

Economic development consultations (Tourism Groups) – Fri 28th March

<p>Employment & skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems finding suitably qualified staff • Perception of the skills gaps in the workforce • Links with local colleges, universities or job centres • <i>Other challenges, key issues or opportunities</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local attitude to work needs to change, expectations must be realistic • Link with Hadlow to develop food & drink/hospitality opportunities • Need consistent staff • Difficulty filling positions - transport & physical location could be issue • Gaps in sector skills, especially catering & management • Hadlow has lots of student workers – no issue filling catering roles • Jobs fairs/school engagement/open days should focus on catering gap and sell it as a good opportunity
<p>Tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging more tourists to the district • Providing more places for tourists to stay • Providing tourism advice & support for tourism businesses • Providing networking opportunities for tourism businesses & accommodation providers • <i>Other challenges, key issues or opportunities</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of district should be taken advantage of • Microsite for tourism – everything in one portal/database • Holistic approach with West Kent overview – overlook boundaries • Market holiday packages, message ‘local produce’ ‘historic houses’ ‘beautiful gardens’ • Join things up with Visit Kent • Limited accommodation an issue (catering for weddings/big parties) must identify availability • Plan boutique/alternative/luxury accommodation
<p>Support services for businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you need business support & advice? What areas of expertise are most important? • Are business loans sufficiently available? • What do you think the Council can do to help businesses in the district be more successful? • <i>Other challenges, key issues or opportunities</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding is a barrier – issues with business plans • Social media – digital marketing workshops • Better dissemination of information • One stop shop could work well • Promotion of West Kent Leader • Planning laws to back rural businesses • Need a voice for business • Culture of advocacy for business • LEP – guidance on local authorities
<p>Energy & sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can the Council do to help businesses use energy more carefully? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity needed – what is available – point of contact • Woodland & grassland management • SDC – what renewable energy is available • Biomass

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can the Council do to help businesses to adapt to the changing climate e.g. the impact of severe weather and flooding? • <i>Other challenges, key issues or opportunities</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food waste strategy needed – logistics chain • Sharing resources
<p>Places for growth & improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there areas or locations in the district that should be identified for growth or improvement? • <i>Other challenges, key issues or opportunities</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hotel in Edenbridge • Incubator space for food production
<p>Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobbying for improved rail transport • Including Swanley in the outer zone of TfL fare zone 6 • Improve Swanley train station • Improve Bat & Ball station • Improve roads/junctions that get very congested – specify or identify on the map • <i>Other challenges, key issues or opportunities</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport in rural locations • Expanding vintage bus • Seal needs attention • Parking • Park & ride – Westerham involved, local ownership & facilitation • Cycle routes need developing (see Camel Valley, Cornwall) • Car sharing – create an app?
<p>Making the district a good place to do business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting the district as a great place to set up a business • Making sure there is employment space to set up and expand a business – what premises’ are in short supply • Helping town centres to be more vibrant • <i>Other challenges, key issues or opportunities</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catering facilities • Marketing – window on Sevenoaks – ‘Simply Sevenoaks’ shopping and dining card • High street, high rates – keep it enticing • Co-operative with landlords to set up pop up shops • Business rates – discount for SME start ups • Hub – attracts people • Ludlow regeneration project – food hub & farmers market • No interface with estates – big opportunity
<p>Broadband</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What areas in our district need faster broadband • Helping rural areas have faster broadband • Helping areas who want faster broadband to find local solutions • <i>Other challenges, key issues or opportunities</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knatts Valley only 3/4 mb upload – big issue • Problem for rural businesses • Mobile coverage is poor • 40% tablet & mobile, 20% using at venue • Gigaclear – rural broadband • Strategic solutions for landowners • Affects price of house

