

Appendix 1

Five Channels	Actions	Progress to Date	Timescale
Communications, Confidence and Trust	Build up subscription to the T&M Business Bulletin.	<p>In delivering a range of initiatives over the past year, the Economic Regeneration Team has encouraged businesses to sign up to the newsletter, and we now have a mailing list of just under 900 business contacts. This is around 300 more contacts than in February 2021.</p> <p>Due to heavy workloads during 2021, the newsletter has recently been running on a quarterly basis rather than monthly, but this will be reviewed later in the year, and further efforts to increase the mailing list will be undertaken.</p>	Ongoing during 2022.
	Use of new TMBC website and social media channels to ensure accessible and timely information is provided for local businesses.	<p>Business information on the new website has been consolidated and made easier to navigate. The majority of work relating to business information has been in relation to various grant streams (particularly covid-related and green business grants).</p> <p>Social media channels have also been used to get information out about grants, promoting project delivery and information about webinars.</p>	Ongoing during 2022.
	Re-establish Networking Events (virtual and face-to-face)	<p>The Economic Regeneration Team did begin to re-establish networking events at the end of last year, with one taking place on 24 November 2021 in Tonbridge in partnership with 'Produced in Kent'. This was attended by 25 local businesses and included a presentation on reducing business food waste.</p> <p>A further event was scheduled at Oakley School in January 2022; however this has had to be postponed due to concerns about high covid numbers. This event is now scheduled to take place in Spring 2022.</p> <p>A programme of networking events across the borough is being drawn up for the next 12 months.</p>	Ongoing during 2022
Open for Business	Completion of Town and District and Local Shopfront Schemes.	This scheme has now been substantially completed, and the success of the scheme is set out in an ERAB report.	Subject to Member Consideration.

	<p>At the time of writing this, there are just 3 projects that are yet to receive their funding. Two of these have completed works, but are awaiting confirmation of planning approval (both in West Malling), and the other project (in Watlington - the last to be awarded funding) is just awaiting planning permission before having the works undertaken.</p> <p>At this meeting, Members are asked to consider an extension to this scheme to use up the small amount of remaining funding.</p>	
Deliver High Street support through the Welcome Back Fund Programme	<p>An update report is being provided at this Board meeting.</p> <p>This programme has included the delivery of a number of improvements to our town centres. One of the main initiatives taken forward by the Economic Regeneration team has been aesthetic improvements to a number of vacant units at Railway Approach in Tonbridge (a key gateway into the town). This project has involved the removal of old signage and external infrastructure and the creation and installation of vinyl windows to promote the town, a community clean up and new planting. Whilst the units remain vacant, and there are limited options to speed up bringing them back into use until the owners implement their investment plan, the Council will continue to work with them to ensure any opportunities (such as national funding calls) are fully considered.</p>	WBF projects completed March 2022.
Develop a new West Kent Retail Support Programme to support our High Streets	<p>Although initial work was undertaken at a West Kent level which provided some useful insights into the impact of the covid pandemic on local retailers, the announcement of the Welcome Back Fund has enabled the Borough Council to undertake a more thorough assessment of its four main traditional high streets, and find out through a sample of over 50 local retailers what support they require in the short to medium term as we tentatively move into recovering from the covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>At this stage, it is not clear what the support package might entail, but once the analysis work has been finalised, an action plan will be pulled together setting out potential initiatives that could in part be funded through the Business Rates Retention Pilot Reserve.</p>	Report and Action Plan finalised in March 2022 and reported to ERAB in May 2022.
Pilot a project to trial out a SMART places initiative within the borough.	The Borough Council is currently working with the County Council to bring forward a pilot community wi-fi project, using the Kent Public Services network to help tackle digital exclusion. Based on digital exclusion and deprivation data provided by the County Council, two areas – Trench and South Aylesford – are being looked into to assess their suitability. A small sample of resident surveys from both areas were undertaken in January 2022 and technical feasibility studies are now being carried out to establish timelines and costs of installation and maintenance. Whilst the installation	During 2022.

