

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

27 August 2019

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, 4th September, 2019 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 17 June 2019

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- This report provides a further update on the Business Rates Retention Pilot Schemes and seeks endorsement to progress a shopfront improvement scheme for local centres and parades (subject to KCC agreement).*

6. Fairtrade Tonbridge - Renewal Submission 21 - 24
- This report seeks endorsement to submit a renewal application to the Fairtrade Foundation for the renewal of Tonbridge's Fairtrade Town status.*

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- The report provides an update from the West Kent Partnership, including the Minutes of the last meeting and the priorities for growth.*

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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 G C Bridge
Cllr R I B Cannon
Cllr Mrs T Dean
Cllr N Foyle
Cllr M A J Hood
Cllr F A Hoskins
Cllr A P J Keeley

Cllr D W King
Cllr J R S Lark
Cllr L J O'Toole
Cllr W E Palmer
Cllr J L Sergison
Cllr K B Tanner
Cllr C J Williams

Apologies for absence

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Declarations of interest

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TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ECONOMIC REGENERATION ADVISORY BOARD

Monday, 17th June, 2019

Present: Cllr B J Luker (Chairman), Cllr F G Tombolis (Vice-Chairman), Cllr G C Bridge, Cllr R I B Cannon, Cllr N Foyle, Cllr M A J Hood, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr A P J Keeley, Cllr D W King, Cllr W E Palmer, Cllr Miss J L Sergison, Cllr K B Tanner and Cllr C J Williams

Councillors Mrs J A Anderson, R P Betts, A E Clark, M A Coffin, N J Heslop, D Lettington, Mrs A S Oakley and M R Rhodes were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs T Dean, J R S Lark and L J O'Toole

ERG 19/9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

ERG 19/10 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the notes of the meeting of the Economic Regeneration Advisory Board held on 20 February 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

ERG 19/11 TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL ECONOMIC REGENERATION ACTIVITY 2015-19

The Economic Regeneration Manager presented an overview of activities undertaken by the Borough Council over the last four years to support the local economy.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

ERG 19/12 BOROUGH ECONOMIC REGENERATION STRATEGY 2019-2023

The report of the Chief Executive set out details of proposed changes to the draft Borough Economic Regeneration Strategy 2019-2023 in light of feedback received during the consultation exercise undertaken during October and November 2018. Particular reference was made to access to broadband provision in remote areas, the need to lobby for lower business rates to encourage High Street shops, the development of socio-economic initiatives in 'deprived areas' to support those seeking employment and the success of the West Kent Careers and Enterprise Network in promoting 'work readiness' in schools and colleges. It was

noted that these issues had been included in the revised strategy set out at Annex 1 to the report.

RECOMMENDED: That the Borough Economic Regeneration Strategy 2019-2023, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved. ◀

***Referred to Cabinet**

ERG 19/13 BUSINESS RATES RETENTION PILOT SCHEME INITIATIVES - UPDATE

Decision Notice D190046MEM

The report of the Chief Executive set out details of progress on economic regeneration initiatives within the Borough funded by income received from the Business Rates Retention Pilot. Particular reference was made to the Town and District Commercial Frontages Grant Scheme launched at the end of March 2019 and the potential for this to be extended to local centres and parades across the Borough.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) the content of the report be noted; and
- (2) initial scoping work on a local centres shopfront improvement scheme be undertaken and a report on the scheme, along with a list of other potential initiatives, be submitted to the next meeting of the Advisory Board.

ERG 19/14 VISIT KENT SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT 2019

Decision Notice D190047MEM

The report of the Chief Executive provided a summary of the current Service Level Agreement between the Borough Council and Visit Kent and set out details of the proposed agreement for 2019/20.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) the proposal to continue the Service Level Agreement with Visit Kent in 2019/20 at the level set out at paragraph 1.4.1 of the report (a maximum of £3,680) be agreed; and
- (2) the activities set out at paragraph 1.4.2 of the report be included in the Service Level Agreement.

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION**ERG 19/15 ECONOMIC OVERVIEW OF TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH**

The report of the Chief Executive provided an overview of the economic position of the Borough which included details of recent trends, up-to-date statistics on current performance of the local economy and comparison with neighbouring districts within West Kent.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE**ERG 19/16 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no items considered in private.

The meeting ended at 8.40 pm

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Agenda Item 4

Presentation on a new programme to provide business funding and advice aimed at reducing the carbon footprint across Kent.

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

04 September 2019

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 SCHEMES

Following on from a report to the last advisory board, this report provides further update on the Business Rates Retention Pilot Schemes and seeks endorsement to progress with a shopfront improvement scheme for local centres and parades (subject to KCC agreement).

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Since the last report to the board in June, further work has been undertaken to progress agreed initiatives under the Business Rates Retention Pilot, to carry out further analysis into the potential for a local centres and parades shopfront improvement grant scheme, subject to agreement with Kent County Council.

1.2 Business Rates Retention Pilot Initiatives

1.2.1 The following initiatives are currently part of the Business Rates Retention Pilot Scheme:

- Town and District Commercial Frontages Grant Scheme (to be delivered during 2019/20).
- Tonbridge Town Centre Initiatives – including pop-up shop initiative (2018/19), contribution towards Christmas activities (2019/20).
- Malling Centres Promotion through Visit Kent (2019/20).
- Business Accommodation Grant Scheme (2020/21).

1.2.2 The Town and District Commercial Frontages Grant Scheme is the furthest advanced and information on this initiative is provided in section 1.3.

1.2.3 Under the Tonbridge Town Centre initiatives scheme, as reported in the previous report, the pop-up shop initiative was delivered at the end of 2018, and forged excellent connections with students at West Kent College and Oakley School. In

addition, a contribution has also been made towards the Christmas lights for 2019 to ensure improved coverage along Quarry Hill.

- 1.2.4 Visit Kent have provided a proposal regarding the establishment of a microsite to help promote the Malling Centres, which would fit underneath the current Visit Kent website. This website would be relatively simple in nature, including sections on attractions ('See and Do'), accommodation and restaurants ('Stay and Eat'), events ('What's On'), as well as transport and travel information ('Getting Here'). Given the ongoing maintenance costs, and the resource required to update the events section in particular, officers will be meeting up with colleagues at Sevenoaks District Council later this month to get an idea of the level of resource required.

1.3 Town and District Centres Commercial Frontages Scheme

- 1.3.1 The Town and District Centres Commercial Frontages Grant Scheme was launched at the end of March 2019, with 350 letters sent out to eligible premises in 10 settlements across the borough – Tonbridge, West Malling, Snodland, Borough Green, Larkfield, Kings Hill, East Peckham, Hadlow, Aylesford and Wrotham.
- 1.3.2 As of August 2019, 108 businesses had responded to the letter to ask for the guidance notes and application form. Of these, 15 applications have been approved – 6 from Tonbridge, 4 from West Malling, 2 from Larkfield, and 1 from Borough Green, Kings Hill, and Hadlow – amounting to just over £40,000 of grant funding contributions towards shopfront improvements. These improvements have included re-rendering and painting, new signage, and the refurbishment of (or introduction of new) awnings.
- 1.3.3 Three further applications are currently going through the necessary internal checks for improvement works.
- 1.3.4 The Borough Council is working closely with Kent Rural Retailers (a branch of Action with Communities in Rural Kent) to help businesses that take up the offer with pulling together their applications and the required associated paperwork, and also, where requested, providing general business support and advice. **Through this service, and through correspondence with the Economic Regeneration Team, it is expected that at least a further 5 applications will be submitted in the next few months.**
- 1.3.5 Given the level of interest to date and the pipeline of projects coming forward, it is proposed that the Borough Council look to officially close this programme to new applications by the **end of December 2019**. This will have the benefit of ensuring new bids are submitted in a timely manner, and will also free up officer time thereafter to focus on other priorities.

1.4 Proposed Local Centres and Parades Improvements Scheme

1.4.1 At the last advisory board meeting, it was agreed to undertake initial scoping work on a local centres improvement scheme, which would entail:

- High level audit of frontages within local centres and parades – identifying whether there is any need for intervention.
- Discussions with a small sample survey of local independent businesses to ascertain the level of interest.
- Producing an outline framework for the programme – including eligibility criteria and levels of grant funding.

1.4.2 **High Level Audit:** 46 businesses in our local centres and parades have been identified in the following locations:

- Burham
- Derwent Road, Tonbridge
- Eccles
- Greenacres, Aylesford
- Hildenborough
- Martin Hardie Way, Tonbridge
- Northwood Road, Tonbridge
- Oxley Shaw, Leybourne
- Plaxtol
- Twisden Road, East Malling
- York Parade, Tonbridge
- Woodlands, Ditton
- Wouldham

1.4.3 In some of these locations, there are just one or two outlets (such as Eccles, Burham, Wouldham or Plaxtol), whereas in others there are as many as 15 (York Parade). If the proposed scheme were to be available to independent businesses only, then the total number of eligible businesses would be 36, as some of the larger local centres accommodate a high number of multinational retailers.

