

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL



## EXECUTIVE SERVICES

---

### Chief Executive

Julie Beilby BSc (Hons) MBA

Gibson Building  
Gibson Drive  
Kings Hill, West Malling  
Kent ME19 4LZ  
West Malling (01732) 844522

---

**NB - This agenda contains proposals, recommendations and options. These do not represent Council policy or decisions until they have received proper consideration through the full decision making process.**

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

17 July 2023

To: MEMBERS OF THE FINANCE, REGENERATION AND PROPERTY  
SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE  
(Copies to all Members of the Council)

Dear Sir/Madam

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee to be held in the Council Chamber, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill on Tuesday, 25th July, 2023 commencing at 7.30 pm.

Members of the Committee are required to attend in person. Other Members may attend in person or participate online via MS Teams.

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

1. Guidance for the Conduct of Meetings

5 - 6

## **PART 1 - PUBLIC**

2. Apologies for Absence
3. Notification of Substitute Members 7 - 8
4. Declarations of interest 9 - 10

Members are reminded of their obligation under the Council's Code of Conduct to disclose any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests in any matter(s) to be considered or being considered at the meeting. These are explained in the Code of Conduct on the Council's website at [Code of conduct for members – Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council \(tmbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/code-of-conduct-for-members).

Members in any doubt about such declarations are advised to contact Legal or Democratic Services in advance of the meeting.

5. Minutes 11 - 14

To confirm as a correct record the Notes of the meeting of the Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee held on 13 June 2023.

### **Matters for recommendation to the Cabinet**

6. Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027 - Consultation Draft 15 - 32

This report presents an initial draft of the Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027 and timetable for consultation and adoption arrangements.

### **Matters submitted for Information**

7. Work Programme 2023/24 33 - 34

The Work Programme setting out matters to be scrutinised during 2023/24 is attached for information. Members can suggest future items by liaising with the Chair of the Committee.

8. Urgent items

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**

9. Exclusion of Press and Public 35 - 36

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

37 - 38

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

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Cllr D Harman (Chair)  
Cllr C Brown (Vice-Chair)

Cllr L Athwal  
Cllr T Bishop  
Cllr P Boxall  
Cllr R I B Cannon  
Cllr Mrs T Dean  
Cllr W J Mallard

Cllr A Mehmet  
Cllr W E Palmer  
Cllr B A Parry  
Cllr M R Rhodes  
Cllr C J Williams

## **GUIDANCE ON HOW MEETINGS WILL BE CONDUCTED**

- (1) All meetings of the Borough Council will be livestreamed to YouTube here, unless there is exempt or confidential business be discussed:  
  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPp-IJISNgoF-ugSzxjAPfw/featured>
- (2) There are no fire drills planned during the time a meeting is being held. For the benefit of those in the meeting room, the fire alarm is a long continuous bell and the exits are via the doors used to enter the room. An officer on site will lead any evacuation.
- (3) Should you need this agenda or any of the reports in a different format, or have any other queries concerning the meeting, please contact Democratic Services on [committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk) in the first instance.

### **Attendance:**

- Members of the Committee/Advisory Board are required to attend in person and be present in the meeting room. Only these Members are able to move/ second or amend motions, and vote.
- Other Members of the Council can join via MS Teams and can take part in any discussion and ask questions, when invited to do so by the Chairman, but cannot move/ second or amend motions or vote on any matters. Members participating remotely are reminded that this does not count towards their formal committee attendance.
- Occasionally, Members of the Committee/Advisory Board are unable to attend in person and may join via MS Teams in the same way as other Members. However, they are unable to move/ second or amend motions or vote on any matters if they are not present in the meeting room. As with other Members joining via MS Teams, this does not count towards their formal committee attendance.
- Officers can participate in person or online.
- Members of the public addressing an Area Planning Committee can participate in person or online. Please contact [committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk) for further information.

Before formal proceedings start there will be a sound check of Members/Officers in the room. This is done as a roll call and confirms attendance of voting Members.

### **Ground Rules:**

The meeting will operate under the following ground rules:

- Members in the Chamber should indicate to speak in the usual way and use the fixed microphones in front of them. These need to be switched on when speaking or comments will not be heard by those participating online. Please switch off microphones when not speaking.
- If there any technical issues the meeting will be adjourned to try and rectify them. If this is not possible there are a number of options that can be taken to enable the meeting to continue. These will be explained if it becomes necessary.

