

Appendix 1

Five Channels	Actions	Progress to Date	Timescale
Communications, Confidence and Trust	Build up subscription to the T&M Business Bulletin.	<p>Initial work has been undertaken to encourage Covid-19 discretionary grant applicants to opt-in to business news updates via our T&M Business Bulletin. This exercise will hopefully see the total subscribers increase to around 800 business contacts.</p> <p>Further work is needed to capture other potential subscribers to the bulletin, using recent contacts made with businesses relating to Covid-19 support and advice.</p>	Ongoing during 2021.
	Use of new TMBC website and social media channels to ensure accessible and timely information is provided for local businesses.	<p>A large amount of the effort in this regard has been in relation to information relating to financial support and advice relating to the Covid-19 pandemic. As an indication of the level of use of our Covid-19 business pages, between 25 September 2020 and 24 March 2021 there were nearly 10,000 page views with an average duration of 3 and a half minutes.</p> <p>Social media channels have also been used to get information out about grants, along with information about webinars relating to operating safely and opening businesses again.</p>	Ongoing during 2021.
	Investigate use of technology to replace business networking events.	This has not been advanced in the past 6 months due to current commitments relating to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, there have been some well-attended business information sessions delivered through the Licensing and Environmental Health Teams which have provided information and advice relating to the re-opening of businesses.	Look to re-establish networking events in the second half of 2021.
Open for Business	Completion of Town and District and Local Shopfront Schemes.	Good progress has been made on this initiative. Whilst a small handful of projects will not now be implemented due to the impact of the Covid-19 restrictions, a few others have now completed. In recent months, Hardy's Wine Store in West Malling and the Diamond Fish Bar, GT Engravers and Finch	Look to continue this initiative.

		House in Tonbridge have all delivered their projects. In addition, 2 new projects have been approved and applications are awaited from at least three other shops.	
	Develop a new West Kent Retail Support Programme to support our High Streets	Initial work was commissioned by the West Kent Partnership during 2020 to gain the views and experiences of local independent retailers on the topic of business support. This was done to ascertain the level of interest there might be in additional support, as well as what that support might entail. This work was disrupted quite considerably by the restrictions that came in during November 2020, and this work is now starting to be picked up again.	Pick up this piece of work again in May 2021.
	Pilot a project to trial out a SMART places initiative within the borough.	The allocation of funding towards this was agreed by ERAB in November 2020. No further progress has been made to date.	Scheduled for 2022.
	Investigate role of the Council in encouraging vehicle charging points in key town centre locations across the Borough.	A report is going to the Communities and Housing Advisory Board in May 2021 setting out a few proposed locations for EV charging points in Council Car Parks in Tonbridge, Kings Hill and Aylesford as part of a Phase 1 approach.	Ongoing
	Set up a Town Centre Regeneration Fund to support investment that will help to stimulate confidence in our high streets.	The allocation of funding towards this was agreed by ERAB in November 2020. No further progress has been made to date.	During 2021/22
	Work with tourism partners and key attractions to promote the borough as a visitor destination	The Borough Council has continued to support Visit Kent for 2021/22 in recognition of the particularly severe impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on businesses in the hospitality sector. Visit Kent continue to promote attractions in the borough through their website and social media outlets and are looking	Ongoing

