

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

28 October 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 Tuesday, 5th November, 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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6. Local Centres and Parades Shopfront Grant Scheme Update 27 - 30

The report provides an update on the Local Centres and Parades scheme, which was launched in September 2019, and seeks approval to extend the support provided by Action with Communities in Rural Kent to cover this new scheme.

Matters submitted for Information

7. Strength in Places Fund - Growing Kent and Medway 31 - 34

The report provides information on the Growing Kent and Medway 'Strength in Places' Fund bid, led by NIAB EMR (National Institute of Agricultural Botany East Malling Research), which was submitted in September 2019.

8. Urgent Items 35 - 36

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

PART 2 - PRIVATE

10. Urgent Items

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

MEMBERSHIP

Cllr B J Luker (Chairman)
Cllr 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

Wednesday, 4th September, 2019

Present: Cllr B J Luker (Chairman), Cllr F G Tombolis (Vice-Chairman), Cllr G C Bridge, Cllr R I B Cannon, 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 and Cllr K B Tanner

Councillors Mrs J A Anderson, V M C Branson, A E Clark, M A Coffin, N J Heslop, D Lettington and H S Rogers were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs T Dean and N Foyle

ERG 19/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

ERG 19/18 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the notes of the meeting of the Economic Regeneration Advisory Board held on 17 June 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

ERG 19/19 PRESENTATION: LOWER CARBON ACROSS SOUTH EAST 2

Members received a presentation from Rob Robinson of Kent County Council on the impact of Lower Carbon Across the South East (LoCASE) grants in supporting businesses within the Borough. Members asked a number of questions on the criteria for grant aid and the guidance provided to applicants, the availability of future funding, particularly post-Brexit, and how the scheme assisted with the Council's Economic Regeneration Strategy. The Chairman thanked Mr Robinson for his contribution to the meeting.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

ERG 19/20 BUSINESS RATES RETENTION PILOT SCHEMES

Decision Notice D190063MEM

The report of the Chief Executive provided an update 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 and the proposed Local Centres and Parades Improvements Scheme.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) the content of the report be noted;
- (2) the proposal to close the Town and District Centres Commercial Frontages Scheme to new applications by the end of December 2019 be approved; and
- (3) delivery of a Local Centres and Parades Improvement Scheme be approved and this initiative be launched before the end of December 2019.

ERG 19/21 FAIRTRADE TONBRIDGE - RENEWAL SUBMISSION

Decision Notice D190064MEM

The report of the Chief Executive sought endorsement of the submission of an application to the Fairtrade Foundation for the renewal of Tonbridge's Fairtrade Town Status.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) the content of the report be noted; and
- (2) subject to the inclusion of the University of Kent and Tonbridge Castle as local organisations engaged in Fairtrade activities, the renewal submission, as outlined at paragraph 1.2.3 of the report, be endorsed.

ERG 19/22 SKILLS AND WORK READINESS

Decision Notice D190065MEM

The report of the Chief Executive provided an update on added-value activities delivered by the Borough Council under the 'skills and work readiness' agenda and set out details of future activities which would meet the aims of the Economic Regeneration Strategy Action Plan for 2020/21.

RECOMMENDED: That the proposed activities for 2020/21, as set out at paragraph 1.5.2 to the report, be endorsed.

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION**ERG 19/23 WEST KENT PARTNERSHIP**

The report of the Chief Executive provided details of key matters discussed at the meeting of the West Kent Partnership held on 5 July 2019 and made particular reference to the West Kent Scale Up programme which provided intense support to local businesses to encourage growth.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE**ERG 19/24 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no items considered in private.

The meeting ended at 8.20 pm

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Agenda Item 4

Presentation by Tudor Price from Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce on the West Kent Scale Up Programme.

