

# Kent Prospects

2006 to 2012

An Economic Development and Regeneration Framework for Kent

**Consultation Draft**

March 2006



# Contents

	Page
1. Foreword (by Chairman of Kent Partnership)	1
2. Executive Summary	2
3. Introduction	4
4. Strategic Context	5
5. Progress Report and Kent Challenges	8
6. Drivers of Change	11
7. Aims and Objectives	12
8. Delivery Framework	14
9. Priorities	16
10. Delivery and Kent Prospects Action Plan	35
11. Performance Monitoring and Evaluation	36
12. Stakeholder Consultation	Inside back cover

# Foreword

The update of Kent Prospects has drawn on the work undertaken during the review of the Vision for Kent – the county’s sustainable community strategy, and the partnership mechanisms fostered through the Kent Agreement. A recurrent message is the need to focus on measures that improve economic prosperity, reduce deprivation and raise living standards. Kent Prospects provides a further level of detail on how these issues are being addressed. As such it aims to guide, influence and co-ordinate the delivery of partners’ economic development and regeneration initiatives from 2006 to 2012.

Kent’s economy has improved its performance since the first and second versions of Kent Prospects were produced in 1996 and 2002 – but much remains to be done to increase competitiveness. Considerable infrastructure investment is also required to improve accessibility across the county and support developments in the Thames Gateway and Ashford growth areas. Government grant support is however currently inadequate to meet the scale of these challenges. Indeed, the South

East gets a poor allocation for infrastructure needs, compared to the rest of the country.

Kent’s regeneration priorities are now more clearly understood. East Kent and the coastal towns are beginning to define their own futures, albeit much work needs to be done in partnership with local communities. Rural areas are looking at new markets for the land-based sector and rural economy. The Supporting Independence Programme is helping communities facing high levels of multiple deprivation access skills and job opportunities. And the 2012 London Olympics and Paralympics adds scope for Kent to secure regeneration benefits.

Kent’s skills base, productivity and innovation levels, availability of high quality and graduate jobs, falls below the pace set by the Thames Valley and other parts of Britain. Much is in train to tackle these issues through partnerships that bring together public, private and voluntary sectors. But in an era of increasing global competition we need to re-double our efforts to ensure a culture of learning, enterprise and innovation takes further root in our communities, public sector bodies and business community.

The mosaic economy concept, introduced in 2002 celebrates Kent’s diverse local economy, high quality of life and environment, as strengths

to be nurtured and safeguarded. This idea remains central to the 2006 version of Kent Prospects in respect of how partners are going to address growth, regeneration and competitiveness opportunities.

A wide range of organisations and members of the business community have participated in the update of the Vision for Kent and Kent Prospects, and our thanks go out to them for their contributions and help. We are especially grateful for the assistance provided by representatives of the Area Partnerships (East Kent, Channel Corridor, West Kent, and North Kent), Business Link Kent, KCC, SEEDA, Locate in Kent, Learning and Skills Council, Kent and Medway Economic Board, Federation of Small Businesses, and Growth Area Delivery Boards, who formed a core advisory group to guide the review and update of Kent Prospects.

The Kent Partnership is presenting this document as a consultation draft. We therefore welcome your views on its content and priorities, and look forward to receiving your comments over the coming months.

**Paul Carter**

**Chairman of the Kent Partnership and Leader of Kent County Council  
March 2006**

## 2. Executive Summary

### Context

Kent Prospects 2006 to 2012 provides a framework to influence, guide and co-ordinate Partners' delivery of economic development and regeneration activities. As such it gives a further level of detail for the Kent Partnership's Community Strategy – the Vision for Kent.

The framework also takes account of a range of countywide initiatives and strategies including the Kent Agreement, the Supporting Independence Programme, the Kent and Medway Structure Plan, Local Transport Plan, and Kent Environment Strategy.

### Mosaic Economy

Kent Prospects was first produced in 1996 and updated in 2002 to take it forward to 2006. The 2006 review highlights the continuing relevance of the '2002' '20-year' mosaic economy scenario. This proposes a Kent of:

- Thriving, diverse enterprises, towns and neighbourhoods;
- Where existing strengths and new opportunities are developed;
- Where regeneration issues are addressed; and
- Where the county's environment and quality of life upon which long term investment depends, is safeguarded.

### Progress

The progress report section indicates that although the economy has moved on since 1996 and 2002, more needs to be done to - increase the skills base, develop Kent's knowledge economy, improve productivity, attract jobs, develop enterprise, attract investment, and address deprivation and intra-county disparities.

### Objectives and Delivery Framework

With reference to the mosaic economy and Vision for Kent, growth at all costs is not an option that stakeholders wish to promote. An approach centred on making the best use of Kent's assets, location, opportunities and people, is therefore outlined by Kent Prospect's 2006 to 2012.

In order to frame this approach, the Vision for Kent's long term economic success objectives provides a direction of travel. These are supplemented by a delivery framework, which

identifies 26 priorities under 4 thematic headings:

**Enterprise and competitiveness**, which focuses on the need to improve the performance of Kent's economy by – developing the skills base; developing the knowledge economy, attracting inward investment and high quality jobs; supporting enterprise, in particular Kent's diverse range of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs); promoting innovation; providing workspace; developing an enterprise culture; promoting key clusters and market opportunities, including tourism; and developing international links.

**Regeneration**, which highlights Kent's diverse range of towns, neighbourhoods and rural communities, necessitates a multifaceted approach to addressing issues and opportunities in - the Thames Gateway Kent and Ashford growth areas; the rural areas; East Kent and the coastal towns, North Kent, West Kent and the Channel Corridor. Scope also exists to use the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics as a catalyst to change external perceptions of Kent and attract inward investment. A key requirement is the securing of additional funding from Government and new sources, for infrastructure investment.

**Pathways to sustainable prosperity**, which relates a growing urgency to address climate change and environmental issues, to smart

growth opportunities, or - better design and sustainable construction; greater resource efficiency and productivity; more energy efficiency and renewable energy production; and more informed decision making which takes into account environmental and social considerations.

**Accessibility and connections**, which highlights Kent's economic development and regeneration opportunities, need to be supported by investment in Kent's infrastructure and smarter use of existing resources and assets. A key requirement in this regard is further support from Government and new sources of funding. Issues considered include - accessibility and integrated transport; Kent's European gateway location; the enabling role of ICT; and investment in utilities and services, particularly in growth and regeneration areas.

## **Bi-Annual Action Plan and Progress Report**

So as to enable a greater focus on delivery, a 2 year action plan accompanies Kent Prospects. This identifies key activities and outcomes which partners aim to work toward from 2006 to 2008. The action plan will be reviewed and updated in 2008 and again in 2010. A progress report will also be published with the action plan, to help chart how Kent's economy is performing.

## 3. Introduction

### Kent Partnership and Vision for Kent

Kent Prospects 2006 to 2012 has been developed within the context set by the Kent Partnership's Community Strategy – the Vision for Kent. The Vision outlines key challenges, long term goals, and an 'Economic Success – Opportunities for All' aspiration for:

*'A Kent where innovative and creative businesses, self-reliant and skilled people and supportive and responsive organisations in private, public and community sectors sustain economic success and regeneration'.*

Kent Prospects provides a further level of detail on how partners aim to work toward the above aspiration. As such it forms the Kent Partnership's strategic policy framework for economic development and regeneration.

### Kent Prospect's Aims

Kent Prospects aims to:

- Review and update the 2002 to 2006 version

of Kent Prospects and its 'mosaic economy' concept.

- Develop a shared understanding of Kent's key economic development and regeneration issues.
- Encourage all stakeholders to share common aspirations on developing sustainable prosperity in Kent.
- Outline a framework to influence, guide and co-ordinate Partners' delivery of economic development and regeneration activities in Kent.
- Highlight key priorities and opportunities for Kent's economy.

### Delivery Partners

The document's 6-year time horizon and the sheer range of economic development and regeneration activity underway, means that it cannot serve as a detailed delivery plan. This will need to be achieved by partners seeking to align their activities to the direction of travel articulated by the Vision for Kent and Kent Prospects. The Kent Agreement, which incorporates the Local Area Agreement (LAA), and the Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA2), provides a further mechanism and incentives to achieve this alignment.

### Framework of Document

Subsequent sections of this document provide a more detailed examination of the following considerations:

- Strategic Context – a review of European, National, Regional, County and local influences.
- Progress Report – a review of how the economy has moved on since the 1996 and 2002 versions of Kent Prospects.
- Drivers of change – wider issues influencing Kent's economic future.
- Vision for Kent Economic Success objectives and cross cutting considerations.
- Delivery framework – an outline of priorities, associated activities and key outcomes.
- How Kent Prospects will be monitored and reviewed

## 4. Strategic Context

A range of strategic influences have shaped the development of Kent Prospects, including the following:

### The Vision for Kent

A 20 year vision for improving the county's economic, social and environmental wellbeing, so that Kent will be a county:

- Where a vibrant and successful economy and targeted regeneration are delivered and sustained.
- Where learning is promoted and supported for everyone – for life, for employment and for enjoyment.
- Where people lead healthier lives and enjoy high quality services that meet their need for health, care and wellbeing.
- Where a high quality environment and countryside are protected and enhanced for current and future generations.
- Where communities are stronger, safer and

confident in the face of change.

- Where people enjoy life through an enhanced and accessible range of recreational, sporting, artistic, and cultural opportunities.
- Where jobs and services are easily accessible for all sections of the community and where traffic growth and congestion are reduced.
- Where housing needs are met and decent, high quality homes help create attractive, safe and friendly communities.

### The Kent Agreement

The Kent Agreement's Block 4 on Economic Development and Sustainable Communities, highlights Partners' aspirations to improve Kent's economic prosperity, and attract new and higher value job opportunities. Kent Prospects provides a further level of detail on how partners will deliver against these aspirations.

