

DRAFT

**West Kent Partnership**

**West Kent Investment Strategy and Action Plan 2010-2015**

Draft 14 January 2010

## West Kent's Economic Position

West Kent provides a very attractive area in which to live and work and measured in terms of GVA per capita is generally more prosperous than other parts of Kent. Traditionally, the area's economic strengths and locational advantages close to London and the M25 has led the area to be regarded as the 'powerhouse' of the Kent economy.

There are a number of strong clusters of economic activity with growth potential and an entrepreneurial culture which has led to the creation of many successful new SMEs. Business and financial services are a strong employment sector for residents both within the West Kent economy and those working in the City of London bringing a boost to local incomes and spending. Tourism is a very important part of the West Kent economy with a combination of exceptional attractions - historic buildings, the North Downs and other impressive rural areas and landscapes, several market towns and many picturesque villages. Healthcare, distribution and logistics, print and publishing are also key sectors for the local economy.

In the past, business growth rates have been positive and the area has also benefited from relatively high levels of inward investment. West Kent has enjoyed low levels of worklessness, high levels of affluence, a high quality environment attractive to new business investment and a skilled and well-educated local labour force,

The West Kent Partnership commissioned CSES to produce an economic profile of the West Kent Economy to inform preparation of an Investment Strategy for the area. Its key conclusion is that the economy of West Kent has reached a crossroads and West Kent's traditional economic strengths are under threat. Overall economic growth in West Kent lags behind many other areas in the South East and West Kent's GVA per capita is only 74% of the South East average. Without positive and urgent intervention, the research concluded that West Kent's position will decline relative to other parts of Kent and to the South East Region as a whole.

On a range of key indicators, West Kent's economy has begun to display some serious weaknesses:

- Apparent affluence masks pockets of deprivation and whilst skills levels are generally high there is an increasing and substantial minority (20%) who don't possess even basic qualifications (NVQ level 1)
- Graduate retention is falling and more higher level skills are being lost to London through out-commuting

- Local businesses are reporting recruitment problems and a lack of skills within the labour force exacerbated by high local house prices which are driving younger employees to jobs in other areas where home ownership is more affordable
- Unemployment levels are rising more steeply than elsewhere in Kent, Medway or the UK, in response to the high proportion of West Kent's workforce employed in sectors that have been particularly hard-hit by the recession
- Economic activity rates in West Kent have fallen and are now lower than in Kent as a whole and the wider South East.
- A population which is ageing more rapidly than in the wider South East and UK with little prospect of a growing workforce in next 20 years and skills shortages
- A relative shortage of good quality sites and premises which potentially constrains West Kent's capacity to promote start-ups and existing local businesses
- Poor transport connectivity, particularly, north-south links and transport congestion at peak times on local routes such as the A21 and access to M25/M26
- The traditional rail connectivity advantage to London is being diminished by the introduction of the HS1 service from North Kent, Ashford and East Kent whereby commuter journey times are becoming comparable with those from West Kent. In addition the introduction of this new service has reduced the frequency of existing West Kent services to London.
- New planned investment taking place in the rest of Kent and the South East could threaten the area's natural attractions for businesses relocating to West Kent. Higher levels of infrastructure investment improving East Kent and North Thames Gateway connectivity to London and Europe are adding to the attractiveness of these areas for inward investment.
- An increasingly competitive property offer in many areas close to West Kent, especially for knowledge-based start-ups and high-profile industrial parks

### **Economic Profiling, Evidence Base and Consultation**

During 2009, CSES conducted desktop research by reference to existing relevant strategies and available economic data, conducted a survey of local businesses, held interviews with key stakeholders and partners and held a workshop in July and conference and consultation workshop in October. CSES were also commissioned to provide an assessment of future scenarios for West Kent and how well placed existing strategies are to tackle them.

