

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ECONOMIC REGENERATION ADVISORY BOARD

Tuesday, 6th November, 2018

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

Councillors Mrs J A Anderson, M A Coffin, N J Heslop and H S Rogers were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J L Botten, R W Dalton, R D Lancaster and C P Smith

ERG 18/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made in accordance with the Code of Conduct. However, in the interests of transparency Councillor Betts advised that he had been a recipient of a LoCASE grant.

ERG 18/25 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the notes of the meeting of the Economic Regeneration Advisory Board held on 5 September 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

ERG 18/26 LOWER CARBON ACROSS THE SOUTH EAST (LOCASE)

Members received a presentation from Rob Robinson of Kent County Council on the impact of Lower Carbon Across the South East (LoCASE) grants in supporting Tonbridge and Malling businesses. Members asked a number of questions on the criteria for grant aid, whether support extended to businesses addressing other pollutants, the availability of funding post-Brexit and how the scheme would link with the Council's Economic Regeneration Strategy. The Chairman then thanked Mr Robinson for his contribution to the meeting.

ERG 18/27 EAST MALLING RESEARCH BIO-TECH CAMPUS

Apologies were received from Mario Coccamo of NIAB EMR who was unable to attend to make the presentation on recent positive developments at the East Malling Research Station. The Economic Regeneration Officer therefore updated the Advisory Board on progress being made at NIAB EMR with assistance from the Borough Council, including submission of two bids to the Stronger Places Fund and the Local Growth 3B Fund. It was hoped that more detailed information would be available in due course.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET**ERG 18/28 BUSINESS RATES RETENTION PILOT INITIATIVES - OUTLINE PROGRAMME**

Decision Notice D180067MEM

Further to Decision No D180060CAB, the report of the Chief Executive set out a programme of delivery for the Business Rates Retention Pilot initiatives, including an early draft of the Commercial Frontages Grant Scheme.

Consideration was given to the proposed criteria for the scheme which focused on independent retailers in the town and district centres of Tonbridge town centre, Borough Green, Kings Hill, Martin Square/Larkfield, Snodland and West Malling. It was agreed that the four additional centres identified in the previous district centres programme (Aylesford, East Peckham, Hadlow and Wrotham) also be included. It was also suggested that the focus of the scheme on retail premises should be reflected in its title.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) the proposed outline Business Rates Retention programme, as set out at paragraph 1.1.2 of the report, be approved; and
- (2) the Town and District Centres Commercial (Retail) Frontages Grant Scheme, as set out in the report, be approved subject to inclusion of Aylesford, East Peckham, Hadlow and Wrotham.

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION**ERG 18/29 WEST KENT PARTNERSHIP**

The report highlighted matters arising from the meeting of the West Kent Partnership held on 19 October 2018. Particular reference was made to the fact that there was now a representative of the Federation of Small Businesses on the West Kent Partnership. It was noted that the draft West Kent Priorities for Growth Strategy would be presented to the next meeting of the Advisory Board.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE**ERG 18/30 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no items considered in private.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm