

This Appendix contains:

- **A complete set of the notes of visits to District, Borough and City Councils undertaken between November 2009 and October 2010**, prepared by the officers of the Regeneration and Economic Development Team who accompanied the visits. Notes are unabridged, and are the same versions as previously sent to Members after each visit.

Visit notes are presented in alphabetical order of District, to match the order in Appendix 1.

- **Extracts of Minutes of meetings of the Regeneration and Economic Development Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee** at which each visit was discussed (except the three most recent, for which this is the first POSC meeting since the visit)

For each District, the note of the visit is followed by the Minutes extract which relates to it.

To make this large document easier to follow, the pages for each District are labelled with the District name in the bottom corner

REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Regeneration and Economy – A District Perspective

Visit to Ashford Borough Council – 30th April 2010

Present (members)

Mark Dance, Chairman of Regeneration and Economic Development Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee (REDPOSC)

Ian Chittenden, Vice-Chairman of REDPOSC

Kit Smith, Chairman of Children, Families and Education Learning and Development POSC (CFEPOSC L&D)

Brian Critchley, Co-opted Parent Governor Member of CFEPOSC L&D

Elizabeth Tweed, Member of REDPOSC and local Ashford Member

Andrew Wickham, Deputy Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development, a Member of CFEPOSC L&D, also a local Ashford Member

Paul Clokie – Leader, Ashford Borough Council

In attendance (officers)

John Bunnett – Chief Executive, Ashford Borough Council

Judith Armitt – Managing Director, Ashford's Future

Richard Alderton – Head of Planning and Development, Ashford Borough Council

Tracey Kerly – Head of Housing, Ashford Borough Council

Andrew Osbourne – Economic Development Officer, Ashford Borough Council

Ian Lewis – Regeneration Officer, Kent County Council

Summary of Presentations

The visit started with a number of presentations from key officers from Ashford Borough Council and Ashford's Future. In summary:

Introduction to Ashford – John Bunnett, Chief Executive, Ashford Borough Council

John gave an overview from the LSP perspective and the 8 strategic priorities outlined in the Ashford Sustainable Communities Plan and illustrated how projects completed or underway are contributing to these priorities.

A number of key projects that have not progressed as hoped, such as the learning campus, commercial quarter, delivery of open space and health facilities but alternative methods for delivering these projects are being investigated.

The quality of design and the future maintenance of public realm are emerging issues. The need to create high quality public realm to make Ashford an attractive place to be needs to be balanced with future maintenance requirements. Development of acceptable maintenance standards also needs to be considered and addressed.

Ashford's Growth Agenda – Richard Alderton, Head of Planning and Development, Ashford Borough Council

Richard gave an outline of how the growth agenda in Ashford has developed in recent years. The growth potential for Ashford was determined between the County and Borough Councils rather than having a figure given by central government. To put the growth in perspective, the two major urban extensions to the south east and south west of the town are each the equivalent of a small town in their own right. A key success of the master-planning for this significant growth has been the consensus building that has taken place during all stages of the process. This has given the resultant master-planning processes much greater credibility and political unity in acceptance of the resultant plans.

The town centre is a key focus for growth, with development of office accommodation near to the railway station vital for the success of the wider town centre. The construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link has created a number of now vacant sites across the town centre, which all present opportunities for future development and improvement in the retail, culture and employment offer in the town.

Victoria Way is a key highway and public realm project that will unlock development south of the railway. However, the project is highlighting difficulties in relation to the agreement of maintenance boundaries and the specification of materials. There is a tension between the creation of high quality public realm and the cost of ongoing maintenance.

Update on the Ashford Learning Campus and Smartlink – Judith Armit, Managing Director of Ashford's Future

Judith gave an outline of the history of Ashford's Future partnership and the structure of the organisation. The funding for the partnership comes from central government with Ashford's Future Company providing programme management and liaison with the development industry. Ashford is one of the most advanced of the growth areas nationally with house-building momentum maintained throughout the recession.

Learning and skills are a key priority. There is little in Ashford that promotes progression to further and higher education. Education will underpin the attractiveness of Ashford as a place to do business and without the higher skill levels the benefits of the growth agenda will be diluted.

The loss of funding for the learning campus as a result of the LSC programme over commitment will delay the introduction of improved access to education. The Ashford's Future Learning Partnership is developing an approach that will continue work to deliver improved education provision. Work is underway to consider both the curriculum and premises for new learning facilities in the

town. The merger of South Kent College and West Kent College will be effective from the start of the next academic year in September 2010.

Smartlink is a bus based rapid transit system that will provide a reliable and frequent service. Smartlink is a key part of the transport system required to support the growth of Ashford and reduce dependency on the car. KCC, supported by Ashford's Future have undertaken the design and development of the business case which will be submitted to the Department for Transport by Summer 2010. Once approved, construction will start during 2011-12 and the first services will be in operation from late 2012.

Stanhope redevelopment and housing regeneration projects – Tracey Kerly, Head of Housing, Ashford Borough Council

Tracey outlined the importance of housing in the regeneration agenda. All district authorities are required to have a strategy for housing. The emerging Kent and Medway housing strategy will give a direction to co-ordination across the County.

The £200m regeneration of the Stanhope estate in South Ashford is a significant project, and is introducing significant improvements and new housing stock. The project is already improving the profile of the area and deprivation indices for the estate are also starting to move positively. Crime is also reducing. A construction skills academy has been established on the site providing the opportunity for residents to train and work within their community. As with the wider growth agenda, the community have been heavily involved in the master planning for the area.

Further significant projects include Bybrook, Joseph Hadlon Court but there also needs to be a continued emphasis on the smaller projects and rural housing.

Questions and Answers Session – Chaired by Cllr Paul Clokie, Leader, Ashford Borough Council

Olympics: Ashford has a range of facilities that could support the Olympics in 2012, notably the Julie Rose Stadium. Ashford Borough Council are promoting the borough as a team base for the Games. However, there are concerns that the High Speed services, that serve Stratford, will not be operating during the games to make sure that there is sufficient capacity between St Pancras and Stratford. Ashford Borough Council will lobby South Eastern trains to make sure that Ashford continues to be served during the Games.

Parks and green space: Members questioned the timing of provision of the parks. A large park (Discovery Park) is planned south of the town as part of the Chilmington Green development site. Green space will also be distributed within development sites.

Job Creation: Ashford will see the creation of 28,000 jobs by 2031. High Speed 1 is a real driver for change in terms of the favourable cost and much shorter journey times to central London. The Employment Land Review has identified sites in the Borough that can be developed to achieve the levels of job creation needed. A large relocation is needed to drive the momentum of development and job creation. A large number of jobs will be created as a result of population growth and the services needed by the new residents.

Utilities: The development will increase demand for utilities, especially electricity. EDF have identified that the power supply to the area will need to be reinforced, but the costs of this are significant – circa £17m

Adoption of Highways: A number of existing developments have seen long periods of time elapse between houses occupied and the highway adopted. Ashford BC are to consider the use of planning conditions that restrict further phases of development until the highway has been completed to the required standard.

Coach Tour

Following the presentations, members were taken on a coach tour of Ashford to see the projects and sites identified. They included:

- Stanhope PFI Project
- Junction 10
- Eureka Business Park
- Junction 9 and Drivers Roundabout
- Repton Park / Barracks Housing Development
- Shared Space Scheme and Elwick Place
- Victoria Way

Regeneration and learning and skills – Additional Report by Cllr Kit Smith CFEPOSC, L&D

For a town with a very ambitious growth agenda to 2031 with 33K new homes and 28K new jobs, a new trained and skilled workforce is essential if full sustainable regeneration is to take place.

The difference in local spend between an Ashford-based skilled and higher paid work force, and an unskilled or in travelling workforce, illustrates the vital importance of an educated, skilled and trained workforce.

28k new jobs with a skills' enhanced extra disposable income per year, spent locally of £10k per job, amounts to a huge £280M per year.

Such a large sum being spent locally by the new people of Ashford living in Ashford is a major outcome of regeneration and is sustainable. It takes no account of the extra disposable income of retrained existing people in Ashford.

The visit highlighted the potentially inadequate provision of progression to jobs via skills and training from South Kent College, now West Kent College and the virtual absence of Higher Education / university.

The loss of funding from LSC for the Ashford Learning Campus was a serious blow for the town and its regeneration aspirations. Members noted the marked difference of the vibrancy and income provided in Canterbury by their student footfall of 35K student from their universities, colleges and schools and the very low numbers apparent in Ashford.

If regeneration is going to work for Ashford the basic skills needs have to be readdressed and redressed. The Ashford's Future Learning Partnership, including West Kent College, Universities and KCC as well as by new partnerships have a big and important job. New and innovative ways to fund capital build will have to be found. The build up of proposals to KCC for soft loans is not sustainable.

In new stringent and difficult times the need for a new approach to suit new challenges for skills and training is required for Ashford and for much of East Kent, which has a considerable interdependency

KCC has new responsibilities for 16-19yr olds, to plan and commission provision of learning and skills for them. This new area of responsibility is a current focus of the CFEPOSC L&D, which is interviewing the principals of Hadlow, West Kent and Canterbury College at its meeting on 20th May and will report on FE provision especially for East Kent. The Growth Points of Ashford and Dover with their skills needs but under-provision of education and skills will no doubt be discussed and reported upon.

Closing Comments and Conclusions

Members recognised the importance of Ashford to Kent, summed up by the remark that it is a potential 'powerhouse for Kent'. The significant progress to date and the momentum behind the whole growth agenda must be maintained.

Development of the learning and skills provision is vital for the success of Ashford. The development of the education offer needs to be a priority with a need to maintain momentum despite the loss of LSC funding for the campus. Innovative ways of delivering an improved education offer need to be explored.

An emerging issue that does need further work is that of future maintenance requirements. There are three key issues here – firstly the specification of materials to make sure that significant financial liabilities are not created in the future. Secondly, the standard of future maintenance needs to be considered especially where new areas of high quality public realm are created. Thirdly, there also needs to be further discussion around maintenance boundaries and responsibilities, particularly between highway and public open space.

***Extract of Minutes of Regeneration and Economic Development POSC,
8 July 2010:***

**Regeneration and Economy - A District Perspective: Report back from
visit to Ashford on 30 April
(Item B1)**

1. Members made the following comments about what they had seen and heard in Ashford:-

- a) the amount of regeneration work going on in Ashford was impressive, and Ashford Future is working well;
- b) not enough emphasis had been placed on the future, eg the 1,200 new houses planned for North Ashford;
- c) the completion of Smartlink will be important for Ashford, as Park and Ride might not work well there;
- d) the quality of new build was good, and fits in well with existing developments. Quality of building is key; KCC should support and encourage quality development; and
- e) it would be helpful to know if more Eurostar train services are planned for Ashford, but this is not yet known. Ashford has a good future with Eurostar services if it chooses to embrace it.

REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Regeneration and Economy – A District Perspective

Visit to Canterbury City Council – 26 February 2010

PRESENT: Cllr John Gilbey (Leader, CCC), Michael Harrison (KCC Member for Whitstable), Mark Dance (Chairman of REDPOSC, KCC), Kit Smith (Chairman of CFE L&D POSC, KCC), Jean Law (REDPOSC and CCC Member for Seasalter), Martin Vye (REDPOSC and CCC Member for Barham Downs), Jeremy Kite, Mike Snelling, Andrew Wickham, Ian Chittenden, Ken Pugh, Peter Homewood.

IN ATTENDANCE: Colin Carmichael (Chief Executive, CCC), Ian Brown (Head of Regeneration and Economic Development, CCC), David Hughes (Coastal Regeneration Manager, KCC).

1. Summary of Meeting / Discussion

The report summarises the content and outcomes of the REDPOSC visit to Canterbury City Council on 26 February. It highlights those issues that REDPOSC members consider are priorities for future investment in the district. The Canterbury and Herne/Herne Bay urban areas provided the main focus of the discussion and visits.

2. Visits to Projects / Sites

REDPOSC members were given a summary of the opportunities and challenges facing the district, which include:

Opportunities	Challenges
Herne Bay town centre regeneration	Redevelopment of land adjoining Beach Street in different ownerships (including CCC) for mixed use (retail/residential) development. Town centre public realm needs refresh. Improving accessibility of Beach Street to waterfront regeneration opportunity.
Improving overall accessibility within the district	Congestion issues at Herne. Resolving issue of routing to Dover and Canterbury at Brenley Corner. Improving A2 slips at Wincheap and Bridge junctions to facilitate opening up of development opportunities at Wincheap and Little Barton Farm. Need more park and ride provision for city of Canterbury.

