

Economic development consultations (Swanley & Westerham TC) – Weds 26th March

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| <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"> • Swanley Gateway to access job centre • Swanley Town Council looking at training for staff, work experience at Orchards & exploring TVDC links • Swanley benefits from good transport links & parking options • Transport links to Westerham limit staff • ‘Beyond Local’ – local companies creating apprenticeships, WTC supporting new businesses through free use of rooms • Westerham school children often go to schools outside the district |
| <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"> • Parking and places to stay in Westerham limit tourism • Tourist Info point not staffed in Westerham • Tourist Info point in Swanley provides services for Sevenoaks Visitors • Visitors to W’ham attracted to Chartwell and Quebec House • Not enough parking spaces for visitors in W’ham • Westerham Garage proposing to run a ‘boogie bus’ • Westerham Brewery intending to link up with other tourist attractions in the town. • More promotion of Westerham events via Twitter etc • More engagement from SDC to support Westerham tourism |
| <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"> • Database of businesses – cannot contact businesses/network without intelligence • Building relationships with businesses for Community Projects • Home-based working: are there any support groups available? |
| <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"> • Working Councils to lead by example and save money by taking control and reducing costs • Solar panels on the civic centre and library • Orchards wind turbine |

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| <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">• Westerham Town Council need better communication/co-ordination to tackle flooded homes |
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| <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"> • Empty industrial units and offices at Flyers Way & Westerham Trading Centre • Protected area 'Crown Building' opposite Westerham Industrial Estate • Swanley Anti-Social Behaviour • Aesthetics, roads & pavements at Park Road Industrial Estate |
| <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"> • Congestion in Westerham (London Rd and Croydon Rd up to A25) and Swanley (London Rd from M25). Clearing up Dartford tolls could ease congestion. • Heavy Goods Vehicles are a cause of congestion on A25, M25 closures also have a big impact on traffic flow • Suggested KCC make A25 20mph, more restrictions for Heavy Goods Vehicles • Extend parking on green space in W'ham town centre • Propose double level underground parking on the green in Westerham • Parking problems when Football is on King George's Field • Need more parking (W'ham)but not getting anywhere with SDC • Westerham provides 25% of SDC's parking fines revenue - this is indicative of a lack of spaces • Parking wardens in W'ham are rude and need training in customer service • Westerham Town Partnership want to extend parking into field on outskirts • Need funding but find SDC difficult to work with and council contractors charge expensive quotes. • Applying for funding is difficult from SDC. • A25 badly potholed. |
| <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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion in Oyster Fare Zone 6 • Westerham has good mix of parking and Farmers Market respects local traders, Swanley market very successful • Business rates too high – what can help people set up in units • More signposting to the help available • Small market town health checks to be co-ordinated |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Other challenges, key issues or opportunities</i> | |
| <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"> • Westerham Town Council is expecting broadband in March • Toys Hill & Crockham Hill good connection • Swanley problems with Vodaphone signal and broadband dropping out • Problems with Vodaphone signal in Westerham |