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

05 November 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 ECONOMIC REGENERATION STRATEGY ACTION PLAN UPDATE

This reports sets out early progress to date on the Economic Regeneration Strategy Action Plan and notifies the Board of the aim to recruit a Graduate Economic Regeneration Officer for a 12 month period to assist in future delivery, using funding from the growth element of the Business Rates Pool.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Following the successful delivery of the Economic Regeneration Strategy 2015-2019, the Borough Council adopted a new strategy in June 2019 for the period 2019-2023 which sets out an ambitious programme of activities and investments that have a positive impact on the local economy.

1.1.2 To date, the Borough Council and external partners such as the West Kent Partnership, the Federation of Small Business, Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce and Kent County Council have delivered or made progress on a wide range of initiatives in the first 6 months.

1.1.3 The availability of Business Rates Pool Growth Funding offers up the opportunity to provide some time-limited support to the Economic Regeneration Manager in ensuring the delivery of the new strategy remains on track.

1.2 Economic Regeneration Strategy Action Plan

1.2.1 The Economic Regeneration Strategy Action Plan sets out a range of activities that need to be delivered in order to help meet the following overarching objectives:

- Planning for Economic Growth
- Funding for Key Infrastructure
- Embracing the Skills and Work Readiness Agenda
- Supporting Local Business
- Helping Our Towns and Local Centres
- Promoting the Visitor Economy

- Supporting the Rural Economy

1.2.2 An overview of these activities, and progress in delivering them, are set out in Appendix 1. However, some key highlights to date include:

- 04 April 2019 – Holmesdale School Employability Day
- 04 April 2019 – Business Networking Event (Tonbridge)
- 20 June 2019 – Innovation Park Medway Consultation Starts
- 03 July 2019 – Trench ‘Help Me Out’ Event
- 03 July 2019 – Business Networking Event (Tonbridge)
- 18 September 2019 – NIAB EMR Strength in Places Bid Submitted
- 20 September 2019 – Local Centres and Parades Grant Scheme Launched
- 25 September 2019 – Hayesbrook Skills 3030 Event
- 25 September 2019 – Malling School Employability Day
- 08 October 2019 – West Kent Skillsfest Event
- 11 October 2019 – East Malling ‘Can I Help?’ Event
- 15 October 2019 - Aylesford Jobs and Training Fair
- 22 October 2019 – Renewal Application Submitted for Fairtrade Tonbridge

1.2.3 Looking ahead, there remains a considerable amount of work to deliver in order to maintain good progress. It has therefore been decided, in conjunction with our partner Kent County Council, to use funding from the growth element of the Business Rates Pool to provide additional staffing resource into the Borough Council’s economic regeneration activity for an initial 12-month period. This does not represent a change to the establishment. A Graduate Economic Regeneration Officer will be able to provide assistance with the delivery of the wide range of economic regeneration initiatives across the Borough, with specific duties of the role likely to include:

- Assisting in the delivery and promotion of business support programmes
- Helping to deliver a range of skills and employability events
- Exploring opportunities to bid for external funding
- Administrative support with arranging meetings and running business networking events.
- Undertaking research and data analysis in support of project development and in monitoring the delivery of the Economic Regeneration Strategy Action Plan.
- Maintaining and developing business information via multiple channels and assisting with business enquiries.

1.2.4 It is also envisaged that the Graduate Economic Regeneration Officer will be involved in green economy measures that will support the emerging Climate Change Strategy.

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 As set out in section 1.1.3, this post will be covered in its entirety, approximately £30,000 (including on-costs and overheads) through the Business Rates Pool growth funding. The Business Rate pool growth funding is ring-fenced for activity that supports economic growth in the borough. The governance arrangements are such that any spending has to be agreed between the Borough Council and the County Council. Agreement to this spend has been agreed with the County Council.

1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 Without the additional support provided through this 12-month post, the delivery of actions within the Economic Regeneration Strategy will be limited.

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 action plan update including the arrangements to provide a Graduate Trainee support post for 1 year, fully funded by Business Rates growth funding **BE NOTED**.