<p>Links to HS1 services will provide a boost to the local economy</p>	<p>How to accommodate extra traffic generation resulting from increased use of HS1. Need KCC's help to identify innovative transport solutions for Canterbury West and St Dunstons stations. Likely upward effect on local land values will raise issues about housing affordability.</p>
<p>Capitalising further on Canterbury's role as a major centre for HE and FE</p>	<p>Improving links between Canterbury's 3 HE establishments and business right across Kent. Making the most of the recent substantial investment in Canterbury's FE college, especially in view of KCC commissioning role in 2011-12. Facilitating closer working between Thanet, Canterbury and South Kent FE colleges and improving provision for local needs. Providing more serviced accommodation for UKC and Christ Church within the city. How to get the best for the East Kent knowledge economy out of the Innovation Centre.</p>

Members visited:

- Important projects and development opportunities within Canterbury city, including the new Marlowe theatre (due to be finished by September 2011) and recently completed projects including the 3,800 sqm Innovation Centre on the University of Kent campus (a joint venture funded by UKC, SEEDA and the East Kent Spatial Development Company), the refurbished and extended Canterbury College of Further Education, Christ Church University's new 12,000sqm Augustine House educational facility (which caters for 2,000 students daily). Canterbury's HE and FE establishments are significant employment generators not only for the city but also for east Kent. Members also visited the Canterbury West railway station, which is now served by HS1 services, and were told about the issues affecting the regeneration of the Wincheap area and the 20 hectare Little Barton Farm site, including access constraints onto and off the A2.
- Regeneration opportunities at Herne Bay, including the Central Development Area initiative adjacent to Beach Street (a mixed use development which will be driven by food retailing) and the proposals for the waterfront area (including the Pier and improving connectivity with the rest of the town centre). Members were also told about the

difficult traffic issues between Herne Bay and Canterbury, via the village of Herne.

- During the visit, Members were made aware of other difficult transport issues facing Canterbury, including the need to improve access to and from the A2, the importance of the A2 route to Dover and the constraints at Brenley Corner, and the need for additional park and ride facilities in the city (at Wincheap)

3. Conclusions

Members agreed with the CCC representatives that the priorities for Canterbury district were:

- (a) To investigate with KCC officers and Visit Kent the opportunities for cultural regeneration through collective marketing of assets such as the Marlowe Theatre and Turner Contemporary at Margate.
- (b) To explore with KCC and other east Kent districts the scope for joint working to maximise the regeneration and economic development opportunities for the area, including joint lobbying for greater transport investment.
- (c) To capitalise further on the pivotal role for Kent provided by the extensive HE / FE offer in Canterbury.

Additional conclusion from the CFE POSC:

- (d) To examine the best practice in Canterbury where:-
 - a strong employer base (Canterbury 4 Business)
 - a strong FE presence (Canterbury College)
 - the three Universities of Canterbury
 - and the three major private schoolsshould all contribute to a meaningful and smooth progression from education and skills through to jobs and regeneration.

This theme will be taken up by the CFE L&D POSC at its next meeting in May.

***Extract of Minutes of Regeneration and Economic Development POSC,
24 March 2010:***

**Regeneration and Economy - A District Perspective. Oral report back
from visit to Canterbury on 26 February
(Item B2)**

- 1) Members expressed their thanks to Canterbury City Council for the organisation of an excellent, full visit and the welcome the KCC party was given.
- 2) In discussion, Members made the following comments on what they had seen and heard in Canterbury and Herne Bay:-
 - a) Canterbury has obviously had much money spent on it, while Herne Bay has not, although Members were reassured that projects in Canterbury had received good cross-party support, and that investors were expressing confidence in Herne Bay;
 - b) Canterbury is a vibrant city, and its 30 – 40,000 student population brought life and economic benefits to the city, plus inevitably a few social problems;
 - c) the elements of education, skills, employment and regeneration came together well in Canterbury, but there was always scope to strengthen the links between these elements in Canterbury and in other towns;
 - d) local passion was evident, and character and tradition are everything in making a place successful;
 - e) one negative in Canterbury was in relation to the new Innovation Centre at the University of Canterbury, as the number of jobs generated were low when set to the financial investment;
 - f) another Member said the Innovation Centre seemed to be covering its costs, and had been selective about the businesses it had included. It is a fertile place for growth, is well placed and a worthwhile enterprise;
 - g) this was an excellent visit, but it is important to remember that regeneration is a long term task, and there is a long way to go;
 - h) Canterbury has much for other towns to envy – its Cathedral, Universities and private schools which attract money and cultural tourism. With all those advantages, it should be impressive;
 - i) Herne Bay will come good, like Whitstable, if it is marketed properly;

j) it had taken years to gain agreement to the development of Herne Bay, but the confidence was now there, and it was attracting investment; and

k) the Canterbury bypass had not been built with a view to the future, and new housing being built needs infrastructure to support it.

3) Mr Lynes referred to the East Kent Spatial Development Company which existed to administrate Government funding, and which he used to chair. It had had some involvement in the Innovation Centre, and he agreed that it was important to get the right balance between having enough tenants and the right tenants. Occupancy how exceed expectations and offered a good support network for growing businesses, although he would not wish to see it drain business and energy from other places.

REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Regeneration and Economy, Learning and Skills – A District Perspective

Visit to Dover District Council – 15 December 2009

PRESENT: Cllr Fred Scales (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic and Special Projects, DDC), Cllr Nigel Collor (Portfolio Holder for Access and Property Management, DDC, and KCC Member for Dover Town), Cllr Steve Manion (DDC Member for Eastry, and KCC Member for Dover North), Cllr Bryan Cope (KCC Member for Dover West), Cllr Mark Dance (Chairman of REDPOSC, KCC), Cllr Peter Homewood, Cllr Kit Smith (DDC Portfolio Holder for Skills Training and External Relations, KCC Member for Deal and Chairman of CFE L&D POSC).

IN ATTENDANCE: Nadeem Aziz (Chief Executive, DDC), Tim Ingleton (Head of Regeneration, DDC), Mike Dawson (Head of Development and Public Protection, DDC), David Robinson (Regeneration Manager, DDC), Amanda Lumley (Interim Programme Manager, Dover Pride Regeneration Partnership), David Hughes (Regeneration and Projects Manager, KCC).

1. Summary of Meeting / Discussion

This report summarises the content and outcomes of the REDPOSC visit to Dover District Council on 15 December. It highlights those issues that REDPOSC members consider are priorities for future investment in Dover. The focus of the discussion and visits was Dover urban area, including Whitfield.

The REDPOSC visit was accompanied by the Chairman of the CFE Learning and Development POSC. There are close links between education, learning and skills issues and regeneration and economic development, and this report also summarises the main outcomes of the visit from a learning and skills perspective.

2. Visits to Projects / Sites

KCC Members were given a summary of the range of opportunities and challenges facing Dover which include:

Opportunities	Challenges
Dover's status as a designated Growth Point and Regional Transport Hub	Providing over 10,000 homes in the district, with a large proportion at Whitfield. Ensuring that the benefits reach the more deprived areas of the town.
Connection to HS1	Making use of Dover's heritage assets. Resolving public transport issues and parking provision for commuters.
Proposed expansion of Dover's Western Docks (T2)	Managing the potential conflict between freight and leisure traffic. Capitalising on the stimulus provided by the cruise facilities for developing new

	customer care and hospitality skills. Port expansion at Calais. Privatisation. Related regeneration of waterfront.
Residential and commercial development at Whitfield	Infrastructure provision on WCBP. Coordinating and funding public services. Connectivity with the rest of Dover.
Building Schools for the Future programme	Achieving with other providers (such as SKC and other local schools) a wide range of sustainable and relevant opportunities for learners Developing strong links with opportunities for sport and leisure
Scope for providing access to FE and HE facilities outside Dover	Ensuring that training provision matches employment opportunities in the town 15% of the town's residents have no qualifications Just 22% of the local population have level 4 or higher

Members visited:

- Dover's waterfront, including the Sea Sports Centre, which opens at the end of December 2009. Members were told of Dover Harbour Board's port expansion proposals at the Western Docks (T2), which will be completed by 2016 and will create some 2,600 new jobs; and the plans for residential, leisure and commercial regeneration of the adjacent Wellington Dock area, which includes public realm improvements on the waterfront, a land bridge connecting with the rest of the town centre and a cable car which would connect the waterfront with Dover Castle.
- The Western Heights, including the Drop Redoubt fortification from where DDC officers could point to various regeneration proposals for the town centre, such as T2, Wellington Dock and the St James redevelopment led by Asda. Members were also told about the regeneration and skills development opportunities and challenges presented by the range of heritage assets on the Western Heights. Members were also told about the opportunities for developing sustainable construction skills at Connaught Barracks and Fort Burgoyne.
- The environmental improvements taking place around the Dover Priory station and Folkestone Road, which is a Dover Pride project led by KCC, and which will help to capitalise on the recent connection to HS1 services that place Dover just over an hour from London.
- The White Cliffs Business Park at Whitfield, in particular Phase 2 which contains some 50 hectares of land available for employment uses, but which requires additional infrastructure and utilities investment to enable sites to be brought forward quickly. Members were also told about the opportunities for coordinating education, leisure and health provision adjacent to WCBP linked to future housing

growth at Whitfield and to public transport provision with connections to the town centre.

3. Conclusions

Members agreed that the main regeneration and skills development priorities for Dover were:

- (a) To work with partners to support the development of T2 at Western Docks and the associated regeneration of the waterfront around the Wellington Dock. These in turn presented opportunities for new education and skills initiatives linked to the maritime sector, and addressing longstanding issues associated with the need to improve connectivity with other parts of the town through sustainable public transport solutions.
- (b) To assist the development of WCBP through innovative financing mechanisms to ensure the provision of infrastructure and utilities, and to support the district council in planning and securing future community infrastructure provision linked to housing growth at Whitfield and other areas in the district.
- (c) To assist the district council and its other Dover Pride partners to make strong case to government for additional transport investment in line with the district's growth area aspirations.
- (d) To make the most of the opportunities for Dover afforded by the Building Schools for the Future programme, especially at Whitfield, and to include quality provision for leisure and sport in future new development.
- (e) To make the most of the opportunities for Dover, and its 16-19 age group in particular, arising from KCC's new commissioning role for learning and training provision.

***Extract of Minutes of Regeneration and Economic Development POSC,
19 January 2010:***

**Regeneration and Economy - A District Perspective: Report Back from
visit to Dover on 15 December 2009 (oral)**

(Item B1)

- 1) Members who had taken part in the visit made an oral report.
- 2) The Chairman expressed his thanks to Dover District Council for the welcome they had given the KCC party and all the energy they had put into the arrangements for the visit.
- 3) Members made the following comments on what they had seen and heard:-
 - a) the cruise industry is currently performing well, and the momentum of this needs to be maintained;
 - b) effective links need to be made to maritime skills training, and the POSC should urge CFE to push for maritime vocational training, as CFE had previously promised to do;
 - c) the accessibility and ease of use of Dover harbour and marina were welcomed; and
 - d) Mr Smith emphasised the importance of the visit for Dover District Council, as it helped to put local issues into a strategic context.
- 4) General comments on the programme of district visits included:-
 - a) it is important that the programme of visits is sustainable as it allows Members to see a full picture at the end, and to identify where KCC can help by placing its resources. The programme is also vital in raising Members' awareness of issues at District level;
 - b) it is important to keep a link between learning and skills, jobs and future regeneration, and REDPOSC and CFEPOSC links were invaluable. Communities would also be a useful link, via the Regeneration Board;
 - c) the report back after the visit needs to be joined to the pre-visit briefing information provided by the District Council, so all information is kept together;
 - d) some conclusions from the visit might be aspirational; how should these be addressed at the end of the 12 month programme of visits? and

e) the high number of REDPOSC Members who were also District Leaders or Deputy Leaders was very helpful.

5) Miss Grayell announced the ongoing arrangements for future visits, and advised that a visit to Canterbury would take place on 26 February (pm), and a whole day visit to Dartford and Gravesham on 12 March (Dartford am, Gravesham pm). She said she hoped to arrange visits so that they were placed in a monthly pattern. *Subsequently arranged is a visit to Sevenoaks on 25 May (pm).*

6) RESOLVED that the oral report be noted, with thanks, and the comments made by Members on the arrangements for future visits, and the information arising from them, be borne in mind as the programme continues.

REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Regeneration and Economy – A District Perspective

Visits to Dartford and Gravesham Borough Councils – 12 March 2010

PRESENT: Cllr Jeremy Kite (Leader, DBC and KCC member for Dartford Rural), Cllr Michael Snelling (Leader, GBC and KCC member for Gravesham Rural), Cllr Tony Martin (Deputy Leader, DBC), Leslie Christie (KCC Member for Northfleet and Gravesend West), Penny Cole (KCC member for Dartford East), Cllr Harold Craske (GBC member and KCC Member for Northfleet and Gravesend West), Cllr John Cubitt (GBC lead member for Community Safety and Environment and KCC Member for Gravesham East), Richard Lees (KCC Member for Swanscombe and Greenhithe), Avtar Sandhu (KCC Member for Dartford North East), Mark Dance (Chairman of REDPOSC, KCC), Ian Chittenden (Vice-Chairman of REDPOSC, KCC), Peter Homewood, Jean Law, Ken Pugh, Kit Smith, William Richardson, Elizabeth Tweed, Martin Vye, Andrew Wickham.

IN ATTENDANCE: Graham Harris (Managing Director, DBC), Rob Scott (Regeneration Director, DBC), Andrew Parkinson (General Manager of Bluewater), Ann Komzolik (Director of Business Enterprise, NW Kent College), Glyn Thomson, (Chief Executive, GBC), Kevin Burbidge (Director, Business, GBC). Barbara Cooper (Director of Economic Development), Rob Hancock (Regeneration and Economy Manager, KCC).

4. Summary of Meeting / Discussion

This report summarises the content and outcomes of the REDPOSC visit to Dartford and Gravesham on 12th March 2010. It highlights those issues that REDPOSC members consider are future priorities for Dartford and Gravesham.

2. Visits to Projects / Sites

Members were taken on 2 bus tours with the morning session covering Dartford and the afternoon Gravesham.

a) Dartford

- The tour started in the Learning Shop at Bluewater where members were told that the learning shop is a successful operation involving Bluewater, Job Centre+ and North West Kent College. It has been operating for 10 years. 80% of the 50,000 visitors to the shop are from local postcode areas and it covers skills from construction to retail.
- The tour was undertaken aboard the new Fastrack service which has transported 3m passengers in its first year, with many of the passengers switching from car use. The bus took members past Ebbsfleet and Eastern Quarry and it was explained that Ebbsfleet will provide 10,000 new home and 25,000 jobs and has been designated a major “economic transformer” for the Thames Gateway. A major transport package costing £175m has been planned and will be funded by central government, Land Securities and development contributions. The bus

travelled around Ebbsfleet station and it was explained that the new HS1 service has reduced journey times into London from 50 minutes to just 17 minutes.

- The bus continued onto Ingress Park where members saw quality designed homes but there were concerns about the lack of community facilities.
- Crossways Business Park was next up and members were told that it was currently providing 5,000 jobs which will increase to 7,000 jobs in the future.
- The bus continued onto the new development at the Bridge. This is a new community facility that includes a primary school, social services, youth service, library, advice services all provided on a compact, single site. It was explained that the new facility could be a pilot for the delivery of multi services elsewhere. Members also heard about the Nucleus - a new facility which is currently home to Sustainable Construction Skills Academy (Suscon) and for the Thames Gateway's Institute for Sustainability.
- Members were then dropped at Dartford Town Centre. Members were told about the proposed Tesco development and then walked through to Central Park where they saw the renovation works which includes water park, new bridges, new bandstand and extensive replanting.
- The tour then continued to Princes Park – home of Dartford FC and home to many community clubs. The stadium was funded by DBC at a cost of £6.5m
- Leigh Academy was next. The Academy serves 1450 students aged 11-18 around 2 schools and 4 units. The Academy specialises in technology, sport and business and enterprise. The building includes plaza areas for individual learning. There are also periods of “vertical tutoring” where groups of 11-18 year olds participate in joint projects.
- The tour ended back at Bluewater. The centre's General Manager explained that Bluewater was the UK's number 1 stand alone centre. It attracts 28m guests a year, offers 330 retail brands and 50 restaurants. It was suggested that the soon-to-be opened Westfield Centre in Stratford does not provide a significant rival to Bluewater as market research shows their respective customers are likely to be from different catchments areas. There are 7,000 people working at the centre at any one time. It has recently launched a Bluewater apprenticeship scheme which provides 6 placements a year for 16-24 year olds. Bluewater has also announced plans for the development of an events venue by mid 2011 which will provide exhibitions, consumer experiences, conference facilities for 3,700 people and a 5000ft² gallery space.

b) Gravesham

A detailed tour guide and map was provided by Gravesham Borough Council to members of REDPOSC.

- The tour started by entering the urban area of Gravesend from the motorway and passing around the one way system and the Transport Quarter with its proposal

for an interchange for rail, bus, FASTRACK, taxi users and car parking. This gateway to the town will benefit from investment in the railway station and the High Speed 1 services and create pedestrian linkages into the commercial areas.

- Travelling past the new £25m PFI Community Hospital, a joint project for a range of health and social services care under one roof, the tour entered the Heritage Quarter and the site of the proposed new shopping, retail and housing development by Edinburgh House Estates Ltd. This provides a greatly enhanced town centre offer and public realm improvements with a planning decision expected shortly.
- Central to the Heritage Quarter is the High Street going down to the River Thames and its improvements including the KCC owned and restored Old Town Hall as well as the Pier and restaurant. There are proposals to add a pontoon to the river frontage at this point to promote a range of river traffic including river taxis.
- Next the tour followed the road along the river to the Canal Basin and its mixed use residential led redevelopment and popular and well designed housing.
- The tour continued with a view of the Siri Guru Nanak Darbar Gurwara – Sikh Temple currently in final stages of an £13m construction programme.
- Christian Fields was the next stop taking a look at the £8m remodelling of a post war 'Wates' housing estate. This includes demolition of 179 council and 30 owner occupied houses in poor condition. The three phase project will deliver 426 dwellings by 2014 and its success is being built upon extensive engagement with residents prior to designs and plans being set.
- The bus then returned northwards along the A2 travelling past the completed Ashenbank Management Scheme restoring the Cobham Park estate, the proposed A2 CycloPark and the Shorne Woods Countryside Park.
- Returning into west Gravesham from the A2 the tour passed the Springhead development currently being built and will deliver around a 1000 units once complete.
- Ebbsfleet International station, allowing users to commute to London from Gravesend in 24 minutes, lies to the west of the town is intended to become a major business development location linking to the domestic services at Northfleet station.
- Travelling on to Northfleet the tour passed the new North Kent Police Area Headquarters, a £25m project on former GBC land on Thames Way thereby freeing up a town centre site for redevelopment.
- The tour concluded by passing through the chalk escarpment to the industrial area of Northfleet and the proposed new mixed use development at Northfleet Embankment to be served by FASTRACK. This is a long term project expecting

to take 10 to 12 years to deliver in order to deal with the landholding and industrial reclamation issues. Northfleet Embankment East is an area of 20ha with a planned 1500 homes, 8000m² of non residential space, a new school and around 7ha of open space. Northfleet Embankment West is planned to have a mix of residential and employment uses. LaFarge and Kimberley Clark works will remain in Northfleet Central with the re-introduction of a rail freight facility to serve both companies. This area is also seen as a potential location for cruise ships.

- Finally, Gravesham wants to have a high profile during the Olympics and are planning a wide range of accommodation available for visitors and are working closely with KCC's 2012 team.

3. Conclusions

Members agreed that political vision and leadership had been key to the projects successfully delivered in Dartford and Gravesham. The relationships with KCC was strong with both members and officers having shared ambitions.

Members agreed that the main priorities for Kent Thameside were:

- (f) Dartford and KCC have worked extremely well together. A huge challenge remains in developing Ebbsfleet and Eastern Quarry as well as key town centre sites. Members wanted flexible support from KCC that reflected the principles of the vision whilst not being straitjacketed into national solutions.
- (g) Both Dartford and Gravesham see it as hugely important to knit growth with community; to value community and ensure that infrastructure is delivered early in order to help deliver a sense of community. Successful communities are based on more than new buildings – successful growth and regeneration will demand a balanced approach which includes existing communities, provision of open spaces and community facilities.
- (h) Integration of old and new communities was seen as important and new developments in north Kent must not be isolated in former quarry sites.
- (i) KCC needs to question whether it is doing enough around skills for sustainability
- (j) Whilst there are significant new housing developments in Gravesham (notably Northfleet Embankment and Springhead) the projects in Gravesham are focused on regenerating the existing town centre and its immediate areas southwards to the A2 corridor as well as ensuring that Ebbsfleet International becomes a key business hub.
- (k) Maintaining a very good relationship with Bluewater in respect of both training and skills and the future retail offer
- (l) Working together on the route and impact of a potential third Thames Crossing.

***Extract of Minutes of Regeneration and Economic Development POSC,
24 March 2010:***

Regeneration and Economy - A District Perspective. Oral report back from visits to Dartford and Gravesham on 12 March.

(Item B2)

Dartford – 12 March 2010, am

4) Members expressed their thanks to Mr Kite and his team at Dartford Borough Council for their organisation of an excellent pre-briefing pack and full tour.

5) In discussion, Members made the following comments on what they had seen and heard around Dartford:-

- a) it was important to continue with and finish Kent Thameside as an exemplar project, as 70% of the funding was in place;
- b) The Bridge project was a good example of a Total Place project, and Members supported having more of this sort of initiative;
- c) Leigh College of Technology was very impressive and a great success, having 10 times more applicants than it had places, excellent technology teaching, a good, disciplined work ethic and good teacher-pupil relationships; and
- d) Members were keen to see how projects at Eastern Quarry would be moved on, and how Dartford Central would develop in the future.

Gravesham – 12 March 2010, pm

6) Members expressed their thanks to Mr Snelling and his team at Gravesham Borough Council for their welcome and a very useful afternoon.

7) In discussion, Members made the following comments on what they had seen and heard around Gravesham:-

- a) the Riverside project was ambitious in aiming to attract cruise liners, but concern was expressed that success in this field might be a threat to Dover;
- b) Gravesend town centre worked well in terms of layout and pedestrian links, and this and its history gave it great potential to attract business and cultural tourism. Gravesend's Sikh Temple was very impressive and was the biggest in Europe;
- c) one Member expressed the view that the programme of visits

would not give Members a balanced view of the reality of each area and would show them just the good parts without the challenges and problem areas; and

- d) other Members disagreed and said it was important to give praise where it was due. Pre-visit briefing information provided by each host council set out negatives as well as positives, so Members were aware of the negatives and were prepared in advance to ask questions about them during the tour.

REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Regeneration and Economy – A District Perspective

Visit to Maidstone Borough Council – 1 October 2010

PRESENT: Cllr Chris Garland (Leader, MBC), Cllr Chittenden (MBC), Cllr Malcolm Greer (MBC), Mark Dance (Chairman of REDPOSC, KCC), Kit Smith (Chairman of CFE L&D POSC, KCC), Peter Homewood, Julie Rook, Gary Cooke, Jenny Whittle.

IN ATTENDANCE: Brian Morgan Assistant Director of Regeneration & Cultural Services, John Foster Regeneration & Economic Development Manager (MBC), Keith Grimley Economic Development Officer (MBC), Rob Hancock(Regeneration Projects Manager, KCC).

4. Summary of Meeting / Discussion

The report summarises the content and outcomes of the REDPOSC visit to Maidstone Borough Council on 1 October. It highlights those issues that REDPOSC Members consider are priorities for future investment in the Borough. The high street and town centre sites provided the main focus of the discussion and site visits.

5. Visits to Projects / Sites

REDPOSC Members were given a summary of the opportunities and challenges facing the Borough via a presentation which included:

Opportunities	Challenges
County Town and Growth Point	Population to grow to largest in Kent by 2011
Town Centre Largest shopping centre in Kent and in Top 10 in South East Largest office market	Tension between town centre policy for new development and issues of congestion and air quality. Stimulating office redevelopment and regeneration of poorly performing sites. Maintain quality of environment and public realm.
Transport interchanges at County Square and Riverside/Maidstone West. Proposed cycling/walking route along Medway River	Ongoing congestion and through flow linked to expected population growth Need to improve journey times and frequency to London by rail.
Growth in night time economy as largest in S East worth £75m pa	Diversification of night time economy offer.