		<p>cost and year-one maintenance would fall to the County Council, it is expected that the ongoing maintenance cost would be met elsewhere. Depending on whole-life cost, this could potentially be met through the Business Rates Retention Pilot reserve.</p> <p>Once these technical feasibility studies have been produced, a report will be presented to consider whether progressing presents value for money and if so, setting out options and potential next steps.</p> <p>In Trench, this activity is being complemented by digital inclusion workshops which are being delivered by Tonbridge Baptist Church to help people in the Trench area with IT literacy and confidence, with further 1-2-1 support provided to residents by Compaid during 2022.</p>	
	Investigate role of the Council in encouraging vehicle charging points in key town centre locations across the Borough.	<p>TMBC is looking to provide EV chargers in its car parks across the Borough where the power network is suitable. These works have been split into two phases – Phase 1 consists of 6 car parks and up to 32 charge points (30 slow/fast chargers and 2 rapid chargers) . Phase 2 is a much larger phase and includes about 15 car parks and up to 100 chargers being provided.</p> <p>Phase 1 is currently being entered into with the supplier and works should be starting as early as April/May 2022. Phase 2 will be considered once Phase 1 is completed and we know how well it progressed. Phase 2 is still an outline proposal, and the final locations and number of charging points may vary.</p>	Commence Phase 1 – Spring 2022
	Set up a Town Centre Regeneration Fund to support investment that will help to stimulate confidence in our high streets.	<p>The allocation of funding towards this was agreed by ERAB in November 2020. It is intended that this funding could be used to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The action plan arising out of the Town Centre Analysis work currently being funded through the Welcome Back Fund (as reference under the section 'Develop a new West Kent Retail Support Programme to support our High Streets') • Tonbridge Town Centre Asset Review. 	During 2022
	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.	Ongoing

		<p>Visit Kent continue to promote attractions in the borough through their website and social media outlets and are looking to relaunch various promotional campaigns which were unfortunately cancelled in 2021.</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>	
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 more limited during 2021. 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 Spring 2022), 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.	<p>The Green Business Grant Scheme was approved by ERAB in May 2021 and launched in July 2021. In total £76,000 of the £150,000 pot was allocated to 19 businesses (out of 21 that applied) in the borough, supporting both businesses in the green sector as well as helping businesses reduce their carbon footprint. Initiatives included installation of zero-carbon energy infrastructure (PV and wind) and electric charging points, purchase of energy efficient equipment and energy sensors and tree planting. Businesses have until October 2022 to deliver their projects.</p> <p>It had been envisaged that a second round (to allocate the remaining £74,000) would take place in January 2022. However, the announcement of new business grants associated with the rise of the Omicron variant, this has now been put back to February/March 2022.</p>	Open up a second round in February/March 2022.
	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 understandably been referred to the covid-19 helpline rather than to the start-up support programme due to the nature of their enquiries.	Review in Spring 2022.

		In addition, the business advisers for the West Kent Start-Up Support Programme will be retiring very shortly and so a review will be undertaken in the Spring, assessing the need for the programme on an ongoing basis.	
	Promote and refer to the Covid-19 recovery helpline/Kent & Medway Growth Hub	<p>This has been an extremely successful service, with over 1,900 business enquiries received from businesses in Tonbridge & Malling between March 2020 and June 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>The helpline formally closed down at the end of June 2021 as enquiry levels were dropping off, however business advisers are still available at the Growth Hub to take the lower level of incoming calls and enquiries, and so there is still a useful referral route in place.</p>	Ongoing in 2022
People	Events to support people back into work or new training opportunities (Jobs Fairs, Skills events, webinars).	<p>The Borough Council successfully delivered the Aylesford Jobs Market in October 2021, which was the first face-to-face employment event delivered since 2019. The event was very successful, and even though numbers were smaller than in previous years, there were still many examples of job seekers finding new opportunities directly as a result of the event.</p> <p>Through the West Kent Partnership, the Borough Council also helped to deliver the West Kent Jobs Fair in October 2021.</p> <p>The Borough Council had planned to run a couple of much smaller jobs events at the Council in January 2022, however these were postponed due to the rise of the Omicron variant.</p> <p>There are plans for jobs fairs in Tonbridge and Aylesford during 2022.</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, with a further report going to ERAB in November 2021 setting out options for the best use of this funding.</p> <p>The original plan had been to bring a finalised plan of action to the board at this meeting, however this has been delayed due to the impact of handling the new covid-19 grants related to the rise of the Omicron variant during winter 2021/22.</p>	Launch the scheme during 2022.

