

2 September 2015

Economic Development Committee

2015/6 Brentwood Business Showcase

Report of: *Anne Knight, Economic Development Manager*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the different options and a recommendation for the implementation of a 2015/6 Brentwood Business Showcase Event.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Option 3 is implemented under the delegated authority of the Head of Service for Planning and Development utilising up to £10,000 of 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.

- 3.1.1 Business support is a priority objective of the Economic Development Strategy and initiatives that support business networking, development, growth and improved productivity are a key part of this. It is also a priority for the Council's Corporate Plan and the South East Local Economic Partnership.

- 3.2 At the 1 July 2015 Economic Development Committee it was agreed that the Economic Development Team scope the options for a Brentwood Business Showcase Event and that these should be considered at the 2 September 2015 Economic Development Committee with recommendations for implementation.

- 3.3 Various discussions have been held with key partner organisations including the Brentwood Chamber of Commerce, Pro-actions Ltd, Essex County Council, Chelmsford City Council, Essex Chambers of Commerce to investigate the options available for Brentwood Borough Council to develop a Business Showcase Event.
- 3.4 In addition the Economic Development Team has visited several different business events held across Essex and Kent to understand how other organisations develop, organise and promote such events, including Essex Chamber of Commerce Discover Essex event, Essex Means Business (County Council), Tendring Business Event, and the biggest event in the South East – the 2020 Event held in Kent. The organisation and resource implications of these events should not be under-estimated and requires significant lead in time to ensure success. The potential options identified are outlined in section 4.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 Following positive evaluation feedback from the businesses attending the business support events the Council has held to date, one of the main issues cited as preventing their business growth is a lack of networking and marketing to develop new business. Other issues mentioned included recruitment difficulties, search for premises, time management, prices and competition. The businesses indicated that further business support events would be helpful especially the idea of a business to business exhibition at which they could network and pitch their services, generate new sales leads, as well as business briefings and speakers, business advice, workshops and speed networking.
- 4.2 Given this feedback and that business support is a key priority of the Economic Development Strategy, it is suggested that Brentwood Borough Council develop a Business Showcase Event to be held in March 2016 to support and drive forward this agenda. The following options to deliver this have been identified.

Option 1 – Do nothing

- 4.3 This is not a recommended option as it does not support the Council's priority of Business Support and the economic benefits this brings.

Option 2 – A series of smaller business support workshops

- 4.4 This option will continue to deliver a series of specific business advice workshops planned with our partners Pro-actions throughout the year. These workshops are based on specific themes such as social media, marketing, business planning, and accommodate approximately up to 15 businesses in each event. This option does not provide a large, high profile event, or include a business to business exhibition, keynote speakers, speed networking and offers less economies of scale, reaching a smaller target audience. The cost of this option is the Economic Development Team's and Pro-actions time, and refreshments provided for the Town Hall Committee Rooms venue..

Option 3 – Brentwood Business Showcase Event

- 4.5 The Brentwood Business Showcase will build on the previous successful business support events that have been supported to date by the Council, including the Business Funding and Advice Event October 2014 which we delivered in partnership with Essex County Council; a range of taster business advice workshops with Pro-actions and the Business Speed Networking event held in March 2015. The Showcase event will look to work with these partners and others to provide a range of activities within one event.
- 4.6 The types of activities that will be considered as part of the event are a business to business exhibition and networking area, business breakfast or lunch, entrepreneurial speakers, business support workshops and speed networking opportunities. In working with partners and securing external support, we will consider other innovative ideas and approaches to organising the event that could add further value. The larger companies of the Borough as our Brentwood for Growth partners will be approached with the objective of securing their involvement and support for the event, during the discussions we are planning with them. Essex County Council's Business Team has offered support in ensuring various business funding and advice agencies are invited to exhibit. Brentwood Chamber of Commerce are interested in opening the event with a Business Breakfast and discussions are on-going with regards to also hosting a new Chamber Business Awards Ceremony at the event.
- 4.7 Having researched other similar events, the resource implications of organising a Business Showcase utilising the limited in-house resource of the ED team should not be under-estimated and would have considerable impact on the capacity to deliver the wider ED Plan for 2015/6. It is suggested therefore that the attached brief is issued with an invitation to

tender in early September 2015 to secure external support and expertise from a supplier with a good track record of organising these types of events. The ED team will commission this support and steer the overall direction of the event, managing the external support, supporting the marketing and promotion, facilitating partner liaison and engagement and hosting on the day.