Supports 1500 jobs Award winning management in place In UK Top 20 places to have a night out	Tackling perception that it is unsafe.
Economic hub and driver for Kent Key sectors are: Financial and business services, Public sector, Retail and construction with a growing media/creative sector Locate in Kent 2010 Perception study – most preferred location in the county	Need to rebalance low skilled, low wage local economy. Need to reduce out commuting offering residents high skilled well paid jobs in knowledge sectors locally.
Building on the success of good schools Refurbishment of Mid Kent College New Senacre Vocational Skills Studio	Relocation of University for the Creative Arts Need to expand HE presence in Maidstone

Members visited:

Eye Hospital

Enabling development ensured that affordable element could be provided in this impressive conversion of a Listed Building into accommodation. The quality of the design and finish was noted. The successful and ongoing re-use of the neighbouring Trinity Church building was also noted.

High Street

Traffic flow and public realm works due to start and complete in 2011. Offsetting the carriageways will allow for a wider pedestrian area on the southern side. MBC identified the successful collaborative working with KCC Highways and the £0.6m KCC contribution to the scheme.

County Square

Potential and significant opportunity to include the railway station frontage and land opposite County Hall to create transport interchange and redevelop adjacent land and buildings. Viability dependent upon commercial need as well as scale and massing of the buildings.

Fremfins / Week Street

Successful new Fremfins redevelopment of former brewery site which included use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers by the Borough in the land assembly process. Significant opportunities in Week Street remain, namely empty shop units and the old Army and Navy site in particular. Tesco Metro to open shortly.

Lock Meadow

Residential development fronting on to the river but with range of other non-residential uses such as warehousing and DIY stores. Permeability not as good as was hoped.

It was felt that the town does not benefit as well as it could have from the opportunities presented by the River Medway. However there are plans to connect Teston Country Park to the west with the town centre and the Riverside area via a series of walking, riding and cycling paths along the river bank – subject to funding for a missing link of tow path.

Riverside

Former brownfield site owned by the Borough redeveloped for housing and leisure uses. The location of Maidstone West train station and connections to Maidstone East across the river provide an opportunity for a Transport Interchange here too. Connection to High Speed 1 could be possible via Maidstone West. However, it was also felt important not to lose sight of the usefulness of Maidstone East and its connections to Central and South London

Wren's Cross / Upper Stone Street

Significant area of deprivation and urban decay leading out of the town to the south. Site of proposed Wren's Cross redevelopment. Programme of work under development to improve the environment and public realm. Close co-operation with KCC as Highway Authority and also as landowner for some key parcels of land.

Eclipse Park

Large Grade 'A' development site near Junction 7 of M20 currently with office block development and anchor tenant Towergate Insurance. One of the key sites to attract higher paid employment. Also site of one off Maidstone three successful park and ride schemes which had financial support from KCC and MBC.

6. Conclusions

Members agreed with the MBC representatives that the priorities for Maidstone Borough were:

- (d) **Neighbourhood regeneration** e.g. Parkwood, and bring forward **sites for regeneration** either owned by MBC or assembled – using CPO powers if required
- (e) Dealing with the challenge of **remaining as an economic hub** and centre of wealth creation for the county.

- (f) **New Unique Selling Points and a promotional strategy** required as the town is now mature town with good retail/leisure offer and a renewed focus upon maximising its full potential as an economic hub (drawing upon the example of local and national growth areas including Ashford).
- (g) Ensure **LDF process** is completed as soon as possible.
- (h) **Transport infrastructure** – minimising congestion, establishing transport interchanges and access to HS1 rail connection to London
- (i) Continue to improve educational standards and skill levels - in particular attract **further HE presence and investment**.
- (j) Low wage levels and wage levels in new jobs to be addressed
- (k) Improve the urban fabric through sympathetic development and **public realm work**
- (l) Use the LDF process to highlight sites where market forces alone are insufficient to create regeneration ie Ashford Rd, Sittingbourne rd, St Peter St, Zeneca site at Yalding, Maidstone East, Springfield and areas of socially rented housing
- (m) **Focus upon quality**, above all sustainability in terms of construction, transport, design.

Rob Hancock

Regeneration Projects Manager
Regeneration & Economy Division
October 2010

Visit to Maidstone Borough Council – 1 October 2010

Supplementary report by Chairman of CFE L&D POSC

Maidstone was the last district visited by the REDPOSC and was remarkable for the open, frank and constructive debate held in the bus on a wet day. The maturing County Town has an excellent retail product and is the first choice for inward investment.

Concerns were expressed however for the future development and growth of the borough. It was felt that its values and unique selling points (USPs) of market town, county town, retail offer and investment draw were being tested and may not be sufficient to sustain Maidstone's future economic and social position.

New opportunities and USPs were being sought.

New skills for new jobs was one of the keys. The value of local skills for sustainable regeneration was aptly demonstrated by a company choosing to locate in Maidstone due to London access, a pleasant place for employees to live with a good night economy and a known skills force. In this case 300 skilled reinsurance workers provide an additional discretionary local spend to the area of approximately £3m per year.

The local economy is supported by an active group of eight business organisations, providing vital mutual aid and an ambassadorial function to potential incoming investors.

Maidstone is well served by good schools, Mid Kent FE College, Senacre Vocational Skills Studio and by the University of the Creative Arts but it was noted that there are contrasting educational attainments especially at KS4 within the more deprived areas.

There was much debate of the value of new housing for the borough from an economics view point. Some Kent growth points have chosen to aggressively build more houses. Their aim is not to build homes just for the sake of it but homes for local enskilled people who work, live and especially spend locally to provide vital discretionally spend. This in turn provides economic churn and sustainable regeneration. This is just one view and the debate will continue.

If skills and qualifications are so important in a new growth regime the question has to be raised as to how provide them and what are the new skills. In all districts the REDPOSC has visited, skills have been at the top or near it in the order of drivers for economic, social and environmental regeneration. The Members have however neither seen a skills audit nor a single skills plan that works effectively. In an ideal world schools and colleges should be planning and providing a curriculum that looked with focus on the future needs.

Maidstone, like all the Kent Districts, provided all Members with real insight at ground level of the challenges for regeneration.

Kit Smith 5/10/10
Chairman CFE L&D POSC

REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Regeneration and Economy – A District Perspective

Visit to Sevenoaks District Council – 25 May 2010

PRESENT: Mark Dance (Chairman of REDPOSC & KCC Member for Whitstable), Julie Rook (Chief Whip & KCC Member for Deal), Jean Law (REDPOSC Member & KCC Member for Herne Bay), Kit Smith (REDPOSC Member, Chairman of CFE L&D POSC & KCC Member for Deal), Paul Myers (CFE L&D POSC – Parent Governor Representative),

IN ATTENDANCE: Peter Fleming (Leader, SDC), Robin Hales (Chief Executive, SDC), Kristen Paterson (Deputy Chief Executive and Community and Planning Services Director, SDC), Dr Pav Ramewal (Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Resources Director, SDC), Carol Clarke (Economic & Sustainable Development, SDC and District Ward Member for Ash), Jill Davison (Economic & Sustainable Development, SDC), Paul Campion (Development Contribution Manager, Regeneration and Economy, KCC).

David Brazier (Deputy Cabinet Member for EH&W & KCC Member for Sevenoaks North East), Clive Bruce (District Ward Member for Ash), and Alan Pett (District Ward Member for Ash) joined the group at New Ash Green specifically for the tour of the shopping centre.

5. Summary of Meeting / Discussion

This report summarises the content and outcomes of the REDPOSC visit to Sevenoaks District Council on 25 May 2010. It highlights those issues that REDPOSC members consider are future priorities for the district. Swanley and New Ash Green provided the main focus for the visit.

Appended is a supplementary report by Mr K Smith, Chairman of CFE L&D POSC.

2. Visits to Projects / Sites

Members were taken on a bus tour which concentrated on the northern half of the district and included the following:-

M25/M26/M20

- Although the three motorways provide easy access to Heathrow, Gatwick, Ebbsfleet and Ashford they act as physical barriers dividing the district into sub areas.
- The high volume of traffic creates pollution issues – Air Quality Management Areas adopted December 2008.

Fort Halstead

- Ministry of Defence research and development site comprising approximately 121 hectares (300 acres) which SDC believe has been sold to Hines UK Ltd, a privately owned property company which is part of the Hines group of companies.
- Important employment site located in green belt.
- Hines propose to build up to 1,000 dwellings.

- Site not required to by district to meet its housing numbers.
- Site is isolated in terms of community facilities and services.
- Potential highway issues as only one existing access.

Swanley Town Centre And Surrounding Urban Area

- The main issue is the retail offer and although the town benefits from an ASDA superstore the 1970's shopping centre opposite is looking tired and in need of regeneration.
- Proposals for a mixed use redevelopment (retail and residential) have stalled.
- The Planning for Real Community Consultation (July 2007) indicated a desire for quality and a variety of shops, retention of the market, night-time economy, residential opportunities, job centre, retention of health centre, overall design/vision and links to other areas/opportunities.
- The nearby library acts as a community hub/one stop shop providing services such as, café/meeting place, adult education including Skills Plus, SDC contact and information centre including council tax payments and benefits surgery and tourist information centre. A Job Centre and Citizens Advice Bureau nearby would be beneficial.
- Swanley is an area of deprivation and the ward of St Mary's is within the worst 20% nationally. It also has an unemployment rate of 5.6%, which is 1.5% higher than the average for Great Britain.
- Gypsies and travellers form the largest ethnic minority group in the district.
- Significant numbers of people with Gypsy and traveller origin now live in two wards within the area.
- Previously, some of these areas were 'no go areas' even for the police.
- Work undertaken by West Kent Housing and the local police. who now have an operational base in Swanley, which is focussing on people and not just buildings has resolved many issues.

Former Déjà Vu Night Club Site & Land To The North

- Allocated as a residential development site but part/all has remained vacant for some time.
- Located within Air Quality Management Area.

Brands Hatch Race Circuit, West Kingsdown

- Hosts international, national and local events including the World Superbikes, attracting over 100,000 spectators, the British Touring Car Championship and many more.
- Noise Management plan agreed with the owners, Motorsport Vision in 2008.

Barnfield Park Gypsy Site, Ash

- Largest public Gypsy site in Kent.
- Owned and managed by KCC, considerable rubbish littering the long driveway from the public highway into the heart of the site.
- Previously a community in isolation. However, work undertaken by the local primary school and others over many years has helped parents and children, who are now parents in their own right, integrate and which has delivered

positive results for all concerned. Again an example of investment in people and not just buildings.

New Ash Green Shopping Centre

David Brazier (Deputy Cabinet Member for EH&W & KCC Member for Sevenoaks North East), Clive Bruce (District Ward Member for Ash), and Alan Pett (District Ward Member Ash) joined the tour specifically for the visit to the shopping centre.

- A new town set in the countryside developed in phases since 1967.
- A mixture of social and private housing, including two residential homes, capable of supporting individuals from the 'cradle to the grave' developed in neighbourhoods (24 in total providing approximately 2,350 dwellings with a population probably in the region of 5,000 – 5,500 people).
- Each neighbourhood has its own resident's committee, responsible for the external painting of every dwelling, maintenance of hardlands (footpaths, main drains, private roads) and greenlands for which an annual residents fee is payable.
- The Village Association are responsible for the common areas belonging to the village including greenlands, street lighting, hardlands (footpaths and main drains), for which an annual Village Association fee is payable.
- The village is well served by local facilities, which include a primary school, school for those with severe learning and physical difficulties, sports field and pavilion, youth centre, library, doctors surgery, health centre, private dental practice, two banks, retail units, Indian restaurant and take away outlets, two pubs and commercial offices.
- The shopping centre has deteriorated, it is in disrepair and requires regenerating. It is poorly designed and inward facing exposing the rear service areas and car parks to main pedestrian routes between residential areas and the majority of the community facilities.
- The centre is in three ownerships, the Co-Op and two offshore investment companies.
- SDC persuaded the Co-Op to occupy the supermarket when it became vacant and actively facilitated a coordinated approach by the three landowners resulting in a public consultation and initial design concepts. Unfortunately the landowners have not progressed matters further since September 2008.
- An Environmental Visual Audit has been undertaken and some limited works have been poorly executed. SDC are taking enforcement action against the managing agent.
- SDC believe they have done all they can to regenerate the centre and now need the support of a larger organisation to progress matters further. SDC feel that compulsory purchase is the way forward and believe KCC could assist.
- SDC indicated that they were aware of a financial backer who may be willing to become involved.

Kemsing & Seal

- 93% of the district is rural and isolated with poor public transport therefore a car is essential to access the larger towns and services. This creates issues for the elderly and children of school age in general but more specifically it prevents

them attending after school clubs unless they can make alternative transport arrangements.

Bat & Ball Junction, Sevenoaks

- Improvements works have been undertaken by Kent Highways and KCC and SDC are considering schemes to further improve traffic flow.
- The area, together with Sevenoaks High Street, Seal High Street and Riverhead remain Air Quality Management Areas.

