

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL



## EXECUTIVE SERVICES

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### 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: Democratic Services  
[committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk)

24 August 2020

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 online via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, 2nd September, 2020 commencing at 7.30 pm. Information on how to observe the meeting will be published on the Council's website.

Yours faithfully

JULIE BEILBY

Chief Executive

## A G E N D A

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- To confirm as a correct record the Notes of the meeting of the Economic Regeneration Advisory Board held on 5 November 2019

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*Presentation by the Economic Regeneration Manager*

**Matters for Recommendation to the Cabinet**

5. Economic Regeneration Strategy 13 - 32

*To present an initial consultation draft and ideas for the Borough Economic Recovery Strategy for consideration by the Board and to agree a timetable for consultation and adoption arrangements.*

6. Shopfront Improvements Scheme 33 - 36

*Over the past 18 months, the Borough Council has been running various Shopfront Improvement Schemes to support our local businesses and help improve the look and feel of our town and local centres. This report provides an update on these schemes and sets out next steps.*

7. Business Rates Retention Pilot and Pool 37 - 44

*This report gives an update on the Business Rates Retention Pilot and Business Rates Pool funding and puts forward possible priorities for funding in light of the impact of Covid-19.*

**Matters submitted for Information**

8. East Malling Research Station - Recent Developments 45 - 48

*Following on from previous reports to the Board, this report gives an update on the Growing Kent & Medway 'Strength in Places' Fund bid and the Local Growth Fund 3b (LGF3b) bid, both of which have implications for the future development of the East Malling Research Station site.*

9. West Kent Leader Programme - Update 49 - 52

*With the West Kent LEADER programme soon coming to an end, this report gives an overview of how the programme has performed and the types of initiatives that it has funded over the past five years.*

10. West Kent Partnership Update 53 - 60

*The key matters discussed at the meeting of the West Kent Partnership held on 10 July 2020 are set out for information.*

11. Urgent Items 61 - 62

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

**Matters for consideration in Private**

12. Exclusion of Press and Public 63 - 64

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**

13. Urgent Items 65 - 66

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

## **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

Tuesday, 5th November, 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 D W King, Cllr J R S Lark, Cllr J L Sergison, Cllr K B Tanner and Cllr C J Williams

Councillors Mrs J A Anderson, R P Betts, 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 N Foyle, L J O'Toole and W E Palmer

#### **ERG 19/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

#### **ERG 19/26 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the notes of the meeting of the Economic Regeneration Advisory Board held on 4 September 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **ERG 19/27 PRESENTATION: WEST KENT SCALE UP PROGRAMME**

Members received a presentation from Tudor Price of Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce on the West Kent Scale Up Programme. Members noted the growth of businesses within the Borough that had been supported through this Business Rate Retention Pilot funded initiative. The Chairman thanked Mr Price for his contribution to the meeting.

#### **MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET**

#### **ERG 19/28 ECONOMIC REGENERATION STRATEGY ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

Decision Notice D190078MEM

The report of the Chief Executive set out progress to date on the Economic Regeneration Strategy Action Plan and advised 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.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the Action Plan update, including the arrangements to provide a Graduate Trainee post for 1 year fully funded by Business Rates Pool growth funding, be noted.

#### **ERG 19/29 LOCAL CENTRES AND PARADES SHOPFRONT GRANT SCHEME UPDATE**

Decision Notice D190079MEM

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

**RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (2) 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.

#### **MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION**

#### **ERG 19/30 STRENGTH IN PLACES FUND - GROWING KENT AND MEDWAY**

The report of the Chief Executive provided 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 had been submitted to UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) in September 2019.

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

#### **ERG 19/31 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no items considered in private.

The meeting ended at 8.23 pm

# Agenda Item 4

- Presentation: Economic Impact of Covid-19 by the Economic Regeneration Manager

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

**02 September 2020**

**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 BOROUGH ECONOMIC RECOVERY STRATEGY**

**To present an initial consultation draft and ideas for the Borough Economic Recovery Strategy for consideration by the Board and to agree a timetable for consultation and adoption arrangements.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 The current Borough Economic Regeneration Strategy was adopted in June 2019 and covers the period up to March 2023. Good progress had been made on delivering initiatives to support our local economy for the period up to March 2020, with notable successes in the delivery of business support, the skills and work-readiness agenda, measures to support our town centres and securing funding for our priority projects. However, with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the economy changed overnight – economic output plummeted (GDP dropped 6.9% in March and 20.4% in April), unemployment rates shot up, a large proportion of the working population were furloughed, and many of those that weren't had to swiftly adopt new ways of working. All of this was unforeseen at the time the current Borough Economic Regeneration Strategy was adopted, and so as we tentatively move away from reacting to the crisis as it unfolded and towards an attempted recovery from the lockdown, it is essential that the Borough Council reviews its strategy and pulls together an Economic Recovery Strategy that is fit for purpose.

**1.2 Kent Economic Recovery Plan - Strategic Context**

1.2.1 Since the beginning of the crisis, the Borough Council has been closely engaged with colleagues at Kent County Council (which has overall responsibility for recovery) and other districts and boroughs through the Kent Economic Recovery Cell. This group has been leading on the development of a Kent-wide Economic Recovery Plan, which at the time of writing this report is still under development. This plan will look at the medium term (the next 18 months) to set out actions that Kent County Council and its partners should undertake to support economic revival

and longer-term sustainability and resilience. At present, it is proposed that the plan has five 'channels' of activity:

- **Communications, Confidence and Trust** – providing better intelligence to inform our actions and ensuring collaboration and partnership to drive our activity
- **Open for Business** – taking action to build confidence and demonstrate that Kent is open and accessible
- **Supporting Business** – supporting resilient and innovative businesses to drive future growth
- **People** – enabling people to access work and skills and reach their potential
- **Investment** – planning and investing now for a sustainable future.

1.2.2 Following a short consultation exercise, there have been slight amendments to the plan. Whilst the five 'channels' of activity have been retained, these are now underpinned by three key principles, which are, in effect, cross-cutting themes. These three key principles are:

- **Cleaner and Greener** – contributing towards net zero and encouraging sustainable growth.
- **Productive and Open** – supporting productivity growth (through measures such as long-term skills development and technological innovation) and being open to new ideas, products and markets.
- **Better Opportunities, Fairer Chances** – addressing the uneven impacts of recession (such as youth unemployment) through an inclusive approach.

1.2.3 Proposed immediate actions include the extension of the Covid-19 helpline and the refocusing of the Kent & Medway Business Loan Fund (both part of 'supporting business'), developing temporary employment schemes and investing in apprenticeships (People) and further investment in broadband and digital technology (Investment). However, much of the more medium term activity will likely be dictated by evolving challenges and developing government policy, as such it is important that there is flexibility within the plan to respond to new circumstances.

### 1.3 Borough Economic Recovery Strategy

1.3.1 In pulling together an initial consultation draft for the Borough Economic Recovery Strategy, it is important that there is synergy with the Kent-wide plan, but that it adds value to what it is looking to achieve and responds to issues that are particularly pertinent to the borough. In addition, a clear link must be made with the Borough Council's Corporate Strategy First Year Addendum, which was approved at Cabinet on 03 June 2020.

1.3.2 As such, it is proposed that the consultation draft of the Borough Economic Recovery Strategy (which is provided as Appendix 1):

- i) Uses the economic vision as set out in the 03 June 2020 Cabinet Report regarding the Corporate Strategy First Year Addendum for the purposes of the Economic Recovery Strategy – **“Maximising the unique strengths of the local area to help create a resilient, dynamic and inclusive economy that fosters sustainable growth”**
- ii) Adopts the five channels and three key principles as used by the Kent Economic Recovery Plan.
- iii) Covers a shorter timescale than previously used for our Economic Regeneration Strategies in light of future uncertainty – from 2021-2023.
- iv) Includes the measures as set out in the Action Plan. This is a starting point and it is envisaged that there are likely to be other actions within the final version of the plan once it evolves into its final form/

## 1.4 Framework for Consultation and Adoption

1.4.1 If the consultation draft is approved for consultation, then it is essential that the draft Economic Recovery Strategy is exposed to external scrutiny prior to its formal adoption, in order to ensure that it is as accurate and comprehensive as possible. We will seek the views of our key economic partners including members of the West Kent Partnership, local business support providers, business representative bodies such as the Chambers of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses, as well as individual local businesses in the Borough.