### The Supporting Independence Programme (SIP)

SIP seeks to develop co-ordinated public service delivery in Kent's more deprived areas to support, for example, better access to learning, skills development and job opportunities. Kent Prospects therefore provides a mechanism for integrating SIP within a wider economic development and regeneration context.

### County Level

Kent Prospects also provides a context for other countywide strategies, frameworks and plans. The intention is to create a coherent and common purpose for all those who contribute to developing Kent's economic wellbeing and prosperity. Key links include:

- The Kent and Medway Structure Plan, particularly with regard to its strategic view on employment land. Kent Prospects refers to the geographical area covered by KCC.
- The Local Transport Plan, particularly with regard to its view on major schemes, public transport and accessibility.
- The Kent Environment Strategy and its focus on addressing resource use and climate change issues.
- The strategies and business plans of KCC Directorates and Service Units.
- The strategies and business plans of the Learning and Skills Council, Kent and Medway Learning Partnership, Business Link Kent, and Locate in Kent.
- The Kent and Medway Economic Board's Economic Statement (joins Kent Prospects and Medway's Economic Strategy).
- The strategies and business plans of organisations represented on the Kent Public Service Board.
- The Kent 2012 business plan

## Local Level

At a local level Kent Prospects provides a context for influencing and shaping - Kent Thameside, Swale and Ashford Growth Area Delivery Board programmes; Area Partnership strategies and Area Investment Frameworks (AIFs); District Plans; and local area based initiatives. It also promotes joint economic development and regeneration opportunities which cross Medway Council and KCC administrative boundaries, particularly in respect of the Thames Gateway, KMEB's economic framework, and the Kent and Medway Structure Plan (KMSP).

A review of Area Partnership / AIFs and District Community Strategies, highlights priorities include the following:

### Channel Corridor

Channel Corridor Partnership priorities focus on - attracting investment to support economic growth; developing business, enterprise and skills opportunities; enhancing the area's sense of place and attractiveness for visitors.

Community Strategy priorities include:

- Ashford: 28,700 jobs in 30 years; more skills and learning opportunities; creating an

environment to encourage inward investment and business growth.

- Maidstone: developing town centre vitality; safeguarding local jobs and attracting inward investment; promoting enterprise and business start-ups.
- Shepway: town centre and rural regeneration; improving workforce skills; promoting business growth and inward investment opportunities.

### East Kent

East Kent Partnership priorities focus on – enhancing the area's quality of life; developing sustainable infrastructure and enhancing East Kent's environment; workforce and skills development; and growing a dynamic business community.

Community Strategy priorities include:

- Dover: developing port opportunities; town centre and coalfield regeneration; improving skills levels; and new business growth.
- Thanet: regeneration through culture and tourism; developing skills and learning opportunities; securing infrastructure investment.
- Canterbury: developing knowledge base, cultural and tourism opportunities; creating more and better-paid jobs; developing new business accommodation.

## West Kent

West Kent Partnership priorities focus on – developing the skills base; supporting local business and tourism opportunities; creating infrastructure responsive to business needs; reducing disparities between deprived and affluent communities.

Community Strategy priorities include:

- Sevenoaks: widening participation in learning; retaining employment land; encouraging new business starts and rural diversification.
- Tunbridge Wells: enhancing tourism and visitor facilities; diversifying the rural economy; support for business starts and local enterprise.
- Tonbridge and Malling: promoting skills development; developing affordable housing for key workers; securing the viability of local shops, services and businesses.

## North Kent

Thames Gateway Kent Partnership priorities focus on KCC and Medway Council areas, and include - Investing in infrastructure and environment; promoting competitiveness, growth and the knowledge economy; and developing sustainable communities.



Community Strategy priorities include:

- Kent Thameside (Dartford & Gravesham): attracting new and better job opportunities for local people; development of Ebbsfleet as a significant business location; improving the local skills base.
- Swale: attraction of higher quality job opportunities; development of key sector opportunities and business locations; improving the local skills base.

## Europe

EU enlargement presents the UK with considerable trade opportunities and Kent's gateway location and two Eurostar stations at Ashford and Ebbsfleet, provide Kent based organisations and businesses with easy access to mainland Europe.

The Lisbon strategy and its focus on jobs and growth is reflected in the UK's national Reform Programme and provides both an EU and national policy framework for improving European competitiveness, skills, innovation and productivity. The Lisbon strategy will also provide the strategic direction for most future EU policies and funding programmes starting in 2007.

Kent has attracted a considerable amount of EU structural funds between 2000-2006, principally in the Objective 2 areas in the east of the

County, cross-border programmes with Nord-Pas-de-Calais, and the URBAN initiative in Kent Thameside. Despite the probability of reduced post 2006 funding availability, Kent is still likely to attract considerable funding for transnational projects from 2007. The focus of the 2007 to 2013 structural funds is therefore reflected in Kent Prospect's aims, objectives and priorities.

## National and Regional Level

Kent Prospect's provides a context for influencing and shaping the delivery of National and South East priorities, including those articulated by:

- Government Departments, including GOSE and the ODPM, particularly in respect of the Sustainable Communities Plan, 'Securing the Future' UK Sustainable Development Strategy, Growth Area policies, and activities linked to the 2012 London Olympics and Paralympics.
- SEERA's South East Plan, and its sub regional spatial policies.
- SEEDA's Regional Economic Strategy, 2006 to 2016, and its vision of 'the South East as a world class region achieving sustainable prosperity, which - builds on excellence and plays to its strengths; Invests in potential across the region and reduces underperformance; and safeguards quality of life as a competitive advantage.

## 5. Progress Report and Kent Challenges

### Kent Prospects Background

The first Kent Prospects was produced in 1996 as a 10 year strategy. A 2002 refresh took the strategy forward to 2006. The review mapped a number of potential scenarios for Kent's economy, with these summarised by box 1. Stakeholder consensus favoured the mosaic economy concept underpinned by three key objectives – promoting smart development; encouraging green growth; and nurturing quality communities. The 2002 Kent Prospects also stressed the importance of developing Kent's knowledge economy as a key means to achieve sustainable prosperity in an increasingly competitive world.

### Kent Prospects 1996 Targets

A review of 1996 Kent Prospects' 10-year' targets highlights achievement of targets related to growth of GDP, GDP per head (output/productivity), annual GDP growth rate,

low unemployment rates, and jobs growth. A manufacturing output target was however not reached, with this a reflection of declining sector employment, national trends, and a global shift of volume production to cheaper locations. This positive overall picture owes a lot to favourable national and international economic conditions, as well as local economic development initiatives.

### Benchmarking Performance

Kent Prospects 2002 introduced a benchmarking methodology to further refine our understanding of Kent's economy. This compares Kent's performance relative to the national (GB) and South East (SE) picture.

GB and SE benchmarking highlights a reasonable Kent level of performance on job creation, enterprise, and employment rates. Poorer scores are recorded against skills, productivity and knowledge economy employment.

Comparisons within Kent highlight continuing intra-county disparities. East Kent, Swale and Shepway register a high incidence of multiple deprivation, with much of this concentrated in the coastal towns.

### Mosaic Economy Progress

The review of 10 year targets and benchmarking

indicates that Kent's economy has moved on considerably since 1996, and that in terms of national comparisons performs relatively well. Key milestones include the opening of CTRL and Eurotunnel; regeneration of the Kent coalfields; and developments in the Kent Thames Gateway and Ashford growth areas. Employment grew by 56,700 from 1996 to 2004, and Inward investment has on average created 1,800 jobs each year since 1997. Kent's home-grown and small businesses, accounting for 98% of the stock, also continue to thrive. Higher education and research facilities have also developed.

Intra-county disparities remain however. Local economic performance also continues to lag behind the pace set by the faster growing parts of the South East. Increasing employment opportunities, skills, innovation and productivity, and knowledge economy job opportunities, which help attract and retain skilled workers and graduates, therefore remain key priorities. Demographic change and an ageing population, also means encouraging people from all generations to learn for life, to ensure Kent sustains a competitive workforce.

The 2005 Kent Environment Strategy progress report highlights climate change and environmental issues need to be addressed by a more resource efficient local economy, and the development of renewable and alternative sources of energy.

## Kent Challenges

The progress report underlines the view of a mosaic economy of diversity and strengths, but with many challenges that need to be addressed related to:

- Responding to demographic change, and expanding the economy's skills base,
- Promoting an Innovation and enterprise culture across all parts of the county.
- Making the most of Kent's gateway location between London and Europe.
- Attracting investment, businesses and jobs, via home grown enterprise and inward investment.
- Developing key assets and market opportunities, particularly where these strengthen Kent's knowledge economy.
- Realising regeneration opportunities and partnership working in Kent's coastal towns, disadvantaged urban and rural communities.
- Making sure business and job growth forms a key part of growth area plans.
- Addressing climate change, environmental and quality of life issues through smarter growth.
- Securing investment to enhance Kent's accessibility and infrastructure.
- Developing new messages on Kent's place in the 21st Century.
- Securing local benefits from the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, and promoting Kent as the gateway to the games

*Note: An accompanying data annex provides detailed information on the indicators discussed by this section (to follow).*

### Box 1: Kent Prospects 2002 '2020' Scenarios

**'Mosaic Economy'** - a Kent of thriving, diverse enterprises, towns and neighbourhoods; existing strengths and new opportunities are developed; regeneration issues are addressed; and the county's environment and quality of life, upon which long term investment depends, is safeguarded.

#### **'Connected Kent: Britain's Euro-Hub'**

- the knowledge economy develops; Kent's European gateway advantages are maximised; but growth comes at a certain environmental cost.

#### **'Good in Parts: No Transformation'**

- a 'multi-speed' economy; in parts it holds its own against other regions; but has not achieved a step change in performance and competitiveness.

#### **'Wheels, Wires & Warehouses'**

Kent's communications hub role grows; road borne activities form the main driver for the economy; but this comes at a high environmental cost which damages Kent's quality of life.