- 4.8 There are various venues in the Borough that may be suitable for the event and the venue chosen will determine the final overall cost of the project and the date of the event. Venue and date suggestions will be finalised during the procurement of external support, but the aim will be to ensure value for money and cost minimisation to the Council. We will aim to hold the event in March 2016. Proposals that incorporate sponsorship and income generation will be scored favourably. It is estimated that the Showcase will require a budget in region of £6,000-£10,000 dependent on venue, external support chosen and the amount of sponsorship secured. The aim would be to minimise costs to the Council.
- 4.9 This would be the first Business Showcase Event for Brentwood and the target outcomes of numbers of businesses exhibiting and attending outlined below can only be roughly estimated. Experience has shown that these increase over time as events become more established year-on-year.

Options Outputs

Option	Output
1 Do Nothing	None
2 A Series of Smaller Business Workshops	3 small events 45 businesses supported Small PR potential
3 Brentwood Business Showcase	1 large event Up to 40 exhibitors Minimum target of 100 businesses supported Multi-partnership event and support Sponsorship opportunities Excellent PR potential

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 To implement the first ever 2015/6 Brentwood Business Showcase Event to support the Business Support and development priority of the ED Strategy and Council Corporate Plan.

5.2 Option 3 is the preferred option as it provides a variety of approaches to support this agenda to a wider range number of target beneficiaries and works with a range of partners.

6. Consultation

6.1 The Economic Development Strategy successfully underwent public consultation and has been adopted. This included support for the Skills and Employability priority.

6.2 Key partner organisations have been consulted and engaged to scope, develop and assist with the delivery of this project.

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
- Support for skills development
- 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 An allocation of up to £10,000 from the 2015/6 ED budget is requested to implement the Brentwood Business Showcase. This is the maximum proposed and it is likely that through sponsorship, minimising venue costs and procuring an effective delivery partner that the budget required will be reduced. The project 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 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

- Appendix 1 – Brief for Invitation to Tender for Brentwood Business Showcase

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Appendix 1

Invitation to Tender

Brentwood Business Showcase Event

Objective

Brentwood Borough Council wishes to commission an external provider to help develop, promote and organise a Brentwood Business Showcase Event in March 2016 for businesses in the Borough.

Background and rationale

Supporting Business is a key priority of the Brentwood Economic Development Strategy and the Borough Council is keen to run a range of initiatives and events to enable this.

Following a successful Business Speed Networking Event in March 2015; a Funding and Advice Road Show in October 2014 and a series of business workshops; we are now keen to support a high profile event which will focus on providing an effective arena for businesses networking to support local trade, the supply chain, business competitiveness and to showcase Brentwood's businesses.

Various discussions have been held with key partner organisations including the Brentwood Chamber of Commerce, Pro-actions Ltd, Essex County Council, Chelmsford City Council and Essex Chambers of Commerce to investigate the options available for Brentwood Borough Council to develop a Business Showcase Event. The Showcase event will look to work with these partners and others to provide a range of activities within one event.

In addition the Economic Development Team have visited several business events held across Essex and Kent to understand how these have been developed, organised and promoted including the Essex Chamber of Commerce Discover Essex event, Essex Means Business (County Council), Tendring Business Event, and the 2020 Event held in Kent.

Methodology

We are keen to understand your ideas with regards to the scoping and methodology for this event. Innovative proposals which add value to our ideas will be part of the assessment criteria of the tenders.

The types of activities that have been considered to date include a business to business exhibition and networking area, business breakfast or lunch, business awards ceremony, entrepreneurial speakers, business support workshops and speed networking opportunities.

It is important the event engages with both the larger and smaller businesses in the Borough across a range of sectors.

Tenders should outline the background to their company and highlight their evidence of a good track record in delivering similar events and the business and economic outcomes these produced.

Tenders should provide a clear action plan within their methodology of how they would deliver this event and address the key outputs and outcomes listed below.

Key outputs/outcomes

- Well planned, organized and promoted prestigious event with effective delivery.
- Minimum target of 100 businesses attending, preferably much higher
- Minimum target of 40 businesses exhibiting
- Range of partners engaged and supported
- Event sponsorship
- Effective PR and Communication undertaken
- Clear evaluation process of event and final report

Timescale

We would like the event to take place in March 2016 to take place at a suitable cost effective, professional local venue in Brentwood Borough. Your tender should propose suitable and costed venue recommendations.

Budget

An indicative budget in the region of £6,000 to £10,000 has been allocated for this event. Tenders will be assessed on quality and value for money. The Council is keen to minimize the budget allocated to this project and is interested in tenders which can organize the event using a methodology that will enable this. A draft costing for the event should be provided.

Deadline for tenders

Tenders to be submitted by email by 12 noon on Monday 14 September 2015. Provisional date for interviews is Tuesday 22 September 2015

Reply to:

Anne.Knight@brentwood.gov.uk

Telephone 01277 312607 if you wish to discuss this Invitation to Tender.

Attachments:

Terms and Conditions