

14 March 2017

Policy, Finance & Resources Committee

Brentwood Economic Strategy 2017-2020

Report of: *Anne Knight, Economic Development Manager*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report presents a refreshed Brentwood Economic Strategy for 2017-2020 as requested at the 31 January 2017 Policy, Finance & Resources Committee.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That members approve the Brentwood Economic Strategy 2017-2020 and agree that a 2017/18 Economic Work Plan is implemented to support the delivery of the Strategy.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 This report attaches a refreshed Brentwood Economic Strategy based on the recent findings of the Enterprising Essex: Opportunities and Challenges report undertaken by the Essex Economic Commission.
- 3.2 This strategy provides a framework to direct the economic development and growth for the Borough and to bring economic benefits to businesses and residents, ultimately supporting an improved quality of life for those who live, work and do business in Brentwood.
- 3.3 It builds on the success of the December 2014 Brentwood Economic Development Strategy and a range of initiatives that have been delivered to address this. It is strategically aligned to economic growth plans at national, regional and county level.
- 3.4 It complements the objectives of the Brentwood Borough Council Corporate Plan and the Brentwood Draft Local Development Plan for economic prosperity.

- 3.5 In particular it will drive forward the objectives of business advice and development; skills and employability support; facilitate business workspace, infrastructure and inward investment; stronger and more vibrant town centres; the rural economy; place-promotion and support for the visitor economy.
- 3.6 Brentwood is one of the higher performing local authorities in Greater Essex, with one of the lowest unemployment rates (3.2%) and a greater share of better qualified staff with higher level occupations (33% with NVQ4 – second highest in Essex).
- 3.7 Brentwood is located with the Heart of Essex sub-region (with Maldon district and Chelmsford) and this is the fastest growing sub-region in Greater Essex (1% per annum). However to aspire to be of the highest performing regions in the UK and maintain and enhance its economic position this needs to increase to 3% per annum.
- 3.8 The vision for Brentwood is to be a thriving, attractive and unique destination for people to live, work and visit by protecting and nurturing its existing high quality environment, growing its prosperous economy and fostering sustainable development which is responsive to the local community needs.
- 3.9 The key economic aims of the vision to are:
- To promote a mixed economic base and a discerning and sustainable approach to economic growth
 - To encourage high value, diverse, employment uses that will provide a significant number of skilled and high quality jobs
 - To encourage better utilization, upgrading and redevelopment of existing land and buildings
 - To enable the growth of existing business, the creation of new enterprises and encourage inward investment
- 3.10 The Strategy Priorities of the Economic Strategy to enable this are to:
- i. To support business development and growth
 - ii. To facilitate and deliver skills and employability support
 - iii. To facilitate and encourage business workspace, infrastructure and inward
 - iv. To facilitate and support stronger and more vibrant town centres;
 - v. To develop and support the rural economy of the borough;
 - vi. To promote Brentwood borough as a place to visit and invest, encouraging the visitor economy

- 3.11 An annual Economic Development Work Plan will be produced outlining the key initiatives to drive forward the Strategy and address its strategic objectives. Progress towards the strategy will be evaluated annually and success will be measured against target outputs and outcomes set for each initiative. Delivery of the Strategy will require strong partnership working with shared delivery where possible to achieve a comprehensive approach, economies of scale and to minimize impact on both staff resources and the ED budget. The ED Strategy will be reviewed every three years or when appropriate due to changing external factors that require this.

4 Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 An annual Economic Development Work Plan will be produced outlining the key initiatives to drive forward the Strategy and address its strategic objectives. For each initiative different options for delivery will be considered and a recommendation for the preferred option recorded.

5 Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 To approve the refreshed Brentwood Economic Strategy and agree that a 2017/18 Economic Work Plan is implemented to support the delivery of the Strategy

6 Consultation

- 6.1 The current Economic Development Strategy successfully underwent public consultation and has been adopted.
- 6.2 Key partners and business groups will be consulted on the refreshed Brentwood Economic Strategy 2017-2020 and engaged with project development and shared delivery where appropriate.

7 References to Corporate Plan

- 7.1 Economic Development is a key priority to support the delivery of the Corporate Plan priorities of sustainable economic development, promoting a mixed economic base across the Borough, maximising opportunities for retail and a balanced night time economy. This includes:
- Facilitating the creation of new businesses
 - Assisting in the provision of advice and guidance for local businesses
 - Working in partnership with the business community and support agencies

- Seeking inward investment into the Borough
- Assisting the SE LEP and Heart of Essex Partnership to secure projects and funding to benefit the Brentwood Economy

8 Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: John Chance, Finance Director (Section 151 Officer)

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- 8.1 Economic Development projects for January to end of March 2017 will be funded from the existing and approved 2016/7 Economic Development budget. Any projects proposed by the ED Work Plan from April 2017 to March 2018 will be funded by the anticipated 2017/8 ED budget.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Daniel Toohey, Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal Services

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- 8.2 There are no immediate legal implications that arise from this report. Legal Services are available to advise and assist regarding partnerships and other matters as these arise.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

- 8.3 None

9 Background Papers (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

- 9.1 None

10 Appendices to this report

Appendix A - Brentwood Economic Strategy 2017-2020

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