

10 March 2016

Economic Development Committee

Annual Report – 2015/16 Achievements and Future Plans

Report of: *Anne Knight, Economic Development Manager*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the achievements of the Economic Development function of the Council in 2015/16 and outlines plans for future projects and initiatives for 2016/17.

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 During 2015/16 the Economic Development function of the Council has successfully led and implemented the following initiatives:

Corporate Apprenticeship Scheme

The ED team have scoped, developed and managed this programme in 3 parts:

1. One in-house Local Authority apprentice recruited in February 2016 to circulate over a 12 month period to support different Council departments including Community Safety, Community Services, Street Scene, Corporate Projects and Economic Development
2. Two apprentices with mental health issues via Brentwood Community Print.
3. Ten apprentices via wage subsidy scheme in partnership and shared delivery approach with ECC in order to ensure economies of scale in delivery.

The total outputs for this first ever programme are 12 businesses supported, 13 apprentices, joint partnership working with ECC, Brentwood Community Print and joined up working within BBC re: in-house apprentice. The ED team have managed the additional £24k corporate budget for this programme.

Essex Rivers LAG LEADER grant programme

The ED Team successfully worked in partnership with Heart of Essex, Essex County Council and Essex Rural Community Council to secure £1.8m of grant funding for businesses in the rural Heart of Essex area to apply for and are now promoting this to businesses to encourage them to make applications to maximise investment to Brentwood from this funding.

Free Business Advice Taster Workshops

The ED team have organised and promoted 4 business workshops on Business Planning (February 2015), Improving your sales (May 2015), Marketing & Social Media (September 2015), Leadership and Management Practices (November 2015), supporting over 200 businesses, with excellent feedback from evaluation. This has also resulted in cementing a new partner relationship with Pro-Actions Ltd UK, a business coaching company, who delivered workshops free of charge, only minimal cost to Council re: ED Team time to promote and host and use of Town Hall as venue.

Business Directory

The ED team have developed and established this key tool for the Council in order to be able to communicate and engage with businesses and promote projects and campaigns, analyse key sectors. It is the first ever CRM business directory for the Council. It now has over 5,000 businesses, 1800 with emails. The cost was £7,500, much less than cost of systems developed for other local authorities. The delivery of the project developed excellent working relationships with our internal Customer Contact Team.

Business e-newsletter

The ED team developed and issued the second edition of the Brentwood Borough Council Business E-Newsletter in February 2016. This is an online newsletter that will be produced by the ED Team on an adhoc basis when there is significant news and information on business support events and projects that we wish to communicate to businesses. The newsletter was sent out to the 1500 businesses with email on the Brentwood Business Directory and to key business groups and partners. It included information on the Apprenticeship Scheme, LEADER rural grant programme, BEST Growth Hub free business support and training sessions; free business taster workshops. The newsletter included a link for businesses to provide their feedback and ideas for future editions and an opportunity to register to be included on the Brentwood Business Directory. This feedback will be monitored by the ED team and appropriate action taken. As the Business Directory grows the reach of the newsletter will extend.

ED Internship

The ED team secured £3,500 grant funding from University of Essex to recruit graduate intern for 3 months to support work of ED team in 2015, and have secured another £3,500 grant to support another intern for 2016. A total of £7,000 to date of grant has been secured to bolster resources of Brentwood ED Team and deliver the ED agenda, representing a significant efficiency saving for the Council.

Brentwood Enterprise Hub Feasibility Study

The ED team secured £5k from ECC to contribute towards a study undertaken by Creative Space Management. This study looked at preferred option of Brentwood Town Hall being the base for a service Enterprise Hub to support start-up and SME businesses in Brentwood. It identified a demand for a hub and potential revenue saving of £250k per annum to Brentwood Borough Council of operating the Town Hall. This is an example of producing an idea and option to better utilise our Council assets – a key objective within the Corporate Plan. The ED team scoped, commissioned and managed this study, galvanising key partner organisations together.

Opportunity Brentwood 2015

The ED team has researched and scoped an option to deliver careers advice and support to Brentwood's secondary schools that minimises the resource and budget requirements from the ED function. We have developed partnership working with Thurrock Council's Skills and Employability team to piggyback on their successful "Opportunity Thurrock" careers event, by offering the option for schools to take their students to this on a subsidised basis and by promoting this as "Opportunity Brentwood". To pilot this approach Endeavour School and Beckett Keys School successfully attended in October 2015 with 500 students with fantastic feedback. Consequently the ED team will now work with Thurrock to develop and promote "Opportunity Brentwood" to the schools in 2016. We will also work to engage our Brentwood for Growth business members to exhibit at the event.

Place promotion

The ED team continues to develop relationships with Visit Essex to maximise the value of Brentwood Borough Council's annual membership fee (£1,500 which the ED budget pays for), in particular working together to identify how best Brentwood could best be promoted as a place to visit in the future with the idea of increasing the dwell time to increase the economic benefits via spend.

Following consultation with businesses at an event in 2014 it was established that there was a need for a coordinated offer through the development of a visitor and location website that could be used as a window to market Brentwood to the world. In addition there was an aspiration for the Council to facilitate opportunities for the tourist and leisure

providers to network more closely to develop promotional offers and campaigns. The influence of TOWIE was debated and the general consensus was on the need to build on this but promote Brentwood as being a place which offered a much wider variety of attractions e.g. green areas, heritage, shopping, restaurants, family attractions, not just nightlife and the TOWIE shops. As a result in 2015/16 the ED team researched and commissioned a “web in a box” solution with NVG to provide this marketing tool to promote Brentwood not just to visitors but to businesses and investors also. The development of this will now take place during 2016.