#### **'Drifting into the Backwaters'**

weaknesses not addressed; a county falling behind other UK and European regions; and marked underperformance in comparison to the South East.

**Box2:** Smart growth seeks to advance our understanding of how our economy can function within environmental and technological limits. A central aim is to increase resource efficiency, with many commentators highlighting existing technologies, if applied, would allow us to increase resource productivity by a factor of 4. By having more regard for the environment and finite natural resources, smart growth provides a means to operationalise the idea of sustainable development for private and public sectors. Smart growth can also be applied to spatial planning and skills issues. For example, engaging disadvantaged communities, and enhancing employability, increases an area's workforce, thereby reducing the need for in-migration and new house building.

**Box3:** The Knowledge Economy: The DTI (1998) identify generation and exploitation of knowledge, as a key driver for UK competitiveness in the 21st century. There are many definitions which aim to add clarity to the concept, with two given as follows. The first offers a broad view, the second highlights the role of people and skills:

*'In today's global, information driven society, economic success is increasingly based upon the effective utilisation of intangible assets such as knowledge, skills and innovative potential. The term "knowledge economy" is used to describe this emerging economic structure.'* (ESRC, 2002)

*'The knowledge economy.....is one that encourages its organisations and people to acquire, create, disseminate and use (codified and tacit) knowledge more effectively for greater economic and social development.'* (OECD, 2000)

## 6. Drivers of Change

Key wider drivers shaping and influencing Kent's challenges and economic prosperity, are outlined as follows:

### International

- Globalisation and the rapid emergence of new economic powers including China, India, Russia and Brazil.
- The growth of the knowledge economy.
- Rapidly developing new technologies, including Information and communication technologies.
- Global resource and political tensions.
- The impact of climate and environmental change.

### European

- The Lisbon Strategy, its drive to increase Europe's global competitiveness, and influence on the strategic framework for EU policies post-2006.
- Market opportunities and challenges provided by the EU's 25 member states, with two more due to join in 2007.

- Structural funds will be more targeted on the new Member States and lagging regions. But Kent will still benefit from funding designed to enable transnational and cross-border projects.
- Potential reforms to the CAP may present future opportunities and challenges for peri-urban and rural areas in Kent.
- EU legislation requires higher levels of environmental quality and sustainability.
- Kent's European gateway location, which needs to be exploited more fully.

### National

- Sustained economic growth - but need to develop the knowledge economy and increase competitiveness.
- Addressing deprivation in disadvantaged communities.
- Imperatives to increase resource efficiencies (e.g. waste minimisation and recycling); and reduce the UK's fossil fuel dependency (renewable and alternative sources of energy + energy efficiency measures).
- The 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, the ODPM Sustainable Communities Plan and Growth Areas.
- A changing support and economic context for rural areas.
- Increasing legislation on business, and the effect on smaller companies.

- Pressures to increase public service efficiencies and reduce spending.

### South East

- The dominant influence of London and the Thames Valley economy regionally and nationally.
- The growth areas – their sustainable development and maximising associated benefits.
- Making sustainable use of finite assets (e.g. minerals), and managing demand for resources (e.g. water, land, and energy), and delivering enhancements (e.g. to landscapes and biodiversity).
- High demand for homes, workspace, mobility, and community infrastructure.
- Skills and labour shortages in many sectors.
- Concentrated areas of deprivation, and lower employment rates in coastal areas.
- Achieving sustainable prosperity, which maintains and improves the quality of life and environment.

## 7. Aims and Objectives

### Long Term '20 year' Objectives

The Vision for Kent outlines a number of long term economic development and regeneration objectives:

- Developing a 'mosaic economy' made up of individual components which are important in their own right and which work together to create a larger, cohesive picture.
- Developing successful and innovative businesses, especially within our diverse and vibrant small business community.
- Making Kent a key location for Inward Investment.
- Making 'smart development' in public and private sectors the norm rather than the exception, generating less waste and making more efficient use of energy, natural resources and assets.
- Developing a vibrant rural economy.
- Achieving a high quality infrastructure and integrated transport network.

- Economic renewal in urban areas and rural centres, especially in regeneration areas and coastal towns.
- Increased employment rates, especially amongst disadvantaged groups and areas.
- A knowledge rich economy and highly skilled workforce.
- Leading edge sectors, clusters, organisations and businesses.
- More flexible ways of working enabled by new communication technologies.
- Valuing the contribution the voluntary, not for profit and faith sectors make to regeneration and employability.
- Valuing the contribution skilled incomers and temporary workers make to Kent's economy.
- Promoting independence through employment for those able to work.

### Key Questions

In addition to addressing Vision for Kent objectives, five key questions also require a Kent Prospects response:

#### *How Do Activities Develop Jobs, Skills and the Knowledge Economy?*

Activities need to demonstrate a direct and indirect influence over increasing job opportunities and skills levels. This is highlighted by growth area employment targets, lower

employment rates in coastal areas, and the need to expand Kent's knowledge economy.

#### *How Do Activities Help Enterprise Flourish?*

Kent's businesses, especially its large smaller business community are the bedrock of the county's economic wellbeing. This asset needs to be supported by the development of an enterprise culture in schools, colleges, universities, public service providers, and communities.

#### *How Do Activities Promote Independence?*

Kent has a significant number of people and communities who live in workless households. Many peoples' quality of life would however be enhanced by increasing their employability through participation in learning, skills development and employment opportunities.

#### *How Do Activities Reduce Deprivation and Disadvantage?*

Kent has significant concentrations of deprivation in coastal towns, parts of East and North Kent. Promoting independence therefore needs to be supported by economic development and regeneration activities that deliver benefits to disadvantaged urban and rural areas.

### *How Do Activities Support Sustainable Prosperity?*

Kent's quality of life and environment is the key resource, which underpins the county's long-term prosperity. Climate change, the growth areas, and pressures on natural resources are however increasing tensions between the environment and economic growth. New, smarter, greener approaches therefore have to be explored and delivered.

## 8. Delivery Framework

Kent Prospect's job is to provide a delivery framework which responds to the Vision for Kent objectives and the five key questions, outlined by the previous section.

Stakeholder discussions and workshops supporting the Vision for Kent and Kent Prospects reviews, point toward this being achieved via an approach based on the following thematic areas, and which focuses on shorter-term priorities, associated interventions, and measurable outcomes:

- Enterprise and Competitiveness
- Pathways to Sustainable Prosperity
- Regeneration
- Accessibility and Connections

### Enterprise and Competitiveness

Kent's economy has over time performed reasonably well against national comparisons, but underperforms on skills, productivity and wage

levels when compared to the South East. Proportionally, there are also fewer knowledge based employment opportunities in Kent. A more encouraging picture emerges however on indicators related to employment and business growth.

Promoting a countywide culture of enterprise and competitiveness would improve economic performance. Kent has some major assets to help achieve this aim. These include - Kent's established employers, especially micro businesses and the small and medium sized enterprise community; its science and knowledge base, which offer opportunities to attract high value jobs and businesses; the existing and future workforce; its European and 2012 Olympics/Paralympics gateway location; quality of life and environment, which underpins Kent's attractiveness for inward investment and new business ventures.

Making the most of these assets requires co-ordinated action on - skills development; the attraction of inward investment; development of local business opportunities; innovation; a supply of business sites and premises; and promotion of enterprise development in schools, colleges and universities. In today's global economy, it also means searching out and developing international links and opportunities. The development of more knowledge based job opportunities would

also help to attract more graduates to Kent.

### Pathways to Sustainable Prosperity

Climate change, rising energy costs, and overconsumption of finite resources, particularly in economic hotspots like the South East, are key factors forcing a shift from traditional patterns of growth to smarter, greener forms. Kent has to contend with these and additional influences. Growth area and housing development pressures will increase demands on waste management, natural resources and infrastructure. Water is already a scarce commodity, traffic congestion is impacting on the economy, waste costs are rising, and land is scarce and costly. Kent therefore needs to protect and make better use of its resources and assets.

Addressing these challenges offers tremendous opportunities for enterprise, innovation, skills development and jobs growth in Kent. The county has already begun to explore this potential in areas such as eco-enterprise, waste market development/recycling, renewable energy, non-food crops, and sustainable construction. However a step change in capacity and intensity is now required to take Kent on its pathway to sustainable prosperity. This will involve – sustainable development and communities in practice; a carbon neutral and energy efficient economy; sustainable resource use; new



market and supply chain opportunities; and a valuing of environmental considerations when applied to investment, procurement and development decisions.

## Regeneration

Kent is generally perceived to be a prosperous county with most communities enjoying a high standard of living. There are however concentrations and pockets of urban and rural disadvantage in some areas, particularly in parts of East and North Kent. The historic and ongoing causes for this are numerous and interdependent, and include the decline of older industries and fragile local economies.

Thames Gateway Kent and Ashford growth areas, urban renaissance in the coastal towns, the potential of the rural economy, Kent's gateway location, and CTRL domestic services – all combine to offer the county some unique regeneration opportunities. Related initiatives need to include – the attraction of new investment from Government and the private sector; development of transformational projects; partnership working with communities to develop learning, skills and enterprise opportunities; and enhancements to accessibility and connections.

This huge range of opportunity also needs to be supported by the development of branding and

marketing activities. These need to project Kent's distinctive and diverse heritage, quality of life, and 21st Century future, within Kent and to the rest of the world.

## Accessibility and Connections

Kent's road and rail links to London and Europe are generally good, albeit investment in more local services and infrastructure remains a high priority. The introduction of CTRL domestic services during 2009 will increase accessibility, especially from the Thames Gateway, Ashford, East Kent and the coastal towns. CTRL International stations in Ashford and Ebbsfleet will also enhance Kent's position as a European gateway.

Better access increases the influence of London and the city's commuter pull for higher paid jobs, but also enhances Kent's attractiveness for inward investment and new business starts. The Channel Ports, Eurotunnel and Kent's airports, in addition to generating economic benefits, also have environmental impacts, not least those associated with Operation Stack. Along with the rest of Britain, Kent's urban centres are grappling with car dependency and peak hour congestion. Challenges include securing investment for public transport, making better use of existing road assets, and changing residents, employer and business behaviours.

