

**1 July 2015**

**Economic Development Committee**

**2015/6 Economic Development Projects and Initiatives**

**Report of:** *Anne Knight, Economic Development Officer*

**Wards Affected:** *All*

**This report is:** *Public*

**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report outlines the proposed Economic Development projects and initiatives for 2015/6.

**2. Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 That the proposed Economic Development projects and initiatives for 2015/6 be agreed.**
- 2.2 That the projects are undertaken and implemented within the delegated authority of the Head of Planning and Development after first liaising with the Chair of the Committee utilising the 2015/6 Economic Development Budget**

**3. Introduction and Background**

- 3.1 The 2014 Brentwood Economic Development Strategy sets out a shared vision and framework to steer the interventions of Brentwood Borough Council and partner organisations to deliver optimum economic benefits to the Borough to 2030.
- 3.2 The Strategy's Vision for Brentwood is for the areas to be a thriving, attractive and unique destination for people to live, work and visit by protecting and nurturing its existing high quality environment, growing its prosperous economy and fostering development that is responsive to local community needs.
- 3.3 The key priority objectives of the Strategy are business competitiveness, economic growth, stronger tourism, retail and leisure sectors, strengthening the rural economy and skills.

- 3.4 Following last year's Economic Development activities, it is now proposed to continue to work on addressing these priorities by implementing a number of key projects in 2015/6, in accordance with resources available. Table 1 summarises these projects and a fuller description for each is provided below. These projects are additional to the ED Committees' aspirations to support longer term strategic transformational corporate projects such as an Action Plan for the Town Centre, Strategy Site Developments e.g. Brentwood Enterprise Park and Crossrail.

*Brentwood Business Event (Brentwood Biz)*

- 3.5 This will be an event to showcase the support and advice available for businesses, with an opportunity for businesses to promote to one another via a business to business exhibition, networking area/boards, themed business advice workshops, training and job zone and keynote inspirational speakers. It will be developed in conjunction with key partner organisations such as Essex County Council, Brentwood Chamber of Commerce, Pro-Actions, FSB, but led and marketed by Brentwood's ED team. It is envisaged it would take place during February 2016. The cost of the event will be mainly dependent on the venue chosen and any requirement for external resource to help facilitate the event but is estimated in the region of a maximum of £5,000-6,000.

*Business Training Taster Workshops*

- 3.6 A series of free business training taster workshops covering themes such as social media, marketing, business planning, leadership, will be developed and held throughout the year in conjunction with or partner organisation Pro-actions, who have already run four successful workshops in the last year. Feedback from business from the evaluation of these events has proved very positive and there is clearly a demand for more. Only a small (maximum £300) budget for refreshments is needed to facilitate these workshops as well as the ED Team's time to promote. It is proposed to hold workshops in September, November, January 2015 and March 2016.

*Completion of Brentwood Business Directory/CRM*

- 3.7 This project is on-going and the budget (£3,000) already committed. The development and completion of a comprehensive Business Directory and CRM is supported by BBC to enable a robust tool to be developed, enabling us to support and engage with the businesses in our Borough,

and to support geographical/thematically focused ED projects. The project is expected to be complete by the end of Summer 2015.

*Feasibility Study for Business Incubation Centre*

- 3.8 Working with partners, Brentwood Chamber of Commerce, Essex County Council and Havering College, Brentwood Borough Council have issued an invitation to tender to commission a feasibility study to investigate the viability of developing a Business Incubation Centre for Brentwood. In particular the building in the High Street currently occupied by the Peter Jones Academy and leased by Havering College for this purpose, is being assessed for its suitability. Alongside this, the Council will continue to explore other opportunities for housing the project. The aim of the Incubation Centre is to provide work space for start-up, micro and SMEs in a supported and serviced environment to encourage business development and growth, job creation, improve skills base of the workforce and encourage innovation and an enterprise hub in the town centre. The study is being funded by Essex County Council and Brentwood Borough Renaissance Group. The outcome of the study will determine the viability of implementing the Centre and identify any potential funding gap, which partners can then consider how best to address.

*Promotion of the “Brentwood for Growth” project*

- 3.9 Lead officers and the Chair of the Committee will arrange a series of meetings with members of Brentwood for Growth to rekindle our working relationship with them and discuss areas where we can best jointly work together going forward.

*Opportunity Brentwood*

- 3.10 To work in partnership with Thurrock Council to be a partner in their careers advice event that they have held successful for a number of years, and extend this opportunity out to encourage our large employers to be exhibitors and our secondary school students to attend. The event would be held on 7 October 2015 and be joint branded and we would promote as Opportunity Brentwood within the Borough. This partnership approach would be resource efficient but still support our skills priority and begin to develop education/business partnership approach. The ED Team would be involved with canvassing the employers and schools and helping to facilitate their involvement, as well as marketing and promoting the event.