4. Conclusions

Members agree that the main regeneration and economy priorities for the Sevenoaks District are outlined below together with the proposed actions:-

Fort Halstead

Continue discussions with SDC to agree a joint approach for the delivery of on and off site service provision, to ensure the delivery of a sustainable community, in case the owners secure approval to their proposals through the local development process or a successful planning application.

Swanley Town Centre

Explore with KCC officers the options available to secure regeneration of the shopping centre with a view to agreeing a joint KCC/SDC approach.

Barnfield Park

Explore with KCC officers opportunities for continued integration.
Explore options to encourage the residents to take responsibility for their own actions and avoid recurring issues ie fly tipping.

New Ash Green Shopping Centre

Explore with KCC officers the options available to secure regeneration of the shopping centre with a view to agreeing a joint KCC/SDC approach.

Visit to Sevenoaks District Council – 25 May 2010

Supplementary report from Kit Smith Chairman of CFE L&D POSC

Members noted that in the District of Sevenoaks:-

1. A surprisingly high proportion of the population with no qualifications at 12.8% and yet higher than average of NVQ4 + qualifications at 33.4%
2. GCSE achievement of 5 grades is nearly half the average for Kent
3. There is neither Further Education nor Grammar schooling in the District and travel time and cost to students is a problem.
4. There is a much respected Independent School in the District.
5. Access generally is a major problem for the District

There are interesting contrasts in the District which are wider than in the other districts visited so far.

House prices are the highest in Kent yet there are major deprived areas. Education and qualification attainment levels are highly contrasting. There are big gaps between urban and rural and especially within the rural areas.

Sevenoaks School highlights the issues around independent Schools in Kent. We have seen on the visits Districts with strong independent schools presence yet have no analysis of this sector of education.

1. The sector in Kent claims that 18% of full time students of 16-19 are in the independent schools, and 9% for all age groups
2. They claim a higher attainment level than equivalent state education
3. Parental funding for this chosen education route comes from a broad band of income levels with some families prepared to make substantial sacrifices for their children's' education.
4. This rapporteur cannot find any report within KCC on the impact and value of this sector.

At the time of the visit and before the general election it was noted that the Leader of Sevenoaks was contemplating budget reductions around 40% within 4 years. At this level of certain reorganisation, rationalisation and restructuring, education, skills and qualification being a non-statutory function of District will probably suffer.

This can not just be a problem for Sevenoaks but Kent wide and has to be viewed in the light of new government reviews.

***Extract of Minutes of Regeneration and Economic Development POSC,
8 July 2010:***

**Regeneration and Economy - A District Perspective: Report back from
visit to Sevenoaks on 25 May (Oral)**
(Item B1)

2. Members made the following comments about what they had seen and heard in Sevenoaks:-

- a) the extremes between the standards of living evident in various parts of Sevenoaks district was surprising and eye-opening. The different areas each had very different sets of issues;
- b) the difficulties in addressing the issues around New Ash Green was of significant concern. It was once an award-winning development. Some parts of the development had apparently been newly painted before the party visited;
- c) Members discussed the possible options for improving the New Ash Green site. Compulsory purchase would be difficult as the site was owned by three different parties, but the potential commercial value of the site could be used to encourage the owners to improve it; and
- d) the neatness of the well-run residential area of the Barnfield gypsy site was spoilt by the rubbish and waste metal dumped on the approach road. This is a fire hazard next to fields of dry grass and should be cleared up by the KCC, although it was acknowledged that this area had been cleared previously, at some expense, and the benefit had been temporary.

REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Regeneration and Economy – A District Perspective

Visit to Shepway District Council – 1st September 2010

Present (members)

Mark Dance, Chairman of Regeneration and Economic Development Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee (REDPOSC)

Kit Smith, Chairman of Children, Families and Education Learning and Development POSC (CFEPOSC L&D)

Keith Ferrin

Ken Pugh

Andrew Wickham – KCC Deputy Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development

Susan Carey – KCC Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance and Chair of Shepway District Council

Tim Prater – KCC Member for Folkestone West and Shepway Member for Folkestone Cheriton

Roland Tolputt – KCC Member for Folkestone South

Cllr Robert Bliss – Leader of Shepway District Council

Cllr. Hugh Barker – Shepway Cabinet Member for Planning and Community Safety

Cllr. Malcolm Dearden – Shepway Cabinet Member for Economic Development

In attendance (officers)

Alistair Stewart – Chief Executive

David Shore – Planning Policy and Economic Development Manager

Chris Lewis – Head of Planning Services

Jeremy Whittaker - Regeneration and Economic Development Manager

Summary of Presentation

Dave Shore gave an overview of economic development, regeneration and the local development framework progress in Shepway.

Shepway has a number of different character areas - the urban areas of Folkestone and Hythe, Romney Marsh and the North Downs. Each area has its own particular needs and the approach needs to be flexible to cater for their different demands. Much of the Borough is covered by local, national and international designations such as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Site of Special Scientific interest (SSSI).

In terms of population, there are similar contrasts. There are relatively wealthy areas as well as areas suffering high levels of deprivation such as Folkestone, Lydd and Romney Marsh. However, the benefits of continued investment are beginning to bear fruit in terms of increasing educational attainment.

There are a small number of significant employers (Saga, Eurotunnel, Dungeness Nuclear Power stations) in the district, but typically most employment comes from small/medium firms.

In recent years, there have been a number of major projects that have had a real impact in the district. They include:

High Speed Rail Services – This new service puts Folkestone within 1 hour of London. The effect of this is already being felt through increased interest in residential property. Shepway anticipate that the effect of the services will have an increasing effect on the development of strategies for the district over time.

Folkestone Creative Quarter – Project is being led by the Creative Foundation put in place by Roger de Haan. This has bought property, renovated it and leased with favourable terms to artists. The Quarter also houses the Cube (KCC adult education facility) and the Quarterhouse (an arts and business centre). This project is a major transformational project for Folkestone. Linked to this is the Folkestone Triennial, an arts festival first held in 2008 with the next one taking place in 2011.

Folkestone town centre – A new retail development was opened in 2007, providing a significant amount of new retail floorspace. This project, with the Creative Quarter, has transformed the town centre.

The Leas – Development of the coastal park

There are also a number of emerging proposals and sites:

Nickolls Quarry – a site to the west of Hythe with outline planning permission for 1,050 new homes, employment space and community open space. The site is currently being used for soil treatment, which is providing income for the owner.

London Ashford Airport (Lydd) – planning permission was granted in 2009 for an extension to the runway and new terminal facilities capable of handling 500,000 passengers per year, with the aspiration to expand this to 2m passengers in the future. The planning application has been called in by the Secretary of State and will be subject to Public Inquiry in 2011.

Dungeness C – power generation started in Dungeness in the 1950's. Plant A is currently being decommissioned and Plant B will be operational until 2023. There is local support for the development of Plant C, but this was omitted from the government consultation on new nuclear plant locations in 2007. KCC, SDC, local MP all lobbied for its inclusion.

Folkestone Sea Front and harbour – The development of this area has been examined for a number of years. Original proposals from around 2005 had to be revisited as a result of flood mitigation requirements and the economic downturn. Terry Farrell have been commissioned by the landowners to produce a masterplan, which saw a successful consultation process in summer 2010 with strong support for development. Over the Autumn, the detailed work on the masterplan will commence and it is hoped that an outline application will be made by mid 2011. Phasing and infrastructure provision is a key issue, especially in terms of commercial viability.

Folkestone Race Course – see later section summarising the visit

Risborough/Napier Barracks – this is an ex-MOD site at Cheriton. The MOD are seeking to rationalise their landholdings in the district, and there is planning policy support for the redevelopment of the site that will see circa 900 new homes including affordable and housing for Ghurkhas.

The Shepway Local Development Framework (LDF) had its preferred option consultation take place in the June 2009. Currently, the evidence base is being assembled. Eight strategic sites have been identified, with additional smaller sites in rural locations. The proposers of each of the strategic sites have all been asked to undertake consultation and develop masterplans for their sites and submit them to Shepway in October 2010. All of the sites will then be looked at in terms of policy fit and sustainability. The core strategy is programmed for publication in May 2011 with 'Examination in Public' taking place in August 2011 with adoption towards the end of 2011.

KCC have provided a range of support to Shepway, including:

- Assistance with demographic information and retail impact to support the LDF core strategy
- Identifying community infrastructure requirements
- Development of the Shepway Transport Strategy
- Contribution to masterplanning – especially Folkestone Seafront
- Development of the economic development case for Lydd
- Lobbying and support for Dungeness C, High Speed Rail services and Lydd Airport
- Joint delivery of tourism functions

Visit to Folkestone Racecourse

Mark Elliot, Chief Executive of Arena Leisure gave a brief presentation explaining the current operation of the racecourse and its development aspirations. As with other major site developers, they are preparing a masterplan for submission to Shepway DC in October as part of the LDF process. Currently the racecourse runs around 20 fixtures and employs 10 full time staff, growing to 280 on race days. It currently makes a small profit.

The aspiration is to develop the site into Kent's premier sporting venue. Currently, the venue suffers from old facilities, poor access and a risk of fixtures being transferred to alternative courses. The aspiration is to create a year round attraction offering facilities for business, leisure and tourism as well as improving the course and its facilities. This will require a level of enabling development (predominantly housing) to make it happen. The race course benefits from having a good level of local support, especially from the business and tourism community.

Discussion

Members raised the following points following the presentation:

Lydd Airport and the interaction with Manston – members queried the interaction between the two airports and how they could both operate. It was indicated that they could be in direct competition with each other. It is considered that the airports would be serving different markets, and that access to Manston from the Shepway area is difficult.

Access to Seafront – Access to the seafront is poor. There is a convoluted one way system in Folkestone which was installed as a response to freight traffic accessing the port. Now that this traffic is gone, it was questioned that a more appropriate 2 way operation of the streets could be introduced that is more in keeping with a typical town centre environment. This would involve the reconfiguration of a number of junctions. Members questioned the suitability of some streets for conversion to 2 way operation. The masterplan for the seafront currently under preparation will examine these issues. Phasing of improvements was also raised and how they could be paid for and the role of the now disused rail line to the harbour could become that of a green corridor, recognising its rail heritage.

Folkestone Seafront – The development here should reflect the town and the Leas. Development of a marina may be tricky because of its tidal nature. The EA requirements in terms of flood protection require the area of beach to be expanded, but this could provide the opportunity for other recreational uses. Ownership of the area is principally between 3 parties – Shepway District Council, Folkestone Estates and Roger de Haan.

Overall phasing of development – Nickolls Quarry is the most advanced, and is likely to make progress first. The masterplan submissions required as part of the LDF process will help to answer the phasing question in more detail. It is hoped that the seafront outline application will be made during 2011.

Corporate Priorities – members queried the absence of regeneration from the Shepway corporate objectives. Shepway consider regeneration is a theme running through each of the priorities.

Employment – members observed that the quality of jobs is just as important as the number. The major employers in the district need to remain and be given the capacity to grow.

Education – an Appendix covering education, skills and employment issues is attached at the end of this report.

Impact of HS1 – Access to London will become increasingly important. Already, the services have resulted in full car parks at stations and standing room only on peak time services. Applications for primary school places have also increased significantly. A study examining the effect of HS1 in East Kent being undertaken by East Kent Authorities will be completed soon.

Closing Comments

A question raised during the discussion regarding airports in east Kent will need to be considered by KCC. The relative merits of Lydd and Ashford will need to be explored further, with the relationship and development potential of the two sites more clearly understood.

Regeneration and Economy – A District Perspective

Visit to Shepway District Council – 1st September 2010

Report on Education, Skills and Employment

Kit Smith, Chairman of CFE L&D POSC

From what we heard, Shepway District Council has an impressive full hand of cards for education, skills, qualification FE and HE. – Good schools, grammar schools, two academies, a new West and South Kent FE College, and joint working with Christchurch and Greenwich Universities. The creative Quarter adds a further dimension. There is a strong Channel Chamber of Commerce.

However, like most the coastal towns of Kent, Shepway has lower than average attainment, qualifications and skills base.

If the economy is to grow and the Districts main Corporate aim of a better place to live is to be become a reality there has to be a full coordination of the elements of the cards the Districts holds.

As ever better skills, more qualifications will raise the standards for better jobs more disposable income and a regenerative economic churn.

Roger de Haan's input is unique and a valuable force. That very uniqueness and vitality appears at times difficult to integrate with other factors in social and economic regeneration - is it the driver, is it supplementary or complimentary? Certainly it is of huge benefit for the District.