Information and communication technology (ICT) and broadband access has rapidly evolved as a key driver of economic productivity. Although Kent has benefited from investment, lower productivity levels in comparison with the South East, indicate more can be done to encourage uptake of ICT.

A range of Initiatives therefore need to be progressed to further enhance Kent's accessibility and connections, particularly those which improve economic prospects and mitigate environmental impacts.

## 9. Priorities

### Enterprise and Competitiveness

From 2006 to 2012 priorities and interventions related to the following activities, need to be progressed:

- Jobs, skills and qualifications
- Inward Investment, high quality and knowledge economy jobs
- Enterprise and SMEs
- Innovation
- Sites and premises
- Enterprise and education
- Cluster and sector development, local supply chains and market development opportunities
- Tourism
- Globalisation and International links

### Jobs, Skills and Qualifications

Having the right skills and qualifications will be vital to Kent's residents and communities if they are to compete effectively in the 21st century knowledge economy. Results from Kent's schools and vocational training providers, highlights the county is going in the right direction and

workforce skills are also improving. Kent's Universities also provide learning and research opportunities for 32,000 students – but many of the annual flow of 8,000 graduates tend to leave the county after graduation.

Opportunities exist to ensure learning and skills provision responds more effectively to employer, key sector, inward investor, Olympics, growth and regeneration area needs. Vocational training and higher education participation rates need to be increased in disadvantaged communities. Demographic change also means sustaining the workforce by encouraging people across generations to remain in, or return to the labour market. A further challenge is to increase learning and training participation rates of people not in education, training or employment (NEETS).

Kent can't afford to stand still if it wants to keep and attract jobs. More therefore needs to be done to provide our young people and existing workforce, with the skills and tools for a successful and fulfilling future.

### Priority

Over the 2006 to 2012 period lead partners will therefore seek to:

***'Develop Kent's current and future workforce by investing in activities which increase the***

***quality and supply of pre-vocational training, basic skills, vocational and work based learning, and higher education opportunities'.***

### Levers

Current activities include:

- Employer engagement and skills brokerage.
- Centres of Vocational Education (CoVEs), and development of apprenticeship opportunities.
- The Building Schools for the Future initiative, and LSC Capital Programme.
- Encouraging young peoples' participation in learning and vocational skills, including Connexions and Kent's 14 to 19 strategy.
- The development of pre-vocational centres (for 14 to 16 age group).
- Construction Labour in Kent (CLIK).

Additional '2006 to 2012' activity includes:

- Developing the skills base of the existing workforce so that it meets employer and business needs.
- Increasing participation rates in higher education.
- Promotion of graduate jobs and enterprise opportunities.
- Encouraging more people from the NEETS group, to improve their employability.
- Vocational skills programmes focussed on key

sectors, growth and regeneration area opportunities.

- Development of higher value skills programmes.
- Development of the Action for Business College network.
- Development of Local Skills for Productivity Alliance priorities.
- Development of Area Partnership learning and skills priorities.
- A Kent 2012 skills taskforce

### **Inward Investment, High Quality and Knowledge Economy Jobs**

Kent has a good track record of attracting Inward investment projects. Locate in Kent highlight since their establishment in 1997 and up to the end of 2005, they have on average attracted 1,800 new jobs each year. Further analysis indicates that 'inward investment' jobs tend to bring high quality employment opportunities to Kent.

The global market place for mobile investment has however moved on rapidly since the mid 1990s. Volume manufacturing and service provision now tends to search out lower cost locations in Eastern Europe and Asia, particularly China and India – and these locations are also beginning to compete for higher value projects and jobs.

Kent therefore has to devote more attention to attracting smaller scale, higher quality and specialist projects, as well as being able to respond to larger windfall investment opportunities. This means offering - a high quality natural environment, effective accessibility, a market ready supply of flexible business accommodation, and a skilled workforce. Kent's knowledge base (research establishments and universities) also strengthens Kent's offer.

#### **Priority**

Over the 2006 to 2012 period lead partners will therefore seek to:

***'Market Kent as a high quality business location, and attract new investment and jobs, which contribute to the development of key sectors and Kent's knowledge economy'.***

#### **Levers**

Current activities include:

- Locate in Kent.
- A step change campaign to influence business and investor perceptions
- Targeted marketing to attract key sectors and knowledge intensive businesses.
- Provision of aftercare services to support key businesses and new investors.

Additional '2006 to 2012' activity includes:

- Promotion of the Thames Gateway Kent and Ashford growth areas.
- Identification and development of new investment opportunities for East Kent and the Coastal Towns.
- Development of existing and potential opportunities linked to Kent's knowledge base and key sectors.

### **Enterprise and Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs)**

SMEs, especially smaller firms dominate Kent's business population of over 53,000 firms. 98% have fewer than 100 employees, and 69% are considered to be micro businesses (fewer than 5 employees). Home based businesses are also increasing in number. Activities embrace a wide spectrum of activities, with significant concentrations in business services, construction, manufacturing, wholesale, and retail. Larger companies and international brand names also have operations in Kent, including – Pfizer, P&O, Hornby, Saga, The Royal Bank of Scotland, BT, Glaxo Smith Kline, Eurotunnel, Meridian, and Fidelity Investment Services.

Kent has a dynamic and increasing business community. The public sector can help support continued enterprise and business growth, in

partnership with the business community, through a range of activities related to skills, technology, addressing regulations and legislation, market development, knowledge exchange, premises, and infrastructure. A focus on the potential of Kent's smaller businesses, key sector and market development opportunities would in particular help improve Kent's economic performance.

### Priority

From 2006 to 2012 lead partners will therefore seek to:

***'Support the development of Kent's business community, especially small and medium sized enterprises, by providing high quality business support services'.***

### Levers

Current activities include:

- Provision of advisory services, brokered by Business Link Kent.
- BLK Euro Info Centre
- Enterprise Gateways, which nurture entrepreneurs and young companies within the general business community.
- The development of enterprise skills in disadvantaged communities (e.g. Trading Up Project).

Additional '2006 to 2012' activity includes:

- Linking business growth potential to market development opportunities, key sectors and clusters.
- Identification of key skills gaps and development of linked activities.
- Identification of key infrastructure needs (e.g. technology, sites and premises) and development of linked activities.
- Development of an approach to public sector procurement that builds in opportunities for the local economy and businesses.
- Helping businesses address regulation and legislation.
- Encouraging more take up of ICT and broadband by SMEs.
- A Kent 2012 business and sectors programme

### Innovation

Levels of innovation, research and development are key drivers underpinning the prosperity of local economies. The South East is one of the UK's most innovative areas, with this reflected in high skills levels and productivity, and large numbers of knowledge intensive businesses.

Kent's knowledge base – its universities, research centres, science and technology businesses, are major economic development and innovation assets. More knowledge base engagement with

the wider business community and public agencies would therefore benefit Kent's economy, particularly the development of the knowledge economy.

### Priority

From 2006 to 2012 lead partners will therefore seek to:

***'Support the development of Kent's knowledge base, and promote a culture of innovation in Kent's businesses, public agencies and communities, to enable development of opportunities related to new services, products, markets, graduate retention and jobs'.***

### Levers

Current activities include:

- Research Centres (e.g. East Malling Research) and Enterprise Hubs (e.g. Kent Science Park and University of Kent, Canterbury), which focus on assisting knowledge and technology, based sectors.
- Knowledge and technology transfer programmes (e.g. Manufacturing Advisory Service; Knowledge Transfer Partnerships; STEP / undergraduate placement programmes; DTI R&D grants for SMEs; R&D Tax Credits)

- Business Advisory Services focussed on supporting innovation (e.g. – BLK’s Innovation and Technology Team; Technology Enterprise Kent; University Research and Commercialisation Offices)
- Kent Inventors Club (supported by BLK)

Additional ‘2006 to 2012’ activity includes:

- Development of a Strategic Innovation Network, linking partners in Kent, Hungary and Virginia (USA).
- The University of Kent at Canterbury ‘I4C’ project.
- Development of ‘University – Business community’ knowledge exchange and innovation networks.
- Federation of Small Businesses and University protocols
- Development of knowledge base (Universities and research centres) assets and clusters.
- Activities which profile innovation successes and opportunities.

## Sites and Premises

The changing nature of the economy and the shift toward more knowledge intensive activities is beginning to influence market demand for property. The trend is toward more flexible accommodation for businesses, whether they are at start up stage, growing or restructuring.

Therefore, encouraging investment in this style of property, in sustainable locations close to transport nodes, is a key basic need to help Kent’s economy grow, particularly for smaller businesses and inward investors. Environmental gains also accrue from developments on previously developed land, which is well served by public transport.

Investment interest in the Thames Gateway and Ashford has tended to focus on housing developments. In many towns, for example Maidstone, Canterbury and parts of West Kent, concerns have been voiced over the loss of existing business premises and employment sites to housing. And in parts of East Kent, provision of workspace comes low down on investors’ priorities. More emphasis therefore needs to be given to attracting investment in industrial, office and commercial developments in growth and regeneration areas. Major development proposals will also need to address environmental and transport issues, and where appropriate provide mixed-use opportunities, and supporting infrastructure.

## Priority

From 2006 to 2012 lead partners will therefore seek to:

**‘Improve the supply of business premises**

***across the county, and facilitate investment in a range of business sites, premises, and mixed-use developments, focussing on designated growth and regeneration areas’.***

## Levers

Current activities include:

- Development of key growth area employment sites (e.g. – Ebbsfleet, Crossways Business Park)
- The East Kent Spatial Development Company (EKSDC), to support infrastructure investments in Thanet employment sites.
- Assessment of potential opportunities at key Kent Knowledge base locations (e.g. – Kent Science Park, the Kent Technology Park in Canterbury, Imperial College’s Wye Campus).
- Development of business incubator units and innovation centres.