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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Appendix 1 - Action Plan

Objective	Action	Success Measure	Progress in first 6 months of Action Plan
Planning for Economic Growth	Support the development of a new Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan, including the identification of new employment sites and the protection of existing sites.	Allocation of sufficient sites for employment uses. Adoption of the Local Plan.	Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council submitted its Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate for examination on 23 January 2019, following a Regulation 19 consultation in the autumn of 2018. The Local Plan evidence base highlights that there is a need for 85.9ha of B Class employment floorspace for the period 2011-2031, made up predominantly of B8 use. This means, after existing supply has been deducted, an additional 46.8ha needs to be identified for the period up to 2031. In the Local Plan, just under 39ha of new employment land is identified, with the shortfall being met through intensification on existing sites. At the time of writing this report, a date for the start of the Examination in Public is still awaited.
	Implementation of the North Kent Enterprise Zone (Innovation Park Medway)	No. of new businesses relocating to Innovation Park Medway.	Consultation on a Local Development Order (LDO) for the portion of Innovation Park Medway which falls within the Borough was undertaken between 20 June and 22 July 2019 (a consultation was also undertaken by Medway Council between 18 June and 20 July 2019). The consultation responses are currently being addressed. Medway Council are currently aiming to adopt their LDO in January 2020, with TMBC looking to adopt in Spring 2020.
	Bring new economic life into the former Aylesford Newsprint site.	No. of new businesses relocating to the former Aylesford Newsprint site.	The demolition of the Aylesford Newsprint buildings and infrastructure to slab level was completed by W&S Recycling at the end of February 2019, with the same company also disposing of all equipment and production machines, the vast majority of which was recycled or reused. Since this time, the administrators KPMG have been working with a preferred purchaser towards completion of the sale of the site, and an announcement is expected shortly.
	Support the development of a new research campus and associated inward investment at East Malling.	Creation of masterplan for the campus. No. of new sector-specific businesses on site.	A Local Growth Fund 3b (LGF3b) bid for £1.8m was submitted to the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership in May 2019 for a new energy centre and greenhouses on the East Malling site and is currently on a short-list to use up any underspend that may arise from initiatives that had been allocated funding through the LGF3 process. In order to bring this closer to reality, a planning application was submitted by the East Malling Trust in September 2019 for the development of an advanced technology horticultural zone, which if built, would bring much needed investment into the on-site facilities.

			NIAB EMR have also been leading a consortium bid to the Strength in Places Fund (Innovate UK) called 'Growing Kent and Medway', which would strengthen the area's position in food production and processing. This bid was submitted in September 2019, and if successful would see the consortium secure over £17m of investment in research and innovation.
	Foster additional inward investment to the Borough via the promotion of vacant sites and existing premises.	% increase in the number of jobs retained and secured through inward investment projects handled by Locate in Kent.	Locate in Kent is currently working with more than 20 companies looking to expand into/within or relocate into/Tonbridge & Malling. The majority of these projects lie within the following sectors: Business Services, Other Manufacturing and Construction.
Funding for Key Infrastructure	Implementation of the Leigh Flood Storage Area and Hildenborough improvements.	Delivery of scheme.	The Environment Agency have now consulted on a proposed amendment to the River Medway (Flood Relief) Act 1976 to allow the capacity of the flood storage area to be increased by around 24% and this is expected to be approved by the Secretary of State shortly. A detailed planning application, covering the expansion of the Leigh Flood Storage Area and the Hildenborough Embankment is scheduled to be submitted to the Planning Department in early 2020.
	Design and implementation of viable flood relief scheme in East Peckham	Outline Business Case for investment completed and funding secured.	Due to an increased funding gap arising from higher scheme costs, the Environment Agency are now pursuing Property Flood Resilience measures to improve flood mitigation for up to 192 properties in East Peckham and Little Mill. The indicative costs for this work will be in the region of £1.6m with funding sought through the Flood Defence Grant in Aid Programme and the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. At this stage, given the need to apply for the funding, the soonest that work to homes could take place would be October 2020.
	Delivery of SMART Motorway between Junctions 3 and 5 of the M20	Delivery of Scheme	This scheme is currently scheduled to be completed by March 2020.
	Implementation of critical transport infrastructure as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.	Funding in place and delivery of 'short-term' (over next 5 years) investments	There are a number of critical short term (over next 5 years) investments highlighted in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (August 2018), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing capacity issues along B2246 Hermitage Road • Development of a link road between Hermitage Lane and the Poppyfields • New footway/cycleway linking South Aylesford with Barming Station • Expansion to existing Community First Responder (CFR) scheme. <p>These investments, and others will be highlighted as the Local Plan and IDP progress.</p>

