

16 December 2014

Business & Town Centres Committee

Brentwood Business Directory

Report of: Gordon Glenday, Head of Planning & Development

Wards Affected: All

This report is: Public

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report considers how to maximise the benefits of the first phase of the business directory and it's future development.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 **That the Committee form a Working Group to consider how best to maximise the benefits of the first phase of the Brentwood Business Directory and to plan for future development of the Directory. This will be reported back to either the February or March 2015 Committee.**
- 2.2 **That the Working Group be stood down once a report to the Committee is made.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 In order to support businesses and progress the Economic Development (ED) agenda it is important to have a business directory for the borough and to know who our businesses are so that we can engage and communicate with them effectively.
- 3.2 Pro-actions Ltd were commissioned during the summer 2014 to compile an online business listing utilising a CRM database to capture the business contact information. Due to budget, it was agreed that half of the borough's businesses (2,500) in the borough as listed by Companies House would be approached for the first part of this work, and the remainder would be completed in a second phase. The businesses were contacted via telephone to secure the necessary information including key contact person and email address. Pro-actions were successful in securing 1160 email addresses. The information has been recorded on a free online CRM system called Zoho. This has then been successful used

to send out campaigns to invite businesses to the Brentwood Funding and Advice Event, a Social Media and Marketing Seminar and for the William Hunter Way Consultation.

- 3.3 In order to fully maximise the benefits of the Directory to date, further work is necessary to ensure data cleansing and migration of businesses from being leads to contacts and to promote the Directory and establish relationships with businesses. Consideration also needs to be given to the options for completing phase 2 of the Business Directory and ensuring it is comprehensive. It is likely that dedicated additional expertise and resource may be identified as necessary in order to support the Directory in the future.
- 3.4 It is proposed that a small Working Group meets to discuss this and agree a way forward. The Group would be Chaired by Cllr Roger Keeble and consist of two members of the Accord (including the Chairman) and one member of the opposition plus the relevant officers.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 Different options for maximising phase 1 of the Brentwood Business Directory and for its future development will be considered by the Working Group and reported back to either the February or March Committee.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 To ensure a comprehensive business directory for the borough to enable business engagement and to support key initiatives within the ED Strategy.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 This project supports the delivery of the business competitiveness priority of the Economic Development Strategy which has successfully undergone public consultation.

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 balance 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

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The first phase of the Brentwood Business Directory cost £6,150. A potential indicative budget of up to £8,164 has been ring-fenced within the 2014/15 Economic Development budget to support further work on this project if required.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Christopher Potter, Monitoring Officer

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- 8.1 Committees can create Working Groups to consider matters within their terms of reference. The Working Group cannot make decisions. There is no requirement for political balance. The group should be time limited and cease its work once a report to the Committee has been made.

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

- 8.2 ICT team's expertise will be sought by the Working Group.

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

- 9.1 None

10. Appendices to this report

- 10.1 None

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