. Paul Carter is fully behind the initiative as it addresses disjointed rural transport services and can be considered as part of a large rural transport concept.

The next stage of consultation is to engage with District Joint Transport Boards and Parish Councils and the WKP offered help to facilitate this. The Rural Transport Big Conversation will start in June and consultation on this proposal will be part of that consultation.

SELEP and KMEP

Both Adam and Sarah unavoidably involved in SELEP Accountability Board meeting.

6.

Sarah's paper covers both SELEP and KMEP topics and was noted. In particular

- Item 2 HS4Air – 2.4 potential implications for West Kent in upgrading route to accommodate high speed trains and the need for stopping trains to interact with it.
- 4.4 – local growth fund projects – partners were asked to consider if there are any alternative projects in the area to be proposed. No suggestions were forthcoming.

Additionally Sarah has asked if Partners have any themes/specific projects asks for the second MP's summit likely to take place on a Friday afternoon in July. The themes for the last MP's meeting in 2017 were Rail, Road and Skills. Notes from that summit will be circulated with the Minutes.

The Chief Executives of Southern and Network Rail will be attending the next Kent Leaders' Meeting and the Chairman is asking Tom Tugenhat if the 3 West Kent Leaders can meet with the Rail minister to discuss concerns about the quality of service to London.

West Kent Priorities – Paper B

7.

Partners noted that there were two parts to West Kent Priorities for Growth report – the first a concept paper for a possible approach to an update and secondly the usual progress report against our five key strategic objectives.

WKP 2 was endorsed by Partners in October 2015 and we have successfully delivered on a number of those priorities against a changing economic landscape. It is suggested that it would be useful to approach an update by aligning to the Government's Industrial Strategy – in particular, the 5 foundations of Ideas, People, Infrastructure, Business

environment and Place.

We would also wish to align with the KCC Enterprise and Productivity Strategy, the SEP and local ED Strategies. Engagement will take place with BEIS and colleagues at KCC over the coming months to develop the concept further.

The Chairman commented on the West Kent Conference yesterday which was staged by Grow Kent in association with the WKP and recorded thanks to the organisers for the opportunity to co-host and co-chair.

The Panel session on the Enterprise Adviser Network was well received. This was followed by a fascinating update from the Bank of England highlighting the gap between productivity and expenditure, an insightful presentation from Jonathan Neame, a session on funding opportunities for businesses in West Kent and a further panel session featuring entrepreneurs from West Kent. The afternoon sessions were lively and informative on marketing techniques and highlighting the need to treat existing customers as potential prospects.

Enterprise adviser network

8. The Chairman commented that very good progress is being made towards recruiting a full complement of Enterprise Advisers and matching these with appropriate schools. He also congratulated Simon on being invited to present to Careers and Enterprise Company head office on his best practice and fast progress in establishing the West Kent Network. The West Kent model, led by districts, closely integrated with economic development and supported by an FE college is unique.

At the conference delegates had heard that Careers & Enterprise Company's objective is for all schools to have the opportunity to access an Enterprise Adviser by 2020 so although Simon is currently at capacity, finding a way to extend the network to include all West Kent schools including SEND schools is part of our work going forward

AOB

9. Business Rates Retention – this item will come to next WKP meeting. In meantime if discussed at a Kent Leaders Meeting then it was suggested that Paul Carter also be involved.

Dates of Next Meetings – outlook invitations have been sent

- 10
- 20 July 2018
 - 19 October 2018

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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