The three scenarios defined by the West Kent Partnership were:

- Scenario 1 – no long term strategic economic development investment
- Scenario 2 – strategy to maintain West Kent's position relative to the rest of the South East and to other areas of Kent
- Scenario 3 – strategy to move West Kent forward and improve its position relative to the rest of the South East

The West Kent Partnership at a workshop in July 2009 endorsed Scenario 3 as the preferred option for West Kent. The consequences of adopting scenarios 1 or 2 were deemed unacceptable as it was agreed that the identified negative trends urgently need to be checked. The delivery of actions to achieve the objectives set out in Scenario 3 is dependent, however, on attracting support and external investment necessary to deliver economic improvement and increase local competitiveness. The West Kent Investment Strategy therefore sets out what investment will be needed to achieve such aims.

### West Kent's Investment Strategy

A proactive and strategic approach to future investment is now needed to support the West Kent economy. This will need to focus on exploiting West Kent's potential for indigenously-driven economic development via promotion of entrepreneurship and helping existing businesses to maximise their potential. In addition, there needs to be a focus on further strengthening of the skills base of the area, ensuring school leavers are best placed to enter the local job market and tackling those in most disadvantage including those with few or no qualifications. Financial and infrastructure investment is also required to maximise opportunities in the future by building on existing strengths and opportunities such as developing a higher added value tourism offer by investment in hotel stock, developing research and development potential around the new Pembury Hospital and maximising the inward investment offer.

Historically, limited financial resources have been available to West Kent to invest in its local economy. The area has not been regarded as a priority by those agencies and bodies at national and regional level who have control over public resources available for investment in regeneration and infrastructure development. It is fully recognised that the future investment needs in West Kent are unlikely to be as extensive as other areas with more structural economic problems, for example, the East Kent coastal towns. However, the key message from the research undertaken is that West Kent should now be regarded as an area where some highly targeted economic and infrastructure investment is both justified and needed. The successful Rural Development Programme for England Leader Programme in West Kent has demonstrated that West Kent can competently manage external investment in our own economy to achieve significant economic improvement in one of its key sectors.

Informed by the profiling study commissioned by The West Kent Partnership this Investment Strategy and Action Plan sets out what needs to be done locally to strengthen the economy and work towards the target suggested by the profiling work to achieve parity with the South East region on GVA per capita over a 10-15 year period. It is intended that this Strategy will underpin future discussions with funding agencies and will set out a case for future bids for external funding streams. Without such targeted investment, the ongoing health of the West Kent economy and local quality of life is at serious risk.

## Action Plan

An action plan for the period 2010-2015 appears below under 3 priority headings:

- **Develop entrepreneurship and businesses** - More active promotion of entrepreneurship and help for existing local businesses to maximise their competitiveness and growth and, in the medium-term, a drive to seek to attract appropriate inward investment
- **Develop labour force and skills base** - Greater intervention in the labour market to address skills shortages and other constraints on the capacity of the West Kent economy to develop involving a focus on developing and expanding the FE/HE provision which already exists in West Kent to meet both current and emerging skills demand
- **Develop connectivity** - Investment to improve connectivity within West Kent, in terms of road and rail transport, broadband, innovative and sector networking and support.

These priorities and the themes developed within them have been derived from the analysis of the situation and trends in West Kent and a review of existing strategies and scenarios. These priorities are not ranked. Each of the key targets within the priorities have equal status and are designed to:

- Build on West Kent's strengths and take advantage of new opportunities
- Address the weaknesses and possible future threats that West Kent faces

In order for the West Kent Partnership to intervene effectively through innovative and dedicated partnership working and affect some positive change, the capacity of the Partnership needs to be developed and links to the West Kent business community strengthened as a mechanism for mobilising support for key initiatives.

A key message from the research is that the main driver of economic development in West Kent is likely to be the area's indigenous potential for growth, underpinned by an effort to promote entrepreneurship, a major effort to strengthen West Kent's skills base and a need for investment in business infrastructure. Many of the identified themes and actions follow on from those economic development issues identified by the West Kent Partnership in its adopted Area Investment Framework which covered the period 2006-2009.

It needs to be recognised that there are very limited financial resources available to the West Kent Partnership to deliver priorities and a key to successful implementation of the strategy will therefore be to lever funding from other public and private sector sources. The global recession and escalating levels of public debt will constrain such public sector investment in the early years of this plan period but the opportunity must be taken to strongly engage with the private sector and ensure that West Kent is prepared and well placed to access such public sector funding as it becomes available.