Skills and Work Readiness	Support the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network (WKEAN)	No of schools engaged in the initiative and supported by an Enterprise Adviser	Having launched in July 2017, the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network has gone from strength to strength. Up until recently, there were 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. However, one of the co-ordinators left in September 2019 and has not yet been replaced. Despite this minor set-back, as of September 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.
	Deliver 2 employability and skills events per year in local schools that are located within our pockets of deprivation.	No of employers attending No of students participating	<p>On 04 April 2019, TMBC partnered up with Kent Education Business Partnership (KEBP) to deliver an Employability Day at Holmesdale School. The day welcomed 19 organisations (employers and educative), represented by a total of 32 employees. EBP Kent worked with the school to target specific sectors and workshop content was agreed upon that would best suit the aspirations and employability needs of the students. The event took place from 0850 until 1510, with over 120 Year 11 students rotating around 5 different zones. Students were able to experience a full range of interactive sessions, presentations, employer interaction, interviews and work on personal employability skills.</p> <p>On 25 September 2019, TMBC again partnered up with KEBP to deliver an Employability Day at the Malling School. In total 22 employees from 14 organisations took part, with just under 100 Year 12 and 13 students rotating around the five zones which covered CV writing, Preparing for Interviews, 1-to-1 interviews, an Employer Workshop focussed on team work and an Exhibition Fair.</p>
	Deliver the West Kent Skillsfest event	No of employers attending No of schools participating	The West Kent Skillsfest took place on 08 October 2019. At the event, there were 53 businesses showcasing their sector to the young people, along with education establishments and training providers highlighting their courses. Around 1,000 students took part in the event with the following schools with Tonbridge & Malling taking part: Hugh Christie Technology College, Hayesbrook, Wrotham School, Hadlow Rural School and Weald of Kent.
	Deliver 2 West Kent Jobs and Training Fairs per year - Spring: alternate between Tonbridge and Sevenoaks - Autumn: Tunbridge Wells	No. of employers attending No. of Job Seekers attending No. of people entering employment or training	<p>On 05 September 2019, a West Kent Jobs and Training Fair took place in Tunbridge Wells. In total 38 employers and training providers came to the event, with 283 members of the public attending. It has been confirmed that 13 people have secured employment directly from the event (with others likely but not captured). Positive feedback includes:</p> <p>“It was amazing and it helped me with my anxiety as I managed to go alone and speak with employers, the outcome is brilliant!!!”</p> <p>“I will be starting full time work tomorrow 17/9, with Town and Country as HR Assistant after speaking to them at the Jobs Fair”</p>

