

<b>Committee:</b> Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee	<b>Date:</b> 8 January 2020
<b>Subject:</b> Economic Development Update	<b>Wards Affected:</b> All
<b>Report of:</b> Phil Drane, Director of Strategic Planning	<b>Public</b>
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### Summary

Economic Development updates have been provided to previous meetings of the Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee with a resolution to commission an economic report (or study). Work to prepare the study has been commissioned and an update is provided accordingly.

### Recommendation

**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 at the end of its life. Alongside preparation of the new Corporate Plan (2020-2015) there is an opportunity to consider future economic priorities as part of a new economic development strategy.
2. At previous meetings of the Policy, Resources and Economic Development (PRED) Committee (10 July 2019; 11 September 2019; and 27 November 2019), Economic Development updates have been provided. PRED Committee has resolved to commission an economic report (or study).
3. A focused brief for the economic study has been prepared and will inform outputs of the work. Key themes have been identified, such as location; changing economy; innovation; skills; town centre challenges; and planning policy and use of the planning system to encourage economic growth.

## **Issue, Options and Analysis of Options**

4. Following completion of the brief, the work has been discussed with a specialist consultant with the expertise to carry out the requirements. Work on the study will be collaboratively undertaken with the Council. Outputs are to be reported through January and February 2020, with a final report presented to PRED Committee scheduled for 18 March 2020.
5. The intention of this work is to provide a comprehensive assessment of how to “bring to life” the ideas and actions outlined in the brief. The study is to provide analysis of what steps could be taken by the Council (and its partners) to maximise economic growth and future prosperity. Research will be undertaken to supply ideas and answers focused on case studies and the experiences of other local authorities. A task will be to consider how powers of competence for local authorities and initiatives for growth can be harnessed for the benefit of Brentwood Borough. This would include advice on how the Council can take advantage of Brentwood’s many advantages (such as geography, transport links, prosperity, education and skills), and navigate various challenges that the borough faces (such as size).
6. The study will consider opportunities for how planning policy can encourage and facilitate economic growth. A focus will be provided on how the Council might seek to develop a “can do” reputation in planning and implementation to economic development, with a strong presumption in favour of growth and flexibility. An emphasis will be to consider the creation of locally based, highly qualified and contemporary skilled employment.
7. In addition, a separate discussion is taking place with the Brentwood Business Partnership and Brentwood Chamber regarding town and village centres. In order to improve local centres amidst a rapidly changing economy (business and retail), it is important that national trends are understood and inform the vision for how places can thrive. Further work will take place to inform options and strategy, to be reported to PRED Committee in early 2020.

## **Reasons for Recommendation**

8. 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 and other work will provide options for the Council to encourage economic growth and inform priorities to be set in a new Economic Development Strategy.

## **Consultation**

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

## **References to Corporate Plan**

10. 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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11. The value of the economic study has been accounted for within the economic development budget.

### **Legal Implications**

**Name & Title: Steve Summers, Chief Operating Officer/Interim Monitoring Officer**  
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12. There are no legal implications.

### **Economic Implications**

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13. 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.

14. None.

## **Background Papers**

15. None

## **Appendices to this report**

16. None