1.4.2 It is suggested that the consultation is undertaken for a four week period from 10 September 2020 – 08 October 2020. During this period, the following will be undertaken to ensure that the opportunity to provide comments on the draft strategy document is as easy and straightforward as possible:

- Direct email to database of key economic partner contacts.
- Inclusion of the consultation draft on the TMBC business webpages.
- Programme of social media messaging – Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn
- Inclusion of an article in two editions of the Tonbridge and Malling Business e-bulletin, which goes out to over 600 business contacts.

1.4.4 Over the course of October 2020, all the comments received will be processed, and where appropriate, the strategy will be amended accordingly.

1.4.5 The intention will be to report on the outcome of that consultation, highlighting any amendments that have been made, and to seek formal adoption of the strategy at the board meeting on 03 November 2020. The timescale is tight, and so if there are substantive comments to consider, it may need to be put back to the February 2021 board meeting.

## **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 There are no financial and value for money considerations arising directly 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, subject to any comments from the Board, the proposals regarding the consultation draft of the Economic Recovery Strategy as set out in sections 1.3 and 1.4 of this report **BE APPROVED**.

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

contact: Jeremy Whittaker,  
Economic Regeneration  
Manager

Julie Beilby  
Chief Executive

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# Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

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## Borough Economic Recovery Strategy – Consultation Draft

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2021 - 2023

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Page 17 **Images to be included.**



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## Foreword - Economic Recovery in Tonbridge and Malling

This consultation draft of our Economic Recovery Strategy sets out Tonbridge & Malling's response to the economic crisis that has arisen from the Covid-19 pandemic. The combined health and economic crises have impacted every sector, business and worker and together they present the greatest threats we have faced in generations.

In recent months, and in the face of considerable pressures, the Council has been working quickly and diligently to support our local businesses and residents. Over 1,500 local businesses have received grant support through via the Borough Council, amounting to an injection of around £20 million into the local economy. In addition, the Borough Council has:

- Set up and run a Community Hub for our most in need residents
- Part-funded the Kent-wide Covid-19 Business Helpline which has been used by over 700 local businesses
- Supported our High Street businesses and licensed premises in moving out of lockdown.

As we move away from these initial responses and assess the wider impact of the pandemic locally, it is essential that we look to the future and set out a framework detailing how we and our partners can facilitate a strong recovery. This document is our starting point and it is our intention to review it annually. We look forward to receiving your feedback.



**Nicolas Heslop, Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration**

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### Appendix 1: List of Key Partners

## 1. The Impact of Covid-19 on our Local Economy

The effects of Covid-19 and measures to combat it have had a severe effect on business activity on both a national and local level.

On 23 March 2020, Central Government imposed a lockdown to contain the spread of the virus, which included the closure of all non-essential stores and destinations. This set of enforced closures impacted supply chains, reduced demand for non-essential goods and resulted in a large increase in unemployment. Through the Job Retention (Furlough) Scheme, along with introduction of loans and grants for businesses, the immediate impact was significantly reduced. Indeed, figures from the Bank of England and the Office for Budget Responsibility indicate a 12.4-13% drop in GDP in 2020 is now expected, which is smaller than previously forecast. However, there is much uncertainty regarding the impact resulting from the conclusion of the Job Retention (furlough) Scheme, the end of the Brexit transitional period and the likelihood and extent of any further waves of the virus.

In Tonbridge and Malling, by the end of June 2020:

- 17,200 workers had been placed on the Job Retention (Furlough) Scheme
- 5,300 self-employed people had accessed the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme
- Nearly 1,500 businesses had received a Small Business Grant or Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant
- A further 150 businesses has received a Discretionary Business Grant
- 3,345 people were unemployed (up from 1,260 in February 2020, but down from 3,560 in May 2020).
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However, the realities of the situation have resulted in considerable negative and unforeseen impacts in many areas of the local economy. As set out in table 1, one of the clear impacts, beyond the overall increase in unemployment, is the impact on 18-24 year olds. In June 2020, 7.8% of people in this age bracket were unemployed, and whilst numbers of unemployed people reduced slightly in June 2020, the figures remained stubbornly high for younger people. This could be partly as a result of the higher percentage of young people that work in sectors that have been disproportionately hit by the virus, but it will also reflect the real difficulties in entering the jobs market at a time of severe economic downturn. Research on this issue by the Institute of Fiscal Studies found that the “pandemic has severely dented the career prospects of young people and threatens to have a prolonged negative economic impact on them as a result”. As such, efforts aimed at mitigating against further damage and providing opportunities and support to young people are a key component of our strategy.

	Number			Rate		
	18-24	25-49	50-64	18-24	25-49	50-64
<b>February</b>	265	665	330	2.9%	1.6%	1.3%
<b>March</b>	280	690	330	3.1%	1.7%	1.3%
<b>April</b>	480	1425	625	5.3%	3.5%	2.4%
<b>May</b>	705	2005	850	7.8%	4.9%	3.3%
<b>June</b>	705	1825	815	7.8%	4.5%	3.1%

KCC figures: Unemployment in Tonbridge & Malling 2020

The Government's Business Impact Covid-19 Survey (BICS) illustrates some other key trends that are happening in the local economy (data relates to the end of June 2020):

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- To date only a small number of businesses have ceased trading permanently – mostly in the Construction and Professional Services sectors
- Most businesses are now trading, but the following sectors still have a high percentage of businesses that are still temporarily closed – Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (nearly 50%) and Accommodation and Food Services Activities (around 15%).
- The vast majority of businesses have at least 4 months of cash reserves in order to keep their operations going.

Analysis of the resilience of the local economy through the KCC Dashboard (2020) shows that pre-Covid-19, the local economy was performing well, however two key 'vulnerable' elements stand out as areas where the local economy might be disproportionately impacted:

- 18% of the workforce in the borough is self-employed (in comparison to 10% nationally) – whilst this demonstrates the local dynamism and ease of setting up a business in the local area, these workers are more vulnerable to a number of negative economic shocks associated with the pandemic.
- A high representation within the borough of businesses with specific sectors that are highly sensitive to the impact of the current crisis – namely, the motor trades industry, construction and to a lesser extent quarrying and utilities.

This information is constantly evolving and so close monitoring of the data will be undertaken on a regular basis in order to ensure the strategy is as relevant as possible.

## Working with Our Partners

The Borough Council recognises the key role it has to play in helping the local economy to recover, both in terms of setting a strategic framework for its approach as well as through the various initiatives it undertakes in order to contribute towards the creation of a better economy. However, our positive impact can only really be maximised by working with partners that also play an equally important role. As such, we are committed to working with a wide range of partners to achieve the actions set out in this strategy. The following are key strategic partnerships that the Borough Council engages with on a regular basis:

**The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP):** is one of 39 business-led public/private partnerships set up by government to make investments and deliver activities, as set out in its Strategic Economic Plan 2014-2018, to drive growth and create local jobs. SELEP covers Kent, Essex, East Sussex, Medway, Thurrock and Southend and is the biggest Local Enterprise Partnership outside of London. Recent investments into Tonbridge and Malling which have benefited from funding via the SELEP have included Tonbridge town centre improvements (Tonbridge High Street and River Walk) and Tonbridge Station. Funding has also been awarded to projects at Rochester Airport, East Malling Research Station (NIAB EMR) and Leigh Flood Storage Area Expansion and Hildenborough Embankment.

**Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP):** was set up in 2013 as one of the four federated partnerships which comprises the SELEP. KMEP is focussed on driving forward economic growth and prosperity in Kent and Medway and is governed by a Board and chaired by the private sector, with membership drawn from business, local government, further and higher education establishments. KMEP is responsible for delivering the objectives set out in Kent and Medway's Growth Plan.

**West Kent Partnership (WKP):** is the strategic economic partnership covering the local authority areas of Tonbridge and Malling, Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells. The three boroughs work closely together to make the most of the resources available to them in order to deliver more for our local businesses. The partnership has been successful in obtaining funding for a number of initiatives over many years, such as for the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network.

In addition, there are a number of key partners that the Borough Council works with directly to deliver initiatives or to support work in a specific area of the local economy. A list of these partners is provided in Appendix 1.