For those Members participating online:

- please request to speak using the 'chat or hand raised function';
- please turn off cameras and microphones when not speaking;
- please do not use the 'chat function' for other matters as comments can be seen by all;
- Members may wish to blur the background on their camera using the facility on Microsoft teams.
- Please avoid distractions and general chat if not addressing the meeting
- Please remember to turn off or silence mobile phones

### **Voting:**

Voting may be undertaken by way of a roll call and each Member should verbally respond For, Against, Abstain. The vote will be noted and announced by the Democratic Services Officer.

Alternatively, votes may be taken by general affirmation if it seems that there is agreement amongst Members. The Chairman will announce the outcome of the vote for those participating and viewing online.

**Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee – Substitute Members (if required)**

	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Liberal Democratic</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Ind. Kent Alliance</b>	<b>Labour</b>
1	Roger Dalton	Garry Bridge	Kath Barton		Angus Bennison
2	Dave Davis	James Clokey	Steve Crisp		Wayne Mallard
3	Sarah Hudson	Frani Hoskins	Anna Cope		
4	James Lark	Roger Roud	George Hines		
5	Alex McDermott	David Thornwell	Mark Hood		

**Members of Cabinet cannot be appointed as a substitute to this Committee**

This page is intentionally left blank



Declarations of interest

This page is intentionally left blank

## TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### FINANCE, REGENERATION AND PROPERTY SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

#### MINUTES

Tuesday, 13th June, 2023

**Present:** Cllr D Harman (Chair), Cllr C Brown (Vice-Chair), Cllr P Boxall, Cllr R I B Cannon, Cllr Mrs T Dean, Cllr B A Parry, Cllr M R Rhodes, Cllr C J Williams, Cllr G C Bridge (substitute), Cllr G B Hines (substitute) and Cllr S A Hudson (substitute)

**In attendance:** Councillors K Barton, A G Bennison, M A J Hood, F A Hoskins, Mrs A S Oakley, Mrs M Tatton and D Thornewell, R P Betts, M D Boughton, M A Coffin, D Keers, D W King and K S Tunstall were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

**Virtual:** Cllrs R P Betts, M D Boughton, M A Coffin, D Keers, D W King and K S Tunstall participated via MS Teams and joined the discussion when invited to do so by the Chair in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Athwal, T Bishop, W J Mallard, A Mehmet and W E Palmer

(Note: Cllr Palmer submitted apologies for in person attendance but listened to the discussion via MS Teams).

#### PART 1 - PUBLIC

##### **FRP 23/10 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Notification of substitute members were recorded as set out below:

- Councillor G Bridge substituted for Councillor T Bishop
- Councillor G Hines substituted for Councillor L Athwal
- Councillor S Hudson substituted for Councillor A Mehmet

In accordance with Council Procedure Rules 17.5 to 17.9 these Councillors had the same rights as the ordinary member of the committee for whom they were substituting.

##### **FRP 23/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

## FRP 23/12 MINUTES

**RESOLVED:** That the notes of the meeting of the Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee held on 14 March 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

#### FRP 23/13 TMBC OWNED SITES - LOCAL PLAN

Careful consideration was given to a number of sites identified for potential development as part of the Local Plan process and Urban Capacity Study. Members were reminded that potential development sites could be brought forward through the planning approval process and did not specifically require allocation in the Local Plan to do so. However, at this stage no decisions on particular sites for inclusion had yet been made by the Borough Council acting as the Local Planning Authority.

The report of the Director of Central Services & Deputy Chief Executive sought Members' views on whether the Borough Council owned sites, detailed in Annex A, were available or unavailable for development.

Members had regard to housing targets for the Borough, the Management Development and Environmental Development Plan Document, Biodiversity Net Gain, the Interim Sustainability Appraisal and the Local Lettings Policy detailed in the report. It was also noted that housing targets remained subject to change pending the outcomes of the NPPF consultation. Particular reference was made to the Angel Centre site and although it was not identified in the UCS there was scope for this to be included as a potentially available site for development if the Borough Council, as landowner chose to do so.