If successfully pursued, the priorities and themes should contribute to improving West Kent's economic position by:

- Helping to create new businesses engaged in high added value activities (eg, through the network of specialized business incubators)
- Strengthening and improving the performance of the key sectors, particularly, rural and tourism, whose prospects will largely determine the outlook for the West Kent economy as a whole (eg, through new inward investment, improved connectivity and other measures)
- Linked to this, boosting productivity through the strengthening of the skills base and other measures (eg, promoting innovation, stronger FE/HE provision and developing high quality sites and premises)

## Priority 1. Develop entrepreneurship and businesses

### KEY TARGETS

- 1 **Network of business incubators and effective business support services in place across West Kent as a basis for developing a wider system of support for entrepreneurs**
- 2 **Identify, encapsulate and market West Kent offer to both existing businesses and potential inward investors**
- 3 **Business sites and premises opportunities identified/developed to accommodate key inward investment projects. Employment land identified for retention through the Local Development Frameworks to be retained in employment use. Affordable housing issues addressed.**

Ref	Key Action	Outcome	Timescale/lead partner
1.1	<b>Develop physical business incubator proposition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review existing business incubator provision in West Kent</li> <li>• Research business incubator models elsewhere, particularly private sector/social enterprise units</li> <li>• Research possible sites/partners to include approaching Skinners Academy and opportunities at WKC</li> <li>• Seek public/private sector funding and support</li> <li>• Commence programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce a costed programme for developing business incubator units across WK (ie, how many, where, size and type of accommodation and whether sector specific)</li> <li>• Funding obtained</li> <li>• Programme underway</li> </ul>	
1.2	<b>Develop virtual business incubator proposition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research models elsewhere</li> <li>• Research potential to develop Media Tree model</li> <li>• Link to networking and sector specific support in priority 3</li> <li>• Approach partners and identify funding needs</li> <li>• Commence programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design costed scheme to support homeworkers with mentoring, networks and meeting place</li> <li>• Partners secured</li> <li>• Programme underway</li> </ul>	
1.3	<b>Develop support for growing on businesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify businesses from those known to Innovation and Growth team but ineligible for their support</li> <li>• Approach partners/funders</li> <li>• Identify grow on space and link to incubator programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design costed programme to grow businesses on from micro-businesses</li> <li>• Funding obtained</li> <li>• Grow on space utilised</li> </ul>	

Ref	Key Action	Outcome	Timescale/lead partner
1.4	<p><b>Maximise business support provision/opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure new businesses have adequate sales/finance training and support</li> <li>• Ensure needs of West Kent identified and recognised for access to area specific Solutions for Business products</li> <li>• Map business support provision available to aid in signposting and identifying gaps in provision</li> <li>• Link West Kent businesses to SE Business Angel network</li> <li>• Develop funding proposals to meet business support needs</li> <li>• Develop sector specific support to create more higher value added businesses particularly in tourism sector working with the Heart of Kent (linked to networks in 7.3)</li> <li>• Investigate the feasibility of public sector partners reducing invoice payment times. Encourage members of the West Kent Partnership to sign up to the Prompt Payment Code</li> <li>• Local authorities to refresh Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with new Business Link provider Serco in May/June 2010.</li> <li>• Encourage use of the £1.8 million Leader grant funding to assist rural businesses.</li> <li>• Exploit resource of retired/semi-retired people with extensive business experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision in place</li> <li>• Needs recognised and met</li> <li>• Gaps addressed</li> <li>• Angels operating in WK</li> <li>• Funding obtained</li> <li>• Sector specific support identified and programme designed for delivery</li> <li>• WKP partners and other businesses signed up to Prompt payment code</li> <li>• MOUs refreshed</li> <li>• Programme fully utilised</li> <li>• Exit/follow on strategy in place</li> <li>• Individuals identified and utilised</li> </ul>	
2.1	<p><b>Identify, encapsulate and market West Kent offer to both existing businesses and potential inward investors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define WK offer</li> <li>• Network WKP website and WKP itself to all other networks/business support agencies operating in WK – use to provide overview of economic terrain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WK offer marketed</li> <li>• Site effectively networked</li> </ul>	