## 2. Policy Context

It is important to recognise that this Economic Recovery Strategy will be delivered within the context of a much wider policy framework, which at present is rapidly evolving. The table below provides a brief overview of the key national, regional, sub-regional and local strategies that look to address a range of issues affecting the economy:

	Policy Document	Organisation	Key Messages
<b>National</b>	National Industrial Strategy	HM Government	May be reviewed following the Covid-19 crisis. The Industrial Strategy has 5 foundations of productivity to achieve a transformed economy: 1. Ideas: the world's most innovative economy; 2. People: good jobs and greater earning power for all; 3. Infrastructure: a major upgrade to the UK's infrastructure; 4. Business environment: the best place to start and grow a business; and 5. Places: prosperous communities across the UK
<b>Regional</b>	Local Industrial Strategy	SELEP	Final production of this document is currently on hold whilst a response to the Covid-19 pandemic is considered. However, the LIS has two core aims – 1. To increase productivity & realise potential 2. Allow all communities to contribute to & benefit from economic prosperity.
<b>Sub-Regional</b>	Economic Renewal & Resilience Plan	KCC	Sets out 5 'channels' of activity – communications, confidence and trust; open for business; supporting business, people and investment, underpinned by three key principles – cleaner and greener; productive and open and better opportunities, fairer chances.
	West Kent Priorities for Growth	WKP	In the process of being reviewed. Currently, aims to create <i>“a dynamic and well connected economy, a key location for business growth where businesses are supported to innovate and thrive and our local population has access to quality jobs and skills development”</i>
<b>Local</b>	Corporate Plan (with First Year Addendum)	TMBC	Aims to “continue to be a financially sustainable Council with strong leadership that delivers valued services, a commitment to delivering innovation and change to meet the needs of our Borough” and highlights the need for sustainable growth, regeneration and encouraging partnership working to support the local economy.
	Emerging Local Plan and Evidence Base	TMBC	Identifies a range of strategic sites and employment allocations to meet the needs of the borough up to 2031. The Local Plan is supported by the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which sets out critical, essential and desirable infrastructure investments needed to enable growth and development.

## Key Issues

Despite having a comparatively resilient local economy, there are a number of challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated and is forcing the Borough to face, and which need to be addressed if the area is to create a better quality of life for its residents and businesses. These include:

- To help build confidence back into the local area, it is essential that the Borough Council helps to facilitate sustainable housing and commercial developments (such as the regeneration of the Former Aylesford Newsprint site and the East Malling Research Station), along with the **essential infrastructure** that is needed in order to create a more resilient transport (including walking and cycling) network, better flood defences and improved broadband provision (especially in rural areas) to ensure a high quality of life for both residents and businesses. Without this investment, our existing infrastructure will soon become insufficient to meet local needs.
- There is no question the labour market is tough at the moment. Even though Tonbridge & Malling fares better than most places in Kent, the impact on local businesses has been considerable, and it will be a while before many of them get back on an even keel. It is essential that the Borough Council therefore is supportive of sustainable development in the borough that creates new employment opportunities, and also supports initiatives that link local people to **job and upskilling opportunities**.
- Although the Borough benefits from a dynamic and entrepreneurial local business identity – with high levels of self-employment – this is also potentially a vulnerability in a situation where the impacts of Covid-19 persist. In recent years, only around 60-65% of businesses in the borough last 3 years or more. Whilst this high business churn is likely created by a wide variety of different factors, it does indicate that there could be a need for more targeted **information sharing, business support and advice, recruitment support and better access to suitable business premises**.
- Whilst our **town centres** have been evolving for a number of years, the Covid-19 crisis has greatly accelerated these transformative changes. With an increased number of transactions online, our High Streets are no longer just ‘retail centres’, but will need to evolve into destinations where people go to get an ‘experience’, be it going to a park, having a coffee, visiting the gym or enjoying a meal out. Whilst some of this change is happening organically, it is important that we continue to support our businesses through these changes by continuing to make our town centres attractive places to visit and to pilot innovative approaches.

- Whilst the borough has some great **tourism** assets, such as Ightham Mote, Tonbridge Castle, the Hop Farm and Buckmore Park, Tonbridge and Malling does not have a particularly high tourism profile, especially in comparison with other parts of Kent. With potentially greater numbers of people holidaying locally, there are opportunities to help our attractions and visitor accommodation providers to recover from closure and adapt to a new normal for the rest of the 2020 summer season and beyond.

## Vision & Objectives

### “Maximising the unique strengths of the local area to help create a resilient, dynamic and inclusive economy that fosters sustainable growth”

Our vision is to build upon the traditional strengths within the local economy, to help recover from the recent Covid-19 pandemic and to build resilience in order to put our businesses in as strong a position as possible in case of future, currently unforeseen, impacts.

Since the beginning of the crisis, the Borough Council has been closely engaged with colleagues at Kent County Council (which has overall responsibility for recovery) and other districts and boroughs through the Kent Economic Recovery Cell, which has been leading on the development of a Kent & Medway Economic Renewal & Resilience Plan. In order to ensure synergy, this Recovery Strategy will be using the same five ‘channels’ of activity in order to structure its approach:

- **Communications, Confidence and Trust** – providing better intelligence to inform our actions and ensuring collaboration and partnership to drive our activity
- **Open for Business** – taking action to build confidence and demonstrate that the Borough is open and accessible
- **Supporting Business** – supporting resilient and innovative businesses to drive future growth
- **People** – enabling people to access work and skills and reach their potential
- **Investment** – planning and investing now for a sustainable future.

Each of these five channels is broken down into sub-themes, which give this recovery plan a more local flavour. These are highlighted in the Action Plan.

In addition to the channels, the three key principles set out in the Kent & Medway Economic Renewal & Resilience Plan, which are, in effect, cross-cutting themes will be employed, not only to ensure synergy with the Kent-wide plan, but also to enable links to the Borough Council’s Digital Strategy and emerging Climate Change Strategy. These three key principles are:

- **Cleaner and Greener** – contributing towards net zero and encouraging sustainable growth.

- **Productive and Open** – supporting productivity growth (through measures such as long-term skills development and technological innovation) and being open to new ideas, products and markets.
- **Better Opportunities, Fairer Chances** – addressing the uneven impacts of recession (such as youth unemployment) through an inclusive approach.

## Action Plan – Priority Actions

Five Channels	Sub-Themes	Possible Actions Could Include.....	Key Principles		
			Cleaner and Greener	Productive and Open	Better Opportunities, Fairer Chances
Communications, Confidence and Trust		Build up subscription to the T&M Business Bulletin.	Y	Y	Y
		Use of new TMBC website and social media channels to ensure accessible and timely information is provided for local businesses.	Y	Y	Y
		Investigate use of technology to replace business networking events.	Y	Y	Y
Open for Business	Our Town Centres	Completion of Local Centres Shopfront (and Energy Efficiency) Scheme	Y	Y	
		Develop a new West Kent Retail Support Programme to support our High Streets		Y	Y
		Complete the Re-opening High Streets Safely Programme	Y	Y	Y
		Investigate role of the Council in encouraging vehicle charging points in key locations across the Borough.	Y	Y	
	Tourism Promotion	Work with tourism partners and key attractions to promote the borough as a visitor destination	Y	Y	Y
Supporting Business	Business Finance	Promote and signpost funding support for business (such as LoCASE, South East Business Boost, Kent and Medway Loan Fund, any other future Covid-19 related Government funding)	Y	Y	Y
	Business Support	Promote and refer businesses to the West Kent Business/Start-up Support Programme	Y	Y	Y
		Promote and refer to the Covid-19 recovery helpline/Kent & Medway Growth Hub	Y	Y	Y
People	Skills and Work-Readiness	Virtual Events to support people back into work or new training opportunities (Jobs Fairs, Skills events, webinars).	Y	Y	Y
		Investigate interventions to support apprenticeships and internships in the borough.		Y	Y

		Support the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network in local secondary schools.		Y	Y
<b>Investment</b>	<b>Delivery of the Local Plan</b>	Work towards the adoption of the Local Plan and the allocation of strategic sites and new employment allocations.	Y	Y	Y
		<b>Strategic Commercial Projects</b>	Continue to support to LEHES and Hildenborough Embankment Scheme	Y	
	Work with NIAB EMR on bringing forward proposals for East Malling Research Station	Y	Y	Y	
	Review strategic asset base (especially with regards to Tonbridge Town Centre)	Y	Y	Y	
	Work with Panattoni to deliver a high quality commercial development at the former Aylesford Newsprint site.	Y	Y	Y	
	Support continued roll out of broadband infrastructure and initiatives to pilot the SMART towns agenda, as set out in our Digital Strategy	Y	Y	Y	

## Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council - Open for Business

The borough council has a key role to play, individually and in partnership with others, to provide positive support and advice to the local business community as we all work together to create a better economy. In addition to this, the council also must, at the same time, undertake a number of regulatory functions which are relevant to, and will impact upon, local businesses.