1.4.4 A quick survey of these shops found that the condition of the frontages was as follows:

Good	Fair	Poor
5 (14%)	22 (61%)	9 (25%)

1.4.5 **Discussions with a small sample survey of local independent businesses:** As one might expect, there has been a relatively strong level of interest in the scheme amongst a sample of independent businesses located within our local centres and

parades. Indeed, a number of these businesses had come across information about the Town and District Centres scheme and made enquiries:

“We are a local well established unisex hairdressing salon of which I have recently become a 50% partner and we are looking to make improvements both internally and externally at the property. Based on Twisden Road, East Malling I would be very interested in further information to explore whether our location fits your criteria and if so, more details about the process of applying” (Twisden Road, East Malling)

“Any news on whether my proposed shop front improvements would come within your budget for shop front improvements in Tonbridge?” (Northwood Road, Tonbridge)

“We would be very interested in the shopfront improvement scheme to help make our unit more presentable” (Derwent Road, Tonbridge)

1.4.6 Whilst it is not guaranteed that this initial interest will translate into completed projects (as stated in 1.3.2, there were well over 100 initial expressions of interest, that have so far translated into 15 approved applications), there is sufficient interest to suggest a scheme could have a good level of take up.

1.4.7 **Outline Framework for the Programme:** There are key lessons that can be learnt from the Town and District Centres that will help in creating this initiative. They are:

- That the average grant given out has been in the region of £3,000, with only one applicant being awarded the maximum £5,000. It is there proposed that the maximum grant be reduced to £3,500.
- The majority of grants offered have been at a 50% intervention level in order to ensure a strong commitment from the tenant or property owner to the improvement works. It is therefore proposed that the maximum intervention level is set at 50%.

1.4.8 In addition, it is proposed that the locations set out under 1.4.2 will be treated as ‘priority areas’ for the fund.

1.4.9 In terms of eligible works, it is proposed that the same eligible works are retained as the Town and District Centres scheme, but with the addition of measures (both internally and externally) that reduce the carbon footprint of the applicant’s business. This would predominantly focus on a move to energy efficiency measures (heating and lighting). The reason for this additional criteria is to support the Borough Council’s aspiration to be carbon neutral by 2030.

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 Subject to the agreement of KCC, these initiatives would be funded through the Business Rates Retention Pilot Scheme.

1.7 Risk Assessment

- 1.7.1 Not applicable.

1.8 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.8.1 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 contents of this report **BE NOTED**.
- 1.9.2 That the proposal to close the Town and District Centres Commercial Frontages Scheme to new applications by the end of December 2019 **BE APPROVED**.
- 1.9.3 That permission to deliver a Local Centres and Parades Improvement Scheme **BE APPROVED** with a view to launching this initiative before the end of December 2019.

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
Manager

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive

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

04 September 2019

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 FAIRTRADE TONBRIDGE RENEWAL SUBMISSION

This report seeks endorsement to submit a renewal application to the Fairtrade Foundation for the renewal of Tonbridge's Fairtrade Town status.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Fairtrade is a trading partnership that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalised producers and workers. Fairtrade products are sold in over 22 countries across five continents. Helping to drive the Fairtrade movement and making international development a local issue are over 600 Fairtrade Towns in the UK and more than 2,000 across 18 countries worldwide.

1.1.2 In February 2018, the Economic Regeneration Advisory Board approved a resolution supporting a bid to secure Fairtrade Town status for Tonbridge. On 22 October 2018, the Fairtrade Foundation announced that the bid had been successful, stating:

"Congratulations on achieving Fairtrade Town status for Tonbridge. Doing so is a fantastic achievement, and it is not often that a town's initial application is already as strong and comprehensive as yours....We would like to emphasise how important it is that your group maintains momentum and keeps up the good work ...We look forward to hearing how your Fairtrade campaign has developed in your renewal application...."

1.1.3 Once a Fairtrade Town has been active for one-year, the Fairtrade Foundation requires the steering group to submit a renewal application to demonstrate that it is still active and undertaking a series of activities that support the Fairtrade Town status.

1.2 Fairtrade Tonbridge Renewal Submission

1.2.1 The Fairtrade Tonbridge Steering Group are required to submit a renewal application online by 22 October 2019 in order to maintain it's Fairtrade Town status for a further two year period (up until 22 October 2021).

1.2.2 The Fairtrade Foundation requires the following information to be provided:

- Steering Group and Members information
- Activities achieved to date, including business engagement, events and local press coverage
- Political Support from the Local Authority and Member of Parliament
- Action Plan setting out future activities

1.2.3 The following information will be provided in the renewal submission:

Steps	Lines of enquiry	Information to be provided
Steering Group and Members Information	Contact and Group Information	As administrative support, the Economic Regeneration Manager is currently the key contact. The group has seven members (2 from TMBC, 3 from faith groups, 1 business rep. and 1 schools rep) and meets every 2 months.
	Online Activity	Group does not have dedicated website or social media accounts at present but is supported by Tonbridge Town Team and TMBC websites and social media accounts.
	Willingness to engage with other Fairtrade Towns	Agree.
Activities Achieved to Date	No. of Businesses Engaged	12 Cafes and Restaurants 10 Supermarkets 9 Other Retailers
	No. of Local Organisations Engaged	3 Workplaces 3 Community Organisations 7 Places of Worship 1 College 6 Schools
	No. of Events Held or Taken Part in	Fairtrade Fortnight Activities - Speaker Event; Street Performances and Art Exhibition. Presence at monthly Farmers Market Food and Drink Festival (May 2019)

	Local Media/Press Coverage	6 articles in local papers and magazines since October 2018.
	Other Activities	Promotion at Tonbridge Station. Directory in the What's On Leaflet and Tonbridge Town Team website. Window Stickers Campaign for Shops selling Fairtrade produce.
Political Support	Local Authority (TMBC)	Passed a renewed resolution in February 2019 Provide administrative support to the steering group and Chairing of meetings. Provision of some seed funding for activities.
	Engagement with Political Representatives	The MP and his office have engaged proactively with the Steering Group on this agenda.
Action Plan	Possible Action Plan Ideas	Events – Fairtrade Fortnight events (lead) and look to have involvement in more Tonbridge Events where possible. Explore activities in local schools. Promotion – continue to use TMBC and Town Team websites, explore setting up of Facebook and Twitter accounts. Update local directory (with the aim of increased engagement) and continue with PR messaging. Steering Group – expansion of membership to include more business engagement.

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 issues arising from this report.

1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 Not applicable.

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 contents of this report **BE NOTED**.

1.7.2 That the draft submission as outlined in 1.2.3 **BE ENDORSED**

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
Manager

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive

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

04 September 2019

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 SKILLS AND WORK READINESS

This report provides an update on added-value activities that the council has been delivering under the 'skills and work readiness' agenda and proposes future activity that will help to meet the aims of the newly-adopted Economic Regeneration Strategy.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 A key part of the Economic Regeneration Strategy 2019-2023 is to support people of all ages into sustainable employment, or at least bring them closer to achieving employment. This work has a number of different strands, most notably:

- a) Working in schools to support business-relevant careers advice and improve links with local businesses
- b) Working with Jobcentre Plus and other employment support organisations to help local residents find employment and training opportunities
- c) Working with a large variety of community and charitable organisations to help local residents that are not currently work-ready to aim towards becoming more independent and confident, through activities such as the 'Help me Out' events

1.2 Working in Schools:

1.2.1 **West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network:** The Enterprise Adviser Network (EAN) is a national network that connects schools and colleges with employers and careers programme providers to work together to create meaningful encounters with the world of work for young people. The network is based on evidence that a young person who has four or more encounters with an employer is 86% less likely to be unemployed or not in education or training, and can earn up to 18% more during their career. However, many schools still do not offer young people this kind of encounter, and unemployment among young people is three times higher than overall unemployment.

1.2.2 The focus of the EAN is to therefore address this gap by bringing together employers, schools and colleges, and careers programme providers to:

- Give young people multiple opportunities to get to know the world of work, understand what work is, explore their options and build real confidence about their future.
- Bring the right people together to create strong connections between employers and careers programme providers and schools and colleges in ways that put young people's futures first.

1.2.3 Having launched in July 2017, the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network has gone from strength to strength. There are now 2 Enterprise Adviser Co-ordinators covering West Kent, enabling expansion in the capacity of the Network to involve all secondary schools, including all Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) schools and alternative provision. As of July 2019, 30 schools were in the network with 24 matched with an Enterprise Adviser (EA). Whilst there is a good supply of business volunteer EAs, care is being taken in making an appropriate match to a school.