			“Great news! I got the job at Costa, although I'm not sure of my hours yet, I'll find out tomorrow, when I have my induction”
	Deliver 1 local Jobs and Training Fair per year that is located within one of our pockets of deprivation	No. of employers attending No. of Job Seekers attending No. of people entering employment or training	On 15 October 2019, TMBC, in partnership with Jobcentre Plus, the RBLI, Golding Homes and Clarion Futures ran a successful local jobs Fair at the RBLI Village in Aylesford. This was the third such event and is becoming an annual event. In total, there were 27 employers and training providers, with 200 members of the public coming along to the event. There were two workshops for people to attend – on self-employment and social media, and on the ‘Hidden Jobs Market’. At the time of writing this report, statistics on the number of people entering employment or training are not available.
Supporting Business	Deliver 4 business engagement events in the borough per year	No. of events per year No of businesses attending.	To date, two business engagement events have taken place in the borough – on the 04 April and 03 July 2019. Both of these events took place in Tonbridge and were attended by a total of 57 businesses. A further event is planned for November 2019 (14 November at the RBLI Village in partnership with Barclays).
	Produce a monthly business e-bulletin	No of e-bulletins produced No of businesses reading the e-bulletin.	The e-bulletin has been distributed on a regular basis since September 2016. At present, just over 600 business contacts are signed up to the newsletter, with 20-35% reading the bulletin on a regular basis. One of the tasks for the Graduate Economic Regeneration Officer is to build up the e-bulletin database and help in the production of the e-bulletin itself. Anyone can sign up to the T&M Business e-bulletin via http://eepurl.com/dthPW1
	Maintain the TMBC Business webpages	No of visits per year.	The content on the TMBC business webpages is regularly updated, but current visitor levels are only on average around 20-50 visitors per month. As such further work to use the success of other media channels to signpost to the webpages is required.
	Maintain regular messaging through TMBC Social Media	No of followers No of shares and retweets.	Regular messaging has been posted on the TMBC Twitter and Facebook accounts regarding the array of events, business support and projects. The Economic Regeneration posts with the highest reach since April 2019 are: Pop Up Business School in Tonbridge – 23.7k (10 Sept 2019) Shopfront Improvement Scheme (Gorgeous George) – 22.2k (02 August 2019) Aylesford Jobs and Training Fair – 22.1k (25 Sept 2019) At the moment, the TMBC Twitter account has grown to around 5,000 followers and the Facebook account now has 2,400 followers.

Promote and support the West Kent Business Support Programme (start-up and scale-up support), the Kent & Medway Growth Hub and other support activities.	No of businesses using the service.	<p>West Kent Business Support Programme The West Kent Start-Up Programme has supported over 150 pre-start and start-up businesses since the beginning of 2019, 45 of which are based in Tonbridge and Malling.</p> <p>The West Kent Scale Up Programme involves intensive mentoring support for a cohort of 12 businesses in West Kent – 4 are based in Tonbridge and Malling (Mereworth Wines, Greensand Ridge Distillery, Newton Waterproofing and PH Project Services – and all are currently about half way through the 12 month programme. Some businesses have already started to show signs of growth.</p> <p>Kent and Medway Growth Hub For the period April – August 2019, a total of 64 businesses used the Growth Hub service, with 17 of these businesses benefitting from medium intensity support (between 3 and 12 hours support) and 47 benefitting from light touch support (under 3 hours).</p>
Promote and Support the Better Business for All initiative	No of businesses using the www.bbfa.biz website.	Better Business For All is a partnership between business and regulators promoting business growth and compliance. The Borough Council has continued to promote and support BBFA over the past six months following the launch of their new website.
Seek new opportunities to provide flexible co-working space for start-up businesses in the borough.	No. of new co-working venues in the borough	Having delivered Castle Lodge in 2018, the Council is aiming to bring forward part of the Gibson Building as accommodation for small businesses. Funding to adjust security arrangements and to redecorate the offices has been secured, and Property Services are engaging with a local commercial agent to discuss the attractiveness and marketability of the accommodation.
Promote and signpost to key business funding opportunities	No. of borough businesses awarded funding.	<p>The Borough Council continues to signpost to both advice services (see above) and potential funding streams for business. The following funding opportunities have been available in recent months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent & Medway Business Fund – offering 0% loans between £50,000 and £500,000 to small and medium sized businesses. This fund has been open to new applications since June 2019. • South East Business Boost (currently closed but SEBB2 launching soon) - funding for capital and revenue purchases for Essex, East Sussex, Kent and Medway businesses. The grants available are from £1,000 up to £2,000 and are for small growth projects. • Lower Carbon Across South East (currently closed to applicants but looking to open again shortly) • LEADER (now closed to applicants) • Start-Up Loans – government backed loans of up to £25,000 at a fixed interest rate of 6%pa with free advice and mentoring.