The council is committed to undertaking such regulation with regard to local business in a measured, consistent and constructive way and to seek to reduce the burden of regulation where possible. Where necessary regulation impacts adversely on a local business, we will take the time to communicate clearly why this is necessary and explore what measures might be open to business to overcome any barriers or problems they face. In this respect, we will use the 'Better Business for All' model across all council services where contact between businesses and the council is joined up regardless of whether that contact relates to regulation or offering support.

We are committed to recognising the challenges which businesses face, particularly smaller businesses, during the current time and will do as much as we can to assist. In order for businesses to get the maximum benefit from the activities set out in this strategy, there are a number of simple things they can do, such as:

- Signing up to the monthly business e-bulletin, which has information on new funding streams, advice and support and other business news.
- Engaging with the West Kent Enterprise Advisor Network and supporting the workforce of the future.
- Following the borough council on twitter - @TMBC\_Kent – and Facebook
- Getting in touch via [economic.regeneration@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:economic.regeneration@tmbc.gov.uk) with any query about the local economy or your business.

## Monitoring and Reviewing the Economy

The data available is constantly being updated, but the following sets out the measures through which it is planned to track the recovery in the local economy:

Economic Indicator	Current Situation (most recent data as of June 2020)	Current Trend	Targets		
			2021	2022	2023
VAT Registrations (Start-Ups)	735 (2018)	TBD	720	730	740
VAT De-registrations	615 (2018)	TBD	600	580	570
3 Year Business Survival Rates (%)	59.4% (2018)	TBD – likely to have dropped in recent months	60%	62%	65%
Median Gross Weekly Workplace Earnings (£)	£552.7 (2019)	TBD	£560	£580	£600
Unemployment Rate (%)	4.2% (June 2020)		3.0%	1.8%	1.6%
18-24 year olds claiming out of work benefits (%)	7.8% (June 2020)		4.5%	3.0%	2.5%
National Vocational Qualification Level 3+ (%)	56.8% (December 2019)		60%	62%	64%
Happiness Score (out of 10)	7.8 (December 2019)	TBD – likely to have dropped since December 2019	7.5	7.8	8.0

## Appendix 1 – List of Key Partners

Action with Communities in Rural Kent	Kent Supported Employment
Better Business For All – Regulatory Services	Locate in Kent
Business Doctors	Mid Kent College
Clarion Housing	National Centre for Micro-Business
Department for International Trade (DIT)	Network Rail
Deskrenters (Castle Lodge)	NIAB East Malling Research
East Malling Trust	North Kent Enterprise Zone Steering Group – including Medway Council
Education Business Partnership Kent	Produced in Kent
Environment Agency	Royal British Legion Industries
Federation of Small Businesses	Tonbridge and Malling Businesses
Golding Homes	Tonbridge and Malling Local Strategic Partnership
Hadlow College	Tonbridge and Malling Schools
Highways England	Tonbridge Forum
Homes England	Tonbridge Town Team
JobCentre Plus	Town & Parish Councils
Kent Apprenticeships	Visit Kent
Kent County Council	West Kent College
Kent Farmers Market Association	West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network
Kent International Business	West Kent Partnership – including Sevenoaks DC & Tunbridge Wells BC
Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce	

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

**02 September 2020**

**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 SHOPFRONT IMPROVEMENTS SCHEME**

**Over the past 18 months, the Borough Council has been running various Shopfront Improvement Schemes to support our local businesses and help improve the look and feel of our town and local centres. This report provides an update on these schemes and sets out next steps.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 A significant amount of progress has been made on these schemes over the past 6-9 months which has resulted in a number of units across the borough being much improved.

**1.2 Town and District Shopfront Improvement Scheme**

1.2.1 In November 2018, a report was considered by this advisory board on the potential for delivering a shopfront improvement scheme in our town and district centres. Having been agreed, the scheme was launched in March 2019 and had the following criteria:

- Grants of up to £5,000 per shop unit were available
- Eligible works were solely external improvements to the shop unit (internal works were ineligible)
- This scheme focussed on – Tonbridge Centre, West Malling, Snodland, Borough Green, Larkfield, Hadlow, Kings Hill, East Peckham, Aylesford and Wrotham.

1.2.2 In addition to support from the Economic Regeneration Team, hands-on help and advice was also available for prospective applicants through Kent Rural Retailers, a branch of Action with Communities in Rural Kent, who were able to provide expert advice on a wide range of issues, including store layout and displays, marketing and promotion as well as practical help with filling in the application forms.

1.2.3 In September 2019, the advisory board agreed to close the scheme to new applications at the end of December 2019. By this time, 23 applications had been received, of which 22 were approved for grant support.

1.2.4 The total amount of grant funding allocated to these 22 schemes was £60,372.90. This grant funding has been at least matched by contributions from the applicants themselves. Further information on the programme is set out in Table 1 below:

Location	Number of Schemes	Value of Grants	Number of Schemes Completed	Spend to Date
Tonbridge	10	£25,427.40	8	£21,626.40
West Malling	6	£20,823.00	2	£12,868.00
Larkfield	3	£8,672.50	0	0
Borough Green	1	£1,700.00	0	£500.00
Kings Hill	1	£1,750.00	1	£1,750.00
Hadlow	1	£2,000.00	1	£2,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>£60,372.90</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>£38,744.40</b>

1.2.5 Unfortunately, despite initial interest from businesses in all eligible areas, apart from one ineligible application, no applications were ultimately received from businesses in Snodland, East Peckham, Aylesford or Wrotham.

1.2.6 Whilst 12 schemes have now been completed, and a further 3 (in Borough Green, Larkfield and West Malling) are currently underway, there are 7 schemes which are yet to commence. Although applicants have a year to complete their projects (and extensions have been given to some), it is likely that a number of these schemes have been impacted by the Covid-19 crisis and unfortunately may not now be delivered.

### 1.3 Local Centres and Parades Scheme

1.3.1 The Local Centres and Parades scheme was agreed by the advisory board in September 2019 and launched the same month. Lessons were learnt from the Town and District Shopfront Improvement Scheme and applied to this new scheme. The changes included:

- In reduction in the grant limit down to £3,500 per shop unit
- Eligible expenditure was extended to energy efficiency measures (both internal and external) in order to encourage such improvements to commercial properties in our borough.

1.3.2 To date, there have been 7 applications, amounting to a grant value of £12,251. Further information is provided in Table 2:

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of Schemes</b>	<b>Value of Grants</b>	<b>Number of Schemes Completed</b>	<b>Spend to Date</b>
East Malling	3	£5,726.00	1	£3,455.00
Tonbridge Local Centres	2	£2,574.00	0	0
Leybourne	1	£2,587.50	1	£2,587.50
Wouldham	1	£1,363.50	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>£12,251.00</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>£6,042.50</b>

1.3.3 To date, no applications have been received from businesses in Burham, Eccles, Greenacres (Aylesford), Hildenborough, Plaxtol, Wateringbury, and Ditton.

1.3.4 Two schemes have now been completed, although again the number of new application submissions and progress with existing projects has been impacted heavily by the Covid-19 crisis. Before lockdown in March 2020, 5 applications had been submitted and approved, but between March and July 2020 there were understandably no new applications. In recent weeks there have been two submissions that have been approved and there is a further application expected in the coming weeks. As such, it does seem like businesses are interested in the scheme now many of them are back and running. However, it is feared that with everything that has happened over recent months, many potential applicants will have forgotten about the scheme. As, such a focus on promoting the scheme in the coming months and setting a deadline for applications of 31 March 2021 would help to increase take up and put a conclusion on the programme to free up resources to focus on other economic recovery measures.

#### **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 £100,000 was set aside from the Business Rates Retention Pilot to cover the cost of these schemes. To date £72,623.90 of grants have been allocated, of which £44,786.90 has been spent. An additional £1,500 has been spent on advice and support through the Kent Rural Retailer.

#### **1.6 Risk Assessment**

1.6.1 The application process has been designed to minimise risk. Applications are shared with colleagues in a number of departments (Business Rates, Licensing, Planning, Building Control and Environmental Health) before being considered by the panel, and payments are only made once receipted invoices and photographic evidence of works have been provided.

## 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 An additional promotional exercise to encourage further take-up **BE UNDERTAKEN** in October 2020.