1.2.4 To support the aims and objectives of the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network, there are a number of events and activities that have recently been delivered, or are planned for the near future:

- **West Kent Skillsfest:** Over 1000 students aged 14-19 from across 12 West Kent schools, and over 75 businesses, will be taking the opportunity to attend the West Kent Skillsfest 2019 at the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells on 8 October 2019. The aim of the event is to inspire young people as they plan their future careers and is a partnership initiative between West Kent schools, AXA PPP, and The West Kent Partnership (including TMBC).
- **Skills 3030** is an initiative set up by the Federation of Small Businesses to increase positive discussion between local businesses and students about careers paths and opportunities and to ensure that students benefit from business-relevant advice, and businesses have an opportunity to promote their sector to future employees. Since the first Skills 3030 event took place in West Kent at Hugh Christie Technology College in October 2017, a number of other schools have come on board to benefit from greater interaction with local businesses.

The format for the event is relatively simple - whilst students take part in an informative workshop on a careers-related topic, business owners get to find out about a 'hot topic' (such as how they could get involved in the West Kent Enterprise Advisor Network). Then both groups come together for an hour of facilitated speed-networking. The next Skills 3030 event in the Borough takes place in Hayesbrook on 25 September 2019, with a further event taking place in Holmesdale School in November 2019.

- **Employability Days:** in partnership with the Education Business Partnership Kent, the Borough Council has helped to deliver a number of whole day events in local schools that are aimed at helping students with work-readiness and providing information on local employment opportunities. The most recent event was held at the Holmesdale School on 04 April 2019 and involved 32 business volunteers working with Year 11s across 5 different business-related activity zones – these were an exhibition fair of local businesses, an interview room, and workshops on CV writing, interviews and teamwork. The feedback from students, teachers and local business volunteers was overwhelmingly positive. The next Employability Day is scheduled for the Malling School on 25 September 2019.

1.3 Helping Local Residents to Find Employment and Training Opportunities

- 1.3.1 **West Kent Jobs and Training Fair:** having delivered a successful Jobs and Training Fair in Tonbridge in March 2019, the next one is to take place on 05 September 2019 at the Assembly Halls, Tunbridge Wells. These events have now become a well-established part of the calendar of activity, and a key part of help given to local residents.
- 1.3.2 In addition, the Borough Council looks to deliver local jobs and training fairs. **The Aylesford Jobs and Training Fair** is taking place on 15 October 2019 at the Capel Morris Centre in Aylesford. This annual event was originally started in 2017 as a partnership between the Borough Council, RBLI and Jobcentre Plus and involved 23 local businesses and approximately 250 jobseekers. This partnership has now expanded to include Clarion Futures and Golding Homes, and will see approximately 30 local businesses and training providers meet approximately 300 jobseekers.
- 1.3.3 In addition to the stands, 2 workshops will take place during the event, both delivered by RBLI on the themes of ‘Self-Employment and Social Media’ and ‘The Hidden Jobs Market’.

1.4 ‘Help me Out Events’:

- 1.4.1 These events are aimed at local residents who are not ready for the world of work, and have issues in their life that they need to overcome in order to get their lives back on track. In May 2019, a ‘Help me Out’ event was held at Snodland. This was the first such event in Snodland and whilst the level of involvement from support organisations was good, turn-out from the public was lower than anticipated. However, following a debrief meeting with partners there is enthusiasm for doing a similar event next year.
- 1.4.2 In addition, there was also a ‘Help me Out’ event in Trench on 03 July 2019 at the Six-in-One Club. This was delivered by the Borough Council in partnership with Jobcentre Plus, Tonbridge Baptist Church, Clarion Housing and the Trench Partnership and attracted over 70 local residents. Further information is provided in Appendix 1.

1.5 Next Steps

1.5.1 The activities set out in this report will go a long way towards meeting, and in some cases exceeding, the actions set out in the Economic Regeneration Strategy Action Plan for 2019/20. However it is important that this momentum is maintained, and that work is undertaken to ensure that these events continue to deliver good outcomes for our local schools, residents and businesses.

1.5.2 It is proposed that all of these activities continue to be an established part of the work plan (and planning for activities in 2020/21 starts imminently), but that an amendment is made to increase the number of 'Help me Out' events delivered in our priority communities is increased from one per annum to a minimum of two per annum. In doing so, it is also proposed that some amendments to these events are considered, following feedback at the recent Trench event, including:

- Greater promotion of the event through the local health service and schools.
- Consideration to alternative venues to ensure accessibility for our various communities.
- More emphasis on healthy lifestyles

1.5.3 Any financial contribution towards this additional activity will be met through existing economic regeneration budgets.

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 no financial implications arising from the report.

1.7 Risk Assessment

1.7.1 Not applicable.

1.8 Equality Impact Assessment

1.8.1 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 proposals for 2020/21, as set out in section 1.5.2, **BE ENDORSED.**

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
Manager

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive

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

04 September 2019

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 WEST KENT PARTNERSHIP – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 JULY 2019

1.1 Key Matters Discussed

1.1.1 The full minutes of the recent meeting of the West Kent Partnership held on 5th July 2019 are attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

1.1.2 The key matters dealt with at the meeting include the following:

- (a) An update on the West Kent Scale Up programme which provides intense support for a cohort of 12 local businesses via business coaches who aim to help them grow. A local West Kent business, Ming Foods, based in Swanley, gave examples of how the support programme had assisted the company. There are 4 businesses in Tonbridge and Malling that are part of this first cohort, they are – Mereworth Wines, Newton Waterproofing Systems, Greensand Ridge Distillery and PH Project Services.
- (b) An update from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) focusing on the need for a Local Industrial Strategy to be delivered by the South East England LEP by the end of the year. Concern was expressed that the role of district councils would be side-lined given the size and scale of SELEP.
- (c) Further work is being led by Kent County Council regarding a Kent and Medway Enterprise and Productivity Strategy and an ongoing review of Commercial Land requirements across the County.
- (d) Publication of the updated West Kent Priorities for Growth document setting out West Kent's economic priorities for the area (Appendix 2).
- (e) Updates from the Federation of Local Businesses (FSB) including their programme of events for small and medium sized businesses across Kent and the ongoing work of the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network linking schools with local businesses.

1.2 Legal Implications

1.2.1 None

1.3 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.3.1 N/A

1.4 Risk Assessment

1.4.1 N/A

1.5 Policy Considerations

1.5.1 Economic Regeneration

Background papers:

Nil

contact: Jeremy Whittaker,
Economic Regeneration
Manager

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive

West Kent Partnership – 5 July 2019 – MINUTES

Present

Cllr Nicolas Heslop, TMBC
 Cllr Brian Luker, TMBC
 Cllr Peter Fleming, SDC
 Cllr Lesley Dyball, SDC
 Cllr Jane March, TWBC
 Cllr David Scott, TWBC
 William Benson, TWBC
 David Candlin, TWBC
 Hilary Smith, TWBC
 Mark Raymond, TMBC
 Iain McNab, BEIS
 Sarah Nurden, KMEP
 Alison Parmar, FSB
 Simon Harris, WK Enterprise Adviser Network
 Henry Warde, Squerryes
 Wendy Wood, WKP

Apologies

Catherine Brunger, AXA PPP
 Pav Ramewal, SDC
 Andrew Stirling, SDC
 David Joyner, KCC,
 Nigel Smith, KCC
 Tudor Price, KICC

Guests

Sam Duong, Ming Foods
 Damien Tree, Scale Up Coach
 David Smith, KCC
 Johanna Howarth, KCC

The Chairman welcomed new Partners, Cllrs Lesley Dyball and David Scott, and guests and expressed thanks to Partners who have stepped down, notably Cllrs Roddy Hogarth and Tracy Moore and Jacqui Ward who has retired from KCC.

1. Minutes & Matters Arising – actions covered in Agenda with exception of

Page 1 – Rural Support

Potential project to support farmers in light of Brexit and gradual scaling back and eventual loss of subsidies was discussed at the May West Kent Executive Leader Action Group meeting. The session was facilitated by Stuart Gibbons. It was agreed to use the £25K budget from Business Rates Retention funds to promote all support available to rural businesses including a new round of EAFRD funding. Also to deliver a programme of 1:1 support to drive change in businesses and to bring forward a pipeline of projects for any forthcoming programme under UK Shared Prosperity Fund. There was an aspiration to use funds to lever in additional funding if possible. Group to review proposals and agree timings at a future meeting once further details are known of EAFRD programme and consultation timings for UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Page 4 – Possible sources of seed funding - this is still being explored

2. West Kent Scale Up – Sam Duong, Ming Foods

Sam's business, based in Swanley is one of 12 in West Kent participating in the Scale Up programme providing 36 hours of coaching support. The programme is now half way through

the 12 month period and is delivered by Kent Invicta Chamber with support from West Kent Partnership, Growth Hub and South East Business Boost.

Ming Foods manufacture Chinese pancakes and export all over the world. Growth has been 15% on last year with predictions of 10% growth for next 2 years. Currently a £2M turnover business but with the capacity to grow to £10M with the right investment in skills and infrastructure. Business curtailed by facilities of trading estate where based and reliant on a generator which needs replacing.