Ref	Key Action	Outcome	Timescale/lead partner
2.2	<p><b>Ensure the voice of West Kent is heard</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>issues and challenges facing the area are recognised and acknowledged at sub-regional, regional and national level and are included in economic growth and structural regeneration frameworks.</li> <li>Support Heart of Kent partnership in raising specific issues for Tourism businesses on the Regional and National agendas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Representation on KEB</li> <li>Close working with Chambers of commerce, business support organisations and other business groups</li> <li>Identify WK champions</li> <li>Close links with Heart of Kent to escalate up to Tourism South East and Visit Britain</li> </ul>	
3.1	<p><b>Review availability/opportunities for sites/premises</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate the adoption of policies in Development Plan Documents that safeguard existing employment land.</li> <li>identify a list of potential sites for inward investment</li> <li>Adopt a proactive approach with developers to bring forward schemes for key allocated employment sites across West Kent that meet the needs of local business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies adopted</li> <li>Locate in Kent/LA's produce list</li> <li>Develop schemes for identified sites</li> </ul>	
3.2	<p><b>Work with Maidstone and West Kent partners on developing Local Investment Plan linked to HCA Single Conversation area to include</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek to ensure suitable affordable housing provision is brought forward of a type and cost (for example, shared ownership and sub-market renting) to meet the needs of the local workforce unable to secure owner-occupation</li> <li>Commission research on staff recruitment/retention linked to lack of affordable housing</li> <li>Capitalise on TW/Tonbridge hub designation both for economic growth and transport links</li> <li>Explore opportunities related to Maidstone's designation as a growth area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan in place</li> <li>Suitable provision made as part of affordable housing offer at key residential sites.</li> <li>Research completed</li> <li>Opportunities identified and followed up</li> <li>HCA single conversation area in place which identifies opportunities</li> </ul>	

## 2. Develop labour force and skills base

### KEY TARGETS

4. Strengthen the Skills base in West Kent by increasing those with level 2+ and improving the workforce employability skills
5. Strengthen Higher Education presence and number of people studying for/achieving level 4/5 qualifications
6. Increase graduate progression into employment

Ref	Key Action	Outcome	Timescale/lead partner
4.1	<p><b>Address 'trade skills' deficiencies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Locate in Kent to identify skills needs of inward investors</li> <li>• Work with FE/HE partners to link employers and students and explore if WK model can be generated based on WKC programme and not duplicating contacts with employers</li> <li>• Support delivery bodies to promote take up of apprenticeships schemes and simplify offer to employers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs identified and links to WKC established</li> <li>• WK model in place if appropriate</li> <li>• Baseline across WK established</li> <li>• Take up monitored</li> </ul>	
4.2	<p><b>Address core skills deficiencies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• complete preliminary worklessness assessment in WK in support of analysis of Future Jobs Fund</li> <li>• Progress Future Jobs Fund programme and work with KCC to be at forefront of any similar programmes</li> <li>• Facilitate co-ordination of work experience placements for all WK students so that employers receive clear message and routes to engage</li> <li>• Link to providers of basic skills training for adults</li> <li>• Work with partners to support local education provision.</li> <li>• Continue to work with Local Children's Services Partnerships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KCC complete assessment</li> <li>• First round successfully completed</li> <li>• Co-ordinated programme in place</li> <li>• Provision details mapped and signposted</li> <li>• Represented on WK education forum</li> <li>• Through district representation</li> </ul>	