Additional ‘2006 to 2012’ activity includes:

- Encouraging the development of mixed-use developments and a supply of market ready, flexible business accommodation in sustainable locations with good public transport access.
- Promoting the potential of existing employment sites (as identified in the KMSP and LDFs)
- Encouraging more developers to provide

- market ready speculative developments.
- Development of East Kent business location opportunities.
- Investigating market needs of Kent's small business community.
- Investigating the potential of new infrastructure and business premises funding mechanisms.

## Enterprise and Education

Schools, colleges and universities need to equip their students with a range of academic, life and vocational skills, to help them achieve their ambitions. Of particular importance is embedding a culture of enterprise by opening up the world of work and business as part of the curriculum. National guidance contained in the Howard Davis review (2002), and Tomlinson Review (2004) set the national framework for local providers to develop this side of their educational offer.

Employers and businesses in Kent, especially small and medium sized companies, are working with schools, colleges and universities, to ensure students have a better insight into potential career opportunities, including starting up their own businesses. More however needs to be done to help develop young people's potential.

## Priority

From 2006 to 2012 lead partners will therefore seek to:

*'Develop links between education and business communities, and increased access to enterprise and vocational learning opportunities for students in Kent's schools, colleges and universities'.*

## Levers

Current activities include:

- Kent Works
- The development of business incubators and innovation centres in schools.
- Enterprise in Schools – BEE positive programme.
- The development of 14 to 16 pre-vocational centres, and vocational centres.
- Young Enterprise
- Creative Partnerships Kent

Additional '2006 to 2012' activity includes:

- More FE and HE links with employers and the business community, to develop undergraduate and graduate career opportunities.
- More co-ordination of enterprise activity in schools.
- Linking of enterprise and education activities

with growth, regeneration and Kent's 2012 initiatives.

## Cluster and Sector Development, Local Supply Chains and Market Development Opportunities

Local economic growth can be accelerated by the identification of key assets, market and supply chain opportunities. In many instances this has taken shape through the development of links between the public sector, the business community, and knowledge base.

Kent's mosaic economy has a diverse range of businesses across many sectors, which is a strength and an opportunity. This is particularly so when key sectors are connected with the county's growth and regeneration area opportunities, enterprise and innovation initiatives, key assets, and major drivers – for example climate change issues.

Good progress has been made in developing networking groups and best practice clubs, focussed on key sectors in for example construction, manufacturing, creative industries, and tourism . Further activities should now be developed and taken forward linked for example to – expanding market intelligence, provision of skills and learning opportunities, connecting key partners and connecting growth opportunities with key assets and issues.

## Priority

From 2006 to 2012 lead partners will therefore seek to:

***‘Design and implement mechanisms, which enable the attraction of investment and the development of skills, innovation, supply chains, new services and products, in clusters and sectors with growth potential in Kent’***

## Levers

Current activities include:

- BLK co-ordinated sector support groups for – construction; business consultants; environmental technology, health and social care, facilities management and supply, manufacturing and engineering, and marine industries.
- Key sector skills development initiatives co-ordinated by LSC, which include a focus on – construction; health and social care; manufacturing and engineering; tourism, retail and hospitality; creative industries, media and communications; cultural industries; transport and distribution; Financial and business services.
- Locate in Kent’s priority Inward Investment sectors, which include – ICT; environmental technology and renewable energy; life sciences; transport and distribution; financial and business services

Additional ‘2006 to 2012’ activity includes:

- Construction - including taking forward CLIK; providing vocational training opportunities; and developing the capacity of businesses to engage with key opportunities linked to the growth areas, the Olympics/Paralympics and sustainable construction.
- Eco-enterprises and environmental technologies – including developing market awareness; skills development; capacity building opportunities linked to key opportunities, including the growth and regeneration areas, and renewable energy issues.
- Creative Industries, media and communications – including further development of the Maidstone Media tree concept; development of links with key assets including Maidstone Studios; the Folkestone Creative Quarter; Margate’s Old Town; and the Kent Film Office and Kent Film Board.
- Cultural Industries – including development of the Turner Contemporary concept’s wider regeneration benefits in Margate; the Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury; a Kent cultural olympiad 2008-12 and the role of arts and cultural activities in developing community aspirations and identities in the growth and regeneration areas.
- The Land Based Sector – including development of market and skills awareness for non food and food crops; and the

development of links between the knowledge base, agricultural and business communities.

- Ports and airports – development of market awareness and skills linked to related business operations and opportunities (e.g. Ramsgate and the London Array).
- The knowledge base – development of engagement and networking opportunities which bring together research, academic and business communities.
- The tourism and visitor economy – development of opportunities linked to key assets and events (e.g. sports, cultural and historical).

## Tourism

Kent’s tourism offer provides a unique range of experiences for visitors to the county. These often influence downstream decisions, related to life style choices, locations for business start ups, and inward investment.

The industry embraces a wide range of activities linked to retail, hospitality, and visitor attractions and generates an estimated direct visitor spend of £1 billion per annum for the local economy. Significant opportunities exist to further develop Kent’s tourism profile through for example initiatives linked to the Olympics, European and global connections (e.g. Virginia in the USA, and EU partners).

## Priority

From 2006 to 2012 lead partners will therefore seek to:

***‘Develop Kent’s tourism product through investment in skills, marketing and visitor attractions, and by providing advisory support for tourism businesses’.***

## Levers

Current and future activities from 2006 to 2012 include:

- Kent tourism development and marketing initiatives including the – Kent Tourism Alliance; research and development; and the Kent Tourism Academy.
- Promotion of tourism growth opportunities – taking forward key aspirations and aims outlined by the Kent Tourism Framework (2005 to 2015).
- Development of ‘Kent – Virginia 2007’ opportunities.
- Promoting Kent as a location for accessing the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics

## Globalisation and International Links

Globalisation, the emergence of China and India as major economic powers, and expansion of the

European Union, have significantly changed the basis upon which Britain needs to compete in the 21st Century. Providing goods and services which compete on price alone, is no longer an option, which means competitiveness needs to focus on higher value, higher quality and knowledge based activities.

The development of international links provides a further dimension to facilitate qualitative change and growth in Kent’s economy, through access to new markets, learning, research, innovation and inward investment opportunities. Related benefits are considerable, with for example £100 million of EU structural and Interreg funding available to Kent from 2000 to 2006. Kent has well established links within the EU and with America, and these now need to be further developed for the benefit of the county.

## Priority

From 2006 to 2012 lead partners will therefore seek to:

***‘Raise Kent’s global and European profile as an International gateway, and a centre for entrepreneurship, innovation further and higher education’.***

## Levers

Current activities include:

- Influencing, information dissemination, and project brokerage activities, related to EU policies and funding opportunities.
- Development of partnerships between Kent, Northern France and new Eastern European partners.
- Development of partnerships with Virginia (USA) to explore and develop inward investment, tourism, innovation, and land based opportunities.
- Development of the Kent Ambassadors programme.
- Development of the Strategic Innovation Gateway Network (SIGN), which links partners in Kent, Hungary and Virginia.

Additional ‘2006 to 2012’ activity includes:

- Development of opportunities related to the EU’s 2007 to 2013 Structural Fund and Interreg programmes.
- Development of an International strategy which builds on established links and identifies new opportunities in fast emerging economies (e.g. – Eastern Europe, China and India).



## Pathways to Sustainable Prosperity

From 2006 to 2012 priorities and interventions related to the following activities, need to be progressed, with the Kent Sustainable Business Partnership (KSBP) taking a leading role in guiding activities:

- Quality design and sustainable construction.
- Sustainable consumption, resource efficiency and productivity.
- Sustainable enterprise and new market opportunities.
- A carbon neutral economy, energy efficiency and renewable energy.
- Capacity building and skilled decision making.

## Quality Design and Sustainable Construction

KMSP policy highlights 93,000 new homes will be developed in Kent and Medway from 2001 to 2016. Along with the regeneration of coastal towns and public sector investment in buildings and infrastructure – this investment provides a major opportunity for Kent to develop leading edge skills and knowledge in quality and contemporary design, and sustainable construction.

Techniques and standards are available (e.g. – BREEAM and eco-homes), which encourage

energy and resource efficiencies. Some Kent businesses and public sector bodies have already demonstrated how related investment creates economic and environmental gains. Activity to date has however been disappointing, with fewer than 160 homes built to BREEAM Very Good standard in the South East between 2000 and 2005. Kent should therefore demand higher planning, design and procurement standards. The public sector, clients and suppliers also need to increase their awareness of opportunities, and improve their sustainable construction capacity, if Kent is to benefit from opportunities.

### Priority

Over the 2006 to 2012 period lead partners, will therefore seek to:

***‘Ensure developments embed quality design, local distinctiveness, innovation and minimal environmental impact, across Kent’.***

### Levers

Current initiatives to develop capacity and market opportunities, and encourage LDF’s, developers, growth and regeneration plans to champion higher standards include:

- Dissemination of quality design and sustainable construction best practice.

- KSBP’s Eco-enterprise construction skills & supply chain programmes.
- The application of the EU’s Energy Performance in Building (EPF) Directive (2006), BREEAM, and ODPM’s code for sustainable homes.
- The Kent Design Guide.
- Sustainable Communities initiatives e.g. - Design Excellence in North Kent.
- Procurement of sustainable buildings by Kent’s public sector and social housing providers.
- Examples of investment in sustainable construction by developers and the private sector.

Additional ‘2006 to 2012’ activity includes:

- SUSCON I sustainable and contemporary construction skills, R&D and supply chain initiative.
- Development of the MSH Homes skills academy model.
- Kent Design supplementary guidance on optimal environmental standards (e.g. – water and energy efficiency).
- Providing business and vocational training opportunities in general and sustainable construction methods.

