

Minutes

Business and Town Centres Committee 16 July 2014

Membership/Attendance

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| * Cllr Kendall (Chair) | * Cllr Reed |
| * Cllr Keeble (Vice-Chair) | * Cllr Russell |
| * Cllr Hossack | * Cllr Sanders |
| Cllr Mrs Murphy | * Cllr Sapwell |
| * Cllr Newberry | |
| Cllr Quirk | |

*present

Substitute Present

Cllr Mrs Davies (for Cllr Quirk)
Cllr Tee (for Cllr Mrs Murphy)

Also present

Cllr Aspinell
Cllr Mynott
Clive Othen – Chair of Brentwood Renaissance Group

Officers Present

Ashley Culverwell – Head of Borough Health, Safety and Localism
Anne Knight – Economic Development Manager
David Lawson – Monitoring Officer
Roy Ormsby – Head of Street Scene
Elaine Richardson – Interim Town Centre and Marketing Manager
Jean Sharp – Governance and Member Support Officer
Rick Steels – Revenues and Benefits Manager

81. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs Murphy and Quirk.

82. Minutes of Community Services Committee meeting held on 26.2.2014

Members noted that the minutes related to matters some of which now fell within the remit of this Committee and they had already been signed by the Chairs of Environment Committee and Housing and Health Committee.

RESOLVED to approve as a true record the minutes of the Community Services Committee meeting held on 26.2.2014.

83. Committee Terms of Reference and 2014/15 Budget

Members were reminded that the Terms of Reference for this Committee were agreed at Annual Council and any proposed amendments needed to be recommended for approval by Full Council by the Constitution Working Group.

Cllr Kendall MOVED and Cllr Keeble SECONDED the recommendations in the report and following a full discussion a vote was taken on a show of hands. It was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that

1. Any suggested changes to the Terms of Reference for the Business and Town Centres Committee be passed onto the Constitution Working Group (CWG)
2. The CWG be requested to recommend to Full Council the following changes to the Terms of Reference for this Committee:-

1. To lead, consider and propose matters concerning the promotion of economic development throughout the Borough and the interface with countywide ~~or~~ and regional economic development initiatives.

6. To consult with the Chamber of Commerce ~~and~~ Federation of Small Businesses, residents and interested parties when required.

84. Business Rates Reliefs

The report provided Members with details of the existing business rates reliefs available to local businesses and the opportunities for enhancing take up of the help available. All existing reliefs were publicised on the Council's website and details of each relief were also included within an information sheet which was sent out with every Business Rates bill.

Members noted that take up of reliefs was patchy and therefore Members were encouraged to provide local businesses with details of the reliefs that were available on the Council's website and in documentation regularly sent to accompany all Business Rates bills.

Officers would additionally promote the take up of the various reliefs available as part of a Council led business event later in the year and would produce another advisory leaflet which would be scrutinized by the PIP Panel.

Cllr Kendall MOVED and Cllr Keeble SECONDED the recommendations and a vote was taken on a show of hands. It was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that:

1. Members actively promote the take up of the various reliefs available to local businesses by advising of the information held and regularly updated on the Council's website and included within the 'Explanatory Notes' that accompany every business rates bill sent by the authority.
2. Members approve the inclusion of promotion and take up of the various reliefs available by officers at a future business event to be held later in the year.

85. Evening Parking Charges

One of the key challenges for the Council was to develop parking charges that encouraged economic vitality in the Borough, and that reflected both the day and night-time economy.

It was considered that there were a high number of vehicles that used the Council's car parks during the evening, and that there was an inconsistent charging structure between the day-time and night-time economy.

It was felt that this was unfair on those using local businesses during the day, and that the many visitors to the area during the evening should make a contribution towards the clean-up costs associated with the night-time economy.

It was proposed that a pilot scheme be introduced for three months, which would monitor the use of the car parks, and the impact it had on local residents and businesses. A charge of £2.00 would be introduced, which would be effective after completion of consultation through advertising the Brentwood Borough Council off street parking places consolidation order 2012. It was anticipated that if approved, and there were no objections, that night-time charging would be introduced from Monday 20 October 2014, or sooner if the order was in place. This would ensure that the trial period covered periods of traditionally lower evening usage, November and January, and a peak period during December.

Charging would be introduced in all Council owned car parks, excluding the multi storey car park due to the high staffing costs that were associated with the barrier system. The impact of the trial would be monitored, and reported back to the Business and Town Centres Committee with the results.

Cllr Kendall MOVED and Cllr Keeble SECONDED the recommendations in the report and following a full discussion a vote was taken on a show of hands. It was

RESOLVED that:

1. A report would be brought back to the Business and Town Centre Committee on 23 February 2015 with full details on the outcome of the trial.
2. Officers would be requested to commence the process of changing the Council's off street parking places consolidation order 2012 to reflect the introduction of a flat rate charge of £2 between 7pm and 6am Monday to Sunday.

3. In the event that insufficient income was raised to cover the one-off costs of £14,200 that a report be presented to Finance and Resources Committee to recommend that such costs be met from the General Fund Working Balance.
4. Any surplus income, exceeding the parking budget, is ring fenced for projects that provided benefit to Town Centres and/or to potentially reduce the cost of day time parking charges.