		<p>to relaunch various promotional campaigns which were unfortunately cancelled in 2020.</p> <p>The Borough Council did not contribute towards the part-EU funded 'Experience' project - https://www.visitkentbusiness.co.uk/about-us/european-funding/experience/ - however, a number of attractions within our Borough have still been able to access direct support and advice through the scheme.</p> <p>In addition, the Borough Council has participated in Kent-wide research into the requirements for tourist accommodation which was undertaken by Canterbury Christchurch University on behalf of Visit Kent. This study identified a need for more visitor accommodation in the Borough, as well as a gap in 4- and 5-star accommodation.</p>	
Supporting Business	Promote and signpost external funding support for business (such as LoCASE, South East Business Boost, Kent and Medway Loan Fund, any other future Covid-19 related Government funding)	<p>Whilst there has been a strong emphasis on promoting the various Covid-19 business grants, the level of promotion and signposting to other financial support has been relatively minimal during the last 6 months. This has predominantly been due to the extremely high level of enquiries specifically in relation to Covid-19 business grants, and the very low levels of interest in other funds at this precise moment.</p> <p>It is envisaged that once the last of the Covid-19 business grants have been allocated (likely by the end of 2021), then promotion and signposting of other funds will pick up again.</p>	Ongoing
	Set up a Green Business Grant Scheme to help existing green businesses and to improve energy efficiency of commercial premises in the Borough.	A report has been written for this ERAB meeting setting out a proposed scheme for the Green Business Grant Scheme. If approved, the scheme will be launched in Summer 2021.	Launch in Summer 2021.
	Promote and refer businesses to the West Kent Business/Start-up Support Programme	Take-up of the West Kent Start-Up Support Programme has been low over the past 12 months, as most businesses have been referred to the covid-19 helpline rather than to the start-up support programme due to the nature of their enquiries. In recent weeks however, there have been a handful of enquiries relating to start-up support.	Ongoing – continue to promote the service.

	Promote and refer to the Covid-19 recovery helpline/Kent & Medway Growth Hub	<p>This has been an extremely successful service, with over 1,600 business enquiries received from businesses in Tonbridge & Malling between March 2020 and March 2021. To put this in context, only Ashford, Maidstone and Medway have seen a higher take-up rate. In addition, only Ashford has had a higher take-up rate than Tonbridge & Malling for the use of the webchat support facility.</p> <p>Overall, whilst the level of business enquiries directly to the Council has still been extremely high, this service has enabled officers to concentrate more on implementing and delivering grant schemes.</p>	Ongoing – continue to promote the service.
People	Virtual Events to support people back into work or new training opportunities (Jobs Fairs, Skills events, webinars).	<p>The Borough Council has supported Job Centre Plus on a small number of training events, but other than that there hasn't been much progress on this to date as there hasn't been the business demand for activities such as virtual jobs fairs, predominantly due to the suppressed jobs market.</p> <p>There are signs now that the jobs market is starting to open up again, and whilst this isn't yet illustrated necessarily by a drop in unemployment levels locally, meetings are now in place with colleagues at Job Centre Plus and the West Kent Partnership to look at reviving these events (as both virtual and face-to-face events)</p>	Ongoing
	Support apprenticeships and internships in the borough – through opportunities at the Council as well as establishing an apprenticeship fund to support opportunities in the local economy.	<p>The allocation of funding towards an apprenticeship grant scheme was agreed by ERAB in November 2020. However, no further progress has been made on this to date.</p> <p>However, initial discussions with Panattoni have indicated that they are keen to support apprenticeships and paid internships during the construction phase, and this is something that could be formalised through the Section 106 agreement.</p>	Scheduled for 2022
	Support the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network in local secondary schools to ensure young people receive quality	Having launched in July 2017, the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network continues to support local secondary schools. Whilst some disruption has been caused by the Covid-19	Ongoing

	careers advice and guidance, and interactions with the workplace.	restrictions and schools operating virtually, the network has been able to operate virtually to provide careers advice and support, including contributions to the Kent and Medway WOW (World of Work) TV YouTube Channel, and a EAN Women's Week in March 2021.	
	Support the West Kent Kickstart Programme, providing 6-month placements for 18–24-year-olds	<p>Kickstart West Kent - https://kickstartwestkent.co.uk/ - has been making good progress since it was set up in late 2020. The first 'Kickstarter' started on 24 February 2021 and since this time another 10 have gone into the workplace. There are currently 49 vacancies either live with the Job Centre or due to go live in the next couple of weeks.</p> <p>In addition, 128 placements have so far been approved.</p> <p>Wraparound training support for young people on the Kickstart West Kent Scheme is being delivered by North Kent College.</p> <p>TMBC has agreed to two placements as part of this Kickstart scheme.</p>	Ongoing
Investment	Work towards the adoption of the Local Plan and the allocation of strategic sites and new employment allocations.	<p>Whilst progress with the Local Plan has been disrupted, progress has been made on a few of our strategic sites and new employment allocations, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panattoni Park Aylesford – development under construction • Vantage Point, Snodland – development under construction • Rochester Airfield – Local Development Order adopted. • Tonbridge Trade Park - constructed 	Ongoing
	Continue to support to LFSA Expansion and Hildenborough Embankment Scheme	The scheme to expand the Leigh Flood Storage Area is continuing to progress as planned, despite some disruption from Covid-19. A key piece of work over the past 18 months for the Environment Agency (EA) has been the consultation with landowners and organisations about the proposal to increase the maximum stored water level within the Leigh FSA	Works commence during 2021

