

Appendix 1 - Action Plan

Objective	Action	Success Measure	Progress in first 6 months of Action Plan
Planning for Economic Growth	Support the development of a new Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan, including the identification of new employment sites and the protection of existing sites.	Allocation of sufficient sites for employment uses. Adoption of the Local Plan.	Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council submitted its Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate for examination on 23 January 2019, following a Regulation 19 consultation in the autumn of 2018. The Local Plan evidence base highlights that there is a need for 85.9ha of B Class employment floorspace for the period 2011-2031, made up predominantly of B8 use. This means, after existing supply has been deducted, an additional 46.8ha needs to be identified for the period up to 2031. In the Local Plan, just under 39ha of new employment land is identified, with the shortfall being met through intensification on existing sites. At the time of writing this report, a date for the start of the Examination in Public is still awaited.
	Implementation of the North Kent Enterprise Zone (Innovation Park Medway)	No. of new businesses relocating to Innovation Park Medway.	Consultation on a Local Development Order (LDO) for the portion of Innovation Park Medway which falls within the Borough was undertaken between 20 June and 22 July 2019 (a consultation was also undertaken by Medway Council between 18 June and 20 July 2019). The consultation responses are currently being addressed. Medway Council are currently aiming to adopt their LDO in January 2020, with TMBC looking to adopt in Spring 2020.
	Bring new economic life into the former Aylesford Newsprint site.	No. of new businesses relocating to the former Aylesford Newsprint site.	The demolition of the Aylesford Newsprint buildings and infrastructure to slab level was completed by W&S Recycling at the end of February 2019, with the same company also disposing of all equipment and production machines, the vast majority of which was recycled or reused. Since this time, the administrators KPMG have been working with a preferred purchaser towards completion of the sale of the site, and an announcement is expected shortly.
	Support the development of a new research campus and associated inward investment at East Malling.	Creation of masterplan for the campus. No. of new sector-specific businesses on site.	A Local Growth Fund 3b (LGF3b) bid for £1.8m was submitted to the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership in May 2019 for a new energy centre and greenhouses on the East Malling site and is currently on a short-list to use up any underspend that may arise from initiatives that had been allocated funding through the LGF3 process. In order to bring this closer to reality, a planning application was submitted by the East Malling Trust in September 2019 for the development of an advanced technology horticultural zone, which if built, would bring much needed investment into the on-site facilities.

			NIAB EMR have also been leading a consortium bid to the Strength in Places Fund (Innovate UK) called 'Growing Kent and Medway', which would strengthen the area's position in food production and processing. This bid was submitted in September 2019, and if successful would see the consortium secure over £17m of investment in research and innovation.
	Foster additional inward investment to the Borough via the promotion of vacant sites and existing premises.	% increase in the number of jobs retained and secured through inward investment projects handled by Locate in Kent.	Locate in Kent is currently working with more than 20 companies looking to expand into/within or relocate into/Tonbridge & Malling. The majority of these projects lie within the following sectors: Business Services, Other Manufacturing and Construction.
Funding for Key Infrastructure	Implementation of the Leigh Flood Storage Area and Hildenborough improvements.	Delivery of scheme.	The Environment Agency have now consulted on a proposed amendment to the River Medway (Flood Relief) Act 1976 to allow the capacity of the flood storage area to be increased by around 24% and this is expected to be approved by the Secretary of State shortly. A detailed planning application, covering the expansion of the Leigh Flood Storage Area and the Hildenborough Embankment is scheduled to be submitted to the Planning Department in early 2020.
	Design and implementation of viable flood relief scheme in East Peckham	Outline Business Case for investment completed and funding secured.	Due to an increased funding gap arising from higher scheme costs, the Environment Agency are now pursuing Property Flood Resilience measures to improve flood mitigation for up to 192 properties in East Peckham and Little Mill. The indicative costs for this work will be in the region of £1.6m with funding sought through the Flood Defence Grant in Aid Programme and the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. At this stage, given the need to apply for the funding, the soonest that work to homes could take place would be October 2020.
	Delivery of SMART Motorway between Junctions 3 and 5 of the M20	Delivery of Scheme	This scheme is currently scheduled to be completed by March 2020.
	Implementation of critical transport infrastructure as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.	Funding in place and delivery of 'short-term' (over next 5 years) investments	There are a number of critical short term (over next 5 years) investments highlighted in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (August 2018), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing capacity issues along B2246 Hermitage Road • Development of a link road between Hermitage Lane and the Poppyfields • New footway/cycleway linking South Aylesford with Barming Station • Expansion to existing Community First Responder (CFR) scheme. <p>These investments, and others will be highlighted as the Local Plan and IDP progress.</p>

