

Economic Development Strategy – Action Plan

A) Retaining and Attracting Investment

		Action / Milestones	S / M / L	Resource	Lead	Partners
A1	Introduce the Council's new Business Customer Relationship Management system Local businesses will be targeted to receive support that enables them to grow. This will be done in partnership with others, including High Growth Kent, Manufacturing Advisory Services, UKTI, etc .	Overarching: 6,500 businesses categorised to assess growth potential / identify business lifecycle / export potential	Short	Existing MBC resource + partners	Coordinating Lead by MBC	Growth Accelerator Programme (BSK) High Growth Kent (KCC) UKTI MAS University of Greenwich (Enterprise Europe Network) Uni of Kent Business School Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
		a. 480 'deeper' appraisals	Short	SELEP Funding		
		b. 180 full diagnostic reviews of companies	Short - Medium	ERDF / ESF Funding		
		c. c.75 growth action plans to be put in place to work over medium to long term	Short - Medium			
A2	Work with Maidstone Medical Campus to ensure that the investment goes ahead, including investigating using direct council intervention (powers/Investment) if necessary.	Enter into direct discussions with site owner/agent to take forward each element of MMC including medical school, Neurovillage and medical technologies. Explore opportunity to attract the Regenerative Medicine Catapult.	Medium	Existing MBC staff	MBC	MMC Ltd KCC SELEP
		Investigate joint promotional activities with the owner and agent.	Short	Current resources, networking and		

				website		
		Consider barriers to delivering MMC and bid to SLGF.	Short	Existing MBC staff		
A3	Ensure that employment land allocated through the planning system is suitable for the needs of new and expanding employers and that planning policies are flexible enough to achieve the balance between realising potential growth opportunities and not sacrificing the environment which is in itself an asset.	Site allocation policies published	Short	Existing MBC staff	MBC	MBC KCC Business Community
		New site allocations made in the next draft of the Local Plan	Short	Existing MBC staff		
A4	Deliver and support business events focused on supporting existing business competitiveness and driving business growth	Development of a programme of 'finance ready' events with 1000 MD's and Senior Manager's attending 225 companies participating in finance ready programme Management Skills Workshops: 500 individuals attending workshops ICT – 200 companies improving use of and access to ICT eg using new websites as a driver for growth Development of supply chain networks (sector approach)	Medium	Existing MBC staff	MBC	BSK TSB Enterprise Europe Network
A5	Effectively engage with employers to raise awareness of	Undertake a baseline survey of the business support available to them including relevance and quality to	Short	Existing MBC	MBC	Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, the

	available programmes and support, increase take up and participation to improve business competitiveness.	highlight duplication and gaps.				Federation of Small Businesses, Kent Institute of Directors, Lenham Valley Business Association, South Maidstone Business Association, Marden Business Forum, the Network of Rural Business Forums, Visit Kent and Produced in Kent.
		Work with business support organisations to use this intelligence to inform the KMEP Innovation and Growth Statement.	Short			
		Strengthen Maidstone Economic Business Partnership to become a strong voice for businesses in Maidstone.	Short			
		Programme of business engagement to raise awareness of available programmes and support and to encourage a greater take up of apprenticeships. - No. Business Visits: 100	Medium			
		Regular e-newsletters (min 12 a year)	Short			
		Sector specific briefing notes	Short			
		New business information website	Short			
A6	Investigate a new master plan involving small scale format offices on land allocated for employment at Eclipse Business Park.	Support the landowner to identify a new vision for Eclipse Business Park Ensure new policies for Eclipse Business Park are flexible enough to achieve this.	Medium	Existing	Gallaghers	MBC

