

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ECONOMIC REGENERATION ADVISORY BOARD

Wednesday, 7th September, 2016

Present: Cllr B J Luker (Chairman), Cllr F G Tombolis (Vice-Chairman), Cllr M C Base, Cllr R P Betts, Cllr T Bishop, Cllr J L Botten, Cllr T I B Cannon, Cllr S M King, Cllr R D Lancaster, Cllr Mrs S L Luck, Cllr L J O'Toole, Cllr Miss J L Sergison and Cllr C P Smith

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B W Walker and T C Walker

ERG 16/8 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

ERG 16/9 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the notes of the meeting of the Economic Regeneration Advisory Board held on 24 February 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

ERG 16/10 WORK READINESS AND CAREERS ADVICE

Decision Notice: D160064MEM

The report of the Chief Executive provided additional background to support the presentation given by Mike Rayner, Participation and Progression Manager for West Kent at Kent County Council, regarding the provision of careers advice, the key challenges faced and current initiatives to improve the work readiness of school leavers and job seekers. A draft Skills Action Plan, set out at Annex 1 to the report, provided details of a number of initiatives to support efforts to improve work readiness.

RECOMMENDED: That a Working Group of Members of the Council be established to assess the size and scope of the work readiness and skills issues, explore opportunities for working in partnership to improve communication between business and schools to create sustainable

employment streams and to report its findings to a future meeting of the Economic Regeneration Advisory Board.

ERG 16/11 SUPPORT FOR VILLAGE STORES INITIATIVE

Decision Notice: D160065MEM

The report of the Chief Executive summarised the progress to date of the District and Local Centres Initiatives which had provided a variety of environmental improvements in retail areas to create a positive and supportive environment for local traders. The report provided an overview of a proposed 12 month scheme to support Village Stores within the Borough which would include the provision of 1-to-1 guidance and support from a specialist retail advisor through Action with Communities in Rural Kent's Rural Retail Service.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) the progress to date on the District and Local Retail Centres be noted;
- (2) if there is no evidence of tangible progress on either of the initiatives in Snodland and West Malling by the end of September 2016 at the latest, the proposal to withdraw funding for the current projects be approved; and
- (3) the Village Shops Initiative, as detailed in paragraph 1.3.2 of the report, be approved.

ERG 16/12 BUSINESS INCUBATOR PROPOSAL

Decision Notice: D160066MEM

The report of the Chief Executive set out details of a proposal for the creation of a business facility to support the development of 'fledgling' businesses within vacant office space at Gibson Building, Kings Hill, as part of the Council's Economic Regeneration Strategy to facilitate economic growth within the Borough.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) the proposed Gibson Building Business Facility be supported in principle;
- (2) the engagement with key partners by the Economic Regeneration Officer be supported in order to help promote take up of the new facility by local businesses; and

- (3) a report regarding proposed financial arrangements related to the new facility be submitted to the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board.

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION

ERG 16/13 UPDATE ON PRIORITIES FOR 2016/17

The report of the Chief Executive provided a detailed update on progress made on the Borough's Economic Regeneration Priorities over the last six months.

ERG 16/14 WEST KENT PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The Minutes of the West Kent Partnership meeting held on 22 July 2016 were received and noted. Reference was made to the recent visit to West Kent by Christian Brodie, Chairman of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) on 8 July which had provided an opportunity to showcase key economic regeneration schemes linked to bids submitted to the third round of the Local Growth Fund.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE

ERG 16/15 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items considered in private.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm