

Committee: Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee	Date: 27 November 2019
Subject: Economic Development Update	Wards Affected: All
Report of: Phil Drane, Director of Strategic Planning	Public
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Summary

Economic Development updates have been provided to previous meetings of the Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee on 10 July and 11 September 2019. Resolutions at each have been made to commission an economic report (or study). A brief is being developed and work will be commissioned to inform the Council's Economic Development Strategy in line with the emerging Corporate Strategy.

The Council's major economic event of the year, the 2019 Brentwood Business Showcase, was held on 31 October 2019. The annual event combines opportunities for business support, learning, and inward investment. It is a major undertaking to organise and hold the event and requires the resource of the Economic Development Team. A summary of the event is provided in this report.

Recommendation/s

Members are asked to:

R1. Note the update contained within this report.

Main Report

Introduction and Background

1. The Council's current Economic Strategy 2017-2020 was approved and published in 2016 (Item 399, Economic Development Committee, 10 March 2016). The strategy is now nearing the end of its life and along with preparation of a new Corporate Plan this provides an opportunity to consider future economic priorities.
2. At previous meetings of the Policy, Resources and Economic Development (PRED) Committee (Item 121, 10 July 2019; and Item 167, 11 September 2019), Economic Development updates have been provided with borough-wide data on: economic context; largest companies by turnover; largest non-domestic rate payers; employment figures by sector; retail audits of Brentwood Town Centre. PRED Committee has resolved to commission an economic report (or study). This is to advise the Council on measures that can be put in place via planning policy to encourage economic growth, among other things. Economic data gathered and presented to PRED Committee will be used to inform outcomes of the study.
3. A focused brief for the economic study is being developed and a consultant will be commissioned to undertake the work. Among other things, the brief and further briefs work will consider on the need for the Council to be advised on:
 - Location – Brentwood Borough is well located to maintain and attract businesses, on the edge of London and in reach of key transport connections (road and rail, such as Crossrail/Elizabeth Line). Some parts of the borough are less connected and there are capacity constraints on infrastructure. We are also in competition with places that have similar characteristics. Advice is required on how the Council can make best use of the borough's location and compete to attract inward investment.
 - Changing economy – the business market is changing fast in ways that have included declining office floorspace and increasing remote working, permitted development rights for the change of offices to residential, evolving technology, and environmental awareness and the advent of green initiatives;
 - Innovation – technological advances are enabling the economy to change and adapt. In addition to green initiatives, advice on the types of innovative industries who are interested in the area and how best to attract them;

- Skills – working with education providers to identify skills gaps and facilitate ways of filling these through a range of methods (i.e. apprenticeships);
 - Town Centre challenges – a fast changing market (as above) has resulted in issues such as increasing High Street vacancies, online access of services/shopping, and decreasing footfall. In addition, there are redevelopment opportunities and it will be important to ensure new development complements local centres;
 - Planning policy – a review of economic policies in the Pre-Submission Local Plan (February 2019) and advice/best practice on how to implement a flexible approach to market needs in a constrained policy context (Green Belt borough etc);
 - Use of the Planning process to encourage economic development;
 - Good practice – examples from local authorities and other organisations relevant to Brentwood Borough; and
 - Support of local businesses and inward investment that results in attracting new business to move to the borough.
4. The 2019 Brentwood Business Showcase was attended by almost 400 people on 31 October. The annual event, held for the fourth year at the Brentwood School, was supported by 10 sponsors and featured 58 exhibitors and 15 speakers.
5. In the welcome address, the Leader of the Council introduced Morgan Sindall Investments who revealed the Brentwood Development Partnership branding and presented the new company's plans to provide homes, mixed-use developments, public spaces, commercial and leisure facilities on the council's portfolio of land. The Brentwood Development Partnership also had an exhibitor stand at the Showcase, which provided a platform to engage with local businesses. Morgan Sindall Investments sponsored the drinks reception that was held at the end of the event, providing additional informal networking for delegates and exhibitors.
6. Showcase sessions covered topics such as growing your business to becoming a more 'green' company to learning the latest news about broadband rollout in Brentwood. New for 2019 were a Grange Motors car display featuring the Aston Martin, Jaguar, Bentley and Lamborghini brands and the Brentwood Chamber Zone spotlighting chamber members and their products/services.
7. The budget for the 2019 Brentwood Business Showcase is expected to be cost-neutral.

8. Sponsors of the 2019 Showcase were:
 - Gold Sponsor – Tees incorporating Wortley Byers Law
 - Silver Sponsor – Crest Nicholson
 - Exhibitor Lunch Sponsor – Howe Chartered Surveyors
 - Bronze Sponsors – Axiom Design Associates, Bennetts Funeral Directors, Blue Serif, Brentwood Business Partnership, Howe Chartered Surveyors, Orsett Hall Hotel & Restaurant, Ignite Business Communications, and Kinetic Podiatry Clinic.
9. Exhibitors at the 2019 Showcase (in addition to sponsors listed above) were: Brentwood Development Partnership; Enterprise Rent-A-Car; Pinney Talfourd LLP; Havering Colleges; Sanderson Weatherall; Brentwood Borough Council; Impossible Creations; Levett Consultancy; BusinessTime in Essex; PDT Sales Consultancy; Green Tornado; Network Magazine; Mullis & Peake LLP Solicitors; Federation of Small Businesses; LoCASE II / Thurrock Opportunities; BEST Growth Hub; Superfast Essex; 110 Technologies; Invest Essex; Ongar Business Centre; British Business Bank; ACL Essex; Visit Essex; Inside News; Hollington Associates; Smarty Pants Schoolwear; Concept Original; My Continuum; Your Utility Solution; Rotary Club of Brentwood; HNE Media; Pendle Vehicle Contracts; Brentwood Council for Voluntary Service; Hartswood Golf Club; Carmel Jane Photography; The Chiropractic Centre; KJL Document Solutions; Nuffield Health Brentwood Hospital; Saint Francis Hospice; Grange Motors; Spacio; Oakpark Security; Essex County Cricket Club; Home Instead Senior Care Brentwood; Hawkhurst Invest; Will Protect; Tina Wing Photography; and 24 Fingers.
10. A survey has been issued to sponsors and exhibitors to measure opinions on what worked well and things that could be improved. This will aid

Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

11. The update provided in this report can inform the options for how the Council's new Economic Development Strategy is shaped in terms of economic priorities and how these shape the workplan. The economic study will advise on what measures can be taken to encourage economic growth. Future plans for events such as the Brentwood Business Showcase can inform how the Council undertakes business support and receives inward investment.

Reasons for Recommendation

12. Members are provided with an update on economic activity in order to measure performance and inform priorities for achieving economic growth in the

borough. The economic study will provide advice on options for the Council to encourage economic growth and inform priorities to be set in a new Economic Development Strategy. Measuring the success of the Brentwood Business Showcase is important to inform how such events can contribute to economic growth in future.

Consultation

13. There has been no public consultation on updates provided in this report.

References to Corporate Plan

14. Economic Development is a key priority in the Council's 'Vision for Brentwood' Corporate Plan 2016-2019. Consideration of local economic data and the new Corporate Strategy will help inform preparation of a new Economic Development Strategy for the Council to replace the current Economic Strategy 2017-2020 (June 2017).

Implications

Financial Implications

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15. The cost of commissioning an economic study was not forecasted in the Economic Development budget 2019/20. The value of this work has been measured according to available budget and so will not cause a pressure.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Paula Harvey, Corporate Governance Solicitor & Deputy Monitoring Officer
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16. There are no legal implications.

Economic Implications

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17. The economic implications are contained within this report.

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

18. None.

Background Papers

19. None

Appendices to this report

None