86. Free parking days in Brentwood multi storey car park and Shenfield Car Parks

Members were advised that following consultation with interested parties, support for free parking days in 2014/15 was very limited as it had not previously resulted in increased footfall for the retail areas.

Feedback from the Council's Parking Manager was that there had been no increased take up in free parking on the days concerned and strong demand remained for paid for parking.

As the free parking days did not appear to be meeting the objective of stimulating increased footfall and support for local shops and businesses in the main retail shopping areas, Members were requested to consider not offering free parking days this financial year and to suggest how the £3,600 already budgeted could best be spent to increase footfall in retail areas. A suggestion of thoroughly cleaning the multi storey car park lifts was put forward and officers would investigate this proposal.

Cllr Kendall MOVED and Cllr Keeble SECONDED the recommendation in the report and following a full discussion a vote was taken on a show of hands. It was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that:

Additional free parking days should not be offered in Council Car Parks (apart from Lighting Up Brentwood as already agreed) and ideas be proposed to the Town Centre Manager as to how the £3,600 additional income (to that budgeted) from not offering free parking could best be spent to increase footfall in the retail areas. Any proposals would be reported at the next meeting of this Committee.

87. Expressions of Interest in Operating Brentwood High Street Market

The report provided Members with an update on the Expression of Interest exercise to consider future arrangements for Brentwood Town Centre Street Trading Market. This was requested by Members at the Community Services Committee held on 26 February 2014.

Cllr Kendall MOVED and Cllr Keeble SECONDED the recommendations in the report. Following a full discussion a vote was taken on a show of hands and it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that

1. A two year license be granted for Essex Farmers Market to operate a weekly Friday and Saturday Market in Brentwood High Street.
2. Officers be instructed to explore alternative market offerings which would enhance the Borough's attractions, including a night time market, teenage market and continental style markets, for Members to consider at a future meeting.

88. Update Report on Draft Economic Development Strategy and Work Plan

The report before us provides an update on the Draft Economic Development Strategy and Work Plan, including key initiatives and thematic work areas.

Cllr Kendall MOVED and Cllr Keeble SECONDED the recommendations in the report. Following a full discussion a vote was taken on a show of hands and it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

1. To support the ED Strategy and agree that it is finalised once the updated employment land, retail and job targets figures are confirmed (estimated early September 2014)
2. To investigate holding a young people job/skills event.
3. To investigate holding a business event to provide business information and advice/networking opportunity.
4. To support Brentwood for Growth as a key forum for business engagement and support for ED
5. To support the proposal to undertake a Skills and Business Needs Survey to provide necessary intelligence on skills needs and gaps to inform future provision and development of skills projects and agree that the ED budget can be utilised to support any administration costs.
6. To consider the Skills Discussion Paper (attached) and provide comment and direction on key priorities to be pursued
7. To investigate developing Apprenticeships within the Council
8. To support the promotion of the Essex Rivers Local Action Group (LAG) LEADER funding opportunity to rural businesses
9. To support the development of a Business Advice and Support Portfolio.
10. To agree to continue to promote and support the low carbon grants programme in Brentwood
11. To support the launch event of the Superfast Broadband Programme in Brentwood borough (Summer 2014)
12. To investigate utilising the Council's website to market and coordinate the visitor offer

89. Termination of Meeting

During the preceding item, in accordance with Rule 28 of Part 4.1 – Council Procedure Rules, the business of the meeting not having concluded by two hours after its start, Members voted and agreed to continue with the meeting for a further 30 minutes.

90. Brentwood Borough Renaissance Group Terms of Reference and Workplan 2014/15

Members noted that the Brentwood Borough Renaissance Group Terms of Reference had been reviewed and revised, following the appointment of a new Chair. The revisions took account of updated Membership with the introduction of Local Trade Clusters and their more efficient use of resources, better accountability, improved financial control and communications.

Within the Terms of Reference, Council Members agree to the annual Workplan presented to them. This is in line with the Council's approach to targeted funding within the Funding Strategy agreed at the Strategy and Policy Board 20 November 2013.

Cllr Kendall MOVED and Cllr Keeble SECONDED the recommendations within the report. Cllr Kendall introduced Mr Clive Othen, Chairman of the Brentwood Borough Renaissance Group, who made a presentation to update Members regarding the work of the Group and responded to Members' questions.

Following a full discussion a vote was taken on a show of hands and it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that:

1. The Brentwood Borough Renaissance Group revised Terms of Reference be approved
2. The Brentwood Borough Renaissance Group 2014/15 Workplan be approved
3. The Chair of the Renaissance Group would provide an update on the Workplan at future Business and Town Centres Committee meetings.
4. Officers be requested to investigate the value of Brentwood's nighttime economy and to report to the next Business and Town Centres Committee meetings

91. Termination of Meeting

During the preceding item, in accordance with Rule 28 of Part 4.1 – Council Procedure Rules, the business of the meeting not having concluded by two hours after its start, Members voted and agreed to continue with the meeting for a further 30 minutes.