Skills and Work Readiness	Support the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network (WKEAN)	No of schools engaged in the initiative and supported by an Enterprise Adviser	Having launched in July 2017, the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network has gone from strength to strength. Up until recently, there were 2 Enterprise Adviser Co-ordinators covering West Kent, enabling expansion in the capacity of the Network to involve all secondary schools, including all Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) schools and alternative provision. However, one of the co-ordinators left in September 2019 and has not yet been replaced. Despite this minor set-back, as of September 2019, 30 schools were in the network with 24 matched with an Enterprise Adviser (EA). Whilst there is a good supply of business volunteer EAs, care is being taken in making an appropriate match to a school.
	Deliver 2 employability and skills events per year in local schools that are located within our pockets of deprivation.	No of employers attending No of students participating	<p>On 04 April 2019, TMBC partnered up with Kent Education Business Partnership (KEBP) to deliver an Employability Day at Holmesdale School. The day welcomed 19 organisations (employers and educative), represented by a total of 32 employees. EBP Kent worked with the school to target specific sectors and workshop content was agreed upon that would best suit the aspirations and employability needs of the students. The event took place from 0850 until 1510, with over 120 Year 11 students rotating around 5 different zones. Students were able to experience a full range of interactive sessions, presentations, employer interaction, interviews and work on personal employability skills.</p> <p>On 25 September 2019, TMBC again partnered up with KEBP to deliver an Employability Day at the Malling School. In total 22 employees from 14 organisations took part, with just under 100 Year 12 and 13 students rotating around the five zones which covered CV writing, Preparing for Interviews, 1-to-1 interviews, an Employer Workshop focussed on team work and an Exhibition Fair.</p>
	Deliver the West Kent Skillsfest event	No of employers attending No of schools participating	The West Kent Skillsfest took place on 08 October 2019. At the event, there were 53 businesses showcasing their sector to the young people, along with education establishments and training providers highlighting their courses. Around 1,000 students took part in the event with the following schools with Tonbridge & Malling taking part: Hugh Christie Technology College, Hayesbrook, Wrotham School, Hadlow Rural School and Weald of Kent.
	Deliver 2 West Kent Jobs and Training Fairs per year - Spring: alternate between Tonbridge and Sevenoaks - Autumn: Tunbridge Wells	No. of employers attending No. of Job Seekers attending No. of people entering employment or training	<p>On 05 September 2019, a West Kent Jobs and Training Fair took place in Tunbridge Wells. In total 38 employers and training providers came to the event, with 283 members of the public attending. It has been confirmed that 13 people have secured employment directly from the event (with others likely but not captured). Positive feedback includes:</p> <p>“It was amazing and it helped me with my anxiety as I managed to go alone and speak with employers, the outcome is brilliant!!!”</p> <p>“I will be starting full time work tomorrow 17/9, with Town and Country as HR Assistant after speaking to them at the Jobs Fair”</p>