		<p>during times of flood which would ultimately reduce flood risk to over 1,400 homes and businesses in Tonbridge and Hildenborough.</p> <p>There are essentially two key strands to this project before it can be implemented – the securing of planning permission and securing approval to amend the River Medway (Flood Relief) Act 1976 to include a change to the flood storage level.</p> <p>In terms of planning permissions for the LFSA (from each of the three planning authorities), these were secured in January 2021. A planning application for the Hildenborough Embankments work is expected to be submitted in April/May 2021.</p> <p>In terms of the changes required to the Act of Parliament, the EA submitted their request to the Secretary of State to increase the stored water level in the Leigh FSA in early June 2020. Unfortunately, they have been unable to resolve objections to the proposal, so DEFRA will hold an inquiry which is due to take place in April/May 2021.</p>	
	Work with NIAB EMR on bringing forward proposals for East Malling Research Station	<p>During 2019 and 2020, the Borough Council supported NIAB EMR in securing public funding for a range of developments aimed at transforming the research centre site into an 'advanced technology horticultural zone'. This has included £2m of Local Growth Funding towards the development of two new facilities buildings, four new greenhouses and an energy centre; £600,000 from the Growing Places Fund towards a new Wine Innovation Centre, along with a successful £18m Strength in Places consortium bid, part of which will help to fund new facilities and research activity on the site.</p> <p>Planning permission was secured for the first phase of developments in November 2020, and work is now underway to implement these permissions.</p>	Ongoing
	Review strategic asset base (especially with regards to Tonbridge Town Centre)	<p>Following a report to FIPAB in May 2020, the Borough Council is now in the process pulling together a Tonbridge Town Centre brief which will look at the opportunities presented by our asset</p>	Ongoing

		base, giving consideration to a wide range of issues including viability, mixture of uses, funding and delivery options and opportunities presented by adjoining sites.	
	Work with Panattoni to deliver a high-quality commercial development at the former Aylesford Newsprint site.	In March 2021, plans were approved for the £180m comprehensive redevelopment of the Aylesford Newsprint site, comprising seven industrial buildings (offering in the region of 177,000 sqm of new commercial floorspace), new link road and landscaping.	First tenant on site by Spring 2022. Development completed by 2024.
	Support continued roll out of broadband infrastructure.	<p>Many of our urban areas have now seen considerable progress with regards to the implementation of Fibre to the Premise (FTTP) which provides services of up to 1gigabit per second – an example of this has been the work undertaken by Trooli, who are a local T&M based broadband provider, as well as Hyperoptic, Virgin Media and Openreach.</p> <p>One of the key challenges is ensuring services are provided in the areas of ‘market failure’, which are overwhelmingly the more remote, rural areas of the borough. The Borough Council has been supporting Kent County Council in the promotion of the Kent Broadband Top Up Voucher Scheme which aims to subsidise the cost of the installation - https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/broadband/broadband-voucher-schemes/kent-broadband-top-up-voucher</p> <p>However, more funding is required to address the challenges in rural areas. In recognition of this, the West Kent Partnership and KCC both wrote to the Secretary of State in March 2021 to highlight the case for the local area, and to stress the need for the ‘final 20%’ UK Gigabit Programme to benefit our rural homes and businesses with the worst broadband connectivity.</p>	Ongoing