

26 March 2015

Business & Town Centres Committee

Annual Report - 2014/5 Achievements and Future Plans

Report of: *Cllr David Kendall, Chair of Business & Town Centres Committee*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the achievements of the Business & Town Centres Committee in 2014/5 and outlines plans for future projects and initiatives that the Committee plan to take forward in 2015/6.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That members note this report; the progress made on key initiatives and the future projects and initiatives planned,**

3. List of Achievements

- 3.1 Phase one of the online Brentwood Borough Council Business Directory developed and implemented.
- 3.2 Joint Brentwood Business Advice & Funding Event with Essex County Council held on 29 October 2014 at Hutton Poplars Hall. 15 Exhibitors and 50 businesses attended with excellent feedback.
- 3.3 Free training seminar on "Marketing & Social Media" held in partnership with Pro-actions Ltd on 11 November 2014 at Merrymeade House.
- 3.4 Free training seminar on "Business Planning" held in partnership with Pro-Actions Ltd on 25 February 2015 at Town Hall.
- 3.5 Working in Partnership with Groundwork, Brentwood Borough Council has secured £52,285.00 of low carbon grant EU funding for ten businesses in Brentwood. We have publicly presented grant awards to five of these businesses to date.
- 3.6 First ever quarterly Economic Working Group between Brentwood Borough Council and Essex County Council held on 12 November 2014. Another meeting is planned for the 7 April 2015. This is a forum to discuss joint working on ED strategic issues and projects.
- 3.7 A £2 charge for night time parking in the Borough Council's car parks was launched on 20 October 2014.

- 3.8 The Brentwood Borough Renaissance Group has developed 5 local trade clusters – Ingatestone, Central Shenfield, Upper Shenfield, Crown Street and Ongar Road.
- 3.9 The Brentwood Borough Renaissance Group launched it's own website in December 2014.
- 3.10 A Friday street market has been launched to complement the Saturday market.
- 3.11 ACAVA have been commissioned to undertake a feasibility study for possible Artist studios to be developed in the Baytree Centre or another location.
- 3.12 The Borough Council are funding and promoting the first ever Business Speed Networking Event in the Borough which is due to take place on 18 March 2015.
- 3.13 The Economic Development Strategy and Work Plan have been approved and published on our website.
- 3.14 Led on proposal for Brentwood Borough Council to have four new apprentices working at the Council in 2015 subject to budget.
- 3.15 Rate Relief opportunities for local businesses have been promoted and marketed and the take up numbers have increased.
- 3.16 The Parking Strategy has now been agreed for the Crossrail construction works.
- 3.17 A visitor website option for Brentwood has been fully researched with a possible go live date in 2015 subject to budget.
- 3.18 Car Parking charges have been reviewed and the cost of all day parking in the Borough will be reduced from £10.50 to £8.00. Specific car parking measures have also been introduced to help part time workers and those on the minimum wage who work in the town centre.

4. Future Projects and Initiatives Proposed

- 4.1 Brentwood Business Showcase Event, Early Autumn 2015 - providing opportunity for business advice, support, networking and possible business 2 business trading exhibition
- 4.2 Careers Roadshow with Essex County Council, December 2015/January 2016 .
- 4.3 Series of business training workshops in partnership with Pro-Actions (April to September 2015).
- 4.4 Recruit ED Apprentice (May 2015)

- 4.5 Working Group to develop Car Parking Strategy (March 2015 onwards).
- 4.6 Implement new fixed penalty notices issued under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (on-going).
- 4.7 Phase 2 and completion of Brentwood Business Directory (April to Autumn 2015).
- 4.8 Corporate Brentwood for Growth Relationship Management Meetings (June 2015 onwards).
- 4.9 Teenage Market project.
- 4.10 Visitor website development (July 2015 onwards).

5. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 5.1 Different options for delivery are considered when scoping and developing economic development proposals and where necessary a recommendation for the preferred option provided.

6. Reasons for Recommendation

- 6.1 The recommendation is to note the progress the Committee has made and the future projects and initiatives proposed. The initiatives support and drive forward the Economic Development Strategy and enable delivery of associated thematic priorities.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The ED Strategy successfully underwent public consultation.
- 7.2 Key partners and business groups for each thematic work area are consulted and engaged with project development.

8. References to Corporate Plan

- 8.1 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

9. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Chris Leslie, Financial Services Manager (S151 Officer)

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- 9.1 Implementation of future projects and initiatives will be subject to confirmation of 2015/6 Economic Development, Renaissance Group budget and other Service Areas budgets which report into this Committee. The proposed costs of each of these projects will be confirmed following project development.

Legal Implications

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- 9.2 None

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

- 9.3 None

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

- 10.1 None

11. Appendices to this report

- 11.1 None

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