The Committee recognised the value of open green spaces, especially on residents living in urban areas and this formed part of Members deliberations.

**RECOMMENDED\*:** That

(1) the following 10 TMBC owned sites identified in the urban capacity study be considered **available** for development when formally responding to the letter from the LPA:

- 59559, 59560, 59661, 59562, 59563, 59581 (Cage Green and Angel);
- 59469 (Aylesford South and Ditton);
- 59554 59555 (Vauxhall); and
- 59572 (Judd)

- (2) the Angel Centre, Tonbridge site be considered **available** for development when formally responding to the letter from the LPA; and
- (3) the following 11 TMBC owned sites identified in the urban capacity study be considered **unavailable** for development when formally responding to the letter from the LPA:
  - 59437 (Larkfield);
  - 59449 (East Malling, West Malling and Offham);
  - 59456 (Birling, Leybourne and Ryarsh);
  - 59502 (Snodland East and Ham Hill);
  - 59515; 59516 (Cage Green and Angel);
  - 59521; 59522 (Trench);
  - 59524 (Higham); and
  - 59550; 59552 (Judd)

**\*Referred to Cabinet**

### **MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION**

#### **FRP 23/14 HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND 2023/24**

The report of the Director of Finance and Transformation provided an update on past, present and future administration of the Household Support Fund.

A fourth round of Government funding had been announced in early 2023. Allocations were made in a similar way to previous awards although there was now a commitment for 12 rather than 6 months. In addition, rules restricting the use of funding to finance debt advice services had been removed. However, there was a requirement for 40% of the fund to be spent by the end of September 2023 and options would be presented to a future meeting of Cabinet for consideration.

Members recorded appreciation for the timely manner in which the Borough Council had allocated and distributed previous grant funding and welcomed the support offered to vulnerable households in respect of energy bills. Clarity was sought on whether alternative fuel payments would be included in the new scheme. In response, it was indicated that these payments were dependent on applications and unfortunately the scheme had closed in May.

#### **FRP 23/15 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

Members received a list of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that were relevant to the committee. A baseline covering April to June 2022 had been used, with the data for January to March 2023 representing the

most up-to-date available statistics. The KPIs would be monitored quarterly and would be made available on an ongoing basis. However, it was noted that KPIs would not be reported to the next meeting due to its timing.

**FRP 23/16 WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24**

The Work Programme setting out matters to be scrutinised during 2023/24 was attached for information. Members were invited to suggest future matters by liaising with the Chair of the Committee.

**MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE**

**FRP 23/17 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no items considered in private.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm  
having commenced at 7.35 pm

## TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### FINANCE, REGENERATION AND PROPERTY SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

25 July 2023

#### 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 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2023-2027 – CONSULTATION DRAFT**

**This report presents an initial draft of the Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027 and timetable for consultation and adoption arrangements.**

#### **1.1 Background**

1.1.1 In 2021, the council adopted an Economic Recovery Strategy 2021-2023, a short-term strategy document focussed on supporting the local economy as it recovered from the worst of the covid-19 pandemic. With the infrastructure that was put in place to tackle the pandemic (such as the business hotline and grants programmes) now dismantled, and with new challenges in the economy and new funding opportunities presenting themselves, it is now time to produce a new strategy that supports our local businesses with the issues they now face.

#### **1.2 Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027**

1.2.1 The strategy provided in **Appendix 1** is set within the context of the draft Corporate Strategy 2023-2027 and sets out a vision that covers four key elements – resilience, dynamism, inclusivity and sustainability:

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

1.2.2 There are 7 themes underpinning the vision, each with a number of actions aimed at supporting the economy. They are:

- Promoting the borough
- Supporting local business
- Land and premises (and supporting infrastructure)
- A greener more productive economy
- A thriving rural economy

- An inclusive economy
- Vibrant town centres.

1.2.3 Updates on the action plan will be provided on an annual basis, along with the economic dashboard, which will also provide comparator data with other West Kent authorities.

### **1.3 Framework for Consultation and Adoption:**

1.3.1 If approved for consultation, then it is essential that this draft 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.

1.3.2 It is suggested that the consultation is undertaken for a four-week period starting in September 2023. 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 900 business contacts.