## Sustainable Consumption, Resource Efficiency and Productivity,

Climate change and global pressures on resource availability create an increasing need for a whole life cycle approach to resource use. Smart growth in Kent therefore includes encouraging greater productivity, sustaining resource availability, and the development of new market and supply chain opportunities. Key components are – skills development; investing in the knowledge base and innovation; helping existing businesses grow; attracting new enterprises and inward investment; and making better use of our existing infrastructure, land and assets.

### Priority

Over the 2006 to 2012 period lead partners will therefore seek to:

***‘Investigate, promote and develop the benefits to Kent’s businesses, the public sector, and consumers, brought about by measures that reduce resource inputs, increase efficiencies, and raise productivity’.***

### Levers

Current initiatives to develop awareness, knowledge, skills and market potential include:

- KSBP SME resource efficiency support programmes.
- ReMade Kent & Medway waste market development programmes.
- Waste minimisation, recycling and energy efficiency programmes and advisory services for businesses.
- Environment Agency Pollution prevention and control programmes.
- The Kent Water Demand Management Group.
- University of Kent’s Regional Centre for Business Productivity
- The Kent Biodiversity Action Partnership’s buildings for nature and business initiative.

Additional ‘2006 to 2012’ activity includes:

- A Kent Business Resource Efficiency and Waste Programme (BREW) at BLK.
- Expansion of ReMaDe resource recovery programmes.
- Development of Kent’s knowledge base e.g. East Malling Research, University of Kent.
- Development of new resource efficiency initiatives (e.g. REUSE in Dartford).

## Sustainable Enterprise and New Market Opportunities

Kent has tremendous scope to develop new markets and business opportunities linked to addressing environmental issues.

For example, DTI’s 2002 estimates value the world market for environmental goods and services at \$515 billion, with this forecast to increase to \$688 billion by 2010.

Kent has an established and growing eco-enterprise community, with over 600 firms. The county is therefore well positioned to benefit from growing market opportunities, but the capacity of eco-enterprises and supply chains serving key sectors of the economy needs further development in areas such as manufacturing, the land based sector, construction, energy, water management, and waste management.

### Priority

From 2006 to 2012 lead partners will therefore seek to:

***‘Support capacity development of sustainable enterprises in urban and rural locations, to enable them to secure ‘green’ supply chain and market opportunities’.***

### Levers

Current initiatives to develop awareness, knowledge, skills and market potential include:

- KSBP’s Eco-Enterprise and supply chain programme.

- The Kent Green Buyers Group (ReMaDe)
- Produced in Kent (PINK)
- University of Kent's Regional Centre for Supply Chain Research.
- BLK's sector group on environmental technologies.

Additional '2006 to 2012' activity includes:

- Identifying opportunities to attract 'green and sustainable' inward investment.
- Awareness raising and best practice networks (e.g. knowledge transfer and exchange).
- Awareness raising of new market, eco-enterprise, knowledge, and skills opportunities (e.g. non-food crops, sustainable construction).

## A Carbon Neutral Economy, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

The decline of the UK's own supply of fossil fuels, and the expected de-commissioning of ageing conventional and nuclear power stations, is leading to a scenario whereby the UK is dependent on imported energy. This co-incides with increasing global energy demands and the growth of China and India. Changing energy markets, climate change and energy security issues are therefore beginning to influence the way in which we produce and use energy.

Future development therefore needs to be

underpinned by a greater attention to energy efficiency in the design of our homes (account for approximately 27% of the UK's carbon emissions), community facilities and places of work. Investment in renewable energy, from large scale to micro schemes, is also required. Kent's economy can benefit from this shift, with opportunities available for new business growth and jobs linked to renewable energy technologies, non-food crops, construction, installation and maintenance.

### Priority

Over the 2006 to 2012 period lead partners will therefore seek the:

*'Promotion and development of the investment, skills, business growth and jobs potential associated with energy efficiency measures and all forms of renewable energy, including wind, wave, solar, bio-fuels and micro-scale generation'.*

### Levers

Current initiatives to develop awareness, knowledge, skills and market potential include:

- The Queensborough and Rushenden regeneration project.
- The South East Sustainable Energy Partnership

- The Kent Energy Centre and Kent Renewable Energy Network.
- The Community Renewables Initiative
- Development of offshore wind power and onshore supply chain opportunities (BLK and KSBP)

Additional '2006 to 2012' activity includes:

- Development of the carbon neutral economy concept.
- Development of links between the London Array, onshore facilities and supply chains, including the Port of Ramsgate.
- Development of inward investment, markets, enterprise and jobs opportunities linked to renewable energy technologies, non-food crops, construction and installation.
- Better planning and design advice on energy efficiency and renewable energy (e.g. – Kent Design Guide and LDFs.)

## Capacity Building and Skilled Decision Making

Sustainable development is an often-used term, but is a concept few can define easily, when applied to an organisation and enterprise. The concept is however now being operationalised and applied to service and product inputs and outputs, and whole life cycle approaches. Further capacity building, knowledge and skills

development opportunities do however need to be identified and progressed, to ensure Kent secures related environmental and economic benefits.

### **Priority**

From 2006 to 2012 lead partners will therefore seek to:

***‘Work in partnership with organisations and businesses, to progress opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and capacity to apply sustainable development in practice’.***

Current initiatives to develop knowledge, skills and capacity include:

- KSBP’s and BLK’s ‘environmental issues’ workshops, networks and events programmes.
- The Kent Environment Business Awards

Additional ‘2006 to 2012’ activity includes:

- Development of new knowledge exchange and transfer opportunities.
- The Hadlow College led Sustainable Business Skills programme.
- A Regional Skills Centre for Advanced Manufacturing and Environmental Technology.
- Opportunities for a Centre of Excellence for sustainable and contemporary construction skills.

## Regeneration

From 2006 to 2012 priorities and interventions related to the following activities, need to be progressed:

- The Growth Areas – Thames Gateway Kent (Kent Thameside and Swale) and Ashford
- East Kent and Coastal Towns Regeneration opportunities
- Regeneration opportunities in West Kent, North Kent and the Channel Corridor
- Neighbourhoods and supporting Independence
- The social economy and social enterprise
- Rural regeneration
- The Kent 2012 programme, sporting and cultural events
- Marketing Kent for the 21st Century

### The Growth Areas – Thames Gateway Kent (Kent Thameside and Swale) and Ashford

Since 2002 the growth area delivery boards have taken forward a range of enabling activities to take advantage of the CTRL and lay the foundations for the long-term growth of Thames Gateway Kent and Ashford. Sustainable communities are a key aim, and delivery plans have set out the need for a balance of housing, jobs, transport, and community infrastructure. Further needs include

integration of proposed new communities with established ones; development of sustainable and affordable housing; improvements to the skills base of communities; and co-ordination with Medway Renaissance.

By 2025, investment has to be attracted into the growth areas to support a projected 28,000 additional jobs in Ashford, and up to XX,000 jobs in Kent Thameside and Swale. These aspirations therefore need to be supported by - skills development programmes; investment in sustainable infrastructure to support employment locations; investment in business premises; and attraction of new businesses and jobs.

### Priority

Over the 2006 to 2012 period lead partners will therefore seek to:

***‘Secure resources and attract investment in key economic development projects, to enable the development of business and job opportunities’.***

### Levers

Current and ongoing growth area initiatives include:

- Integrated Regeneration Frameworks and Economic Action Plans for Kent Thameside,

Swale and Ashford, to guide resource allocations and future investment.

- Development of key employment sites.
- Investment in key infrastructure projects.

Additional ‘2006 to 2012’ activity includes:

- Identification and implementation of new funding mechanisms for infrastructure projects.
- Attraction of developer interest and investment into industrial, commercial, and office developments.
- Encouraging the provision of workspace opportunities within mixed use developments.
- Development of unique selling points for the growth areas.
- Identification of key business sectors, job opportunities, and attraction of inward investment.
- Expansion of learning, vocational training and skills development opportunities.
- Further joint working with Medway Renaissance, within the context set by Thames Gateway.

### East Kent and Coastal Towns Regeneration Opportunities

East Kent and the coastal towns have experienced the fall out from declining older industries. The end result is a low skills base, a

poor external image, limited investment interest, and a limited supply of business premises and workspace for small and medium sized firms and larger potential inward investors. Consequently the area contains some of the South East's highest concentrations of urban deprivation and disadvantaged communities.

The area's string of pearls – its coastal towns, ports and airports, Canterbury, historical and cultural centres, and high quality environment, offers however a unique potential for regeneration. The introduction of CTRL domestic services during 2009 will also increase accessibility to the rest of Kent and London. Realising this potential requires joined up activities across a range of partners. Focussed investment in a range of key assets, including green infrastructure, is also required, especially where they have a catalytic effect on regenerating surrounding areas, and have the potential to increase learning, business and job opportunities for local communities.

### Priority

Over the 2006 to 2012 period lead partners will therefore seek to:

***'Secure resources and attract investment, which supports urban renaissance, develops key assets, and improves access to learning, business and job opportunities'.***

### Levers

Current initiatives include:

- Implementation of East Kent Partnership's and Channel Corridor Partnership's Area Investment Frameworks.
- The Turner Contemporary concept in Margate, old town regeneration, and development of wider cultural, arts and regeneration benefits.
- The Margate's Future Initiative
- Development of Folkestone's creative quarter.
- Regeneration of Kent's coalfields sites.
- Development of Canterbury's cultural offer (e.g. the Marlowe Theatre), and knowledge base.
- The East Kent Spatial Development Company
- Capacity building and skills programmes.

Additional '2006 to 2012' activity includes:

- The Dover Pride initiative.
- Securing Ramsgate as the port of choice for servicing offshore wind farms (e.g. the London Array).
- Promotion of smaller town regeneration opportunities (e.g. Herne Bay).
- The East Kent Natural Park concept.
- Investigation of enterprise, skills and job opportunities linked to Manston and Lydd airports, and Kent's Ports.

### Regeneration Opportunities in West Kent, North Kent and the Channel Corridor

In addition to Kent's priority regeneration focus on East Kent and the coastal towns, other parts of the county are seeking to address specific economic issues. For example, Maidstone has a thriving retail base and night time economy, but is characterised by low wage jobs. Sittingbourne, the Isle of Sheppey, Gravesend, and Dartford are also characterised by lower skilled and waged jobs. The West Kent Towns are prosperous but some high streets face increasing competition from surrounding towns, Bluewater and the Internet. There's also a dependence on London commuting for employment. A further common issue is the limited supply of business premises, particularly for smaller companies.

### Priority

Over the 2006 to 2012 period lead partners will therefore seek to:

***'Develop the skills base, improve the availability of workspace, and support the attraction and growth of businesses, especially smaller companies'.***

## Levers

Current initiatives include:

- Implementation of the Channel Corridor Partnership's, Thames Gateway North Kent Partnership's, and West Kent Partnership's Areas Investment Frameworks.
- Investment in town centre public realm projects.
- Increasing the supply of learning, vocational and skills development opportunities.
- Support for the growth of key sectors (e.g. creative industries, cultural industries, leisure and hospitality), local enterprise and business opportunities.

Additional '2006 to 2012' activity includes:

- Encouraging LDF's to provide a framework to secure a sufficient supply of employment land and business premises, primarily in brownfield locations.
- Encouraging the provision of workspace opportunities within mixed use developments.
- Providing capacity building support in priority locations (e.g. town centers) and communities.

## Neighbourhoods and Supporting Independence

Kent has some of the South East's most disadvantaged communities and neighbourhoods. Coastal towns have particularly high concentrations of deprivation and benefit dependency. Initiatives in the growth areas, coastal towns, rural communities, and regeneration areas therefore need to offer scope for disadvantaged communities to access learning, skills development, job and business opportunities.

The Supporting Independence Programme, launched in 2002 has made significant progress in defining issues, supporting community focused partnerships and initiatives that aim to develop community capacity and skills. These sound foundations now need to be developed further in conjunction with local communities, regeneration and neighbourhood renewal programmes.

### Priority

Over the 2006 to 2012 period lead partners will therefore seek to:

***'Work in partnership with communities to raise learning, skills and job aspirations of disadvantaged people, especially in Kent's coastal towns and regeneration areas'.***

## Levers

Current initiatives include:

- The Supporting Independence Programme
- Pilot initiatives which aim to improve the employability of disadvantaged groups.
- Intermediate Labour Market and supported employment initiatives.
- New Deal programmes.

Additional '2006 to 2012' activity includes:

- Development of opportunities which link communities with regeneration opportunities.
- Development and implementation of the Thanet Neighbourhood Renewal Programme.
- The Empty Homes Programme in Swale, Thanet, Dover, and Shepway Districts.
- Investment in community learning infrastructure.
- Influencing the recruitment strategies of major public and private sector employers so they design in the possibility of recruiting from disadvantaged communities and hard to reach groups.
- Support for the growth and start up of local businesses and social enterprises.

## The Social Economy and Social Enterprise

Kent has a thriving social economy (voluntary and community sector organisations and social enterprises). The sector is increasingly engaging in partnered service provision with public sector organisations, particularly in areas linked to the health and wellbeing of communities. The voluntary sector and social enterprises also provide considerable support for local partnerships and communities, and a key resource for developing an area's social capital and confidence - particularly in disadvantaged communities.

The social economy therefore has a key contribution to make to regeneration initiatives, particularly projects that build community capacity. For example, social enterprises are taking a lead in developing skills programmes and pathways to work for disadvantaged communities and individuals, especially in the coastal towns, East Kent and rural communities.

### Priority

Over the 2006 to 2012 period lead partners will therefore seek to:

***'Enhance opportunities for voluntary and community organisations and social***

***enterprises, to contribute to the development of the growth areas, coastal towns, regeneration areas, and rural communities'.***

### Levers

Current activities include:

- Development and supply of supported employment opportunities for disadvantaged individuals.
- Local Authority and Voluntary Sector compacts
- The Kent Community Alliance of Networks; the Voluntary Infrastructure Consortium Kent (VICK) to guide implementation of the Government's Change Up initiative.
- Innovative projects linking physical regeneration with Intermediate Labour Markets.
- The Thanet Community Development Trust

Additional '2006 to 2012' activity includes:

- The Kent & Medway Social Enterprise Network's action plan (2005/6 to 2008/9)
- Building in voluntary sector and social enterprise participation into regeneration projects
- Provision of capacity building support for voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises.

## Rural Regeneration

Kent's rural economy is complex and diverse. Over 19,000 businesses in Kent are rurally-located, employing almost 136,000 employees (22% of the employed workforce in Kent). Self-employment is also a significant feature of rural areas with 13% of the people being defined as self-employed compared to 9% in urban areas.

Although farming incomes and employment in Kent have continued to fall, the land-based industries remains the critical rural sector within Kent. In addition to the £400 million generated per annum from food production, the maintenance of the landscape underpins Kent's £800 million per annum tourism and equestrian industries. This 'countryside capital' also provides a prime attraction for business relocations, with national research indicating two-thirds of rural enterprises are started by people moving into rural areas.

New opportunities are emerging for the land-based sector through diversification into non-food crops, adding value to traditional commodities, environmental management and the development of more specialised, niche food production. Tourism is also growing, but remains vulnerable to changing consumer preferences and global instability.

With a few notable exceptions, deprivation



within rural Kent tends to be dispersed, creating a hidden geography of deprivation. Access to local employment and training remains a particular issue for those with limited mobility, or where local transport is not available or affordable.

Kent's rural economy is therefore facing up to some major challenges. Diversification of land-based activities, appropriate skills training, developing more knowledge intensive enterprises and fostering innovative social enterprises will be key to strengthening the role that rural Kent makes to the county's economy.

### Priority

From 2006 to 2012 lead partners will therefore seek to:

***'Encourage innovation and diversification within traditional rural industries, and foster the entrepreneurial nature of rural communities to provide higher income jobs for rural residents and further develop Kent's rural knowledge economy'.***

### Levers

Current activities include:

- Stimulating the demand for Kentish products and developing local supply chains through the

work of Produced in Kent Ltd.

- Levering in funding to assist community-led regeneration projects (LEADER +, Small Market Towns, Rural Revival etc)
- Development and promotion of niche rural tourism offers.
- Piloting of joined-up one-stop advisory services for the land-based sector (Kent Downs Rural Advice Service)
- 'Rural Proofing' mainstream policy and activity

Additional 2006-2012 activity includes:

- Development of a Kent Rural Strategy and associated rural delivery framework
- Kent rural evidence base project
- Facilitation of diversification opportunities for the land-based sector, including non-food crops, equestrian infrastructure, adding value to traditional agricultural commodities
- Collaborating with national and international partners to promote innovation and knowledge transfer
- Encouraging and developing Kent's rural knowledge economy.
- Fostering and supporting rural enterprise
- Lobbying to ensure that Kent's rural areas have sufficient infrastructure, including next generation broadband to retain the competitiveness and productivity of rurally-located businesses
- Maximising the opportunities offered by the

2007-2013 England Rural Development Programme.

- Programmes which improve access to rural services.

### The Kent 2012 programme, Sporting and Cultural Events

The 2012 Olympics and Paralympic games provide a unique opportunity to raise the county's global profile. Kent's gateway location offers tremendous scope to host some of the anticipated 11,000 athletes, 11,000 coaches and officials, 50,000 journalists, and large numbers of tourists.

This potential needs however to be developed so it provides a legacy for Kent and complements planned investments in the growth and regeneration areas. Opportunities also exist to use the Olympics and Paralympics, as a catalyst for volunteering and skills development in key sectors, for example construction, sport and leisure, hospitality, cultural and creative industries.

In the run up to 2012, Kent also has considerable scope to host a range of sporting and cultural events, with these helping to support tourism and raise the county's profile.

## Priority

From 2006 to 2012 lead partners will therefore seek to:

***‘Promote and develop opportunities associated with the Olympics, Paralympics, sporting and cultural events, which support skills development, business opportunities, and infrastructure investment in Kent’.***

## Levers

Current and future activities from 2006 to 2012 include:

- The Kent 2012 Campaign and its key message on the county’s offer for Olympics and Paralympics participants and visitors.
- Development and implementation of a Kent 2012 Business Plan and Strategy, on sports, arts, young people, volunteering, skills, tourism, transport, economic development and regeneration opportunities associated with the games.
- Development of Sports England links.
- Hosting of a Kent 2007 Tour de France stage.
- Countywide and local sporting and cultural events.

## Marketing Kent for the 21st Century

Kent is a unique county with a special blend of countryside, environments and coast. Its heritage, maritime history, diverse range of towns, the cathedral city of Canterbury and the Garden of England image, add to the quality of Kent’s offer to residents, visitors and investors. Mixed views of what the county is and could become do however prevail. The mosaic economy concept responds to this in part. Further thought is however required on how Kent’s heritage, quality of life, economy and regeneration opportunities, interact to produce something really distinct for the 21st Century.

## Priority

From 2006 to 2012 lead partners will therefore seek to:

***‘Co-ordinate and develop a more coherent message of Kent’s place in the world’.***

## Levers

Current and future activities from 2006 to 2012 include:

- Kent Tourism marketing programmes.
- Locate in Kent inward investment campaigns.
- Area based marketing initiatives

- Kent Thameside, Swale and Ashford growth area marketing initiatives.
- Kent’s 2012 Campaign.
- Development of joined up marketing campaigns, which reflect Kent’s many unique selling points.

## Accessibility and Connections

From 2006 to 2012 priorities and interventions related to the following activities, need to be progressed:

- Accessibility and Integrated transport
- European gateways
- ICT and E-commerce
- Utilities and services

## Accessibility and Integrated Transport

The Local Transport Plan (LTP) from 2006 to 2011 highlights strategic priorities for improvements to Kent's rail and road networks. Many of these are linked to securing benefits for Kent's economy, its gateway location, growth and regeneration areas.