			“Great news! I got the job at Costa, although I'm not sure of my hours yet, I'll find out tomorrow, when I have my induction”
	Deliver 1 local Jobs and Training Fair per year that is located within one of our pockets of deprivation	No. of employers attending No. of Job Seekers attending No. of people entering employment or training	On 15 October 2019, TMBC, in partnership with Jobcentre Plus, the RBLI, Golding Homes and Clarion Futures ran a successful local jobs Fair at the RBLI Village in Aylesford. This was the third such event and is becoming an annual event. In total, there were 27 employers and training providers, with 200 members of the public coming along to the event. There were two workshops for people to attend – on self-employment and social media, and on the ‘Hidden Jobs Market’. At the time of writing this report, statistics on the number of people entering employment or training are not available.
Supporting Business	Deliver 4 business engagement events in the borough per year	No. of events per year No of businesses attending.	To date, two business engagement events have taken place in the borough – on the 04 April and 03 July 2019. Both of these events took place in Tonbridge and were attended by a total of 57 businesses. A further event is planned for November 2019 (14 November at the RBLI Village in partnership with Barclays).
	Produce a monthly business e-bulletin	No of e-bulletins produced No of businesses reading the e-bulletin.	The e-bulletin has been distributed on a regular basis since September 2016. At present, just over 600 business contacts are signed up to the newsletter, with 20-35% reading the bulletin on a regular basis. One of the tasks for the Graduate Economic Regeneration Officer is to build up the e-bulletin database and help in the production of the e-bulletin itself. Anyone can sign up to the T&M Business e-bulletin via http://eepurl.com/dthPW1
	Maintain the TMBC Business webpages	No of visits per year.	The content on the TMBC business webpages is regularly updated, but current visitor levels are only on average around 20-50 visitors per month. As such further work to use the success of other media channels to signpost to the webpages is required.
	Maintain regular messaging through TMBC Social Media	No of followers No of shares and retweets.	Regular messaging has been posted on the TMBC Twitter and Facebook accounts regarding the array of events, business support and projects. The Economic Regeneration posts with the highest reach since April 2019 are: Pop Up Business School in Tonbridge – 23.7k (10 Sept 2019) Shopfront Improvement Scheme (Gorgeous George) – 22.2k (02 August 2019) Aylesford Jobs and Training Fair – 22.1k (25 Sept 2019) At the moment, the TMBC Twitter account has grown to around 5,000 followers and the Facebook account now has 2,400 followers.

	Promote and support the West Kent Business Support Programme (start-up and scale-up support), the Kent & Medway Growth Hub and other support activities.	No of businesses using the service.	<p>West Kent Business Support Programme The West Kent Start-Up Programme has supported over 150 pre-start and start-up businesses since the beginning of 2019, 45 of which are based in Tonbridge and Malling.</p> <p>The West Kent Scale Up Programme involves intensive mentoring support for a cohort of 12 businesses in West Kent – 4 are based in Tonbridge and Malling (Mereworth Wines, Greensand Ridge Distillery, Newton Waterproofing and PH Project Services – and all are currently about half way through the 12 month programme. Some businesses have already started to show signs of growth.</p> <p>Kent and Medway Growth Hub For the period April – August 2019, a total of 64 businesses used the Growth Hub service, with 17 of these businesses benefitting from medium intensity support (between 3 and 12 hours support) and 47 benefitting from light touch support (under 3 hours).</p>
	Promote and Support the Better Business for All initiative	No of businesses using the www.bbfa.biz website.	Better Business For All is a partnership between business and regulators promoting business growth and compliance. The Borough Council has continued to promote and support BBFA over the past six months following the launch of their new website.
	Seek new opportunities to provide flexible co-working space for start-up businesses in the borough.	No. of new co-working venues in the borough	Having delivered Castle Lodge in 2018, the Council is aiming to bring forward part of the Gibson Building as accommodation for small businesses. Funding to adjust security arrangements and to redecorate the offices has been secured, and Property Services are engaging with a local commercial agent to discuss the attractiveness and marketability of the accommodation.
	Promote and signpost to key business funding opportunities	No. of borough businesses awarded funding.	<p>The Borough Council continues to signpost to both advice services (see above) and potential funding streams for business. The following funding opportunities have been available in recent months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent & Medway Business Fund – offering 0% loans between £50,000 and £500,000 to small and medium sized businesses. This fund has been open to new applications since June 2019. • South East Business Boost (currently closed but SEBB2 launching soon) - funding for capital and revenue purchases for Essex, East Sussex, Kent and Medway businesses. The grants available are from £1,000 up to £2,000 and are for small growth projects. • Lower Carbon Across South East (currently closed to applicants but looking to open again shortly) • LEADER (now closed to applicants) • Start-Up Loans – government backed loans of up to £25,000 at a fixed interest rate of 6%pa with free advice and mentoring.