1.8.2 A date of 31 March 2021 **BE AGREED** for the closure of the Local Centres and Parades Scheme for new applications.

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**

**02 September 2020**

**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 AND POOL**

**This report gives an update on the Business Rates Retention Pilot and Business Rates Pool funding and puts forward possible priorities for funding in light of the impact of Covid-19.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 Funding through the Business Rates Retention Pilot and the Business Rates Pool are key resources through which the Borough Council can implement measures that support our local economy. Over the past 18 months or so, progress has been made in delivering some initiatives. However, the impact of Covid-19 is such that work now needs to be undertaken to review and reconsider the sort of initiatives that should be funded through these funds.

**1.2 Business Rates Retention Pilot**

1.2.1 In November 2018, the Economic Regeneration Advisory Board endorsed a number of initiatives to be delivered through the Business Rates Retention Pilot. Progress to date has been as follows:

- Shopfront Improvement Grant Scheme (£100,000 allocated) – through the Town and District Scheme and the Local Centres Scheme, 29 businesses have been allocated funding to carry out improvement works. The total value of these 29 grant offers to date is just under £80,000, and to date about half of that grant funding has been given out to completed projects.
- Tonbridge Town Centre Initiatives (£25,000 allocated) – to date £4,000 has been spent on pop-up shops and Xmas lights at Quarry Hill Parade.
- Malling Centres Promotion (£15,000 allocated) – working with East Malling Trust (who have contributed £2,000), NIAB EMR and Explore Kent, improvements to interpretation along the PROW through the East Malling site will be undertaken during 2021. It is likely only £10,000 will be required.

- 1.2.2 However, progress on two initiatives that were endorsed by advisory board – the use of the audit wing at the Gibson Building for small businesses, and the establishment of a co-working/flexible office space fund – have not progressed at this stage. Despite initial interest, the audit wing has seemingly proved unattractive to co-working operators due to the lack of 24/7 access, and a co-working/flexible office space scheme (which was scheduled for 2021/22) was in the initial stages of being pulled together just before the Covid-19 crisis happened.
- 1.2.3 At the time of allocating funding to these initiatives, the actual amount of funding available through the Business Rates Retention Pilot was not set in stone. However, with a number of projects now progressing, the business rates retention pilot fund balance as at 01 April 2020 was circa £523,000.
- 1.2.4 In response to the increased pot of funding, the following initiatives were being drawn up for consideration before lockdown began:
- Vehicle Charging Points – to align with aspirations in the draft Climate Change Strategy
  - Natural Flood Management – has been highlighted to KCC and the Environment Agency that we potentially have some funding set aside for any NFM in the borough that supports land based industries.
  - Business IT initiatives – to align with the aspirations of the Digital Strategy.
- 1.2.5 However, it is pretty clear given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic that the priorities and focus of the Business Rates Retention Pilot fund need to be re-assessed in order to ensure we respond effectively to the requirements of the local economy as it is now. As such, it seems a fitting time to review the priorities for this funding and agree them with the County Council as we are required to do so.

### **1.3 Business Rates Pool**

- 1.3.1 In addition to the Business Rates Retention Pilot funding, progress has been made on initiatives agreed with Kent County Council through the Business Rates Pool at the end of 2019. The total funding for this equates to £150,000 and has been broken down as follows:
- Recruitment of a Graduate EDO (£70,000) – James Read started during week commencing 16 March 2020 on an initial 12 month contract, with the potential to extend for a further year.
  - Highways Transport Schemes (£70,000) – funding has been earmarked to contribute towards the revenue cost of working up schemes in the borough that support the Local Plan/other strategic priorities. Discussions are ongoing with Kent Highways.
  - Tonbridge Gateway Pods (£10,000) – conversations between the Gateway Manager and Kent County Council are progressing.

1.3.2 Given that progress has already made on these allocations, it is not proposed that these are changed as part of a review. However, there is additional funding within the Business Rates Pool – approximately £194,000, which remains uncommitted and needs to be allocated through this review process.

#### 1.4 Business Rates Retention Pilot and Pool – Proposed Next Steps

1.4.1 The need to reconsider the allocation of funding in light of the covid-19, has already happened to a small degree, with Kent County Council agreeing to the use of the Business Rates Retention Pilot to help support our local economy through the response phase of the covid-19 crisis. This has resulted in just over £40,000 being allocated as follows:

- £33,000 towards business grants as a top-up of the Small Business Discretionary Grant Scheme (which could increase subject to appeals)
- £8,000 contribution towards the Covid-19 Business Helpline

1.4.2 Pulling together spend to date, along with committed expenditure, the balance available to fund one or more of the initiatives detailed in Appendix 1 (or indeed other priorities) from the Pilot is approximately **£366,000** (i.e. £523,000 minus £157,000):

<b>BRRP Projects</b>	<b>Spent as of 01 April 2020</b>	<b>Committed/Spent since 01 April 2020</b>
Shopfront Improvements Schemes	£40,000	£60,000
Town Centre Initiatives	£4,000	£21,000
Malling Centres Promotion	£0	£15,000
Covid-19 Initiatives	£0	£41,000
Natural Flood Management	£0	£20,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£44,000</b>	<b>£157,000</b>

4.3 This figure of £366,000 from the Pilot, plus the £194,000 from the Pool, means that there is a total pot of **£560,000** for initiatives that support growth (and that are supported by Kent County Council).

4.4 Under Appendix 1, an attempt has been made to consider some of those initiatives that had been previously put forward as priorities under the Pilot scheme but had not yet been progressed, along with other potential initiatives that appear at present likely to be priorities in the years to come. Given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, emphasis on **strengthening the resilience of the local economy** (through skills development and a work-ready workforce), tackling the increasingly

pressing issues regarding **the future of our town centres** and **embracing the economic and environmental opportunities arising from the green agenda** are the focus of the list in Appendix 1, and would seemingly be strong candidates for funding. However, it is proposed that further work is undertaken on these and a report is brought back to the advisory board in November 2020 for endorsement.

#### **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 Any initiatives that are ultimately agreed through this process would be funded through the Business Rates Retention Pilot and Business Rates Pool.

#### **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 report **BE NOTED**

1.8.2 That the table set out in Appendix 1 **BE APPROVED** as an initial starting point for consideration of ideas to support the local economy, with a view to coming back to the next board meeting in November 2020 for endorsement before ultimately sharing with Kent County Council for agreement once finalised.

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

## Appendix 1: Possible Initiatives

Status	Project Ideas	Strategic Fit to three key principles (in the emerging Economic Recovery Strategy)	Headline Analysis	(Potential/ Indicative) Budget Allocation
Existing Proposals	Co-working Space Fund		<p>A fund to stimulate additional co-working space in the Borough would still potentially meet the aim to stimulate local economic growth, although whilst co-working/flexible venues were at capacity before the crisis, many of them now have availability and as such the demand for additional capacity is no longer evident.</p> <p><b>This may be something to consider as a medium/longer term aspiration once the recovery starts to take greater hold, but at present isn't a priority.</b></p>	£100,000
	Audit Wing		<p>It fits into the Council's aims of Economic Regeneration and efficient use of public buildings. <b>However, given the response from co-working providers to the space (and the impact of the crisis) it may be better to simply look to rent it out to local businesses or charitable organisations.</b></p>	£70,000
	Vehicle Charging Points	Cleaner and Greener	<p>A key part of the Climate Change Strategy's aim of reducing greenhouse emissions locally.</p>	£50,000
	Business IT Initiative	Productive and Open Better Opportunities, Fairer Chances	<p>The covid-19 crisis has raised awareness amongst employers and employees of the potential of technological solutions to increase business efficiency, reduce congestion and improve air quality.</p>	£75,000

			The Borough Council has led by example in this respect, and so it would seem fitting that whatever the future holds, it is clear that we continue to embrace technology to play a key part.	
Potential Emerging Priority Projects	Local initiatives to tackle the worklessness and skills agenda.	Better opportunities, Fairer Chances	<p>Given the impact of covid-19 on unemployment this agenda is likely to be a key part of the refreshed Economic Regeneration Strategy. Such measures could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Virtual jobs fairs</li> <li>- Virtual careers fair/school employability work (linked to the WKEAN)</li> <li>- SEND Internship Project – modelled on SDC who had 3 SEND internships (presented at WKP)</li> <li>- Contribution towards our own apprenticeships</li> <li>- Apprenticeship Grant Scheme (for higher level apprenticeships)</li> </ul>	£75,000
	Town Centre Regeneration Investment Fund	Productive and Open	<p>The future of town centres has come even further to the fore following the covid-19 crisis, and it appears that much of the thinking around High Streets has been brought forward at greater pace – particularly the increase in internet sales and the struggles of large multinational retailers.</p> <p>It is clear that many town centres will face issues, and so having a flexible pot of funding to react to these challenges and support investment that will stimulate confidence in the local economy is important, and could be useful in meeting some of the proposals coming out of our asset review work.</p>	£200,000
	Boosting the Green Economy	Cleaner and Greener	In support of our economy-related actions in the Climate Change Strategy (and to move them beyond signposting/promotion/information sharing) we could establish a Green Business Grant Scheme that supports and expands the aims and aspirations of the LoCASE scheme locally and contributes towards:	£100,000

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making commercial buildings more energy efficient/greater use of low carbon energy along with measures to improve air quality</li> <li>• Encouraging sustainable transport for business (supporting green travel plans) – charging points/bicycle infrastructure etc.</li> <li>• Possible link to higher level apprenticeships in the green economy</li> </ul>	
	Other ideas	Cleaner and Greener Productive and Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution towards delivery of priorities in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan</li> <li>• Funding towards wider asset development (beyond town centres)</li> </ul>	TBD TBD

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

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**Report of the Chief Executive**

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**Matters for Information**

**1 EAST MALLING RESEARCH STATION – RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

**Following on from previous reports to the Board, this report gives an update on the Growing Kent & Medway ‘Strength in Places’ Fund bid and the Local Growth Fund 3b (LGF3b) bid, both of which have implications for the future development of the East Malling Research Station site.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 The East Malling Research Station has a history dating back to 1913 when it was established by the fruit growing sector to address the many challenges faced by growers. Over the years, the research team at East Malling has introduced wide-ranging advances that have had a huge impact on the way that produce is grown and supplied to the consumer.

1.1.2 In 2016, after a number of years of losses, the East Malling Research Station was rescued in a take-over by the National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB) to form NIAB EMR. Following the take-over, the Research Station has found itself on a much more stable footing, but it is evident that in order to maintain the world-class research that takes place on the site, investment in the facilities is much needed. As such, NIAB EMR, with the support of strategic partners like the Borough Council, has focussed strongly on promoting the economic benefits of the sector to the regional and national economy, and to lobby and bid for government investment to ensure the future success of horticultural research on the site.

**1.2 Strength in Places Fund**

1.2.1 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.

- 1.2.2 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.
- 1.2.3 One of the 24 bids submitted was ‘Growing Kent and Medway’ – a consortium bid led by NIAB EMR (and including Universities and key businesses in the horticultural sector), 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.
- 1.2.4 In June 2020, it was finally announced that the ‘Growing Kent and Medway’ bid had been successful in securing £18 million of Strength in Places funding as part of a £33 million initiative. In total, there were only 7 successful bids in the UK and only 3 in England, illustrating the importance of the horticultural sector to Kent and Medway and demonstrating the strength of the bid.
- 1.2.5 This initiative will see the following developments:

**Inclusive innovation-led growth:**

- a) Investment in enterprise support and small-scale R&D funding at hard-to-reach and under-served groups
- b) Grant funding programme to deliver community engagement

**Investment in flagship infrastructure:**

- a) Food Innovation Lab and Maker Space – University of Greenwich, Chatham
- b) Green Tech Hub for Advanced Horticulture – NIAB EMR, East Malling
- c) Industrial Biotechnology Hub for Sustainable Food and Drink – University of Kent, Canterbury

**Investment in industry-led collaborative R&D:**

- a) £1.5m for small scale innovation and prototyping projects
- b) £3m for large-scale collaborative R&D projects
- c) £0.5m for technology showcase demonstrator projects
- d) Innovation Growth Managers

**Enterprise Support:**

- a) 1-2-1 mentor support (up to 12 hours)
- b) Accelerator programme for plant-based food businesses

**Workforce for 2030:**

- a) Sector Skills Audit and Strategy
- b) Skills road-map for professionalization of the sector in the region
- c) Pilot Skills Hub

- 1.2.6 The Green Tech Hub will build upon the infrastructure set out in 1.3.2 and provide approximately 3,000 square metres of commercially-relevant space for research and development, testing and demonstration of 'Agritech' innovations (such as robotics, sensors and artificial intelligence) in horticultural production.

### **1.3 Local Growth Fund**

- 1.3.1 Having initially been unsuccessful in applying to the Local Growth Fund Round 3 (LGF3) in 2016 for the creation of new greenhouses and energy centre, a further opportunity for NIAB EMR arose with the establishment of a Round 3b (LGF3b) in September 2018, which was set up in order to allocate any underspend in the Round 3 programme.
- 1.3.2 An Expression of Interest was subsequently submitted requesting £1.7m for new greenhouses and energy centre, which was assessed as being a strong bid by consultants acting on behalf of the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP). However, in the initial ranking of projects, NIAB EMR's proposal fell some way down the list. As a result of strong lobbying from the Borough Council and other KMEP Board Members, the NIAB EMR proposals were put on a reserve list of projects that would be funded if further underspend arose from LGF3 funded projects. In preparation, NIAB EMR, with the support of the Borough Council and others produced a Full Business Case.
- 1.3.3 In April 2020, NIAB EMR were invited by the KMEP Board to submit their Full Business Case. On 03 July 2020, this Business Case was considered by South East LEP Accountability Board and awarded £1.7m of LGF3b funding.
- 1.3.4 With the funding now awarded, progress is now being made to move towards commencing construction on site by the end of March 2021.

### **1.4 Legal Implications**

- 1.4.1 None

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

- 1.5.1 None

### **1.6 Risk Assessment**

### **1.7 Equality Impact Assessment**

Background papers:

None

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

**02 September 2020**

**Report of the Chief Executive**

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**1 WEST KENT LEADER PROGRAMME UPDATE**

**With the West Kent LEADER programme soon coming to an end, this report gives an overview of how the programme has performed and the types of initiatives that it has funded over the past five years.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 LEADER is an EU grant programme that has provided grants aimed at supporting capital investment and job creation in rural businesses, including farming and forestry enterprises. There are six national priorities for the programme:

- Support for increasing farm productivity
- Support for micro and small enterprises and farm diversification
- Support for increasing forestry productivity.
- Support for rural tourism
- Provision of rural services
- Support for cultural and heritage activities

**1.2 West Kent LEADER Programme**

1.2.1 The West Kent LEADER Programme covers a rural area spanning Sevenoaks District, Tunbridge Wells Borough, Tonbridge & Malling Borough and a small part of rural Gravesham. The programme started in 2015 and is currently scheduled to finish at the end of December 2020.

1.2.2 It is administered by staff employed by Sevenoaks District Council, who act as the Accountable Body with each West Kent authority contributing to the costs of administration during the course of the programme (£5,000 per authority per annum).

1.2.3 Individual grant applications have been determined by a Local Action Group (LAG) for West Kent made up of representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors, including rural businesses and land owners.

1.2.4 In total, the programme had a budget of £1,794,000 over five years to allocate for project funding.

### 1.3 Programme Update

- 1.3.1 As of August 2020, a total of £1,793,723 had been committed for projects (99.98% of the budget). Overall, the programme received 109 Expressions of Interest. Of these, 54 were approved at the Full Application stage, but five of these were subsequently terminated or withdrawn.
- 1.3.2 To date, 39 projects have now completed, with 10 currently still live and yet to claim all of their grant allocation. In total, just under £215,000 (12% of the budget) is yet to be claimed. All of these live projects have had their claim dates extended in response to possible delays due to the coronavirus pandemic. However, the programme has still accepted other applications in the event of underspend in order to ensure that as much of the budget is used up as possible.

### 1.4 Programme Benefits to Tonbridge & Malling

- 1.4.1 As of August 2020, a total of 17 projects in Tonbridge & Malling had been allocated grant support through the West Kent LEADER Programme, equating to a total of £581,224. Of this funding, £506,538 has been spent, meaning just under £75,000 is yet to be claimed.
- 1.4.2 Table 1 illustrates the distribution of projects and funding across the West Kent Leader Programme area. The distribution across West Kent has broadly been very balanced, with Gravesham only having one project, reflecting the small area of the borough that the programme covers.