Our Towns and Local Centres	Work with the Tonbridge Town Team and local retailers to support the delivery of town centre events and other initiatives aimed at increasing footfall and spend in the town centre.	No of events and initiatives delivered per annum. % vacancy rates on Tonbridge High Street	Tonbridge Town Team continues to run or support a number of events and activities in the town centre – most notably the Dragon Boat Races and the Food & Drink Festival. The ‘What’s On’ brochure is also produced on a quarterly basis, and helps to promote a wide range of events and community activity in the town. Data from March 2019 shows that vacancy levels are relatively low along Tonbridge High Street, with a 6% vacancy level for the Upper High Street (north of the Big Bridge) and an 8.7% vacancy level for the Lower High Street. This is marginally higher than the figures for 2018, but still much lower than any other time within the last five years. One clear trend however, is the move away from retail uses – for the period 1997 (when survey work began) to 2013, retail uses made up well over 70% of frontages on the High Street. However, the most recent data (January 2019) shows that only 58% of frontages are now retail uses. This illustrates the evolution of the high street and the growth of food outlets and professional services.
	Bring forward developments and townscape improvements to strengthen the viability and vitality of our town and local centres.	Planning permission in place for new schemes by the end of the strategy period.	Through the shopfront improvement grant initiatives, the Borough Council has so far supported 19 improvement schemes in our Town and District Centres, and has recently also launched a similar grant scheme for our local centres and parades which has so far generated initial expressions of interest from 20 independent businesses.
Visitor Economy	Work with Visit Kent to promote and market Tonbridge and Malling’s tourism assets through an annual Service Level Agreement.	No. of visitors to the borough Visitor spend in the borough (£)	The most recent piece of research undertaken on behalf of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council was ‘The Economic Impact of Tourism 2017’ (produced in November 2018). This illustrated that over the course of 2017, there were 3,029,000 trips to the borough (2,787,000 of which were day trips and 242,000 overnight stays). The total direct value to the borough of these trips was just over £143m.
Rural Economy	Promote the take up of LEADER grants by rural borough businesses	No of grants awarded to borough businesses.	Since opening in September 2016, TMBC have been helping to promote the scheme through the use of the TMBC website and social media, as well as working with West Kent partners to provide additional business support for prospective applicants. To date there have been 26 Expressions of Interest submissions from T&M businesses to the West Kent LEADER Programme. Of these, 9 did not progress and 17 have been approved. The total value of grants awarded already to ‘approved’ projects in Tonbridge & Malling is just under £800,000 (around 60% of the total value of grant funding approved to date, meaning the actual amount of grant allocated to our rural businesses is significantly higher than that allocated to Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells or Gravesham rural businesses).

		Whilst the LEADER Programme has been extended until 20 December 2019, EU structural funding is set to be replaced by a UK Shared Prosperity Fund. However details of this new funding stream are still awaited.
Work with partners to implement superfast broadband services across the borough and to address local problems with mobile phone coverage.	% of the borough with high speed broadband coverage. % of the borough with weak or no signal	<p>At the end of 2018, the BDUK Phase 2 project was completed. This resulted in superfast (at least 24 megabits per second) broadband coverage of around 96% of properties in the borough, against a target of 95%. Although this project has now been completed, because the take up of publicly funded superfast broadband has been higher than expected, the County Council have received a small pot of funding that can be used to deliver additional schemes that would not otherwise be delivered commercially, with a government emphasis now on Fibre to the Premise (FTTP).</p> <p>During 2018, Government also launched a broadband voucher scheme aimed at encouraging small businesses and the local communities around them to install faster connections using gigabit-capable infrastructure. The vouchers are worth £2,500 per SME, with residents able to claim £500 each towards installation. This initiative has been promoted through the T&M Business Bulletin.</p> <p>In October 2019, OpenReach made a number of announcements about its programme of bringing its 1-gigabit Fibre-to-the-Premises (FTTP) broadband service to 15 million homes across the UK by 2025. In the latest new announcement of 23 roll-out locations, the Tonbridge exchange has been included meaning it will be one of the earliest locations to benefit from this service. In addition, OpenReach have recently announced 13 rural locations (the nearest to T&M is Seal in Sevenoaks) to pilot new machinery and techniques that will ultimately make it much cheaper and quicker to provide FTTP in rural locations.</p>
Deliver further phase of the Village Stores Initiative.	No. of village stores engaging with the initiative.	<p>The Village Stores Initiative, set up with Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) in 2017, was a useful mechanism through which rural businesses were able to get support and advice in submitting application forms to the West Kent LEADER Programme.</p> <p>With the Shopfront Improvement Scheme expanding out to Local Centres and Parades, it is suggested that the advice service provided by ACRK is used to help support prospective applicants.</p>