Sam outlined the benefits that access to the Scale Up Programme has brought to his business which include:

- Mechanism by which team can share in the smooth running of a business
- External coach can bring a different dimension to the same information that could be provided from within the business but received in a different way
- On line framework has goals and metrics developed from within the business and staff are accountable for their own goals – providing a common strand in a busy environment
- Monthly email reminder to all involved to update against monthly goals – continuing monitoring of progress is valuable to the business
- Feedback through the monitoring process is anonymous from members of the team and is a useful barometer on staff morale and motivation
- Overall annual goal set from within the team helping to steer the business with its scale up ambitions
- Supported frameworks for different types of challenges business may face such as skills, resources and infrastructure
- Uncertainty in market place makes it difficult to both run and grow a business but Scale Up promotes and supports entrepreneurial mindset

Sevenoaks Economic Development Team providing good support to the business and adding value to the Scale Up offer. Partners offered help to mitigate risk and capitalise on opportunities by identifying external advisers to bring additional skills and motivate staff. Sam welcomed all opportunities to share ideas and network. He is investing in staff, one example of which is a supervisor within the business who is now undertaking a higher level apprenticeship in Leadership and Management. Sam is an innovator and has a belief in collaboration and learning from best practice and is fully involved in the Kent manufacturing programme.

There was some discussion around Kent & Medway Business Fund and the value it can add to a business such as Ming Foods in helping to finance replacement of vital machinery which helps the business to operate more effectively.

Action: Partners to liaise through Wendy on any introductions that may be helpful to Sam or any other of the Scale Up Businesses

all

West Kent Scale Up – Damien Tree, Coach

Damien is working with a number of the Scale Up businesses, although not with Ming Foods. He identified areas where as a Coach he can add value beyond Scale Up coaching such as

- Helping to create a business plan

- Signposting to support for niche specialisms
- Making link to district economic development teams for support on premises, funding applications and all regulatory services
- Linking to funding and other support available through Growth Hub and managing expectations around application processes

Action – mechanism to be agreed with KICC to ensure that Coaches are aware of all potential areas of support outside of Chamber offer

WW

Action: Scale Up progress to be included in KICC update Paper to next Partnership Meeting and full evaluation report to Partners at end of the 12 month programme.

TP

3.

Government Priorities – Iain McNab, BEIS

A paper powerpoint was circulated and is attached to these Minutes. Iain highlighted key areas for WKP to consider

- SELEP’s Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) is to be submitted by end of the year, informed by KMEP Enterprise & Productivity Strategy and by work at District Level. Task for SELEP due to its size and complexity is to produce a Strategy which speaks at County level within SELEP but is also coherent with National priorities and identifies common issues and challenges across the SELEP area
- LEPs need to focus their LIS on the 5 foundations of productivity – Ideas, People, Infrastructure, Business Environment and Places.
- Whilst LIS’s are not bidding documents it is expected that UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will reference LIS priorities in allocating funding
- SELEP to remain

Partners made the following points on Government Priorities

- Disappointment on outcome of Stronger Towns Fund bids and point made that if Funds had been split proportionately across LEP populations there would have been a significant opportunity across the LEP to enhance our retail centres.
- Metrics for delivering growth with a focus on jobs and houses, doesn’t provide a mechanism to support growth in West Kent where the focus is more on rural economy and high tech growth such as at NIAB EMR.
- Suggestion that going forward rather than bidding pots it makes sense to focus on the 5 Foundations and allocate money on a per capita basis to LEPs to ensure delivery against the 5 foundations of productivity
- Concern that outcome of LEP review will see Districts and their important functions including housing and planning, completely unrepresented on SELEP
- Difficulty understanding BEIS view that Federated parts of SELEP happy with status quo

4.

Kent & Medway Enterprise & Productivity Strategy (EPS) – Johanna Howarth, KCC

Johanna updated Partners on the rationale behind the Strategy and timeframe for delivery

- Strategy will inform SELEP LIS which is to be produced in the next 6 months but will also provide a story for a 2050 vision for Kent & Medway which recognises local distinctiveness, tells a strong story and is action based

- Strategy will provide a sense of where Kent & Medway can add value at SELEP level and what focus needs to be at federated level
- Evidence base now being finalised by Arup, supported by a Kent & Medway Steering Group and informed by stakeholder engagement
- Strategy will link to funding landscape and set out clear strategic cases for investment across Kent & Medway including the need for investment in NIAB EMR
- Early draft will be shared with Partners including Leaders, Chief Executives and district officers

Partners' observations on Kent & Medway included the following

- Brand consultancy could be beneficial to identify a strong message
- Relationship with London – pros and cons – an integral part of story with West Kent residents contributing intellectual capital to London economy.
- Diverse area with different stories, innovation key theme, need to develop cohesive story
- Need to balance prosperity with identifying opportunities and the need for investment
- Don't lose sight that there are areas in West Kent that are far from prosperous
- Message on area is for those outside looking in
- Delivering value in West Kent but not in terms of jobs or housing growth – therefore difficult to access Government funding
- Need for infrastructure investment is a national issue

5. Kent Commercial Land Assessment – David Smith, KCC

The first stage of the work from Cushing & Wakefield was effectively a desk exercise but failed to address availability of appropriate buildings as well as commercial land. Concluded that there was a technical land oversupply of 3 times the market demand. Next stage of work now being commissioned which will link to the EPS and provide an in depth review of commercial property market including industrial, flexible, storage and office space. The consultants will liaise closely with economic development officers and planners so that the work reflects the diversity of actual business requirements.

Partners commented on the pressing need for appropriate premises, citing Ming Foods as an example of a business operating from an industrial park but having to rely on a generator.

6. West Kent Priorities for Economic Growth – Wendy Wood

- New Strategy and flyer now available as pdfs
[West Kent Economic Priorities for Growth V3](#)
[WKP leaflet 2019](#)
- Strategy organised around 5 themes of productivity – Ideas, People, Infrastructure, Business Environment and Place to provide a clear link to National and Local Industrial Strategies
- First quarterly update reporting progress on action plan supplied with Agenda
- Observation made around importance of Skills to local economy and the need to retain FE provision.
- **Action: Hadlow Group Principal to be invited to update Partners at October meeting**

WW

7. West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network – Simon Harris

The Chairman welcomed Jason Akintoye to the team (in his absence) who joined in April as the second Enterprise Coordinator expanding the capacity of the Network in West Kent to include all Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) schools and alternative provision.

Current work programme includes

- Promoting apprenticeships and working towards a West Kent programme for apprentices that caters for career pathways from level 3 to graduate in generic skills such as project management
- 30 schools now in Network, 24 of which are matched with an Enterprise Adviser (EA). Good supply of business volunteer EAs but care needs to be taken in making an appropriate match to a school. All mainstream schools in West Kent have now been offered the opportunity to be matched with an EA.
- Schools now have to identify a link Governor for Careers and work is underway to link Governors more closely with Schools Career's Lead and EA
- Case studies are being developed and will be used as the basis of stories for the local press
- Strategy for next year is to keep process focused and simple and achieve Government targets for the Network

Partners commented on the impact the Network is having in West Kent and the huge value in developing relationships with both schools and businesses. Credit also given to the Economic Development Officers who support Network colleagues

8. FSB – Alison Parmar

- Over 30 events bringing 600 businesses together have been facilitated across Kent in the last 6 months. These included
 - Be the Business round table event to provide training to increase productivity and digital capability
- Autumn/winter calendar of events will include around 5 events per month – including networking and events based around skills agenda and women in enterprise. Specific events include
 - 3 October – Mental Health and Finance Conference
 - 4 October – first Kent & Medway Graduation Ceremony for Kent apprentices at Rochester Cathedral
- *Small Business, Big Heart* report focuses on what SMEs bring to their communities, measured in terms of contribution to GVA, employing a diverse and flexible workforce and undertaking charity and volunteering work locally
- *A Force for Business* – event in Tunbridge Wells for Armed Forces Day to facilitate practical ways for businesses to find staff
- Skills 30/30 has been a huge success in Kent with over 1000 participants to date – the businesses that engage with the initiative generally go on to develop ongoing relationships with the school and other participating businesses
- Quarterly survey – *Small Business Index* - shows confidence is on the slide with 72% of respondents not planning on increasing investment. Operating costs, including business rates and labour costs are high and Government legislation burdensome for small businesses

- FSB has produced a Welsh Towns Report which looks at whole High Street picture – including cohesion, civic, infrastructure, colleges, schools and skills. A potential good model for looking at South East. FSB also running 2 High Street campaigns to support small retailers

Discussion followed on how business rates may be retained in future for local government to deliver core services such as health and social care. This will tie hands of local government in how flexible they can be around business rates locally.