Area	No. of Projects Allocated Funding	% of Total	Amount of Funding Allocated	% of Total	Amount of Funding Spent	% of Total
<b>Tonbridge &amp; Malling</b>	17	34.7%	£581,224	32.4%	£506,538	32.1%
<b>Tunbridge Wells</b>	13	26.5%	£592,333	33.0%	£592,333	37.5%
<b>Sevenoaks</b>	18	36.7%	£600,634	33.5%	£479,897	30.4%
<b>Gravesham</b>	1	2.1%	£19,532	0.1%	£0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>£1,793,723</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>£1,578,768</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 1: Distribution of Project and Funding across West Kent**

- 1.4.3 One further project in Tonbridge & Malling, seeking around £30,000 LEADER funding could also be included within this list should it get approved at the Full Application stage.

1.4.4 The types of rural businesses within the borough that have been supported through this programme are varied, but include:

- Distilleries
- Conference venues
- Village stores and cafes
- Stables
- Food producers
- Tourism and leisure businesses

## **1.5 Future Funding**

1.5.1 In order to replace funding from the EU, the Government has pledged to set up a Shared Prosperity Fund to 'reduce inequalities between communities'. At the time of writing this report, Government is still tackling a number of fundamental issues that will need to be considered when setting up this fund, including:

- The priorities and objectives of the fund
- The amount of money allocated
- The method of allocating it between countries and regions of the UK
- The model by which funding is allocated
- Who administers the funds and the degree to which local authorities are involved.

1.5.2 As such at present it is unclear as to whether there will be funding allocated to another LEADER-type programme, or if funding will be prioritised elsewhere. Government will be publishing its consultation on the fund in due course, although no specific timescale has been given as to when this might happen.

## **1.6 Legal Implications**

1.6.1 None

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

1.7.1 None

## **1.8 Risk Assessment**

1.8.1 Not Applicable

Background papers:

None

contact: Jeremy Whittaker  
Economic Regeneration Manager

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

**02 September 2020**

**Report of the Chief Executive**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Information**

**1 WEST KENT PARTNERSHIP – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 JULY 2020**

**1.1 Key Matters Discussed**

1.1.1 The full minutes of the recent meeting of the West Kent Partnership held on 10 July 2020 are attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

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

- a) A presentation from the Department for Business, Energy and the Industrial Strategy (BEIS) on the impact of Covid-19 and the Government response. The key impacts were highlighted as a 76% drop nationally in retail footfall compared to the same time last year, and a 41% drop in spending in the South East of England. In terms of the resilience of the economy, the South east of England fared quite well, but both Kent and Essex have pockets of weakness. The Covid-19 business grants, Getting Building Funding and funding for re-opening high streets were given as examples of support for local economies.
- b) A presentation from Kent County Council on their Draft Economic Recovery Strategy. This highlighted the 122% increase in unemployment in Kent and Medway between March and May 2020, and the 9-15% fall in GVA in 2020. The three key principles of the Economic Recovery Strategy will be:
  - i) Cleaner and Greener – an economy which is more sustainable in the long term.
  - ii) Productive and Open – supporting long-term productivity growth (skills development, business capacity, technology and innovation)
  - iii) Better Opportunities and Fairer Chances – addressing the uneven impact of recession and ensuring that actions have positive labour market effects (job creation and skills development at all levels)
- c) A presentation from the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce on the Covid-19 Helpline – highlighting that they had engaged with 1,730 businesses in

West Kent (and 671 business in Tonbridge & Malling) since launching on 23 March 2020. In Tonbridge & Malling, the following sectors have made greatest use of the helpline in the first four months – Retail and Wholesale (92); Hospitality and Leisure (65); and Professional Services (56).

- d) Updates from Members of the Board on the impact of Covid-19 as set out in the minutes.

## **1.2 Legal Implications**

1.2.1 None

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

1.3.1 None

## **1.4 Risk Assessment**

1.4.1 Not applicable

Background papers:

Nil

contact: Jeremy Whittaker,  
Economic Regeneration  
Manager

Julie Beilby  
Chief Executive

## West Kent Partnership Meeting – 10 July 2020

### Present

Nicolas Heslop, TMBC (Chair)  
Peter Fleming, SDC  
Alison Parmar, FSB  
Brian Luker, TMBC  
Andrew Metcalf, Maxim PR/KICC  
Allan Baillie, KCC Skills  
David Candlin, TWBC  
Iain McNab, BEIS  
Ross Gill, KCC  
Jon Regan, Hugh Lowe Farms  
Sarah Nurden, KMEP  
Tudor Price, KICC  
Detlev Munster, SDC  
Emily Haswell, SDC  
Jeremy Whittaker, TMBC  
James Read, TMBC  
Lesley Dyball, SDC  
Simon Harris, WKEAN  
Richard Kidd, KCC  
Martyn Riley, KCC  
Caroline Lingham, WK LEADER  
Wendy Wood, WKP

### Apologies

Catherine Brunger, AXA PPP  
Nigel Smith, KCC  
Pav Ramewal, SDC  
Julie Beilby, TMBC  
Hilary Smith, TWBC  
Jane March, TWBC

## 1. Welcome

Peter Fleming gave an update on the Getting Building Fund KMEP meeting the previous evening

- Difficult meeting, rushed nature with a number of schemes never seen before coming forward. KMEP had just completed a scoring matrix for Growing Places Fund projects in November 2019, which Government scoring didn't seem to support.
- SELEP meeting today and Chair attending with agreed top 15 – including one WK project
- Disappointing how Government scored WK schemes. Amelia Scott is shovel ready yet rated 5 and therefore didn't make Kent list.
- Essex projects tend to be longer term infrastructure (mostly road) projects not focused on quick delivery of jobs or homes
- Question value of the local process as Government will still make final decision
- Iain McNab commented that the LEP have been given a steer away from big infrastructure projects. Government are looking for visible projects which will deliver within 18 months.
- SELEP has received substantially more funding than other LEPs north of London, recognising that on a range of factors SELEP is less resilient than other areas of the SE

## 2. Covid-19 impacts and Government Response – Iain McNab, Cities & Local Growth Unit, BEIS

- Presentation attached – key impacts, pretty high level

- In answer to a question on what are the characteristics of most resilient areas Iain confirmed that it is those that have a higher skills base and are less dependent on a few sectors. Other factors are around productivity, household income, employment factors and population density
- Allan Baillie commented that in Kent there are huge skills shortages in trades and other sectors

3. **Renewal and resilience – supporting Kent’s economy after Covid-19 – Ross Gill, KCC**

All

- Presentation attached – comments would be welcome as work still evolving and refreshed document not yet redrafted. Please copy Nicolas in on any comments for a West Kent overview
- Refocussing of strategies – repurposed Kent and Medway Productivity Strategy to focus on recovery work
- Impact on London and commuter economy particularly relevant in WK
- 122% rise in claimant count March-May – still not peaked
- Allan commented in West Kent this has risen from 2535 in May 2019 to 9965 in May 2020

4. **Growth Hub – Covid-19 Helpline – Tudor Price, KICC**

- Thanked LAs for financial and active support of Covid 19 helpline
- Moving into proactive phase encouraging businesses to take action
- In answer to a question, Tudor stated that in his opinion the Furlough £1K grant is an insufficient incentive to keep on furloughed employees. Much of the chancellor’s announcements were symbolic – it is now up to businesses to work their way out of the crisis.

