

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
ECONOMIC REGENERATION ADVISORY BOARD

05 September 2018

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 REGENERATION STRATEGY 2019-2023 – CONSULTATION DRAFT

To present a consultation draft of the Borough Economic Regeneration Strategy 2019-2023 for consideration by the Board and to agree consultation and adoption arrangements.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The current Borough Economic Regeneration Strategy was adopted in June 2015 and covers the period up to March 2019. Over the course of the lifetime of this strategy considerable progress has been made in delivering the actions set out in the Action Plan, including:

- Working in partnership to set up the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network.
- Running events such as Jobs and Training Fairs, Skillsfest and Skills 3030 to promote greater work-readiness and skills attainment.
- Delivering free business support and advice for pre-start and start-up businesses.
- Supporting Tonbridge Town Centre as well as Local and District centres through the High Street Innovation Fund.
- Securing Local Growth Fund Round 3 funding for Leigh Flood Storage Area and other local flooding issues.

1.1.2 In addition, there were a number of initiatives implemented, such as the delivery of Castle Lodge Co-working Space and the creation of a monthly e-bulletin, that were not explicitly mentioned in the Action Plan, but were delivered in order to reach the objectives of the strategy.

1.1.3 The Borough Economic Regeneration Strategy 2019-2023 Consultation Draft (attached as Appendix 1) looks to continue the approach of the previous strategy

– avoiding the creation of a long and complex document, and to address a number of key issues, namely:

- To set out clear priorities for economic regeneration in the Borough.
- To ensure all activities and functions of the Borough Council which impact on economic regeneration are reflected in the strategy.
- To clearly illustrate the role of key partners and local businesses in delivering the actions of the strategy.
- To benefit from external funding opportunities that support the local growth agenda.

1.2 Consultation and Adoption

1.2.1 It is essential that the draft strategy document 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.

1.2.2 It is suggested that this consultation is undertaken for an eight week period in October/December 2018. 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.

1.2.3 Over the course of early 2019, all the comments received will be processed, and where appropriate, the strategy will be amended accordingly.

1.2.4 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 first meeting of the Board in the new cycle of meetings following the local elections in May 2019.

1.3 Legal Implications

1.3.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.4.1 As addressed by the draft strategy.

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 consultation draft of the Borough Economic Regeneration Strategy 2019-2023 **BE APPROVED** for the purposes of local consultation.

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.

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