9. KMEP – Sarah Nurden

- SELEP Governance – 2 working groups are looking at composition – real concern that review proposals will mean that SELEP Board will have no District representation.
- Funding – investment panel met recently, J5 M2 received funding. Bad round for West Kent
- Growing Places Fund has up to £220m of loan funding for reinvestment so another round to be announced.
- SELEP AGM 17 July

10. AOB - None

11. Next Meetings – all 10-12, outlook invitations to be sent

- 4 October 2019
- 17 January 2020
- 17 April 2020
- 10 July 2020
- 9 October 2020

West Kent Economic Priorities for Growth 2019-22



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Foreword

West Kent has a long history of collaborative working and the Partnership has been delivering benefits for the area since 2001. West Kent has many shared themes and issues and through various iterations of economic strategies the Partnership continues to work successfully for its businesses and residents. We demonstrably deliver benefits to the local economy on small amounts of funding. We also deliver jobs for residents from elsewhere in Kent and make a very positive contribution to the wider Kent Economy.

West Kent Economic Priorities for Growth builds on the achievements of earlier strategies, in particular focusing on the delivery of projects which will make a difference to the business environment and quality of life in the area, building on the strong sense of place and playing to the strengths of our innovative small businesses.

The Government's Industrial Strategy aims to create an economy that boosts productivity and earning power throughout the UK and outlines five foundations of productivity. Our Strategy is based on these five foundations with actions to deliver the conditions to increase productivity in West Kent. This Strategy is intended to make the case for much needed investment into the area to facilitate business innovation and growth and afford our businesses some of the advantages enjoyed by their peers elsewhere where proximity to universities and higher levels of public and private investment provides a framework for growth. Enabling West Kent to deliver similar levels of productivity to bring it in line with other areas adjacent to the M25 and with neighbouring Surrey will bring greater strength and resilience not only to West Kent but to Kent as a whole.



Nicolas Heslop, Chairman, West Kent Partnership



Tonbridge Castle

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LONDON



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KEY

-  WEST KENT
-  EAST KENT
-  NORTH KENT

West Kent

About West Kent

West Kent comprises the boroughs of Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge & Malling as well as Sevenoaks District. These areas share many characteristics, which make for a strong West Kent identity. Much of the area is designated as Greenbelt or within the Kent Downs/High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, delivering a high quality of life but resulting in restrictions on development.

Royal Tunbridge Wells is a regional retail, cultural and commercial centre and Kings Hill is a thriving office cluster. The area has a number of market town hubs servicing a predominantly rural economy the largest of which are Sevenoaks and Tonbridge.

With close proximity to London, house prices in the area are the highest in Kent but local businesses benefit from the wealth earned outside of the area.

West Kent has excellent primary and secondary schools and a further education facility but no university campus to retain and attract young talent and support innovation in local businesses.

Whilst largely prosperous, there are pockets of deprivation which, when aggregated, represent a small but significant population facing challenges around housing, skills and worklessness.

West Kent has a strong sense of place, with residents and businesses alike proud to be based in a beautiful and historic country landscape but with excellent connectivity to London and the Coast and on to Europe.

West Kent Economy

West Kent is a well-functioning economic area and plays a vital role in promoting and sustaining the Kent economy as a whole. It has historically enjoyed strong job growth and is forecast to continue to do so with good prospects for securing economic growth over the next 20 years. West Kent has the highest proportion of business start-ups in Kent and a

stronger representation of higher value, knowledge-based industries than anywhere else in Kent. The area provides significant employment to those living elsewhere in Kent including high skilled, well paid jobs.

However, future growth in the West Kent economy is constrained by high land values, a shortage of available development land, full employment, lack of investment in infrastructure and congestion on our transport networks. Whilst the West Kent economy is one of the best performing sub-regions of Kent, it under-performs compared to many other areas adjacent to the M25. West Kent provides a significant number of jobs for residents outside of West Kent.

There is a significant rate of churn within the West Kent economy with high levels of business births and medium to high level of business deaths. The five-year survival rate for businesses stands at around 45% which is consistent with Kent and Nationally.

The datasets¹ accompanying The State of Small Business report² (NESTA/SAGE 2017) show that 90% of the West Kent economy comprises micro-businesses with a total number of SMEs of over 18000. The strongest SME sectors by both employment and turnover are:

- Professional, scientific and technical (11900, £1855K)
- Business administration and support (8428, £1465K)
- Construction (8055, £1517K)
- Production (7208, £968K)
- Wholesale (5693, £2209K)

The data sets show that West Kent productivity levels are the highest in the County along with Dartford but local variations in productivity are significant even across West Kent. This could be attributable to the gain or loss of large, highly-productive SMEs. Care therefore needs to be taken in interpreting the productivity indicator in isolation.

Across West Kent more than 20% of jobs are in the knowledge economy, compared to 15% in Kent as a whole. Investment in supporting growth in the knowledge economy in particular has the potential to contribute to increased productivity.

¹ <http://stateofsmallbiz.com/about>

² <http://stateofsmallbiz.com/downloads/the-state-of-small-business.pdf>

The knowledge economy is seen as a key driver for economic growth in the UK. The industries that fall within this sub-set of the economy are the ones that deal extensively with the processing, exchange and communication of information and knowledge. They are likely to have a high dependency on technology and provide highly skilled and technical jobs. They are also likely to contribute a higher level of “value added” to the economy (a higher level of output per head). Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells district are within the top 20% of GB local authorities with the highest concentration of Knowledge Economy jobs³.

	SDC	TMBC	TWBC	Kent
GVA per head 2017 ⁴	£26,870	£29,606	£30,679	£23,149
SME Productivity * ⁵	£144,511	£287,980	£132,419	-
% NVQ level 4+ 2018 ⁶	39.6%	35.2%	40.2%	33.6%
Workplace median weekly wage 2018 ⁷	£543	£536	£515	£522

The West Kent economy both benefits and suffers from proximity to London. Large numbers of residents commute to London taking high level skills away from the local economy. However, local businesses benefit from the additional spending power and their operating costs are lower than in London. House prices are the highest in Kent, reflecting easy access to London, but pricing many young local employees out of the market.

The Economic Vibrancy Index published by Grant Thornton in 2018 provides an overview of economic performance encapsulating some of the broader indicators of economic success – Prosperity, Dynamism and Opportunity, Inclusion and Equality, Health, Wellbeing and Happiness, Resilience and Sustainability and Community, Trust and Belonging – to create an overall vibrancy ranking for each district. Overall the West

Kent districts rank in the top 25% of local authorities on an average of all indicators.

West Kent has a strong culture of entrepreneurship. Some of these are lifestyle businesses reflecting proximity to London. We have a highly skilled resident workforce, many of whom commute to London. The area also provides employment for those living elsewhere in other parts of Kent (and East Sussex). Net commuting in 2015 totalled 11,700 people.

The West Kent economy has traditionally been regarded as the ‘power-house’ economy in Kent. To continue competing and growing, it is vital that we build on our areas of strength and face up to growing challenges which could impede economic prosperity and well-being.

³ The Knowledge Economy, October 18 https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/8194/Redefining-the-knowledge-economy.pdf

⁴ https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/8187/Kent-economic-indicators-report.pdf April 2019 (2017)

⁵ <https://www.nesta.org.uk/blog/launching-the-state-of-small-business-report/>

⁶ https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/8187/Kent-economic-indicators-report.pdf

⁷ https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/8187/Kent-economic-indicators-report.pdf



West Kent Partnership

The West Kent Partnership is the strategic economic partnership covering the local authority areas of Tonbridge and Malling, Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells. The three local authorities work closely together to make the most of the financial and other resources available to them in order to deliver more for local businesses. The Partnership has been successful in obtaining funding for a number of programmes, such as West Kent LEADER and the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network.

The Partnership promotes West Kent, champions key economic issues, engages with industry and business and pursues external funding opportunities for our local economy.

As a public-private sector Partnership of some 17 years standing, we seek

- Add value to the economic delivery of our local authority partners;
- Act as a voice for West Kent on funding and other shared issues; and
- Deliver business engagement and support initiatives.

As an established, productive and progressive partnership the West Kent Partnership is able to deliver a real benefit in representing the shared themes and issues both within and outside of West Kent. The Partnership is able to extend the reach of any of the constituent local authorities and brings greater weight and influence where needed. Examples of this include accessing LGF funding for key infrastructure projects; identifying local priorities for the Pilot Business Rates Retention scheme in Kent and linking through the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.

The West Kent Partnership has delivered a number of notable successes since West Kent Priorities for Growth 2015-18 was published including:

- Securing funding to deliver a second West Kent LEADER programme
- Funding the ongoing West Kent Business Support service and working

with Partners to provide an extended programme through South East Business Boost (SEBB);

- Securing a West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network;
- Delivering the West Kent Jobs & Training Fairs and Skillsfest events; and
- Partnering on an annual West Kent business event.

Our vision for West Kent is to sustain a dynamic and well-connected local economy, to ensure that West Kent remains a key location for business success and growth and that our local population has access to quality jobs and skills development.