The developing Local Development Framework may be the final catalyst to pull the whole and complicated network together. Shepway's LDF is due to be adopted in late 2011.

***Extract of Minutes of Regeneration and Economic Development POSC,
23 September 2010:***

**Regeneration and Economy - A District Perspective: Report back from
Visit to Shepway on 1 September
(Item B1)**

During the debate on this item, Mrs J A Rook declared an interest as her family company has retail premises in a number of towns across Kent.

4. Members made the following comments on what they had seen and heard at the visit to Shepway:-

- a) the visit had been interesting but Members had been surprised at what they had been shown, spending much time at the racecourse but very little at seafronts or town centres;
- b) the presence of the De Haan Trust locally was a big asset to Shepway, and they were making the most of it, but combining a major benefactor with other work can be a challenge;
- c) Shepway is behind on developing its Local Development Framework, but the LDF would help resolve issues like b) above;
- d) much money has been spent on the creative quarter in Folkestone, but Members were unimpressed by the result and worried that it was not reaching its potential;
- e) the racecourse was in the early stages of development but offered a way ahead, and had more potential than the creative quarter;
- f) regeneration in the region had been bitty, and cohesion was not evident;
- g) Members discussed at some length the relative merits of Lydd and Manston airports, highlighting the following points:-
 - i) Lydd has the benefit of private investment, while Manston would need KCC support;
 - ii) Lydd has a good rail link yet is dwarfed in importance by Manston;
 - iii) we shouldn't be encouraging increased air travel so should not develop or promote *either* airport!

- iv) each has a different role – Manston offers a link to Essex, which fits with the LEP bid, while Lydd is just a local hub;
- v) Lydd is close to HS1 but has a dangerous road link which would need upgrading;
- vi) having an airport close to a nuclear power station could bring a potential terrorist problem;
- vii) both are too far from London to serve it;
- viii) neither has a local population to support its facilities;
- ix) Manston had its heyday in the 1960s, with trips to the continent. It now needed to find a new role; and
- x) each could serve a different market, so would not be in competition.

5. The Chairman commented that the POSC was a useful forum for identifying cross-directory themes, such as work by the De Haan trust on community projects.

REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Regeneration and Economy – A District Perspective

Visit to Swale Borough Council – 2nd November 2009

PRESENT: Cllr Andrew Bowles (Leader, SBC), Cllr John Wright (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, SBC), Mark Dance (Chairman of REDPOSC, KCC), Peter Homewood, Jeremy Kite, Jean Law, Ken Pugh, Kit Smith.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr P Raine (Interim Regeneration Director, SBC), Kieren Mansfield (Economic Development Officer, SBC), Mrs B Cooper (Director of Economic Development, KCC)

1. Summary of Meeting/Discussion:-

This report summarises the content and outcomes of REDPOSC member visit to Swale Borough Council on 2nd November. It highlights those issues that REDPOSC members consider a priority for future investment in Swale.

2. Visits to Projects/Sites

KCC members were given a summary of the opportunities and challenges facing Swale which include:

<u>Opportunities</u>	<u>Challenges</u>
Good connectivity	Skills, especially adult skills with 19% of the resident population without any qualifications
Deep water port	M2 Junction 5
Stunning countryside	Sheppey
Logistics and distribution	Future external funding post 2011

Members visited:

- Kent Science Park and were told about the history of the site; the issues around accessing the site, particularly the proximity to the M2; the companies and employees on site; the recently approved 4ha extension; and the challenges and opportunities afforded by the Kent Science Resource Centre
- Members saw the new Morrisons' building which had opened the previous week with 900 employees on site, 90% from within a 10m radius.
- Queenborough and Rushenden and saw the development proposals for the area including employment land at Neats Court and 2000+ new homes between the existing communities at Queenborough and Rushenden; the

new marina; community facilities and a retrofit project for 484 homes. Members saw the start on site of the Rushenden Relief Road (managed by KCC) and were told of the outstanding funding issues.

- Sheerness port and were told of Peel Ports' ambitious expansion plans and the challenges and opportunities of the heritage areas
- Sheerness west and east and were told of the poor quality housing; lack of development opportunities, and the very strong social and community networks
- Sittingbourne Town Centre and summary details of the recently approved masterplan for a step change to both retail and housing provision matched with new cultural provision and the £2.1m Parklands project which has KCC funding included. Members saw the start of the route for the Northern Relief Road and were told about the forthcoming consultation which is due to undertaken by KCC on the final section of the Relief Road.

3. Conclusions

Members challenged themselves to ask, should KCC resources be available in the future what would be the priorities for investment in Swale. Members understood the importance of Kent Science Park and its contribution to science based/knowledge based jobs; shared thoughts about "creating place" in Sittingbourne which built upon its architecture and heritage. However, members agreed that the overwhelming priority was to focus on people based regeneration and that KCC should focus its resources on Sheppey: not just Sheerness but the whole island including eastern Sheppey (Leysdown and Warden). It was recommended that there needs to be a new multi agency approach that addressed long standing issues of aspiration, education and skills, public transport and jobs.

***Extract of Minutes of Regeneration and Economic Development POSC,
12 November 2009:***

**Regeneration and Economy - A District Perspective: Members' oral report back from visit to Swale Borough Council, 2 November 2009
(Item B3)**

Mr K A Ferrin declared a prejudicial interest in this item due to his involvement in the development of the Kent Science Park at Sittingbourne, which was one of the sites viewed and discussed during the visit. He left the room and took no part in the discussion which followed.

- 1) The Chairman placed on record his thanks to Swale Borough Council for organising and hosting the visit, and thanked the Members of the POSC who had attended.
- 2) Mrs Cooper reminded Members that the aim of the visit was for the Borough Council to show POSC Members its priorities, for Members to see examples of different practice and best practice, and to seek to identify and understand the future funding needs of the areas visited.
- 3) Members agreed on the general usefulness of the visit in helping them towards the aims which Mrs Cooper had listed, and expressed the following views:-
 - a) money spent on the Kent Science Park would need to show a return, and some Members were concerned that this might not happen;
 - b) it is important to focus on people in an area and not just on the buildings and the physical economy;
 - c) while some Members were impressed with what had been done in Sittingbourne town centre and the Queenborough - Rushenden coastal area, others felt Sittingbourne town centre could benefit from building up the night time economy with some fine dining establishments, and that more could be done to promote the heritage of the coastal area;
 - d) it was vital to improve the quality of life in Sheppey to bring it up to the level of the rest of the county;
 - e) Kent's Universities should be involved in the development of the Kent Science Park, to bring industry and science together;
 - f) in undertaking this series of visits, the POSC needed to be able to gather consistent, comparative information from all areas. It was vital that the visit produced a useful report at the end which the POSC could present to Cabinet; and

- g) Members needed background and introductory information in advance of each visit, to get the optimum benefit from what they are visiting. Information packs given out by the borough on the visit need to be copied to those Members who could not attend.

3) RESOLVED that:-

- a) the views expressed by the Members who attended the visit be noted; and
- b) protocols and paperwork to prepare for and report back from the visit be further developed to give full and consistent information.

REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Regeneration and Economy, Learning and Skills – A District Perspective

Visit to Thanet District Council – 26 July 2010

PRESENT: Mark Dance (Chairman of REDPOSC, Member for Whitstable), Kit Smith (Chairman of CFE L&D POSC, Member for Deal), Nigel Collor (Member for Dover Town), Peter Homewood (Member for Malling Rural NE), Elizabeth Tweed (Member for Ashford Central), Andrew Wickham (Member for Ashford Rural East), Jean Law (Member for Herne Bay), Avtar Sandhu (Member for Dartford NE), Ian Chittenden (Member for Maidstone NE), Michael Jarvis (Member for Margate and Cliftonville), Elizabeth Green (Member for Ramsgate), Roland Tolputt (Member for Folkestone South), Julie Huckstep, Brian Critchley (Co-opted members of CFE L&D POSC), Cllr Bob Bayford (Leader of TDC and KCC Member for Broadstairs and Sir Moses Montefiore), Cllr Roger Latchford (TDC Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development)

IN ATTENDANCE: Richard Samuel (Chief Executive, TDC), Brian White (Director of Regeneration Services, TDC), Derek Harding (Margate Renewal Partnership Project Director), Rob Brown (Ramsgate Harbour Master, TDC), Victoria Pomery (Director, Turner Contemporary), Theresa Bruton (Head of Regeneration Projects, KCC) and Keith Mackenney (Regeneration and Projects Manager, KCC).

6. Summary of Meeting

This report summarises the content and outcomes of the REDPOSC visit to Thanet District Council on 26 July 2010. It highlights those issues that emerged from the visit as priorities for future investment in Thanet. The REDPOSC members were also accompanied by the Chairman of the CFE Learning and Development POSC. There are close links between education, learning and skills issues and regeneration and economic development, and the appendix to this report summarises the main outcomes of the visit from a learning and skills perspective.

The scene was set for the visit by Cllr Bayford, Cllr Latchford and Richard Samuel. They were at pains to point out that while Thanet still experienced high levels of unemployment, deprivation and benefit dependency, particularly in parts of Margate, Cliftonville and Ramsgate, considerable progress was being made in the district's regeneration and economic development and major opportunities existed to build upon the progress made and the district's innate strengths. Derek Harding outlined comprehensive plans for the regeneration of Margate and Victoria Pomery explained that the Turner Contemporary build was on time and on budget and that the Turner Contemporary Trust would open the gallery and launch their new programme in 2011.

7. Visits to Projects / Sites

KCC Members were provided with a summary of the range of opportunities and challenges facing Thanet which included:

Opportunities	Challenges
<p>The Regeneration of Margate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turner Contemporary • Dreamland • Old Town/Cultural quarter • Public Realm/Sea Defences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the Turner Contemporary Trust by providing the physical and cultural environment in which it can flourish after it opens in 2011. • Having secured a £12.4m funding package, to create a commercially successful destination/ heritage amusement park opening in 2012 to complement Turner Contemporary • To build upon the improvement in the Old Town/Harbour Arm built environment by attracting more sustainable businesses. • To improve the seafront public realm from the station to Turner in conjunction with a £6m sea defences improvement project.
<p>Improving social conditions in Cliftonville West/ Central Margate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Task Force • Housing intervention 	<p>Local public services have generally failed to meet the needs of vulnerable groups. Hence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A multi-agency approach to the integrated delivery of public services focussing closely on local needs and social ills. • An ambitious programme involving the delivery of a housing enforcement plan and the rebalancing of the housing market where currently over 80% is privately rented.
<p>Maximising opportunities created by improving transport links</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth of services from Manston Airport • The completion of HS1 and a potential parkway station • Road improvements – dualling of A256 and New Haine Rd • Port of Ramsgate improvements 	<p>The completion of HS1, improvements at the port of Ramsgate, the dualling of the Thanet Way and the anticipated completion of East Kent Access mean that Thanet is now better connected to other parts of Kent, London and the continent than it was 15 years ago and therefore more attractive to business investors. However, the perception of inaccessibility will persist until more passenger services are introduced from Manston and rail connections and journey times are further improved (i.e. improvements to HS1 track from Ashford to Ramsgate and a park way station at Manston.)</p>
<p>Increasing quality jobs by providing attractive employment sites and support for new and existing employers</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EKO • East Kent Spatial Development Company (EKSPC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create quality jobs by attracting inward investment, encouraging expansion and generally improving the speed of take up of opportunities on fully serviced business parks. • To continue to forward fund the provision of utilities and infrastructure to bring forward development on key sites.
<p>Building upon the success of Westwood Cross</p>	<p>The retail and leisure development at Westwood Cross has successfully retained a great deal of residents' retail spend within the district and created approximately 1500 jobs. The opportunity exists to develop the area further but this needs to take account of the impact that it has already had on Margate, the need to relieve local road congestion and the road improvements needed to service an expanded airport and other development in the area.</p>

The party's tour of the district was led by Brian White. It took in:

- **Margate** – where the party saw current state of the Turner build, new commercial development on the Harbour Arm and the dilapidated state of the Dreamland cinema and amusement park. A hybrid planning application is expected later in the year for the neighbouring Arlington site, detailed in respect of the new Tesco store (250 jobs), car park and tower refurbishment and outline in relation to the seafront development expected to replace the boarded up shops currently in evidence.
- **Cliftonville West** - Passing the faded TDC owned Winter Gardens, the tour travelled through Cliftonville West, stopping in Dalby Square, where a four storey residential development is planned to replace a recently CPO'd burnt out hotel. The elegant Victorian streetscape has recently been recognised by the award of conservation area status. Unfortunately, at the same time the area is dominated by benefit landlords, small flats with very few owner occupiers, poor living conditions and very serious social problems. A significant public sector intervention, relating to housing, the public realm and service provision, is required to address the problem and break the cycle of decline. Success would have a major impact on Margate's regeneration, the image of the town and the confidence of local people.
- **Westwood Cross/Eurokent** – En route to Westwood Cross the party passed the Hornby head office and the site of its new visitor centre. Skirting Westwood Cross, the tour took the New Haine Road through the Eurokent site. Funded through the EKSDC and opened in 2008, the road has improved access to the Marlowe Academy and Innovation Centre, helped to relieve local congestion and provided a better link to the Thanet Way and the A256. It will be instrumental in opening up the Eurokent site for development.

- **Port of Ramsgate** – Recent dredging of the port has enabled the ferry operator, Transeuropa, to introduce larger vessels on its route to Ostend and facilitated the use of the port by wind farm developers. The port has been identified as capable of meeting the construction and O & M requirements of the offshore wind farm developers in the Thames Estuary and the operators of both Thanet Offshore and London Array have established bases in the port with the potential of creating approximately 200 direct jobs. Supply chain development possibilities also exist, potentially putting Ramsgate at the forefront of wind farm technology. The party also saw the development of a café culture on the Ramsgate seafront around an increasingly busy marina.
- **Manston Airport** – Airport owners, Infratil, confirmed their long term commitment to Manston and introduced a masterplan that predicts that by 2033 the airport will serve 4.7m customers, cater for 400,000 tonnes of freight and sustain over 6,000 jobs. Infratil believe this to be achievable due to limits on the expansion of all London airports. Successful scheduled flights have been introduced to Edinburgh and Manchester and freight business is buoyant.
- **Manston Park** - Along with the Eurokent Business Park, Manston Park is in the ownership of the KCC/TDC joint venture, the East Kent Opportunities Company (EKO). The partnership was driven by the need to put a stop to the land banking of the sites by previous owners and to create quality jobs by encouraging inward investment and local business expansion. Manston Business Park consists of 47 hectares of developable land, where the focus will be mainly on manufacturing with the potential to create 4,000 jobs. Eurokent is likely to accommodate mixed use development and create some 2,000 jobs. The party visited Cohline where 200 new jobs are about to be created in an extension of the existing facility. The company has had some difficulty recruiting locally because applicants are often unable to cope with the repetitive nature of the work.
- **Thanet Earth** - which currently comprises three greenhouses covering a total of 25ha producing cucumbers, tomatoes and peppers for Sainsburys, Tesco, M&S and Asda. The first year's turnover was £53m. Each greenhouse has cost £25m to build and, while the plan is to construct a further four, there is currently no capital funding for this. When the development is completed it is expected to provide 550 jobs.

8. Conclusions

Thanet is a district of considerable charm and variety but despite the continuing success of Broadstairs, the growing fashionableness of Ramsgate and the development of a new town centre at Westwood Cross, the district still faces major challenges in relation to housing, unemployment, benefit dependency, skills, crime and health levels. The problems in areas like Central Margate, Cliftonville West, Newington and Northwood are well documented and recognised by TDC's partners and Government departments. Opportunities to bring about significant change in these key areas of deprivation have been pursued enthusiastically but there is still much to do at a time when public sector funding is becoming increasingly short.

The main regeneration and skills development priorities are therefore considered to be as follows:

- (m) To pursue the district's economic development, particularly by seeking to attract inward investment and quality jobs to key, well serviced sites at Eurokent and Manston Park. Job development at the Port of Ramsgate should also be strongly supported.
- (n) To pursue transport improvements that reduce the perceived peripherality of the district to inward investors, visitors and decision makers. It is important to focus on improvements to the HS1 track between Ashford and Ramsgate and the creation of a park way station on the HS1 line to serve Manston.
- (o) In order that the new jobs created in a) above can be taken up by local people, the Work & Skills Plan should be urgently finalised and implemented.
- (p) To continue to support projects aimed at changing the image of Margate, creating a successful cultural quarter and bringing about its wider regeneration. Improving the seafront public realm and increasing its commercial vitality is a key element in improving the visitor experience.
- (q) To support the Task Force approach in Central Margate and Cliftonville West both in tackling deprivation and benefit dependency and in undertaking a major intervention to rebalance the housing market.

Visit to Thanet District Council on 26 July 2010

Rapporteur supplementary report from CFE L&D POSC Chairman.

Of all the visits to the Kent Districts by the REDPOSC, Thanet was always going to be the most interesting yet challenging.

We were told about the huge potential for the District with many new regeneration projects running or about to begin. Over the next seven years or so there is the prospect of up to 14,000 new higher skilled jobs that most other Districts would be very jealous of. Yet Thanet has areas of the highest deprivation in Kent, low skill and qualification levels and high unemployment.

That mix is a real challenge from the view point of education, skills, qualifications, jobs and sustainable regeneration in Thanet. Without a local skilled workforce, there is a real prospect of the new better paid jobs going to workers travelling to Thanet rather than for home grown, Thanet dwelling, skilled and higher waged workers. For every 1000 new skilled workers living outside of Thanet but travelling to work there, there is a potential loss of an extra disposable spend in Thanet of around £10m per year, every year.

It was noted on the visit that a good start has been made by Thanet Works in developing a Work and Skills Plan, and a strategy for developing skills and qualification for the new jobs, for Thanet residents. This is a huge job and will only work if it involves the schools, colleges and employers and a multi agency effort to upgrade the working ethos and opportunity for many in Thanet.

Thanet has a remarkable potential with large amounts of government aid and assistance. However this will not last for ever and in the austere new economic climate Thanet has a narrow window of opportunity to economically and socially regenerate itself – an interesting yet challenging prospect.

***Extract of Minutes of Regeneration and Economic Development POSC,
23 September 2010:***

**Regeneration and Economy - A District Perspective: Report back from
Visit to Thanet on 26 July
(Item B1)**

During the debate on this item, Mrs J A Rook declared an interest as her family company has retail premises in a number of towns across Kent.

1. Members made the following comments on what they had seen and heard at the visit to Thanet:-

- a) the visit had been positive, upbeat, very worthwhile, and was very well organised. Thanet were congratulated on what they were doing;
- b) Thanet was intriguing and challenging, in terms of regeneration, and its reputation as an area of deprivation had served it well;
- c) this was the last chance for the District and County Councils to work together to achieve outcomes;
- d) it was hoped that the Turner Centre would deliver all that was planned, and draw tourists from Europe as well as from the UK;
- e) Manston Parkway is a key priority and would need a fast track rail link to London within the hour to ignite the whole of East Kent;
- f) it is important to recognise where mistakes had been made – eg Westwood Cross – and it would be useful to see how shopping areas will be addressed once economic confidence is regained;
- g) Members debated the relative merits and problems of free and charged parking:
 - i) Kent's towns do not have enough and it is never free. If shoppers cannot park for free in one shopping area, they will go to another. Provision of free parking is big issue when addressing the regeneration of town centres, and should be a community commitment;
 - ii) it is unrealistic to expect to provide free parking, and parking revenue would contribute valuable income to a town centre. Charges could be relatively small yet cover the maintenance costs of providing it;

- h) Thanet had received much regeneration funding over the years, yet still it is an area of multi-deprivation; and
- i) in some town centres in Kent, shoppers could park outside shops for free, while other towns had pedestrianised high streets. This might explain why some High Streets were doing well and keeping their independent traders and others were not.

2. The Deputy Cabinet Member, Mr J A Kite, was asked what he would be doing to help Thanet in the short term. Mr Kite replied that there were two threads - strategic and specific. A key strategic challenge would be to get the Local Enterprise Partnership right. Specifics would include issues like supporting the towns and communities behind the seafronts rather than being beguiled by the seafronts themselves, and to treat all areas equally.

3. In discussion, Members started to identify key themes for their future discussion of priorities:

- Manston parkway and the need for a good rail link to Thanet
- parking – free or charged
- pedestrianised or non-pedestrianised town centres

**Regeneration & Economic Development Policy Overview & Scrutiny
Committee (REDPOSC)**

Regeneration and Economy – a District Perspective

Visit to Tonbridge & Malling – 28th September 2010

Present (Members)

Mark Dance (Chairman of REDPOSC, KCC), Ian Chittenden (Vice - Chairman of REDPOSC, KCC), Kit Smith (Chairman of CFE L&D POSC, KCC), Keith Ferrin, Peter Homewood, Ken Pugh, Julie Rook, Elizabeth Tweed, Jeremy Kite, Trudy Dean

Mark Worrall, Leader, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council (TMBC)

Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member for Planning, TMBC

In attendance (Officers)

David Hughes - Chief Executive, TMBC

Steve Humphrey - Director of Planning, Transportation and Leisure, TMBC

Mark Raymond - Corporate Services Manager (lead on Economic Development), TMBC

Katie Chantler – Regeneration Manager, KCC

1. Introduction

This report summarises the REDPOSC visit to Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council on 28 September 2010.

2. Presentation

KCC Members were presented with a summary of the challenges facing Tonbridge & Malling by Mark Raymond and Steve Humphrey. A comprehensive summary of Tonbridge & Malling was provided to REDPOSC in advance, profiling the district and its population.

Opportunities	Challenges
<p>Road improvements</p> <p>A21 dualling is critical to connect Tonbridge & Tonbridge Wells with new hospital</p> <p>A228 has improved, links Maidstone and Tonbridge and new hospital</p> <p>M20 – increasing capacity at junction 4 and junction 5 are priorities</p>	<p>Caught by review of public spending</p> <p>This link is currently a major problem for commuters. Junction 4 improvements are dependent on housing growth.</p>
<p>Railway improvements</p> <p>Recent changes to timetable and London destinations (removed City destination) are</p>	<p>Relatively poor transport connectivity; businesses already leaving Kings Hill due to</p>

<p>an absolute priority. There is a great need to improve capacity and frequency of network</p>	<p>these changes</p>
<p>Kings Hill Well located to import good skills and businesses; high quality environment with well planned development</p>	<p>It is a challenge to plan this development and ensure it becomes a sustainable community. Development has slowed in recent years.</p>
<p>Tonbridge A corporate priority for T&MBC A wonderful market town, strong education provision including West Kent College. Two key sites offer a combined opportunity to uplift the town:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Behind Sainsburys” – opportunity for residential/ retail/ community facility. 2. Second site nearby has a planning application for residential and some retail <p>Library is in a prime site though the building is not fit for purpose. Service could be moved to a more functional space and the original building sold.</p>	<p>Sits on a flood plain Retail offer has suffered due to economic down turn and traffic issues Need to decide how to provide leisure facilities in such a prime location KCC have not expressed a desire to move sites</p>
<p>Borough Green is a key commuter point and a key employment generator</p>	<p>Need to release land from green belt to ensure there are sufficient levels of affordable housing</p>
<p>West Kent Partnership Worked hard to breakdown misconceptions about West Kent. Produced West Kent Investment strategy, setting out needs to 2015. Priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supporting indigenous business growth ▪ Developing local labour force ▪ Tackling issues of transport infrastructure 	<p>Locate in Kent suggest that developer interest is shifting to East Kent The recession has affected West Kent more significantly than other areas of the county for example unemployment has risen faster here than anywhere else in Kent There are high average house prices which create staff retention and recruitment issues. East Malling is one of the wards with the lowest educational attainment in the county</p>
<p>Three key areas of deprivation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ East Malling ▪ Snodland ▪ Trench Ward (north of Tonbridge) <p>Applying a multi agency approach which has a focus on dominant families</p>	<p>Mismatch of resources between where they are located and where they are needed Lack of resources and in particular more youth services required</p>

KCC & T&M youth services working well together	
<p>Three key new residential developments with 25% affordable housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Holborough Quarry; 1,500 homes ▪ Peters Pit; 700 homes ▪ Leybourne Grange; 700 homes 	Market conditions will dictate growth
<p>West Kent College</p> <p>Benefited from £90m improvement programme, high standard and range of facilities including 500 seat theatre.</p>	Need to share facilities with wider community and make better use of them outside of learning hours

T&MBC were asked to summarise their corporate priorities. They were identified as:

1. Regeneration of Tonbridge
2. Priorities in West Kent Investment strategy
 - Supporting indigenous business growth
 - Developing local labour force
 - Tackling issues of transport infrastructure
3. Increasing levels of affordable housing
4. Securing funding for community development to meet local needs particularly in areas of deprivation

3. Visit

Members were taken on a tour of Tonbridge and Malling. Some of the highlights of this tour include:

Kings Hill

Members were shown the Lacuna Development, one of the highest density developments with approximately 55 homes to the hectare. T&MBC noted the parking environment was problematic at night and weekends. The tour included the new cricket pavilion and Discovery School. There is a commitment to provide leisure facilities behind this school in due course including football pitches. Affordable housing levels at Kings Hill are less than 20%. The aim is to increase this to 25% and T&MBC policy is now for 40% on all new developments. There are plans for regeneration of Grade II listed RAF control tower which will be a mix of retail with a restaurant as well as a cultural centre to display the history and heritage of the area.