Ref	Key Action	Outcome	Timescale/lead partner
5.1	<p><b>Strengthen Higher education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market higher education provision available to indigenous population and to attract other UK and overseas students</li> <li>• Work with Pembury Hospital team to identify opportunities to develop as teaching hospital</li> <li>• Maintain dialogue with HE providers and encourage expansion of local HE offer to respond to emerging local business demand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WKC, Hadlow and Salomons offers consolidated and marketed</li> <li>• Dialogue established</li> <li>• Providers on appropriate task groups</li> </ul>	
6.1	<p><b>Nurture graduates into WK economy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider offering summer and vacation internships for graduates, helping graduates gain experience and also encouraging graduate retention in the area- possible potential for using graduates to conduct research during vacations.</li> <li>• Link to Young Chamber model operating in other parts of Kent</li> <li>• Map WKC and Hadlow under-graduate profile/postcodes</li> <li>• Raise graduate awareness of local work opportunities</li> <li>• Network students into local economy</li> <li>• Support development of Kent graduate portal being developed by Canterbury Christ Church</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme designed</li> <li>• Programme underway</li> <li>• Young Chamber in WK in place</li> <li>• WKC to deliver</li> <li>• Strategy developed</li> <li>• Linked to above strategy</li> <li>• Linked to above strategy</li> </ul>	

### 3. Develop Connectivity

#### KEY TARGETS

7. Provide support/added value to existing sector clusters
8. Transport infrastructure and broadband connectivity enhanced to support economic growth and sustainable transport promoted
9. Strengthen economic development function in West Kent.

Ref	Key Action	Outcome	Timescale/lead partner
7.1	<b>Link into existing sector networks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative sector - provide support/added value to help identify funding bids/pilot projects to develop further – eg Media Tree</li> <li>• Financial and business services</li> <li>• Healthcare</li> <li>• Retail</li> <li>• Transport and Distribution</li> <li>• Rural (see 7.2)</li> <li>• Tourism (see 7.3)</li> </ul>	Existing clusters supported	
7.2	<b>Develop the value of the rural economy which is the largest geographical part of West Kent</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on the existing rural economy by encouraging higher added value farm activity through innovation and diversification</li> <li>• Support the creation and growth of both new knowledge and tourism based business located in the rural areas</li> <li>• Develop initiatives arising from low carbon economy opportunities</li> <li>• Work with developers/farmers and local authorities to develop more rural business sites and increase conversion of redundant farm buildings for commercial use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing support of West Kent Leader Local Action Group</li> <li>• Exit and sustainability strategy developed (see 1.4)</li> </ul>	