1.3.3 In October 2023, all the comments received will be processed, and where appropriate, the strategy will be amended accordingly. The intention will be to report on the outcome of the consultation to the Committee in November 2023, highlighting any amendments that have been made, and to seek formal adoption of the strategy by Cabinet in Winter 2023/4.

### **1.4 Legal Implications**

1.4.1 The matters raised in this report are considered to be routine, uncontroversial or not legally complex and a legal opinion has not been sought on these proposals.

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

1.5.1 None arising directly from this report.

### **1.6 Risk Assessment**

1.6.1 Not applicable.



## 1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.7.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote to low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act.

## 1.8 Policy Considerations

- 1.8.1 Economic Development
- 1.8.2 Skills and Employability
- 1.8.3 Inward Investment
- 1.8.4 Tourism Development

## 1.9 Recommendations

- 1.9.1 That the report **BE NOTED**
- 1.9.2 That the consultation draft of the Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027 **BE RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet for approval.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Regeneration and Property confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

Nil

contact: Jeremy Whittaker,  
Strategic Economic  
Regeneration Manager

Julie Beilby  
Chief Executive

This page is intentionally left blank

# Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027

---



**Dynamic – Resilient – Inclusive - Sustainable**

**July 2023**

# Contents

---

## **01 Foreword**

## **02 Strategic Context**

## **03 Key Strengths and Challenges**

## **04 Vision and Strategic Priorities**

- Theme 1: Promoting the borough.
- Theme 2: Supporting local business.
- Theme 3: Land and premises (and supporting infrastructure).
- Theme 4: A greener more productive economy.
- Theme 5: A thriving rural economy.
- Theme 6: An inclusive economy.
- Theme 7: Vibrant town centres.

## **05 Working in Partnership**

## **06 Action Plan**

## **07 Economic Dashboard**

# 01 Foreword

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council recognises the leading role it can play in helping to drive forward sustainable economic growth, and shape the borough into a place that offers a high quality of life for residents, businesses and visitors alike.

This is a responsibility that we take on with enthusiasm, but it is by no means a small undertaking in the current economic climate. The COVID-19 pandemic has left a considerable legacy, with the sizeable impact on economic and personal well-being resulting in changes in the way many people live their lives and how businesses continue to operate.

At the same time there is a growing imperative for action in mitigating the worst effects of climate change – making sure that the council leads by example, but also supporting the local business community to move towards carbon net zero.

These are challenging times, but it is vital that the council proactively uses the resources at its disposal to help steer our economy towards a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable future. Our Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027 sets out how, with our partners, we aim to achieve this.



**Cllr Robin Betts**

**Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Regeneration and Property**

**July 2023**

## 02 Strategic Context

The council is in the process of adopting a new Corporate Strategy 2023-2027 which sets out a bold new vision for the borough:

***“To be an innovative and forward-thinking council, that leads the people and businesses of the borough towards a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable future.”***

One of the priorities that underpins the vision focusses specifically on the local economy and the role that the council and its partners can play in supporting it. The priority, which emphasises the need for sustainable growth, is:

***“Investing in our local economy to help support residents and businesses and foster sustainable growth.”***

These statements provide a strong starting point for the direction that this strategy needs to take.

When the council’s last economic strategy was produced in 2020/21 (Economic Recovery Strategy 2021-23), the emphasis was very much on navigating through the COVID-19 pandemic. However, a number of key considerations now need to be factored into our thinking when formulating our new strategy document and identifying our priorities. These include:

- The economic uncertainty arising from high inflation, tight labour markets and supply chain disruption, as well as the longer-term impact and opportunities arising from Brexit.
- Moving towards a net zero carbon economy in a way that incentivises the use of new technologies and green skills development as well as the enhancement of our natural environment.
- The need to align this economic strategy closely with the re-positioning of the West Kent Partnership and its new priorities, the Kent & Medway Economic Development Strategy and our UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan in order to support our local economy effectively.
- Gross Value Added (GVA) per head data has highlighted the strong role that West Kent plays in contributing towards the Kent economy – for example in Tonbridge and Malling the GVA per head is £36,690 compared to £27,907 across Kent as a whole. However, when compared to other locations equidistant to London, such as Guildford, it is clear that there is room for improvement.
- The challenge for our High Streets as they evolve from purely ‘shopping centres’ to provide a wider array of services.
- Supporting the rural economy as it undergoes a period of change, particularly with the switch away from the Direct Payment system in the farming sector and changes in the labour market.