East Malling

Members were shown the new St James the Great primary school. The old school is now a community hub which includes a children's centre and

nursery. It is hoped that in time, this hub will have a positive impact on the estate opposite.

Tonbridge and Malling has three particular pockets of deprivation

1. East Malling
2. Snodland
3. Trench Ward (north of Tonbridge)

Members were taken on a tour of one of these estates. These areas are no different from other areas of deprivation but they are relatively small and therefore T&MBC felt they were not on the radar of Government, regional or County bodies. One estate in Tonbridge and Malling took part in a national study by the Young Foundation¹ which looked into entrenched deprivation on small estates. This report found a number of common factors in such estates which Tonbridge and Malling are targeting through their existing multi agency approach.

Whilst T&MBC and KCC's youth teams work well together, more youth officers are needed from KCC. There is a quantifiable uplift in outcomes where KCC services are co terminus with Tonbridge & Malling.

East Malling Research centre is globally recognised but is also diversifying to ensure its continued success. It has great conference facilities.

Larkfield

Members were shown an example of where problems arise when councils fail to hold onto employment land and lose it to residential. This particular site in Larkfield was lost under appeal to Barretts who built a residential development. This development now has 50% social rental with a high proportion of single parent families. T&MBC have had to work hard to ensure these families are supported and have sufficient local services to meet their needs but it has proved highly problematic.

Snodland

Holborough Quarry is a successful development with 25% affordable housing in Snodland. It's a strategic site with a new community. Snodland town centre (the old part) is a priority for change and discussions are ongoing with Kent Highway Services to improve the street furniture. Holmesdale Technology College is a beacon for change; it has improved significantly in recent years and is now a very popular college. The site includes a community hub.

Lafarge are proposing a state of the art cement factory near the Medway valley. This project is "on ice" due to the current economic climate but is still a live project.

Hadlow is a successful college, recently rated "outstanding".

¹ <http://www.youngfoundation.org/solutions-entrenched-deprivation-small-estates-summary-report-september-2009>

Tonbridge

This is a corporate priority for T&MBC. It needs to regenerate and renew however it is on a flood plain which significantly impacts development and design. There are two key sites in the town near Sainsburys which offer an opportunity to uplift the town. The pedestrian links from these sites to the high street will be preserved and enhanced. The nearby industrial estate is a mix of distribution with some manufacturing though its success depends almost entirely on market conditions.

4. Conclusions

Tonbridge and Malling is a diverse borough with a mix of settlements. It is a vital contributor to the Kent economy through employment generation and supplying a skilled labour force. There is a real concern it is losing its previously buoyant economic role. T&MBC outlined their priorities for regeneration

1. To support the vitality and viability of Tonbridge Town Centre via a comprehensive redevelopment of the Botany Area in central Tonbridge to provide new retailing provision, employment uses, enhanced car parking, housing, community uses, additional car parking and enhancements to the public realm.
2. To secure the future development of the Borough's key strategic development sites including those on the East bank of the Medway to enable the provision of additional affordable housing as part of mixed tenure developments to meet future housing needs.
3. To address deprivation issues in the Borough's three priority communities: East Malling, Snodland, and Trench Ward and, through a highly targeted approach to community engagement and community development, raise aspiration, tackle worklessness, improve educational attainment and shift the dominant, often negative social culture affecting these communities.
4. To support the West Kent Partnership to strengthen the local economy through the delivery of actions in the West Kent Investment Strategy focusing on the development of business support and entrepreneurship, skills development and improving transport connectivity via key infrastructure investments.
5. To counter any misconceptions that Tonbridge and Malling is universally affluent, its local businesses face no significant issues and that little or no external investment is therefore justified.

5. Additional Conclusion from Children, Families & Education Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Kit Smith (Chairman of CFE L&D POSC, KCC)

Although the Borough has no dedicated Higher Education (HE) campus it is well provided at Further Education (FE) level by South and West Kent College's main new campus at Tonbridge and by the specialist Hadlow College. Both colleges have HE students. Hadlow has very recently been assessed by Ofsted as outstanding, with one of the highest scores for a FE college in England. There are a range of good schools..

Members saw students streaming from a useful skills festival at the Angel Centre.

It was noted that with high levels of skilled jobs in the borough up to 50% of those skills had to be imported on a daily basis. The down side of this, is that such higher paid workers probably spend their disposable income outside the area

Perhaps because Tonbridge over all is the second least deprived district in Kent it is not surprising that where there are small areas of deprivation the gap in educational attainment between students eligible for free school meals and their peers is particularly wide. The borough in common with most in Kent probably has a below national attainment at KS1 and especially at KS2. This issue is being actively monitored and action sought by the CFE L&D

These results and the causes can not be analysed in detail at the L&D POSC which has to deal with average figures .

However a new small informal Member Monitoring Group is being formed to dig deeper into schools, heads, teachers or class level to learn any lessons that can be reported to the POSC.

On the same theme, Members heard of useful data from a Young's Report that has dug deeper into the core reasons for sustained deprivation at a very local level, and have requested that Members can see that report.

**Regeneration & Economic Development Policy Overview & Scrutiny
Committee (REDPOSC)**

Regeneration and Economy – a District Perspective

Visit to Tunbridge Wells– 28th September 2010

Present (Members)

Mark Dance (Chairman of REDPOSC, KCC), Ian Chittenden (Vice - Chairman of REDPOSC, KCC), Kit Smith (Chairman of CFE L&D POSC, KCC), Keith Ferrin, Peter Homewood, Ken Pugh, Julie Rook, Elizabeth Tweed, Roy Bullock (County Member and Leader, TWBC), Tracy Moore (Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, TWBC)

In attendance (Officers)

Jonathan MacDonald - Director of Regeneration & Sustainability, TWBC
David Candlin – Head of Economic Development, TWBC
Kevin Hetherington – Head of Housing & Wellbeing, TWBC
Mike Bodkin – Head of Urban Regeneration, KCC

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report summarises the REDPOSC visit to Tunbridge Wells Borough on the afternoon of 28 September 2010.

2.0 Presentation

2.1 KCC Members were presented with a summary of the key issues facing Tunbridge Wells Borough. A summary of the Borough was provided to REDPOSC members, profiling the district and its population.

2.2 Despite the dominant view of Tunbridge Wells as being an affluent borough, there are pockets of deprivation in some residential estates such as Sherwood and Ramslye, which experience higher than average unemployment, poor health, teenage pregnancies etc.

2.3 The Borough (and in particular the towns of Tunbridge Wells and Southborough) has experienced a loss of employment in office and related sectors. There is still a reliance on the service sector and retail in Tunbridge Wells itself.

2.4 Despite the relatively buoyant town centre economy of Tunbridge Wells, there are a number of high profile 'grot spots' or redundant sites awaiting redevelopment. The most high profile of these is the former cinema site, opposite the town hall, which has been subject to a long and convoluted planning history since its closure in the 1990s. TWBC had attempted to buy the site over the recent summer, but its bid was unsuccessful.

2.5 The existence of these 'grot spots' was one of the reasons for the establishment by the Borough Council of the Tunbridge Wells

Regeneration Company (TWRC), a joint venture between TWBC and John Laing PLC, selected following a procurement exercise.

2.6 TWBC has agreed to place a significant amount of its land and property assets in the town centres of Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Paddock Wood and Cranbrook into the TWRC. John Laing will contribute development expertise and finance and all profits will be shared on a 50:50 basis.

2.7 The TWRC was one of the first 'Local Authority Asset Backed Vehicles' (LABVs) established in the country and unlike conventional methods of disposal of assets by Local Authorities, it represents a true partnership and sharing of risk between public and private sectors. The Borough Council is able to retain a long-term interest in the sites whilst ensuring that redevelopment is brought forward and is of the type and scale that it wishes to see.

2.8 The Civic Centre site in Tunbridge Wells will be one of the first and most important developments undertaken by TWRC and this could involve other public sector partners including KCC, Kent Police and Fire Service.

2.9 In order to support TWRC, the Borough Council is bringing forward its planning policies for the town centres through Area Action Plans, in tandem with a review of housing numbers and density in the round, which is likely to focus on the designation of certain rural settlements in the Borough, such as Hawkhurst, with the aim of retaining their status as villages rather than accepting larger scale development.

2.10 The Tunbridge Wells Gateway was cited as a key recent success story in working with KCC and other public sector partners.

2.11 The following key issues were identified by TWBC:

- The forthcoming Regional Growth Fund;
- West Kent Local Investment Plan (bid for HCA resources);
- Infrastructure Investment (particularly transport);
- The new Local Enterprise Partnership (whatever geography it covers);
- Total Place and place-based initiatives;
- Highway Land (improving street scene and decluttering signage etc)

3.0 Questions & Answers

3.1 In response to questions, TWBC representatives identified transport as their top priority. This was broken down into the following issues in particular:

- Congestion, as a threat to economic vitality and the impact of the school run – with five secondaries located on the A26 alone;

- Longfield Road (North Farm large scale retail area);
- A21 dualling.

3.2 In response to questions about the civic centre redevelopment, TWBC representatives set out the following desired objectives:

- The existing Assembly Halls would be reprovided as a 600 seat facility. There had been discussions with the private sector which indicated that a doubling of size to 1200 seats would require a doubling of the current revenue subsidy (£263k pa). Both capital funding and revenue support would need to be funded from the development;
- The existing library and museum could be rebuilt on the lines of the Ashford Gateway Plus model, which is currently under development. This would of course require the input of KCC;
- There is a desire to find a quality anchor retail tenant to support the scheme and attract further commercial and retail investors.

4.0 Visit

4.1 Members were taken on a tour of Tunbridge Wells and surrounds. Some of the highlights of this tour included:

- The Civic Site & surrounds (including the former cinema site);
- The Kent & Sussex Hospital site in the town centre, which will be closed in 2011 as services are transferred to the new Pembury hospital. An opportunity for an office-led redevelopment scheme;
- The current Arriva depot which TWBC wishes to see relocated to North Farm;
- Royal Victoria Place – potential extension of this major shopping centre in the north of the town centre;
- The Sherwood Estate, where approximately 50% of the stock is owned by TWBC's housing partner, Town & Country Housing Group;
- North Farm retailing parks, where TWBC representatives indicated their concerns over congestion and insufficient provision for transport improvements in the future;
- Pembury Hospital, a major PFI funded development scheduled to open in the near future where TWBC representatives indicated concerns in relation to transport and access issues, exacerbated by the recent decision not to progress the A21 dualling scheme and the poor transport links with Maidstone (desire to construct the A228 Colts Hill bypass);

- The Land Registry building, an opportunity for co-location of public sector partners once the Land Registry exit (in the near future);
- The Pantiles, owned by Targetfollow, a Norwich-based property company known to be in financial difficulties, where TWBC representatives expressed concerns about the impact of the company be placed in administration on investment in the area;
- The former Morrisons supermarket and underused multi-storey car park close to the railway station.

5.0 Additional points from Kit Smith, Chairman of Children, Families & Education Learning and Development Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Members noted that in the District of Tunbridge Wells:

There are interesting contrasts in the District which are wider than in the other districts visited so far.

House prices at an average of £302K are the highest in Kent yet there are significantly deprived areas.

The gap in attainment between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers is the highest in Kent at KS4.

There are big gaps between urban and rural areas of the District.

Many of the District's schools are bunched together which produces real problems on the roads at start and finish times.

This disadvantage perhaps could be turned to advantage by looking at the Canterbury shared timetable model. The REDPOSC saw this model on their visit to Canterbury early in the visits programme. This is replicated in Dover. They have managed to achieve savings, better use of buildings and equipment and better and wider curriculum offer by networking the schools. This has been made possible by close proximity and the ability for pupils to go from one school to another with relative ease.

Tunbridge Wells has no major Further Education campus but has skills outreach at North Farm from the nearby West Kent College at Tonbridge. There is Higher Education presence of Solomons at Southborough provided by Christ Church Canterbury University

The economy appears strong but for sustainability in difficult and changing times the District may have to look long and hard at future jobs and skills provision for them.