### *ED Apprentice - Shared Support*

- 3.11 To host a shared Council apprentice to undertake work and support the Economic Development Team for up to 3 month period during 2015/6. This resource will help to support project delivery.

### *Essex Rivers LAG Leader Programme*

- 3.12 To be a member of and support the Essex Rivers LAG Leader Programme and promote the funding opportunities (£1.8m over the Essex Rivers area over 4 years) that this will offer the rural businesses in the Borough. The ED Team will work with businesses to identify and develop project ideas and applications for funding.

### *Visitor Website Development and Promotion*

- 3.13 To commission the development of a Visitor Website for the Borough to provide a coordinated offer and a tool that can be used to promote the Borough and attract visitors and investment. To work with partners, Visit Essex to develop a marketing plan for the website and to pro-actively market the Brentwood offer utilising the website. The development of the website and editorial support for 3 years is £6,000 and has been budgeted for. Visit Essex has confirmed they would provide support for the launch and on-going marketing of the website.

### *Superfast Broadband*

- 3.14 To continue to work with Essex County Council and the Essex Superfast Partnership to launch/roll out the superfast broadband infrastructure and promote take-up to businesses.

### *Strategic Partnership Working*

- 3.15 To continue to work closely and align our priorities/delivery with Essex County Council, Heart of Essex Partnership and South East Local Economic Partnership to implement the ED Strategy and key projects for Brentwood. This will involve strategy and project development, and investigating investment and income opportunities.

**Table 1 – Summary of proposed 2015/6 ED Projects**

<i>ED Strategy Priority</i>	<i>Project</i>	<i>Indicative timescale</i>	<i>Estimated budget</i>
Business Competitiveness	Brentwood Biz Event	February 2016	£6,000
Business Competitiveness	Business Training Taster Workshops	September 2015 November 2015 January 2016 March 2016	£300 refreshments ED Team time
Business Competitiveness	Phase 2 and Completion of Business Directory/CRM	Already committed and estimated completion September 2015	£3,000 (already agreed in 2014/5)
Business Competitiveness	Feasibility Study for Business Incubation Centre	Already committed July to September 2015	£5,000 secured from Essex County Council £5,000 secured from Renaissance Group)
Business Competitiveness and Skills	Relationship development meetings with Brentwood for Growth members	July 2015 onwards	TBD (subject to key priorities and projects identified)
Skills	Opportunity Brentwood Event	7 October 2015	TBD (estimate £2k)
Skills	ED Apprentice support (up to 3 months)	Summer 2015	Shared resource funded by corporate budget
Rural Economy	Essex Rivers LAG LEADER programme	September 2015 onwards	ED team time to support and promote
Tourism, Retail and Leisure Economy	Visitor website development and promotion	September 2015 onwards	£6,000 includes editorial support over 3 years
Economic Growth	Work with Essex County Council to support the continued marketing of Superfast Broadband	On-going Possible further launch event in the Autumn	ED Team time

All priorities	Strategic Partnership Working – SE LEP, County, Heart of Essex	On-going	ED Team time
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#### **4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 4.1 Different options for delivery will be considered when scoping and developing the Economic Development Projects proposed and a recommendation for the preferred option provided and recorded and approved under delegated authority of the Head of Service (Planning & Development) and Committee Chair.

#### **5. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 5.1 To agree the key Economic Development Projects to be implemented in 2015/6 in order to drive forward the priorities of the Brentwood Economic Development Strategy.

#### **6. Consultation**

- 6.1 The Economic Development Strategy successfully underwent public consultation and has been adopted.
- 6.2 Key partners and business groups for each priority area are consulted and engaged with project development.

#### **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 balanced 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**

**Name & Title: Chris Leslie, Finance Director**

**Tel & Email: 01277 312 542 christopher.leslie@brentwood.gov.uk**

- 8.1 The proposed Economic Development projects for 2015/6 will utilise the 2015/6 Economic Development budget and any project funding required will be approved under delegated authority of the Head of Service (Planning & Development). The Council's procurement policy will be adhered to when required. The Economic Development budget will be monitored on a monthly basis.

### **Legal Implications**

**Name & Title: Chris Potter, Monitoring Officer**

**Tel & Email: 01277 312 860 christopher.potter@brentwood.gov.uk**

- 8.2 None

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

- 8.3 None

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

- 9.1 None

## **10. Appendices to this report**

- None

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