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

05 November 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 LOCAL CENTRES AND PARADES SHOPFRONT GRANT SCHEME UPDATE

This report provides an update on the Local Centres and Parades scheme, which was launched in September 2019, and seeks approval to extend the support provided by Action with Communities in Rural Kent to cover this new scheme.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 In September 2019, Report ERG 19/20 set out further information on the emerging Local Centres and Parades Shopfront Grant Scheme and sought permission to launch the initiative before the end of December 2019 using Business Rates Retention Pilot Scheme Funding.

1.1.2 Due to growing interest in this initiative, it was decided to launch the initiative ahead of time, with independent retailers and food outlets being notified of the scheme at the end of September 2019.

1.1.3 Given the level of interest, it is suggested that the hands-on support provided by Action with Communities in Rural Kent for the Town and District Centres Scheme is retained for the Local Centres and Parades Scheme.

1.2 Local Centres and Parades – Progress to Date

1.2.1 In total, 62 independent retailers and food outlets located within priority areas across the Borough were contacted by letter on 20 September 2019 to announce the launch of the programme. As of mid-October, there has been a solid level of interest in the scheme, with 20 businesses (around 32%) contacting the Borough Council asking for more information about the scheme.

1.2.2 There has been a good geographical spread of interest, with responses coming from most of the priority areas apart from Burham, Wouldham, and Eccles (which only have a small handful of shops in total) and Hildenborough.

Location	Number of Requests for Further Information
Twisden Road, East Malling	4
East Malling High Street	3
Oxley Shaw, Leybourne	2
Tonbridge (other)	2
York Parade, Tonbridge	2
Martin Hardie Way, Tonbridge	2
Greenacres, Aylesford	2
Woodlands, Ditton	1
Wateringbury	1
Plaxtol	1

Table 1: Geographical Spread of Interest

1.2.3 As is evident from Table 1, there has been a large amount of interest from businesses in East Malling, both on Twisden Road and the High Street (where nearly all the eligible businesses have made contact). In addition, there is a clear correlation between those businesses that have engaged with this scheme and those businesses that got involved with previous initiatives the Borough Council has delivered within these areas (such as the retail centres projects during 2015-2017).

1.3 Hands-On Support

1.3.1 The Town and District Shopfront Grant Scheme, which is scheduled to close on 31 December 2019), has seen 19 businesses offered grant support, four of which were given hands-on support by an advisor from Action with Communities in Rural Kent. Whilst helping businesses with the application forms has been the main role for the advisor, it has also enabled a broader conversation on a wide range of topics – such as building awareness of other funding streams and support, advice on shop layouts and product placement – that have been beneficial.

1.3.2 Given the level of interest and the wider benefits accrued from the advice service, it is proposed that this service is continued for the Local Centres and Parades Shopfront Grant Scheme. The cost of this will be under £1,000 and will be met through existing economic development budgets.

1.4 Legal Implications

1.4.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.5.1 These initiatives will be funded through the Business Rates Retention Pilot Scheme. A Local Centres Improvement Scheme would be funded through likely underspend in other projects.