### Priority

From 2006 to 2012 lead partners will therefore seek to:

***'Promote and develop smarter and better use of road, rail, aviation, and public transport assets and investment, and find innovative solutions to addressing major issues including traffic growth, congestion and operation stack'.***

And:

***'Promote and develop the benefits CTRL Domestic Services will bring to Kent, including increased accessibility to London, investment and job opportunities in growth and regeneration areas, especially in the coastal towns'.***

### Levers

Current and ongoing activities include:

- Investment in major schemes including East Kent Access, and the Sittingbourne Northern Distributor Road.
- Development of network management plans and intelligent transport systems to tackle road congestion.
- Investment in public transport, including Quality Bus Partnerships, Fastrack (Kent Thameside), and SMARTLINK (Ashford).
- Lobbying and influencing on the Integrated Kent Rail Franchise.

Additional '2006 to 2012' activity includes:

- Development and Implementation of Kent's Accessibility Strategy.
- Identification of opportunities and funding for more 'Fastrack style' schemes.
- Surface access improvements to the Kent

Ports and Channel Tunnel, including reconnection of the Dover Port rail link.

- Promotion of opportunities to transfer freight from road to rail.
- Upgrading of the M2/A2 Corridor.
- Promoting the regeneration benefits of CTRL Domestic Service, including services, which run through to Dover and Thanet.
- Solving the problems caused by disruptions to cross channel flows and Operation Stack.
- Assessing propositions for a Lower Thames Crossing, taking account of the environmental and capacity issues set out by the Kent and Medway Structure Plan, LTP and Local Development Frameworks'.

## European Gateways

Global trade is putting more pressure on Britain's port and airport capacity, particularly in respect of the economy's increasing dependency on imported goods, and increasing passenger numbers. Port and airport operators are in response seeking to develop a range of options, within a context set out by Government.

Kent's cross channel ports of Dover, Sheerness, Ramsgate and Folkestone, its two main airports at Manston and Lydd, and the Folkestone Eurotunnel facility provide a range of business and job opportunities for local communities. Both of Kent's CTRL International Stations at

Ashford and Ebbsfleet also provide opportunities to develop Eurostar services, and economic benefits for the growth areas. Development proposals need however to consider environmental limits and social impacts

### Priority

From 2006 to 2012 lead partners will therefore seek to:

***‘Promote investment, business and job opportunities at Kent’s cross channel ports, main airports and international rail stations, and ensure proposals are environmentally and economically sustainable, taking account of the capacity issues set out by the Kent and Medway Structure Plan and Local Development Frameworks’.***

Key interventions to progress the above priorities are considered by other sections of Kent Prospects, the KMSP, LTP and LDFs.

### ICT and E-Commerce

ICT and communications technologies are developing at an ever increasing rate, and their use by businesses and organisations has the potential to improve productivity. Digital, Internet and broadband service availability has reached a high level of availability in Kent. Take up by

businesses and communities is however patchy, which means further capacity building, and development is required.

### Priority

From 2006 to 2012 lead partners will therefore seek to:

***‘Promote the business benefits of investing in and applying broadband and emerging communications technologies across Kent’.***

### Levers

Current activities include:

- ICT and e-commerce advisory services provided by BLK.
- Kent Connects
- Provision of ICT training opportunities and facilities, especially for disadvantaged urban and rural communities.

Additional ‘2006 to 2012’ activity includes:

- Provision of digital and ICT infrastructure within new developments.
- Promotion of the business benefits of ICT as a tool to support home working.
- Promoting business take-up of ICT and broadband, especially by SMEs.

### Utilities and Services

The growth areas require considerable investment in power, water, sewage, drainage, and ICT infrastructure, to facilitate development. Parts of East Kent also require further investment in power provision to enable economic development, with the East Kent Spatial Development Company (EKDC), established to facilitate this investment. A further need which applies to all of Kent is for more efficient use of water and energy, including investment in renewables.

### Priority

From 2006 to 2012 lead partners will therefore seek to:

***‘Investigate, promote and develop innovative and alternative funding and delivery mechanisms for the provision of more sustainable utilities and services, in support of economic development and regeneration activities’.***

Key interventions to progress the above priority are considered by other sections of Kent Prospects.

# 10. Delivery and Kent Prospects Action Plan

## Lead Partners

Kent Prospect's objectives and priorities need to form part of the planning and delivery process for all partners. But not all issues will have an equal weighting when viewed within the context of partners' own ongoing and future activities. To take account of these 'weighting' considerations, priorities and associated activities need to be driven by lead partners, who include the following:

- The Kent Partnership and Public Service Board.
- KCC and Local Authorities.
- District Local Strategic Partnerships
- Area Partnerships – East Kent Partnership, Channel Corridor Partnership, West Kent Partnership, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership.
- County wide organisations – LSC, BLK, Locate in Kent, Kent and Medway Learning Partnership, and KMEB

- Growth Area Delivery Boards – Swale, Kent Thameside, and Ashford
- Area based regeneration organisations, local business communities and neighbourhoods.
- European Funding bodies
- Government and Regional bodies – including Government Departments, GOSE, SEERA and SEEDA
- The business community, including – FSB, Chambers of Commerce, major employers, Institute of Directors, and CBI.
- The Voluntary and Community Sector
- The Kent and Medway Social Enterprise Network
- Kent's Knowledge base – its research establishments and universities.
- Further Education Colleges and vocational training providers

## Block 4 of the Kent Agreement

The Kent Agreement demonstrates how a partnership and outcome focussed approach, driven by lead partners, contributes to service, social, educational, employability and environmental improvements across Kent. The delivery of Kent Prospects will therefore be closely aligned with the Kent Agreement's Block 4 on Economic Development and Sustainable Communities.

## Kent Prospects Bi-Annual Action Plan

The monitoring section of this document highlights that Kent Prospects progress reports will be produced every 2 years, the first due in 2008. This co-incides with the Kent Agreement's 2005 to 2008 timescale. Key activities, outcomes and lead partners from 2006 to 2008 that form the core of Kent Prospect's delivery aspirations are therefore detailed by an accompanying Kent Prospects Action Plan. This will be updated on a rolling 2 year cycle, to co-incide with the Progress Report

## Sum of the Parts

The Action Plan focuses attention on a narrower range of activities, but issues, opportunities and innovation will continue to evolve. These should be evaluated and where appropriate absorbed within the Kent Prospects, Kent Agreement and partners' delivery frameworks. In this way co-ordinated action can be progressed which promotes sustainable prosperity, capitalises on regeneration opportunities, improve levels of enterprise and competitiveness, and enhances accessibility and connections.

# Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

The progress report section highlights how Kent's economy has moved on since 1996, and how the local economy fares against national and South East benchmarks. It also provides a view on where we are in respect of the mosaic economy concept.

An updated monitoring framework based on contextual indicators now needs to be developed to enable partners to track and evaluate the performance of Kent's economy. This will be based on an approach, which combines:

- The selection of key performance indicators and targets;
- Trend analysis;
- Benchmarking against national and South East comparisons; and
- Profiling against nearest neighbours

## Key Performance Indicators

The following key performance indicators (KPIs) will be used to track and map the performance of Kent's Economy:

- 1) Unemployment rates
- 2) Earnings (wages)
- 3) Employment Change (jobs)
- 4) Net VAT registrations (of businesses) as a % of stock
- 5) Gross Value Added (GVA) per head (output)
- 6) % of Employees in the Knowledge Economy.
- 7) Skills (level NVQ4+)
- 8) Employment rates

## Targets

Kent's KPIs will be benchmarked against South East, national comparisons and nearest neighbour comparisons. So as to track progress over the 2006 to 2012 period targets will also be set for each KPI. Where available, these will draw from related frameworks, including the Kent Agreement.

## Nearest Neighbour Profiling

In addition to benchmarking performance against national and south east pictures, a nearest neighbour profiling provides an additional depth of understanding on how Kent's economy

performs in relation to the selected KPIs. This exercise indicates that of Kent's 12 nearest neighbours, only Sussex, and Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, are in the South East. This also highlights Kent's economy shares similar characteristics to areas outwith the South East, and as such is markedly different to the economy in the west and north west of the region.

## Bi-Annual Progress Report

A progress report will be produced every two years to chart Kent's journey against the key indicators, targets and benchmarks. Supporting additional information will also be made available as data sets are released, and these will be available via the Kent Partnership and KCC websites.

The progress report will also comment on what has been achieved against the activities identified by the 2-year action plan that accompanies Kent Prospects. This report will be produced in 2008, 2010 and 2012.

*Note: An accompanying data annex provides detailed information on the indicators discussed by this section (to follow).*

# Stakeholder Consultation

The following organisations have participated in a Kent Prospects Advisory Group, or a wider reference network, which has been key to guiding the development of the consultation draft:

- Business Link Kent
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Learning and Skills Council Kent and Medway
- Kent County Council
- Locate in Kent
- South East of England Development Agency
- Medway Council
- The Kent and Medway Economic Board
- The East Kent Partnership
- The West Kent Partnership
- The Channel Corridor Partnership
- The Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
- Kent Thameside Delivery Board
- Swale Forward
- Ashford Futures
- The Kent Tourism Alliance
- The Kent Economic Development Officers Forum

A range of organisations will be contacted to obtain their views on the document during the consultation process, including:

- Organisations participating in the Kent Partnership and Public Service Board
- Organisations contributing to the Kent Agreement
- District Local Strategic Partnerships
- Kent's Local Authorities
- Kent's higher and further education community
- The business community and representative organisations
- The voluntary and community sector

Other organisations and Individuals are also welcome to provide comments and views on the consultation draft.

## Responding to the Consultation Draft

Comments can be submitted by email, or in writing to:

Stephen Arnett  
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Please send comments by Friday 9th June 2006.