Ref	Key Action	Outcome	Timescale/lead partner
7.3	<p><b>Develop relationships with leisure and tourism partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate the development of more higher value added businesses which complement the existing Heart of Kent Strategy for Tourism</li> <li>Increase the number of quality of quality graded tourism businesses to attract repeat and higher spending staying visitors</li> <li>Work with the Heart of Kent and use existing Hotel Needs Surveys for the WK area to support a funding quest for further hotel development</li> <li>Support the Heart of Kent in its development and marketing activities to develop and support tourism businesses in the WK area</li> <li>Via the Heart of Kent and its links with regional and national tourism organisations ensure that the view of tourism businesses in the WK area are represented at a strategic level (see 2.2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closer working with Heart of Kent as WK delivery vehicle to support, develop and market businesses within the tourism sector</li> </ul>	
8.1	<p><b>Sustainable and Community Transport</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the impact of traffic on the natural and historic environment of the main urban areas</li> <li>Improve commercial viability of operating buses to, from and within the urban centres by establishing quality bus partnerships, an integrated network of public transport services and through ticketing and adopting 'fastrack' principles on key urban bus routes</li> <li>Maintain existing community and voluntary transport options (Kent Karrier and Sevenoaks Minibus services for example) and identify new areas of poor accessibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cut congestion to reduce the number of air quality management areas (AQMA) on local roads in West Kent by 2015</li> <li>Quality bus partnerships (QBPs) established across WK</li> <li>Integrated bus network pilot scheme in place</li> <li>Pilot scheme assessed</li> <li>Fastrack in place</li> <li>Maintain existing levels of services</li> <li>As part of preparing the next LTP for Kent, identify areas of poor accessibility to key services in WK</li> <li>Rural bus subsidy/grant accessed</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce congestion hot spots in urban centres and on the main transport networks – especially during peak period</li> <li>• Lobby for improved and more reliable services for commuters into London from West Kent</li> <li>• Ensure optimum accessibility to the new hospital at Pembury</li> <li>• Ensure proper standards of highway maintenance to improve the appearance and amenity of West Kent's roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban traffic management and control (UTMC) in place for West Kent</li> <li>• Road networks operating more efficiently than 2010 benchmark using KCC monitoring</li> <li>• Bus priority measures in place</li> <li>• Implement Park and Ride to tackle congestions and poor air quality in appropriate town centres.</li> <li>• Improved rolling stock for commuter services</li> <li>• Re-establishment of Canon Street service via West Malling</li> <li>• Station platform lengthening schedule in place</li> <li>• Assessment made of ratio fast/slow trains</li> <li>• New timetable fast/slow ratio implemented</li> <li>• high quality service to be maintained from West Kent during reconstruction of London Bridge in 2012</li> <li>• Improvements to A228 Corridor including at Kent Street and at Colts Hill scheduled</li> <li>• A228 improved</li> <li>• Integrated public transport plan in place</li> <li>• Car parking allocations at acceptable levels</li> <li>• A more attractive environment to encourage businesses to come and invest in the area</li> </ul>	
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Ref	Key Action	Outcome	Timescale/lead partner
8.2	<p><b>Transport Infrastructure Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lobby the Highways Agency to carry out a study into the feasibility, cost and impacts of provision of east facing slips at Junction 5 of the M25/M26 to enable traffic approaching from the south to travel east of the M26 and M25</li> <li>• Improvements to A228 Corridor including at Kent Street and at Colts Hill</li> <li>• Construction of by-pass at Borough Green</li> <li>• Dualling of A21 between Tonbridge and Pembury</li> <li>• Maximise the benefits of the Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells designation as a regional hub</li> <li>• Work with The Department for Transport, Network Rail and the Train Operating Companies in the area to enhance opportunities for transport interchange at stations and increase the range of stations that can be accessed from stations in West Kent including access to Gatwick and Channel tunnel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commence Study</li> <li>• Scheme approved</li> <li>• Works commence</li> <li>• Works completed</li> <li>• Improvements scheduled</li> <li>• Works commence</li> <li>• Works completed</li> <li>• Planning consent obtained so in place when potential funding available 2014 onwards</li> <li>• Scheme approved</li> <li>• Works commence</li> <li>• Works completed</li> <li>• Schemes put forward for funding</li> <li>• Funding obtained</li> <li>• WKP views and interests reflected in the emerging Kent Route Utilisation Strategy</li> <li>• WKP view and interests fully offered and reflected in the setting up of the next Kent Integrated Franchise beyond 2013.</li> <li>• Lobby for improved connections and service from West Kent to Gatwick on the Tonbridge/Redhill line</li> <li>• Sufficient commuter parking at a range of WK</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek priority and funding for WK Transportation infrastructure improvements through the Regional Transport Board's London-Dover Corridor Study (part of the national programme of studies within the Delivering a Sustainable Transport System programme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved interchange for buses at stations in Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, West Malling</li> <li>Work with Network Rail to enhance the National Station Improvement Programme schemes at Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, Swanley and Sevenoaks</li> <li>Railway, Kent County Council, Highways Agency led proposals currently identified in adopted programmes to be fully reflected in the output of the DaSTS study.</li> </ul>	
<b>8.3</b>	<b>Improve broadband capability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>map existing provision to establish a base line</li> <li>Work proactively with the next Generation Fund to ensure that WK is at the forefront of new investment in broadband connectivity. High concentration of media businesses underpins argument for improved upload speeds in particular</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KCC data made available</li> <li>WK representations made for pilot project</li> <li>Pilot project secured</li> <li>High speed upload connectivity available to 95% of WK urban and rural businesses</li> </ul>	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Strengthen Economic Development Function</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WK ED group in place to deliver WKP strategy</li> <li>Strategy prioritised and work programme agreed, timescales and lead partners agreed</li> <li>Task groups established</li> <li>Profiling undertaken of similar SE local economies, particularly Surrey to learn from best practice</li> <li>Funding bids undertaken</li> <li>Funding secured</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>April 10</li> <li>June 10</li> </ul>