1.6 Risk Assessment

1.6.1 Not applicable.

1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

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

1.8 Recommendations

1.8.1 That the contents of this report **BE NOTED**.

1.8.2 That the continued use of hands-on advice and support from Action with Communities in Rural Kent for the Local Centres and Parades Scheme **BE APPROVED**

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

contact: Jeremy Whittaker,
Economic Regeneration
Manager

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive

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TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
ECONOMIC REGENERATION ADVISORY BOARD

05 November 2019

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 STRENGTH IN PLACES FUND - GROWING KENT AND MEDWAY

This report gives information on the Growing Kent and Medway ‘Strength in Places’ Fund bid, led by NIAB EMR, which was submitted in September 2019.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The UK Government announced the Strength in Places Fund in the Industrial Strategy White Paper (2017). The White Paper highlighted the important role science, research, innovation and skills provision play in driving productivity and economic growth throughout the regions and nations of the UK. The UK Research and Innovation’s (UKRI) Strength in Places Fund therefore forms a key part of the activity undertaken that will be contributing to the UK Government’s target to reach 2.4% of GDP investment in R&D by 2027, and 3% in the longer term.

1.1.2 In March 2019, 24 projects - from pharmaceuticals to aerospace, and transport to the creative economy – were shortlisted following a highly competitive bidding process and received early-stage funding of £50,000 to develop full-stage bids that could lead to significant economic growth in places across the country. These bids were submitted to the UKRI in September 2019.

1.1.3 One of the 24 bids is ‘Growing Kent and Medway’ – a consortium bid led by NIAB EMR, which is focused on the region’s advanced horticultural production, fresh produce packaging, food and drink processing industries and the enabling technologies that drive innovation and growth.

1.2 Growing Kent and Medway

1.2.1 The ‘Growing Kent and Medway’ initiative aims to build on the existing regional strengths in innovative horticultural research as well as world-class excellence in biosciences and business studies by reaching out to business partners along the supply chain that are engaged in developing technologies that could support productivity gains. In order to achieve this, the four key objectives of the bid are to:

- Provide state-of-the-art infrastructure that gives access to innovation, demonstration and research facilities to help businesses and human capital grow.

- Raise investment in industry-driven Research and Innovation and stimulate the commercialisation of technologies for climate-smart food production and waste minimisation.
- Foster a vibrant and supportive environment in which businesses can innovate and thrive
- Develop a strategic framework for the upskilling and professionalisation of the sector.

1.2.2 The consortium bid, which is led by NIAB EMR comprises the following other partners:

- University of Greenwich
- University of Kent
- APS Salads (tomato grower with Kent base in Ash, near Canterbury)
- Berry Gardens Growers (head office in Five Oak Green)
- Chapel Down Plc (wine producer with head office in Ashford)
- Gusbourne Estate (wine producer with head office in Appledore)
- Richard Hochfield Group (fresh produce distributor with head office in Borough Green)
- Thanet Earth (salad grower based in Birchington)
- Worldwide Fruit (fruit distributor based in Whitstable)
- Geku (industrial automation company based in Strood)

The bid has also received backing from the Borough Council, Kent County Council, Kent & Medway Economic Partnership and Locate in Kent.

1.2.3 The total project cost is £33m over a five-year period, with a funding request from UKRI of £17.91m. Around £7.5m of the project relates to capital expenditure, particularly construction and equipment costs for a Green Tech Hub for advanced horticulture at East Malling, a food innovation lab (University of Greenwich) and a biotechnology hub for sustainable UK food and drink (University of Kent). The remaining revenue expenditure covers a wide range of activities, such as direct investment in research staff and grant programmes to help stimulate the commercialisation of innovation and supporting investment in Research.

1.2.4 In terms of wider local economic impact ('local' being Kent and Medway) it is envisaged that as a result of an uplift in research and development activity and resulting innovations, an extra 682 FTE jobs will be created in the region by 2025.

1.2.5 A decision from UKRI as to whether the bid is successful is expected in early 2020.

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 and value for money considerations 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.

Background papers:

None

contact: Jeremy Whittaker,
Economic Regeneration
Manager

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Agenda Item 8

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 9

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 10

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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