B) Stimulating More Entrepreneurship

		Action / Milestones	S / M / L	Resource	Lead	Partners
B1	Continue to provide funding for a business start-up programme.	Continue to deliver an enhanced programme of business support and explore innovative ways for local delivery with partners	Short	Existing MBC and bid for new funding	MBC	COC
		Work with others to coordinate the plethora of business support initiatives to remove duplication and fill gaps in provision	Medium	SELEP	SELEP and KMEP	MBC BSK KCC
B2	Progress the option of an Enterprise Hub solution for Maidstone.	Progress Mini Hub with aim of being open by August 2015. The Mini Hub will test proof of concept as the Council retains its ambition to create a full Hub in the medium term.	Short	Existing MBC and business rates pooling	MBC	BSK COC Centre for Micro Businesses Kent Foundation for Young Entrepreneurs Princes Trust University of Kent University of Greenwich
B3	Work with the County to ensure the roll out of high speed broadband across rural communities.	Work with KCC on ensuring Maidstone Businesses benefit from the extended roll out programme.	Short	Existing	KCC	MBC BT BDUK
		Encourage all new developments to provide the required infrastructure to enable fibre to all premises.	Medium			
B4	Investigate specific actions that the Council could undertake to support the creation of small businesses in	Capitalise on the enthusiasm shown by some parish councils and rural business networks to identify small businesses in rural areas.	Short	Existing and bids to the SELEP / ERDF / ESF	MBC	Parish Councils Centre for Micro Businesses Produced in

	rural areas.	Investigate the parish level interventions required to support the small businesses identified	Medium			Kent Made in Kent Rural Networks NFU TSB
		Identify specific interventions to support the land based sector	Short			
		Investigate the use of rural libraries and other community facilities to deliver business support activities in rural areas.	Medium			

C) Enhancing the Town Centre

		Action / Milestones	S / M / L	Resource	Lead	Partners
C1	To develop a vision for the town centre and translate this into a spatial land use plan for the future development of the town.	Agree with stakeholders a long term vision for the Town Centre	Short	Financial resource required for master planning and Engagement Plan c.£30k	MBC	Capital and Regional Solum
		Develop and deliver a set of initiatives to make this vision a reality.	Medium			
		Ensure planning policies support the vision and delivery of actions	Medium			
C2	Consider current office accommodation uses in the town centre and determine how best to ensure the development of fit for purpose prime office space for business.	Consider use of direct intervention including purchase of sites to ensure quality office offer.	Medium	Borrowing to resource purchases (considered alongside development appraisals) and private sector partners	MBC	KCC Private sector partners
		Monitor the situation with regards to Permitted Development Rights (PDR) and the loss of both primary and secondary office stock	Short			
		Ensure planning policies support the protection of the quality town centre office stock.	Medium			

C3	Consider how the public sector can work together to help stimulate investment in Maidstone town centre.	Explore options for the delivery of Phase 3 public realm works in Gabriels Hill, Earl Street and North End of Week Street including ensuring Planning Policy requires S106 contributions where appropriate.	Medium	Consider as part of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan including S106 contributions MCL Business Plan	MBC	KCC Leisure Industry
		Work with MCL to develop events and activities within Maidstone Town Centre to enhance the Town Centre offer.	Short			
		Consider direct intervention through the Council acting as an investment partner in key sites such as the Mall and Maidstone East	Medium	Consider as part of the Commercialisation Project	MBC	Capital and Regional Solum Regeneration

D) Meeting Skills Needs

		Action / Milestones	S / M / L	Resource	Lead	Partners
D1	Work closely with Mid Kent College and other relevant education and training providers to forge closer links with business to help ensure that the skills needs of employers are met.	Engage with local businesses to gauge their awareness of the existing training provision available to them and the relevance and quality.	Short	Existing	MBC	All training providers All businesses
		Undertake a baseline survey to determine the skills needs of our local businesses.	Short	Existing		
		Develop a comprehensive web based application incorporating the principles behind the big exchange, access to skills for young people, a business to business skills exchange portal and an	Medium	Transforming Local Government Fund (secured £100k) and ESF		