Policy Context

This Strategy focuses on developing the shared themes and issues for West Kent and links closely to the three Economic Development Strategies of the local authorities all of which have undergone review during 2018.

Regionally and sub-regionally the strategy is aligned with SELEP Strategic Economic Plan, KMEP's Unlocking the Potential: Going for Growth, Kent & Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework and Kent Adult Skills Strategy. The West Kent pages of the Kent & Medway Growth & Infrastructure Framework have been drawn on, as have West Kent authority data sets from KCC and SELEP's Skills Strategy. The work being undertaken on the Kent & Medway Enterprise & Productivity Strategy will provide valuable data and insight and inform future iterations of our Priorities for Growth.

At a national level, the opportunity has been taken to structure the West Kent Strategy as a local Industrial Strategy, with a view to creating the right interventions at a local level to increase productivity as the key objective.

Strengths

- Strong base of highly skilled labour
- Proximity to London, M25 and Europe
- Embedded and successful sub county partnership and strong LEP alignment
- High quality of life, cultural and leisure facilities
- Vibrant key sectors
- Resilient SME sector
- Good business start-up rates with high survival rates
- Strong visitor economy
- Consistently low levels of unemployment
- High quality rural landscape and AONB
- Good quality primary and secondary schools
- Recent investments delivered (e.g. A21 dualling, Peters Pit, Tonbridge Town Centre) and plans for further significant investment (e.g. Tunbridge Wells Theatre/civic centre, Leigh Expansion and Hildenborough Embankments Scheme)

Opportunities

- Low level investment can unlock high levels of local growth
- Strong entrepreneurial culture
- Access to business support programmes – e.g. Kent & Medway Business Fund, LEADER, South East Business Boost
- Development of supported business premises around key sectors
- Potential to optimize Apprenticeship Levy to address skills shortages
- Potential for Higher Education expansion
- Active business community
- Possible Brexit opportunities
- Develop Higher/Degree Level Apprenticeships offer
- Provision of flexible workspace
- Technology/AI

Weaknesses

- Traditional economic strengths under erosion
- Lower GVA than comparable areas around M25
- Pockets of deprivation that can fall below radar
- Limited Higher Education facilities
- Small number of large employers
- High house prices causing recruitment issues
- High levels of out commuting for work
- Shortage of good quality sites and premises for business use and expansion
- Traffic congestion in urban areas
- Planning and environmental constraints
- Rural broadband infrastructure incomplete
- Skills retention issues
- Local resistance to change
- Limited rural public transport services and poor evening services

Threats

- Lack of capacity in strategic road and rail networks
- Competition from other areas for funding infrastructure
- High local house prices and need for additional affordable housing
- Aging population
- High commuting costs, service and reliability issues
- Need for higher skilled jobs
- Pressure for residential development over employment uses
- Possible impact of Brexit on business confidence to invest and availability of labour in some sectors
- Climate Change challenges
- Technology/AI



Tunbridge Wells Pantiles

Objectives

The Key Objectives of the West Kent Partnership are to:

- Deliver a dynamic and well-connected economy;
- Become a key location for business growth where businesses are supported to innovate and thrive; and
- Ensure our local population has access to high quality jobs and opportunities for skills development.

We will support our businesses to maintain and enhance productivity through five themes:

- **Ideas:** Securing investment and funding to underpin innovation and growth

People: Delivering the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network to secure our future workforce and championing training and inclusivity in the workplace

Infrastructure: Representing the need for infrastructure and transport investment for West Kent at a local, county and regional level

- **Business environment:** Delivering an environment that supports start-ups and stimulates growth
- **Place:** Engendering a strong West Kent sense of place with vibrant town centres and a sustainable rural environment. Quality of life maintained and enhanced with a balanced approach to development and equal opportunity for all

Ideas

1 Securing investment and funding to underpin innovation and growth

Although West Kent benefits from a research Institute (NIAB EMR) and some Higher Education provision through The Hadlow Group, there is no University campus located in the area to act as an innovation

hub. Opportunities to access research and development facilities, and attract undergraduate or post-graduate talent to the area are therefore limited at present.

1.1 Greater access to Higher Education Provision

In order for businesses to secure a talent pipeline and to benefit from closer links with universities, greater access to Higher Education provision is a key priority for this strategy. The Partnership is committed to working with potential Higher Education partners, alongside The Hadlow Group to increase the provision in West Kent and to support the expansion of the number of degree level courses being delivered through The Hadlow Group. Opportunities to deliver an additional campus facility, possibly an expansion of the Canterbury Christchurch University campus in Tunbridge Wells will be explored as will the potential to develop a cohesive degree level apprenticeship offer across the area.

1.2 Business access to innovation investment facilitated

We need to ensure that our businesses can benefit from both public and private sector investment offers. Communicating the availability of various schemes is a key role for the Partnership, as is fostering relationships with innovation leader enterprises in West Kent. The Partnership will seek to work collaboratively with organisations such as NIAB EMR at the East Malling Research Station to bring forward inward investment.

1.3 Business access to innovation support facilitated

Given the lack of a University, ensuring businesses have access to innovation support is a challenge for the area and the Partnership will work with Canterbury Christ Church University to deliver local access to this specialised type of support with an aspiration to secure a Kent & Medway Engineering, Design, Growth and Enterprise (EDGE) hub in West Kent.

People

2 People – Delivering the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network to secure our future workforce and championing training and inclusivity in the workplace

2.1 Work Ready Young People

Delivering on a key objective from West Kent Priorities for Growth 2015-18, the Partnership is at the heart of better collaboration between business and schools to bring forward work-ready young people. Since September 2017 the Partnership has co-funded an Enterprise Coordinator with the Hadlow Group and Careers & Enterprise Company to establish an Enterprise Adviser Network linking young people with local business and generating meaningful encounters with the world of work. The target network size of 20 schools matched with 20 business people has now been achieved and work is underway on consolidating the Network and extending the reach of its activities. It is a priority to extend the Network in West Kent so that all mainstream and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) schools can benefit from an Enterprise Adviser.

The West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network Steering Group is a forum through which an innovative approach to apprenticeship delivery in West Kent can be driven and opportunities explored to deliver initiatives to broaden the horizons of young people and, where appropriate, retain their skills and talent in the local labour force.

Other initiatives to engage and support young people and to raise career aspirations will be delivered through the Network. These will include

- the continuation of an annual Skillsfest event attended by some 1200 year 9-12 every year and supported by around 50+ mainly local employers
- working with partners to support world of work experiences and

initiatives throughout West Kent Schools such as the Federation of Small Business 30:30 model

- working with Partners such as Gatwick Airport to deliver a STEM (Science Technology, Engineering and Maths) event

2.2 Young adults attracted and retained in the local economy

Large numbers of West Kent students leave the area post A Level to study elsewhere. The Partnership plans to adopt a role in promoting awareness of degree level apprenticeships to young people and employers so that we can grow our own graduates and supply local businesses with the skills they need.

Initiatives will also be explored to encourage graduates to live and work in the area.

2.3 Adults supported to be economically active and provided with opportunities to reskill

Improving workforce skills leads to increased productivity and business growth. A critical part of boosting productivity in the area is empowering the workforce and potential workforce to become competent in the area of digital skills. Digital skills have been identified in the Industrial Strategy as a key area for development if businesses are to benefit from the advances in technology. The House of Lords has stated that digital skills should be taught as a third core subject, and treated with the same importance as numeracy and literacy⁸. One definition of digital literacy is ‘the ability to find, evaluate, utilize, share and create content using information technologies and the Internet’⁹. The West Kent Partnership will support businesses to upskill their staff in this area by signposting to national digital skills initiatives such as the Digital Business Academy and will continue to work with partners to deliver workshops and events on digital skills.

West Kent has near full employment and vacant jobs to be filled. With increasing use of automation the balance could start to shift. Equipping the current workforce with digital skills so that they can

work alongside and with automated processes is one way to help mitigate the impact in terms of potential jobs lost in the future. Working with young people through the Enterprise Adviser Network, we are able to make them aware that the jobs of tomorrow may not exist yet and encourage the development of skillsets that will be transferable and flexible in the future.

The Partnership will continue to work with Jobcentre Plus to bring forward two West Kent Jobs and Training Fairs per year and work

closely with the National Careers Service to identify opportunities locally to support adults in their career choices.

New Initiatives will be explored to support those who are economically inactive including those in disadvantaged groups and young people, building on the Tunbridge Wells 'Working Families Everywhere' project and linking to the SEND focus of the expanded West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network.



⁸ UK Parliament, Select Committee on Digital Skills Report, Make or Break: The UK's Digital Future, 2015.

⁹ <https://digitalliteracy.cornell.edu/>

Infrastructure

3 Representing the need for infrastructure and transport investment for West Kent at a local, county and regional level

The West Kent Partnership Infrastructure and Transport Group includes representatives from rail and bus operators, county strategic planners, district planners and draws in colleagues/organisations on an ad hoc basis to address infrastructure and transport issues for the area.