### 03 Key Strengths & Challenges

Like any borough, Tonbridge and Malling has numerous strengths and challenges that have an impact on its potential for success. In addition to being well located with good transport links, the borough also has a strong business community, and an attractive environment.

However, many of these strengths also bring challenges. For example, for much of the borough development is constrained due to environmental and landscape designations (such as the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Green Belt), and whilst proximity to London and good accessibility to international gateways brings wealth into the area, it also contributes to higher housing prices, greater employment costs and congestion.

<b>Strengths:</b>	<b>Challenges:</b>
Location – proximity to London and to international gateways	Identifying new employment sites to meet future need.
Good strategic transport network – good road and rail links that enable high levels of accessibility.	Loss of existing commercial premises through Permitted Development Rights.
An attractive environment that creates a high quality of life.	Limited Higher Education provision in the borough. Recruitment challenges for local businesses.
A strong business community with a diverse number of key sectors that ensure local resilience.	Housing price affordability.
A proactive and well-run local authority, with a strong partnership network.	Transport infrastructure often congested at peak times.
Comparatively low level of unemployment amongst the local work force.	Rural isolation – especially with local public transport services reduced and some areas of variable broadband coverage.
	Ineligibility for many public funding opportunities due to perceived affluence.

## 04 Vision & Strategic Priorities

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

During the early 2020s, the local economy has been impacted by a series of national and global events. We have worked closely with local businesses to ensure that we have managed to avoid the very worst impacts of these events, and it has demonstrated that we are fortunate to have a **resilient** and **dynamic** business community. This is something that we need to build upon in order to provide greater protection against any future challenges.

We also need to ensure that everyone sees the benefit of improvements in our economy, and that no-one is left behind. By being **inclusive** in our approach, we can help to increase skills levels and reduce unemployment through helping to create local opportunities.

Reducing our own carbon footprint, and encouraging others to do the same, is a central part of our Climate Change Strategy. In line with the aims and objectives of this strategy, we need to ensure that this Economic Development Strategy has a strong focus on **sustainable growth** that can reap benefits for our businesses and positively impact future generations.

With these key elements to our vision in mind, 7 themes have been identified that make up our approach in this strategy:

### **Theme 1: Promoting the borough:**

Tonbridge and Malling borough has lots of great things to shout about, and a wide range of successful businesses across a number of sectors. By promoting the area, as part of a wider West Kent initiative, it will help to increase investment, attract visitors and help to foster a stronger identity that will help to support our business community.

### **Theme 2: Supporting local business:**

Starting or growing a business is no easy task with just under 40% of businesses failing to last three years and nearly 90% of businesses in the borough being classed as ‘micro’. The council and partner organisations can offer areas of support to business, such as establishing advice and mentoring programmes, providing grant support and running events that support networking opportunities or enable businesses to find new members of staff.

### **Theme 3: Land and premises (and supporting infrastructure):**

The adoption of a Local Plan that identifies new employment sites is key to ensuring that existing businesses and inward investors have the room to grow and are supported, where required, in that journey. There are also a number of strategic investment sites in the borough that are vital to the strengthening of the local economy, and it is therefore important that the council engages fully with these to ensure that they are delivered in a timely fashion and offer the maximum benefit locally.

### **Theme 4: A greener more productive economy:**

Whilst growth is clearly important, it is essential that the economy de-carbonises in order to reduce its impact on the environment and mitigates against the worst impacts of climate change. A growing economy can be a green economy: between 1990 and 2019 the UK reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 41% while the economy grew by 78%. Many businesses are well-advanced on their journey towards Net Zero, reaping the benefits of greater efficiencies and shielding themselves from the volatility of the energy markets, but others still need support along the way. There are also new challenges such as making sure that there are sufficient skills locally to enable the decarbonisation of the economy and our homes, and the support infrastructure is available to enable growth in the use of electric vehicles.