		ability to aggregate business training needs.		bid		
D2	Increase the number of businesses in Maidstone that take on apprenticeships.	Link with programme of business engagement see A5	Medium			
		Use social media, website, e-newsletters, editorial, case-studies and other to promote apprentice opportunities to businesses.	Short			
D3	Increase awareness of the sector growth opportunities in Maidstone to training providers so that they can gear their provision to meet the future needs of employers.	Provide regular briefing notes, information and newsletters to training providers to give them a wider understanding of the boroughs business composition and likely trends to enable them to gear provision accordingly.				
D4	Work with KCC to encourage greater take up of the 2-1-2 programme which addresses the education and training needs of school leavers qualified at below level 2.	Support KCC identify businesses willing to provide the work experience element of this project	Short	Existing resources	KCC	MBC, Education Business Partnership
D5	Support KIMS in their discussions with universities to expand the HE offer on the MMS site.	Establish working group Identify drivers for HE investment Any barriers Consider funding options	Medium	Unknown at this stage	KIMS	MBC, Canterbury Christchurch University
D6			Long	Unknown at this	MBC	UCA , KIMS,

	Support discussions between UCA and KIMS on looking to enhance the overall student experience for HE students at Maidstone Studios and at Maidstone Medical Campus.	Evolve the joint working group with KIMS to include UCA		stage		Maidstone Studios
D7	Work with UCA to further develop the business case for their proposed new facilities at Maidstone Studio.	Support the Studios bid to create a Media Village to SLGF	Long	Existing	Maidstone Studios	UCA

E) Improving the Infrastructure

		Action / Milestones	S / M / L	Resource	Lead	Partners
E1	Take forward the schemes for which LGF funding has been allocated.	Work with KCC and contribute to the Project Groups for Sustainable Access to Employment and Bridge Gyratory Bypass Project.	Short	SLGF Infrastructure Delivery Plan	KCC	MBC TMBC EA
		Work with partners within the project areas to increase ownership and funding opportunities.		Existing	MBC	
E2	Consider how to improve the train service to London.	Work with South Eastern to ensure the 2018 Thameslink from Maidstone East remains on-track, to deliver an extended peak period service to the City of London.	Medium	Existing	South Eastern Rail	MBC KCC Medway Valley Line Network Rail
		Work with the Medway Valley Line and South Eastern to ensure High Speed Service from Maidstone West continues.	Medium	Existing	KCC	

E3	Work closely with KCC and other stakeholders to agree the Integrated Transport Strategy	Deliver the transport proposals in the ITS.	Long	SLGF Infrastructure Delivery Plan Existing	KCC MBC	Developers
E4	Work closely with KCC to consider ways to increase the rate of broadband roll out across Maidstone borough, especially in rural areas.	Help identify areas where poor broadband provision is hindering the development of business to help inform the areas of focus for the extension programme to the BDUK funding.	Medium	Existing	KCC	BT Developers
		Help promote the uptake of upgraded services within areas of business / resident concentration to increase the potential coverage of the BDUK work.	Medium	Existing	KCC	BT Developers

Maidstone Borough Council – Partnership Engagement and Demonstrating Leadership

	Action / Milestones	S / M / L	Resource	Lead	Partners
To publicise the positive things that the council is doing that demonstrate it is pro economic growth.	Produce a Business Charter setting out the role of every Council service in supporting businesses. Promote the work of the Council through the media. e.g. Down's Mail	Short	Existing	Economic Development MBC	All Services in MBC

	supplement. Attend and present to business networking and business support organisations.				
To consider ways of effectively conveying to the Maidstone electorate the advantages that economic growth will bring.	Promote the benefits of growth through the media, case studies, press releases and direct to parishes.	Medium	Existing	MBC	Design South East
To consider what the Council can do to convey the message to investors that Maidstone is 'open for business and for investing in growth'.	Redesign the Locate in Maidstone website Hold awareness raising events in London with private sector partners Create new marketing material	Medium	Existing	MBC	Business networks
To examine ways in which more support can be given to applicants to increase the likelihood of a positive outcome.	Encourage pre-application advice With businesses Ensure Economic Development Officers attends pre-application s	Short	Existing	MBC	Businesses