3.1 Transport infrastructure fit for purpose and with East-West links enhanced

The Infrastructure and Transport Group informs the West Kent Partnership so that appropriate lobbying activity can be put in place to work towards mitigating the impact of delays and congestion on the roads and providing better rail connections and capacity for commuters, residents and businesses alike. As well as major strategic transport issues the group also addresses public transport and sustainable transport and will be working collaboratively to improve the active travel offer in West Kent.

The Partnership, through the Infrastructure and Transport Group will link with SELEP, KCC and Highways England to identify a pipeline of potential projects to support key transport infrastructure including highways and rail.

3.2 5G broadband to be in place where deliverable and solutions for rural connectivity where not.

High quality broadband infrastructure is a key component of a productive economy and the Partnership will work with other organisations to deliver innovative solutions to this issue enabling our rural businesses to remain competitive in a digital world and for residents to take advantage of flexible and agile working opportunities and work effectively from home.

3.3 Adequate flood defences in place to protect homes and businesses

This Strategy has an ambition to secure funding to ensure adequate flood defences are in place to protect homes and businesses and the WKP will be working with partners towards delivering this for the areas around Leigh and East Peckham.

Business environment

4 Business environment – Delivering an environment that supports start-ups and stimulates growth

4.1 More High Growth Businesses

West Kent businesses have already demonstrated an appetite for growth through the high take up of the Escalate funding programme in the area. Building on this success, a Scale Up programme is being delivered in partnership with Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce to deliver intensive, bespoke support to targeted businesses that have the potential to create jobs and wealth and increase productivity.

4.2 Commercial space delivered for business growth

All three authorities recognise that a shortage of commercial space is currently restricting inward investment and local business growth. Space to attract businesses to West Kent is needed, just as start-ups working from home, other microbusinesses and SMEs will flourish more readily with appropriate grow on space. We will work with private investors and local councils to bring forward suitable space to support growth at every level.

4.3 Support programme available to start ups and established businesses

The West Kent Partnership has a long history of delivering business support to our local businesses which will continue alongside promoting the support available to business through the Kent and Medway Growth Hub. The West Kent support programme

comprises advice to start ups and microbusinesses, delivery of the SEBB programme, grant support through West Kent LEADER and signposting/facilitating access to County, LEP and national support and funding.

4.4 Regular communication/networking between WKP/Councils and business

Facilitating business networking is a proven way of stimulating local collaboration. The Partnership will continue to work with Partners to deliver, support and promote events and utilise social media and other communication channels to keep businesses informed of opportunities.

Ongoing business engagement events will continue to be delivered in order to understand the key areas of concern to our businesses. The Partnership will continue to work with partners such as the Chambers of Commerce and FSB to canvas the views of their members.

West Kent businesses are well placed to benefit from our proximity to Gatwick Airport and Gatwick Diamond businesses and we will look to facilitate collaboration and supply chain opportunities.

The Partnership also has a role to play in signposting businesses to the service available through Better Business for All and in promoting business funding opportunities as they become available.

4.5 Support the Rural Economy

Stimulating growth and innovation in the rural economy remains a priority. The current West Kent LEADER programme has supported 30 projects, created 45 jobs, awarded grants totalling £1.1 million and drawn investment into the area of nearly £3 million. The land based sector in particular faces significant challenges around access to labour and the cost of automation and it is essential that there is a smooth transition to support for rural businesses through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund as the current programme draws to a close. The Partnership will allocate funding to providing an ongoing business support offer to rural businesses during this transition period, designed to help them access other available funding streams.

Support will also be provided to traditional agricultural industries to help them become more resilient during the seven-year transition period as direct payments are phased out following the Agriculture Bill 2018.



Place

5. Place: Engendering a strong West Kent sense of place with vibrant town centres and a sustainable rural environment. Quality of life maintained and enhanced with a balanced approach to development and equal opportunity for all

West Kent is a great place to live with a high quality landscape, historic built environment, full employment, easy access to London and a strong sense of place. Many organisations define their geographic scope as West Kent and residents identify with the sub-region.

5.1 Key locations for growth brought forward

Previous West Kent Priorities for Growth strategies focused on key locations for growth and enabling them to be brought forward for appropriate and sustainable development. This work will continue and priority projects will be identified and work undertaken to secure funding and other support for their delivery. Locations include

- NIAB East Malling Research
- Peters Village – commercial and community facilities
- Swanley – mixed use redevelopment of Bevan Place and 27-37 High Street
- Fort Halstead – employment led redevelopment scheme
- Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre
 - Calverley Square
 - The Amelia (Cultural and Learning Hub)
 - Other town centre projects

5.2 Sustainable Housing Development

Planning constraints preserve the high quality landscape but this has implications for bringing forward housing numbers to meet the needs of the local population and balancing this with preserving the supply of employment land and sites. House prices are high due to these

constraints and proximity to London pricing many younger people out of the area. These planning issues are addressed through the three Local Plans and the West Kent Partnership will work to support the development of the new Local Plans for the West Kent authorities.

5.3 Vibrant town centres incorporating integrated office, retail, leisure and residential units

West Kent's vitality is dependent on having vibrant town centres which are focussed around a modern model of integrated office, retail, cultural, leisure and residential uses. Supporting those towns to build a mixed offer through various initiatives and investments is a priority for the well-being of the local economy.

The business rate retention pilot focuses on supporting town centre vitality and the West Kent scheme provides support for both specific larger developments and more bespoke support to town centre teams. In Sevenoaks the District Council is keen to support the economic growth of Swanley Town Centre by introducing new residential and commercial uses in the town sites it owns at Bevan Place and in the High Street.

Tonbridge & Malling will be bringing forward a Town and District Centres Improvement Programme focusing on improving their vitality and viability and including a commercial (retail) frontages grant scheme, Tonbridge Town Centre initiatives (including the creation of a pop-up shop) and an initiative focused on delivering additional tourist promotion for the Malling Centres.

Royal Tunbridge Wells will support the new Calverley Place development which includes a new 1,200 seat theatre, 6,000m² new office space and 258 car parking spaces. This development will deliver 152 jobs and a high quality public realm including a new public square, enhanced entrance to Calverley Grounds and a public roof terrace. Other town centre initiatives will see Royal Tunbridge Wells with a Business Improvement District from 1 April 2019, which will focus on

four key themes, prioritised by local businesses including: Business support, events, promotion & marketing and transport & access.

West Kent has rich tourism assets with a wealth of historic properties, a growing cultural offer and beautiful market towns, villages and countryside. Encouraging greater length of stay and spend across a range of associated local businesses will be facilitated/directed through joint working between Visit Kent and the three local authorities, supported by the West Kent Partnership.

5.4 Opportunities through proximity to London exploited

West Kent enjoys many advantages through its proximity to London but our businesses could build better networks and benefit from strengthened supply chain opportunities through the Partnership facilitating relationships with London based businesses and organisations. We have strong links within Kent and throughout the South East LEP area but it would be beneficial to explore greater links to London.

5.5 Levels of deprivation reduced in priority wards

Looking at West Kent from outside, it can be easy to overlook the pockets of deprivation in what is largely an affluent community. The focus that develops from the emerging KCC Enterprise & Productivity Strategy will help to inform addressing this priority in West Kent. Local authorities deliver various initiatives to improve the quality of life and to reduce deprivation in terms of housing, health and welfare and the West Kent Partnership will support these and seek to identify funding to deliver joint initiatives across the area.

GB's Grand Challenges

The Industrial Strategy identifies developments in technology that are set to transform industries and societies around the world and the Government is taking a strategic lead in supporting the development of new technologies to position the UK at the forefront of the industries of the future. Four Grand Challenges have been identified.

- Putting the UK at the forefront of the artificial intelligence and data revolution
- Maximising the advantages for UK industry from the global shift to clean growth
- Being a world leader in shaping the future of mobility and
- Harnessing the power of innovation to help meet the needs of an ageing society

The Government called on the Nation for ideas to tackle these challenges and now a series of themed missions are being rolled out and further public engagement on the Challenges will be undertaken.

The West Kent Partnership has a role to play in doing what we can to position our local economy to contribute to the Grand Challenges.

We will work towards putting mechanisms in place to enable our businesses to access funding and support to deliver innovative solutions to GB's Grand Challenges



NEPICAR PARK
A **Gallagher** Development

Future Trends West Kent Economy

Working patterns

As working patterns change with many more commuters now working several days a week from home and choosing to work hours to suit them, this should impact positively on over-stretched rail services and could create a demand for more flexible workspace in West Kent. This in turn has the potential to encourage new collaborations and business start-ups.

Brexit

Uncertainty around our future outside of the European Union constitutes a very real threat to the future vitality of significant sectors in the economy such as rural, retail, hospitality and tourism where many workers are single Europeans living in houses of multiple occupation. A trend has begun for these workers to leave as sterling devalues and uncertainty looms. With employment opportunities for local people so readily available in London there is a danger jobs will remain unfilled, reducing productivity and impacting on economic vibrancy. Workers from the EU are also undertaking a variety of jobs outside of those sectors, many of them highly skilled, especially in construction, but also in research, financial services and other professional careers. Nurturing a pipeline of local labour, connected whilst still at school with local business is a priority for the area.