5. **Covid-19 – partner responses and organisation updates**

**FSB – Alison Parmar**

- Similar to growth hub have a national call centre – main topic initially was lockdown distress in immediate drop off in orders. Progressed to calls on how to access grants – took a week or so to get framework in place so could access. Over 80% of calls looking at grants and loan schemes
- Most recently, bulk of call topics were furlough related but now about redundancies
- Increased number of call centre staff and more on legal helpline
- Locally recommending legal helpline and also Growth Hub helpline and to FSB members who are experts in employment law
- Grants have helped with cash flow temporarily, supply chain and footfall still issues – consumer confidence needs to be addressed to support those re-opening businesses
- Retail premises - impact of road closures for pedestrians but can cause issues for deliveries
- Kent Business Summit – annual conference last 3 years. First webinar with KCC and Bank of England on 30 June. 200 businesses as well as local government. 40% snap poll fairly confident about future of their businesses. 30 July webinar on hospitality and tourism – will ask same question
- Businesses have been stretched. Some sectors been able to pivot and adjust but where businesses struggling some have chosen to close

### **Jon Regan – Hugh Lowe Farms**

- Challenging and stressful – 9000 applied for work but only have 100 people working
- Very few agriculture businesses applied for Government support
- Cost implications of highly priced sanitizers, large quantities of PPE and social distancing measures
- Enormous increase in local trade
- Prices are down
- Very strict on no visitors to farm, also a problem as can't entertain customers
- Business as normal in many ways. Lockdown didn't affect the business greatly as staff are key workers. Managed to get deal with ASDA for supplies to feed workers
- Migrant staff kept social distance and grateful to be employed

### **Andrew Metcalf – Maxim PR and KICC**

- 3 furloughed, 40% down on business, still getting new clients
- Panattoni investment in TMBC Aylesford Newsprint site – prospect of 3000 jobs – great sign of confidence in West Kent
- NIAB EMR – couple of good successes – £18M Strength in Places Fund and £1.7m LGF – food security
- Professional services businesses now slowly coming back to work.
- Challenge shape of businesses going forward – move towards digital – clients needs to understand customer profile before developing strategy around this
- Business as normal in many ways, quietly optimistic

### **KICC – Tudor Price**

- Working on line – first conference – 6 stages, 28 speakers, all day – exhibition on line. Went very well, lessons to learn and providing as a service to other organisations as well. 250 businesses registered on line and dipped in and out
- WK Chamber of commerce goes into liquidation at 4pm today. KICC have been in discussions and agreed to step in and will take on existing accounts. Continuation of membership arrangements and opportunity to increase support to businesses in WK area

### **SDC – Peter Fleming**

- Positives – high streets in Sevenoaks, Edenbridge, Westerham and Swanley pretty independent and entrepreneurial. Businesses pivoted really quickly – food produce boxes etc – some will fall away but new practices here to stay
- Most concerned about micro businesses – 1 person bands, consultants important to local economy for spending power
- Kent Leaders meeting yesterday spoke about importance of London to WK
- Sevenoaks set up new business board with real cross section of businesses
- Emily Haswell commented on work within ED teams getting grants out which has provided an opportunity to get in touch with businesses not engaged with previously

### **TWBC – David Candlin**

- Working well with Chamber, Covid 19 panel set up to oversee recovery and reopening with FSB and BID

- Business and community resilience panels feed into overall panel
- Royal Victoria Place was in process of doing major refurbishment and had just completed at lockdown. Direction of potential major redevelopment is now in doubt
- Nicolas Heslop - permitted development rights for retail units makes it very difficult for local authorities to have a proper role in place shaping

#### Rural and land-based – David Candlin

- General view that the fruit harvest is progressing well, the rural economy is fine and Covid19 hasn't had much of an impact, however this masks wider problems
- likely poor harvest due to weather conditions
- Basic EU agricultural subsidies to be phased out over next 7 years
- Potential future cap on Seasonal Migrant workers
- Competition from cheap low-quality imports with reduced food standards
- Added uncertainty of Brexit and its implications means that ongoing support is urgently required in particularly, the agricultural sector, to develop new business models, diversify and grow in the immediate future.
- LEADER programme has been successfully delivering in West Kent for the last 12 years with strategic oversight from the WKP
- Current LEADER programme had a budget of £1,794,230 for projects. To date 39 projects have completed, with another 10 in progress. Overall £1,578,000 has been spent with further commitments of £215,000.
- Currently the extension to complete is by September 2020, with the LEADER programme closing on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.
- Ongoing confusion as to what replaces the LEADER programme, WKP and KCC managed to keep staff in place in Kent between last 2 programmes but there is no information forthcoming on any potential follow on programme.
- A source of funding to extend the work and some clarity for the future is essential. The CLA are already lobbying nationally for surplus RDPE to support a LEADER style grant programme and the WK ELAG group are seeking NFU backing in the SELEP region to put a broader case to DEFRA.
- What does WK want to achieve and some actions for WKP and WKL
- **Action 1:** WKP and WKELAG to lobby WK MPs for Government funds to continue a grant programme (40% intervention) with immediate effect to bring forward jobs and growth in the rural and land-based economy – letter to be drafted CL/DC/WW
- **Action 2:** WK already leads on LEADER group activity across the SELEP area. Letter from all LEADER accountable bodies and LAG chairs in the SELEP area to be sent to (tbc) at DEFRA with a call for continued funding for LEADER groups – Caroline to coordinate CL
- **Action 3:** WKP had identified a £25k pot to deliver a “business support programme for rural, agricultural and forestry businesses in the area to facilitate growth and leverage funding”. This programme, due to launch in April 20, to be kept under review for now as possibly the funds could be used to lever in a greater level of support – previous LEADER programmes have required an element of match funding from sponsoring Partners. WW
- Tudor – aware of a number of rural programmes in the offing – will include WK area – good to hold off on spend as suggested in Action 3

#### TMBC – Jeremy Whittaker

- Thanks to Tudor and ED colleagues – Grants taken up a lot of time

- Re-opening of High streets – regular discussions with traders over that process. Footfall numbers down but recovering
- Good news stories for borough – Panattoni (Aylesford Newsprint), East Malling Research Station, waiting for planning to come in for Leigh Flood storage – will help to build in resilience to local economy
- Reflecting on presentations and seeing figures – will need to review Economic Regeneration Strategy – worklessness and skills development agendas will be key
- Innovation within our local businesses – necessity has been mother of invention – flexibility from businesses in responding – showing how resilient the WK economy is.

#### **Brian Luker – TMBC**

- Chairs TMBC Economic Regeneration Advisory Board and runs own business
- Training and skills essential
- Conversations with other businesses – several building sites around Aylesford/Maidstone on hold at the moment because developers can't get materials. This is a barrier to recovery.
- Nicolas Heslop - Frustrated that Government thinks LAs are the roadblock to housing growth – we are giving planning permission but developers and landlords are land-banking which impacts on land supply

#### **Skills – Allan Baillie - KCC**

- Reflection on Iain's comment – resilience – what do resilient places look like – response was high skills. Need to move Kent as a whole to more of a high skilled economy. We have low skills in Kent, in WK slightly above national average but below SE so can't be complacent. Mixed economy impacts on skills and in WK retail is a large sector
- Unemployment – since May last year 18-64 up from 2.5k to 9.9K, youth up from 435 to 1835. JCP concerned that as furlough ends 18-24 unemployment figures will rise.
- 4 wards in WK have unemployment levels above the national average - Swanley St Marys, Swanley Whiteoak, Trench and Rusthall
- Been running adult skills forums across Kent for 3 years. West Kent forum previously included Ashford (link to colleges). Now West Kent group is a sub group of WKP. First meeting on 1 July, changed way will operate so an holistic Skills forum including young people and linking to CEC. More of an ED focus. Agenda around developing high level skills, continue to try and ensure access to HE provision, analyse skills needs in area and inform skills providers and influence so are reflecting local needs – drive up skills to a high skills economy in West Kent
- Nicolas – passionate about skills agenda – Next WKP meeting to include strategic discussion on Skills linked to economic recovery. Invite Principals from all FE colleges who take our young people
- Peter – historic issue FE/HE in SDC – not represented. Tried to deal with WKC and Hadlow. Will have a discussion with Allan separately.

WW

PF/AB

#### **West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network – Simon Harris**

- EAN – challenge to meet Gatsby benchmarks 5 and 6 around encounters with employers and work place experiences. DFE are expecting schools not to reach BM targets in those areas with more a focus now on strategies.

- WK focus has been to train up Enterprise Advisers to reset their strategic focus with head teachers and governors. Gatsby Foundation allows virtual experiences to count so long as there is engagement.
- Finding link governors for careers - world of work changing so quickly
- Been training 6<sup>th</sup> formers in LinkedIn to assist schools as well as peers in building links
- Kickstart programme – imperative that LAs look to use themselves to bring in young people and give them real projects. Need to champion and advocate
- Hillview’s new 6<sup>th</sup> form offer – establishing new centre for level 1 and 2 for students not going on to A levels
- For next meeting with Skills focus consider opportunities for young people through charities sector – structured volunteer programme including training and supported internships
- Nicolas – what capacity do employers have for taking on young people? Where apprenticeships are being curtailed will be massive impact

SH

6. **AOB**

7. **Next Meeting – 9 October 2020, 10:00-12:00**

- Update from KCC on Kent Renewal and Resilience
- Update from Tudor on Business support Helpline
- Discussion on economic strategy for WK linking to Kent and WK local authority plans so partnership can start to lobby and develop other actions
- Skills Strategic Focus segment

# 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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# Agenda Item 12

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 13

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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