Renaissance Group

The ED team have supported town centre businesses and the public realm via managing and strengthening the RG, its chairmanship, terms of reference, membership, development of clusters and cluster leaders, website, development of projects, improved grant programme governance and administration, evaluation and PR. The ED team inherited significant budget carry forward and successfully managed the programme to administer this more effectively to projects. A total of £11k sponsorship from the private sector has been secured to support Shenfield Christmas Fayre, Children’s Literacy Festival and Medieval Market Charter. A new Friday market has been set up and work on the Crown Street Arch project is progressing.

Partnership working and shared delivery

The ED team has been extremely successful in developing and managing effective partnership working relationships with a variety of partners which has been critical to enabling the delivery of the ED Work Plan, especially given our limited budget, and to ensure economies of scale.

This joined-up working has ensured strategic operational alignment and where possible shared delivery with partners such as SE LEP, ECC, Heart of Essex Partnership, Brentwood Chamber of Commerce, Invest Essex, Visit Essex, other local authorities in Essex (via EDO forum and Integrated Growth Forum) and initiatives such as the LEADER EU programme, Low Carbon Programme, BEST growth hub, national and county apprenticeship programmes.

4. 2016/17 Key Initiatives Proposed

Apprenticeships programme

To deliver and manage any future Brentwood Borough Council Apprenticeships Programme in partnership with Essex County Council. This will attract match funding from the private sector as well as possible funding via S106.

Brentwood Enterprise Park, Jct 29, M25

To continue liaising with landowner and St Modwens (the developer) and planning policy team to influence development plans, ensuring strategic fit with ED Strategy, to maximise best deal for local jobs, skills and training,

supply-chain (re: procurement), S106 agreement benefits and place and investment promotion (working with Invest Essex and working in conjunction with Essex Economic Development Group). Support the delivery of the adopted LDP.

Brentwood Business Showcase

To develop and organise the first ever Brentwood Business Showcase on 2 November 2016 at Brentwood School. This project has already been approved with a budget of £10k from 2015/16 and Pro-actions UK commissioned to help with the organisations. The ED team will work on scoping the content of the event with Pro Actions in January – March 2016 and then on the promotion and organisation of it. The aim is it could become an annual event to showcase the best of business in Brentwood, provide a forum and exhibition for business networking and selling; workshops and key note speakers for learning. It could be utilised to promote Brentwood as a great place to do businesses with all of the strategic projects planned.

Visit and Locate Brentwood Website

To continue to work with NVG and partners to develop and deliver a Visit and Locate Brentwood website as a tool for place and investment marketing. This could be officially launched at the Brentwood Business Showcase event. This project has been approved with a budget of £10k from 2015/16. There is a longer term opportunity to raise funding from sponsorship and advertising on website, and from promotional campaigns.

Crossrail Public Realm Projects and Promotional Campaign

To work with County and other partners to develop the project and associated business case and applications for Local Growth Funding from SE LEP (£3.5m grant funding).

To work with Invest Essex and Crossrail on promotional campaign for Brentwood utilising Crossrail (e.g. North Kent)

Brentwood for Growth and evolution to an Economic Forum

Meetings have already been held in 2015 to re-ignite relationship with these key Brentwood businesses and to wet their appetite to be engaged with future ED initiatives. The ED team will continue to work on re-engaging the members of this group on a project by project basis throughout 2016. Dependent on progress, there may be scope for these businesses to provide future sponsorship, time and resource for a membership fee to support the ED agenda.

LEADER rural business funding

To deliver a rural road-show and campaign to promote this programme and encourage applications from Brentwood businesses to maximise benefits to Brentwood economy from this programme. To provide project development advice and assistance to local businesses applying for grants.

Business Incubation and Enterprise Hub

To assist and drive forward the possible development of future Enterprise Hub in Town Hall or an alternative venue as result of changes in buildings in Brentwood required by public sector service hub or possibly within the new Brentwood Enterprise Park development.

Opportunity Brentwood 2016

To continue to work with Thurrock to develop and engage the schools to take part in “Opportunity Brentwood” 2016. We will also work to engage our Brentwood for Growth business members to exhibit at the event.

Strategic Partnership working and groups

- Heart of Essex Partnership
- Essex County Council Quarterly Economic Working Groups
- Integrated Growth Forum and SE LEP

5. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

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 ED Function of the Council has made and the future projects and initiatives proposed. These initiatives support and drive forward the Economic Development Strategy and enable delivery of the associated thematic priorities.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The Economic Development Strategy successfully underwent public consultation and has been adopted.
- 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 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

9. Implications

Financial Implications

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- 9.1 As set out in the report, £20,000 of the 2015/16 budget has been allocated to the Business Showcase event and the Visit & Locate website. Implementation of any other future projects and initiatives will utilise the 2016/17 Economic Development budget of £23,000, subject to approval at Ordinary Council on 2 March 2016. Where possible, external funding and resourcing will be secured to assist with delivery and minimise cost to the Council.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Daniel Toohey, Monitoring Officer

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- 9.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report. Legal Services are available to advise and assist in relation to detail on specific projects as these emerge.

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

Appendix A - Apprenticeship Case Study to follow

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