The Agricultural Bill 2018 and Brexit brings challenges to traditional agricultural industries as subsidies will be gradually withdrawn. Supporting these businesses to plan for the changes, develop a more commercial business model and seek to diversify is an important element to agricultural sustainability in the years ahead.

The move towards full devolution of business rates

This provides an opportunity for West Kent to invest directly in supporting the economy, both in terms of infrastructure and business support. Developing a close understanding of the local business landscape and involving local businesses in discussions about economic policy will be an essential

part of delivering support which will increase output per worker and raise productivity.

As part of the Business Rates Retention Pilot in Kent, West Kent has taken an innovative approach to developing some area-wide initiatives which can deliver benefits to business.

- Funding has been allocated to supporting a business Scale Up Programme. The NESTA/SAGE research highlighted the importance of high-growth firms, or scale-ups, achieving 'breakthrough' growth. These are of interest since they contribute disproportionately to net new job creation.
- Expanding the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network will enable greater interaction between young people and employers, helping to build a talent pipeline that is flexible, creative and skilled to take on the jobs of the future. This will play a vital role in equipping West Kent businesses to become more productive and at an individual level, empower our young residents to aspire to a fulfilling career.
- Support to develop opportunities in the workplace for disadvantaged groups, such as those who are disabled, have learning difficulties or are long-term unemployed as a response to anticipated skills shortages post Brexit.
- Support for rural businesses to include facilitating access to funding to ease the transition from LEADER to any programme under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and to address the need for agricultural businesses to develop new business models as subsidies are gradually withdrawn.

Upskilling Digital Skills

The NESTA/SAGE analysis of local authority level SME productivity supports the case for attention to skills, finding that productivity is positively linked with the share of the local population with NVQ4+ level qualifications and identifies that this skills gap is particularly wide in the digital space.

Climate Change

West Kent should be proactive in engaging with research and modelling taking place at a National level to help inform the likely impacts to our local economy in the decades ahead.

Car use

Increased automation will change the way people use cars and have an impact on our local economy in terms of travel to work patterns, congestion levels, pollution, rural accessibility, parking requirements and other areas.

Empowering our SMEs

The NESTA/SAGE research concludes that the strength of the UK economy long term is in the hands of its SMEs. If we are to see wages rise and income inequality fall, then targeted local intervention to build a landscape of thriving, productive SMEs, should be the main priority of every layer of government. In West Kent this empowerment can be initiated through the interventions outlined in this strategy.



ECA Sevenoaks

West Kent Economic Priorities for Growth 2019-2022 Action Plan

A West Kent Priorities for Growth progress report on active projects will be submitted to West Kent Partnership quarterly meetings.

A final report will be produced at the end of the Action Plan period covering all success measures and productivity indicators

Bold = priority projects

1. IDEAS – Securing investment and funding to underpin innovation and growth

Objective	Action	Timescale	WKP Partners	Success Measures
1.1 Greater Access to Higher Education provision	Explore options for Higher Education provision in West Kent	Ongoing	Universities Hadlow Group	Number of HE courses on offer locally increased Additional campus facility delivered or courses delivered in West Kent
1.2 Business access to innovation investment facilitated	Support the development of a new research campus and associated inward investment at East Malling	Ongoing	NIAB EMR and the East Malling Trust, TMBC	Creation of masterplan for the campus No of new sector specific businesses on site
1.3 Business access to innovation facilitated	Kent & Medway Engineering, Design, Growth and Enterprise (EDGE) Hub secured in West Kent	2021	Canterbury Christ Church	EDGE Hub in place

2. PEOPLE – Delivering the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network to secure our future workforce and championing training and inclusivity in the workplace

Objective	Action	Timescale	WKP Partners	Success Measures
2.1 Work ready young people	Support and expand the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network (WKEAN)	Ongoing	Careers & Enterprise Company TWBC/TMBC/SDC Hadlow Group Local Employers, Local Schools	No. of schools engaged in the initiative and supported by an Enterprise Adviser
	Promote apprenticeships and other pathways to careers	Annually	Hadlow Group Apprentice Kent Local training providers	Apprenticeship event delivered
	Support delivery of Skills 30:30 events	Annually	Federation of Small Businesses, WKEAN, Local Employers, Local Schools	No. of employers attending No. of students participating
2.2 Young adults attracted and retained in local economy	Deliver West Kent Skillsfest	Annually	West Kent CEIAG Group SDC/TWBC/TMBC Local Employers, Local Schools	No. of employers attending No. of students participating
	Promote awareness of degree level apprenticeships to young people and employers	Ongoing	Local training providers Apprentice Kent	No. of Higher Level degree participants
2.3 Adults supported to be economically active/provided with opportunities to reskill	Develop strategy to encourage graduates to live and work in the area	2021	SDC/TWBC/TMBC Housing Associations Local Employers	Project scoped
	Digital Skills training facilitated/promoted	Ongoing	SDC/TWBC/TMBC	Ongoing social media activity
	Deliver 2 West Kent Jobs and Training Fairs per year	2 pa	SDC/TWBC/TMBC Jobcentre Plus/employers	No. of employers attending No. of Job Seekers attending
	Support initiatives developed for unemployed and those with a disability	Ongoing		No. of people entering employment or training

3. INFRASTRUCTURE – Representing the need for infrastructure and transport investment for West Kent at a local, county and regional level

Objective	Action	Timescale	WKP Partners	Success Measures
3.1 Transport infrastructure fit for purpose and with East-West links enhanced	Lobby for the delivery of better rail connections and capacity including SE Franchise schemes and improved rail links to Gatwick	Ongoing	SELEP, KCC WK Infrastructure & Transport Group Rail operators, Network Rail	Views of Partnership effectively communicated
	Identify a pipeline of potential projects to support key transport infrastructure – inc. highways and rail	2019	SELEP, KCC, Highways England WK Infrastructure & Transport Group	Costed schemes produced inc. Colts Hill and Swanley Interchange
	Lobby for and bid for funds for design and delivery of improvement schemes on the Major Road Network including A228 Colts Hill and A229	2023	WK Infrastructure & Transport Group	2 priority schemes funded
	Work collaboratively to improve the active travel offer in WK through design and implementation of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cycling & Walking improvement routes Lobby and work with bus operators to ensure network supports growth and work with operators to develop new and innovative services 	Ongoing		New cycling routes introduced as identified by three authorities
5G broadband in place where deliverable and solutions for rural connectivity where not	Work with partners to implement high speed broadband services across WK and to address local problems with mobile phone coverage	2021	KCC SDC/TWBC/TMBC Broadband providers	5G in place Rural solutions in place
Adequate flood defences in place to protect homes and businesses	Secure funding to support delivery of flood defences	2020-23 Ongoing	Environment Agency Kent County Council TMBC Local businesses Local residents	Leigh Flood Storage area delivered Progress towards implementation of a viable flood relief scheme in East Peckham

5. PLACE – Engendering a strong West Kent sense of place with vibrant town centres and a sustainable rural environment. Quality of life maintained and enhanced with a balanced approach to development and equal opportunity for all

Objective	Action	Timescale	WKP Partners	Success Measures
5.1 Key locations for growth brought forward	<p>Identify priority projects and work with Partners to secure funding and other support for their delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIAB East Malling Research • Peters Village • Swanley town centre • Fort Halstead • Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Calverley Square - The Amelia (Cultural and Learning Hub) - Other town centre projects 	Ongoing	SDC/TWBC/TMBC	No. of projects delivered
5.2 Sustainable housing development	Support the development of new Local Plans for the WK authorities	2019	SDC/TWBC/TMBC	Allocation of sufficient sites for employment uses Adoption of the Local Plans
5.3 Vibrant town centres incorporating integrated office, retail, leisure and residential units	<p>Seek funding to support Town Centre Teams</p> <p>Bring forward further retail and mixed use developments and townscape improvements to strengthen the viability and vitality of town centres</p> <p>Work with Visit Kent to promote and market WK's tourism assets</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Town Teams/Town Councils/RTW BID SDC/TMBC/TWBC/</p> <p>Private Investors</p> <p>Visit Kent SDC/TWBC/TMBC</p>	<p>No. of events and initiatives delivered</p> <p>Planning permission in place for new schemes</p> <p>No. of visitors Visitor spend</p>
5.4 Maximise opportunities through London proximity	Strengthen relationships with London business/council groups/partnerships	Ongoing		No. of new contacts
5.5 Levels of deprivation reduced in priority wards	Enterprise & Productivity Strategy output Identify joint initiatives to improve quality of life	Long term	KCC	Levels of deprivation reduced

Fruit Farm, Tunbridge Wells

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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