Our Towns and Local Centres	Work with the Tonbridge Town Team and local retailers to support the delivery of town centre events and other initiatives aimed at increasing footfall and spend in the town centre.	No of events and initiatives delivered per annum. % vacancy rates on Tonbridge High Street	Tonbridge Town Team continues to run or support a number of events and activities in the town centre – most notably the Dragon Boat Races and the Food & Drink Festival. The ‘What’s On’ brochure is also produced on a quarterly basis, and helps to promote a wide range of events and community activity in the town. Data from March 2019 shows that vacancy levels are relatively low along Tonbridge High Street, with a 6% vacancy level for the Upper High Street (north of the Big Bridge) and an 8.7% vacancy level for the Lower High Street. This is marginally higher than the figures for 2018, but still much lower than any other time within the last five years. One clear trend however, is the move away from retail uses – for the period 1997 (when survey work began) to 2013, retail uses made up well over 70% of frontages on the High Street. However, the most recent data (January 2019) shows that only 58% of frontages are now retail uses. This illustrates the evolution of the high street and the growth of food outlets and professional services.
	Bring forward developments and townscape improvements to strengthen the viability and vitality of our town and local centres.	Planning permission in place for new schemes by the end of the strategy period.	Through the shopfront improvement grant initiatives, the Borough Council has so far supported 19 improvement schemes in our Town and District Centres, and has recently also launched a similar grant scheme for our local centres and parades which has so far generated initial expressions of interest from 20 independent businesses.
Visitor Economy	Work with Visit Kent to promote and market Tonbridge and Malling’s tourism assets through an annual Service Level Agreement.	No. of visitors to the borough Visitor spend in the borough (£)	The most recent piece of research undertaken on behalf of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council was ‘The Economic Impact of Tourism 2017’ (produced in November 2018). This illustrated that over the course of 2017, there were 3,029,000 trips to the borough (2,787,000 of which were day trips and 242,000 overnight stays). The total direct value to the borough of these trips was just over £143m.
Rural Economy	Promote the take up of LEADER grants by rural borough businesses	No of grants awarded to borough businesses.	Since opening in September 2016, TMBC have been helping to promote the scheme through the use of the TMBC website and social media, as well as working with West Kent partners to provide additional business support for prospective applicants. To date there have been 26 Expressions of Interest submissions from T&M businesses to the West Kent LEADER Programme. Of these, 9 did not progress and 17 have been approved. The total value of grants awarded already to ‘approved’ projects in Tonbridge & Malling is just under £800,000 (around 60% of the total value of grant funding approved to date, meaning the actual amount of grant allocated to our rural businesses is significantly higher than that allocated to Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells or Gravesham rural businesses).

		Whilst the LEADER Programme has been extended until 20 December 2019, EU structural funding is set to be replaced by a UK Shared Prosperity Fund. However details of this new funding stream are still awaited.
Work with partners to implement superfast broadband services across the borough and to address local problems with mobile phone coverage.	% of the borough with high speed broadband coverage. % of the borough with weak or no signal	<p>At the end of 2018, the BDUK Phase 2 project was completed. This resulted in superfast (at least 24 megabits per second) broadband coverage of around 96% of properties in the borough, against a target of 95%. Although this project has now been completed, because the take up of publicly funded superfast broadband has been higher than expected, the County Council have received a small pot of funding that can be used to deliver additional schemes that would not otherwise be delivered commercially, with a government emphasis now on Fibre to the Premise (FTTP).</p> <p>During 2018, Government also launched a broadband voucher scheme aimed at encouraging small businesses and the local communities around them to install faster connections using gigabit-capable infrastructure. The vouchers are worth £2,500 per SME, with residents able to claim £500 each towards installation. This initiative has been promoted through the T&M Business Bulletin.</p> <p>In October 2019, OpenReach made a number of announcements about its programme of bringing its 1-gigabit Fibre-to-the-Premises (FTTP) broadband service to 15 million homes across the UK by 2025. In the latest new announcement of 23 roll-out locations, the Tonbridge exchange has been included meaning it will be one of the earliest locations to benefit from this service. In addition, OpenReach have recently announced 13 rural locations (the nearest to T&M is Seal in Sevenoaks) to pilot new machinery and techniques that will ultimately make it much cheaper and quicker to provide FTTP in rural locations.</p>
Deliver further phase of the Village Stores Initiative.	No. of village stores engaging with the initiative.	<p>The Village Stores Initiative, set up with Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) in 2017, was a useful mechanism through which rural businesses were able to get support and advice in submitting application forms to the West Kent LEADER Programme.</p> <p>With the Shopfront Improvement Scheme expanding out to Local Centres and Parades, it is suggested that the advice service provided by ACRK is used to help support prospective applicants.</p>