**Theme 5: A thriving rural economy:**

The borough is mainly rural in nature, and as such our rural businesses play a strong part in the overall performance of our local economy. As well as fantastic land-based businesses, institutions such as East Malling Research Station (NIAB EMR) and Hadlow College (part of North Kent College), there are a diverse range of innovative rural businesses covering a range of sectors. With recruitment challenges and the loss of some funding sources, it is important that we offer support to contribute towards a flourishing rural economy.

**Theme 6: An inclusive economy**

Despite Tonbridge and Malling being perceived as affluent, not everyone enjoys equal access to opportunities. This is best illustrated by the variation in unemployment rates and deprivation indices across the borough. We will collaborate with local schools, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Kent County Council and community organisations to create opportunities that contribute towards a more inclusive society.

**Theme 7: Vibrant town centres**

High streets are the beating hearts of our towns, and in recent years they have had to deal not only with the impact of economic downturns and the covid-19 pandemic, but also the shift in spending behaviour as online retailing expands. We will support our town centres as they adapt to change, to ensure they are attractive places to socialise, shop and be entertained.

DRAFT

## 05 Working in Partnership

The Borough Council recognises the key role it has to play in helping the local economy to recover and grow, both in terms of setting a strategic framework for its approach as well as through the various initiatives it undertaken 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 and can offer specialist skills, experience, knowledge and additional resources. As such, we are committed to working with partners organisations to achieve the actions set out in this strategy. Key individual partners are too numerous to include individually in this chapter, but the following partnerships will be essential in supporting the council to meet the needs of the local economy:

**UK Shared Prosperity Fund Partnership (UKSPF):** the council is working closely with Central Government and local organisations to deliver its Levelling Up Programme. An important part of the delivery of this programme is the role of a 'Local Group' comprising community and business representatives, which provides oversight, advice and support in advancing UKSPF funded initiatives.

**Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP):** is currently one of the four federated partnerships which comprises the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). KMEP is focussed on driving forward economic growth and prosperity in Kent and Medway and is governed by a Board with membership drawn from business, local government and education establishments. KMEP delivers the objectives set out in Kent and Medway's Growth Plan, and in recent year has supported the borough in securing investment through government initiatives such as the Local Growth Fund and Growing Places Fund.

**West Kent Partnership (WKP):** is the strategic economic partnership covering the local authority areas of Tonbridge and Malling, Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells. The three areas work closely together to leverage the resources available to them in order to deliver more for our local businesses and promote the local economy.

Over recent years, the partnership has successfully delivered initiatives including:

- the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network, which had a focus on business-relevant careers advice for schools;
- the West Kent Kick Start Programme, giving young people 6-month work placement opportunities;
- the West Kent Jobs Fairs and West Kent SkillsFest.

There are plenty of exciting new initiatives starting, including the West Kent Business Support Programme, West Kent Rural England Prosperity Fund (grants for rural businesses and communities), and the Invest West Kent initiative to promote the area as a great place to do business.

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, along with some of the key funding streams, is provided in Appendix 1.

## 06 Action Plan

Theme	Action	Measure	Partners
Promoting the Borough	Rebranding of the West Kent Partnership.  Launch of Invest West Kent website and associated campaigns.	Delivery of brand and launch of website by Autumn 2023.  Ongoing campaigns.	West Kent Partnership (Sevenoaks District Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)
Promoting the Borough	Delivery of Service Level Agreement with Visit Kent to promote the area as a tourism destination.	100% of targets in the SLA met.	Visit Kent
Supporting Local Business	Delivery of the West Kent Business Support Programme (UKSPF)	20 Tonbridge and Malling based businesses per annum given mentoring support and access to micro-grant support.  Delivery of minimum 6 workshops across West Kent per annum	West Kent Partnership (Sevenoaks District Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council), Smarter Society Ltd
Supporting Local Business	Promote the Kent and Medway Growth Hub and other business support organisations.	To promote the support available and appropriately refer businesses.	Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, other business representative organisations.
Supporting Local Business	Local Business Networking	Minimum of 3 events per annum.	Federation of Small Business (FSB); Tonbridge Town Team; Town and Parish Councils
Supporting Local Business	Creation and Distribution of the monthly Business Bulletin.	Minimum 12 bulletins per annum  Minimum 900 recipients on the business database.	Input from all partner organisations and businesses.
Supporting Local Business	Annual West Kent Business Conference	Delivery of one summit per annum with minimum 40 businesses attending.	West Kent Partnership (Sevenoaks District Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)
Land and Premises	Delivery of the Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan by the Local Planning Authority	Work towards the adoption of the Local Plan and the allocation of strategic sites and new employment allocations by 2026.	Statutory Consultees, local residents and businesses.
Land and Premises	Work with Panattoni to help complete the Panattoni Park Aylesford development.	Full occupation of the site by 2024.	Panattoni, Kent County Council

Theme	Action	Measure	Partners
Land and Premises	Work with NIAB EMR to bring forward further phases of the Green Tech Hub for Advanced Horticulture.	Implementation of Phase 2 during the course of this strategy.	NIAB EMR, East Malling Trust.
Land and Premises	Support the Royal British Legion Industries in bringing forward the next phase of the Centenary Village and other on-site developments	Implementation of works during the course of this strategy.	RBLI
Land and Premises	Support the delivery of the Leigh Expansion and Hildenborough Embankment Scheme (LEHES)	Works fully completed by 2025.	Environment Agency, Kent County Council, SE Local Enterprise Partnership
Land and Premises	Promote Locate in Kent to businesses looking for land or premises to grow.	To promote the support available and appropriately refer businesses.	Locate in Kent
A Greener More Productive Economy	Green Business Grant Scheme (UKSPF)	Deliver 2 more rounds of the GBGS (in 2023 and 2024) supporting a minimum 20 businesses.	Sevenoaks District Council, Kent County Council (LoCASE); Local Businesses.
A Greener More Productive Economy	Delivery of Green Retrofit Skills Pilot (UKSPF)	Support up to 50 people into gaining green retrofit skills in 2024/25.	Sevenoaks District Council, Local Colleges
A Greener More Productive Economy	Carbon Literacy Training (UKSPF)	Delivery of Carbon Literacy Training to up to 100 people in 2024/25	Town and Parish Councils, Charitable and Community Groups
A Greener More Productive Economy	Promote existing advice on energy efficiency and emissions reduction to local businesses	To promote the support available and appropriately refer businesses.	Low Carbon Kent, LoCASE, GSE Net Zero Hub.
A Greener More Productive Economy	Support provision of Electric Charging Points	50 Electric Charging Points delivered in Phase 2 of the Programme (by April 2025)	Kent County Council, Connected Kerb
A Thriving Rural Economy	West Kent Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Programme	A minimum of 25 grants provided to support rural businesses and communities during 2023-2025	West Kent Partnership
A Thriving Rural Economy	Promote and refer local businesses to the Growing Kent and Medway initiative	To promote the support available and appropriately refer businesses.	NIAB EMR (at East Malling), Growing Kent and Medway partners.
An Inclusive Economy	Delivery of jobs fairs that support people into work or training.	2 per annum (Tonbridge and Aylesford (RBLI Village))	Department for Work and Pensions; Housing Associations, RBLI

Theme	Action	Measure	Partners
An Inclusive Economy	Support apprenticeship and internship opportunities for people with SEN.	Work with specialist college to support up to 8 young people into workplace opportunities.	Oaks Specialist College, Education People (KCC)
An Inclusive Economy	Support local schools with careers advice and work experience.	Attend up to 2 school careers fairs per annum.	T&M Schools, The Education People, Kent Education Business Partnership.
An Inclusive Economy	Help to reduce digital exclusion in our most deprived communities.	Establish an initiative to help tackle Digital Exclusion	Kent County Council
Vibrant Town Centres	Shopfront and Vacant Unit Improvement Scheme (BRRP/UKSPF)	Support up to 35 shopkeepers with grant support and advice during 2023-2025	Let's Do Business Group, local businesses.
Vibrant Town Centres	Programme of Town Centre Events and Markets	Deliver and support a minimum of 30 events per annum to support our town centres.	Events Companies and organisers, local businesses.
Vibrant Town Centres	Tonbridge Town Centre Review	Production and implementation of sustainable plans for the regeneration of Tonbridge Town Centre.	Key Landowners, MACE Consultants
Vibrant Town Centres	Improve wayfinding and signage in Tonbridge Town Centre (UKSPF)	Delivery of first phase to improve links between Tonbridge Station and the rest of the town centre.	Community Rail Partnership, Network Rail, Southeastern, local residents and businesses
Vibrant Town Centres	Explore potential of a BID in Tonbridge.	Carry out initial research to examine the viability of a BID in Tonbridge.	Tonbridge Town Team, local businesses

## 07 Economic Dashboard

This economic dashboard provides a very high-level illustration of the performance of the local economy. Whilst there is some delay in the data, it does display that many aspects of the economy have plateaued, with ‘business failures’, youth unemployment and skills attainment on a negative trajectory.

The aspiration for 2027 is set out in the end column. Obviously, this can be impacted by a number of factors that are outside the control of this authority, however through the initiatives set out in the action plan the strategy does have the potential to help move all of these indicators in a positive direction.

Along with the action plan, updates on this dashboard will be provided on an annual basis, with comparison data also being provided in order to benchmark the performance of the local economy.

	Economic Indicator	Latest Data	Date	Current Trend	Aspiration for 2027
Dynamic	VAT Registrations (Start-Ups)	750	2021		800 per annum
Dynamic	Job Density	0.98	2021		1
Resilient	VAT De-registrations	775	2021		650 per annum
Resilient	3 Year Business Survival Rates (%)	62.5	2021		65%
Resilient	Median Gross Weekly Full-time Earnings (£) by Residence	£703.60	2022		£750
Resilient	Median Gross Weekly Full-time Earnings (£) by Workplace	£608.80	2022		£650
Inclusive	Unemployment Rate (%)	2.2%	Apr 2023		Less than 2%
Inclusive	16–64-year-olds claiming out of work benefits (%)	3.6%	Apr 2023		Less than 3%
Inclusive	National Vocational Qualification Level 3+ (%)	48.3%	2021		60%
Inclusive	Happiness Score (out of 10)	7.6	2022		8 out of 10
Sustainable	Greenhouse Gas emissions from industry and commercial sectors in T&M (tCO2e)	188	2020		150
Sustainable	Percentage of T&M Greenhouse Gas emissions from industry and commercial sectors (%)	25	2020		20%
Sustainable	No. of renewable electricity installations	1,848	2021		2,750
Sustainable	% of all dwellings with EPC band C and above (%)	48.95	2022		55%
Sustainable	Proportion of employment in energy intensive sectors (%).	36	2022		30%

# Appendix 1:

<b>Partners</b>
Community Rail Partnerships
Clarion Housing
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
Department for International Trade (DIT)
Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC)
Deskrenters (Castle Lodge)
East Malling Trust
Education Business Partnership Kent
Environment Agency
Federation of Small Businesses
Golding Homes
Highways England
Homes England
JobCentre Plus
Kent Apprenticeships
Kent County Council
Kent Farmers Market Association
Kent International Business
Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
Locate in Kent
Mid Kent College
Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
Network Rail/Great British Railways
NIAB East Malling Research
North Kent College
Orbit Group
Produced in Kent
Royal British Legion Industries
Southeastern Railways
The Education People
The National Trust (Ightham Mote)
Tonbridge and Malling Businesses
Tonbridge and Malling Schools
Tonbridge Community Forum
Tonbridge Town Team
Town & Parish Councils
Visit Kent
West Kent Partnership – including Sevenoaks DC & Tunbridge Wells BC
<b>Key Funding Streams:</b>
Business Rates Pool
Business Rates Retention Pilot (BRRP)
Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)
UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

# TMBC.GOV.UK

## Serving our community

---

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council  
Gibson Building  
Gibson Drive  
Kings Hill  
West Malling  
Kent  
ME19 4LZ.

DRAFT



**FINANCE, REGENERATION AND PROPERTY SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE**

**WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24**

Members can suggest future items by liaising with the Chair of the Committee

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Matter for Discussion</b>	<b>Requested by:</b>	<b>Director/Officer</b>
19 September 2023	Tonbridge Town Centre – asset review	n/a - ongoing work matter	Director of Central Services
	Key Performance Indicators Work Programme		
14 November 2023			
	Key Performance Indicators Work Programme		
28 February 2024			
	Key Performance Indicators Work Programme		

This page is intentionally left blank

# 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**

This page is intentionally left blank

# 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.

This page is intentionally left blank