	Support the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network in local secondary schools to ensure young people receive quality careers advice and guidance, and interactions with the workplace.	<p>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 restrictions and schools operating virtually, the network has been able to operate virtually to provide careers advice and support.</p> <p>This initiative was initially part-funded for a two-year period through the support of the Hadlow Group (at a time when there was no other provision in Kent), and thereafter was funded for a three-year period through the West Kent Business Rates Retention Pilot Reserve. As of September 2022, the Enterprise Adviser Network covering West Kent will be funded and overseen by The Education People, bringing it in line with the rest of the county.</p> <p>Having built up a very strong network, our schools are now in a great position to implement their careers strategies and the relationships that have been forged, will ensure that we are in a good position to implement future skills and careers work with local schools.</p>	Ongoing
	Support the West Kent Kickstart Programme, providing 6-month placements for 18–24-year-olds	<p>Kickstart West Kent - https://kickstartwestkent.co.uk/ - has made very solid progress since it was set up in late 2020. The first 'Kickstarter' started on 24 February 2021 and since this time there have been a total of 95 young people starting on the scheme.</p> <p>Of these 95, 15 ended their placement early, 35 are still on their placement and 45 have completed their placement. Of the 45 that have completed, 30 have been kept on by their employer, and a further 5 have moved on to further education. Wraparound training support for young people on the Kickstart West Kent Scheme is being delivered by North Kent College.</p> <p>The scheme closed to new applications on 17 December 2021, although young people will continue to be referred to opportunities until 01 March 2022.</p>	Look to set up legacy initiatives during 2022
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 is now being made with updating the evidence base and developing a new plan. Progress has also 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 with plans to complete and occupy by Summer 2023. • Vantage Point, Snodland – construction completed and occupied. • Rochester Airfield – Local Development Order adopted and contractors now on site at Innovation Park Medway. 	Ongoing

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tonbridge Trade Park – construction nearing completion 	
	<p>Continue to support to LFSA Expansion and Hildenborough Embankment Scheme</p>	<p>The scheme to expand the Leigh Flood Storage Area is continuing to progress as planned, despite some delays. A key piece of work 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 during times of flood which would ultimately reduce flood risk to over 1,400 homes and businesses in Tonbridge and Hildenborough.</p> <p>There were essentially two key strands to this project before it could 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. In terms of planning permissions for the LFSA (from each of the three planning authorities), these were secured in January 2021. 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 with a public inquiry taking place in May 2021. In November 2021, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs approved the scheme, and works will commence in summer 2022 and be completed by autumn 2024.</p> <p>The Environment Agency is continuing to work with residents on the final design and is currently preparing the planning application for this aspect of the scheme. It is expected that a planning application will be submitted in early 2022.</p>	<p>Works commence during 2022</p>
	<p>Work with NIAB EMR on bringing forward proposals for East Malling Research Station</p>	<p>During 2019-2021, 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 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 is funding new facilities and research activity on the site.</p> <p>This funding, along with funds raised through the sale of part of the estate for housing development, has meant that the site is now being transformed into a state-of-the-art horticultural science destination.</p> <p>Having secured planning permission, work on the first phase started on site in early 2021.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

	Review strategic asset base (especially with regards to Tonbridge Town Centre)	The Borough Council has been exploring procurement options for engaging specialist advice to assist us in undertaking a review of our town centre assets and it is hoped the review will commence in the coming months	Ongoing
	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. Significant progress has been made over the past 12 months, with ground preparation works substantially completed and work commencing on the 7 new units (which have all been taken up). Such has been the demand for the premises at Panattoni Park that the completion date has now been brought forward to Summer 2023.	First tenant on site by mid-2022. Development completed by 2023.
	Support continued roll out of broadband infrastructure.	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. One of the key challenges is ensuring services are provided in the areas of 'market failure'. Having supported Kent County Council by promoting the Kent Broadband Top Up Voucher Scheme during 2020-21 (which helped to subsidise the cost of the installation) - https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/broadband/broadband-voucher-schemes/kent-broadband-top-up-voucher - the County Council is now working to bring forward 'Project Gigabit', which has set out the following targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial investment to provide gigabit capable connections to 80% of homes and businesses across the UK • The remaining 20% that remain outside the scope of commercial investment to be connected via new government-funded programmes. Building Digital UK (BDUK) has announced between £119-203 million to deliver gigabit-capable connections to parts of Kent and Medway that are not expected to benefit from telecom providers own upgrade programmes. It is estimated this funding	Ongoing

		will cover in the region of 122,000 properties across the county. Formal procurement will be commenced in May 2022, with contracted work starting in April 2023.	
--	--	--	--