

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING: 19 SEPTEMBER 2017

TITLE OF REPORT: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN
CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Report of: Communications and Economic Development Manager

Cabinet member: David Neighbour, Leader

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To note the results on the Economic Development Action Plan consultation which ran from the 10 July to the 9 August 2017, and the final Economic Development Strategy Action Plan attached as Appendix I.

2. OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the outcome of consultation on the Economic Development Strategy Action Plan; and
- 2.2 To note the revised Economic Development Strategy Action Plan attached as Appendix I.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In August 2015 Hart District Council adopted the Hart Economic Development Strategy. The Action Plan adopted alongside the Strategy covered the period to 2017.
- 3.2 Over the past 8 months Hart Officers have been engaging with local businesses and have reviewed that Action Plan, updating the aims reflecting current business needs. This Action Plan will be implemented from September 2017 until 2020. The Economic Development strategy will then be reviewed in 2020 alongside a new Action Plan.
- 3.3 This consultation ran from the 10 July until 4pm on Wednesday 9 August 2017. It was publicised on the Council's website, at networking meetings, on the Hart for Business Twitter page and emailed to over 1,500 local businesses in July and again in August.

4 ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION RESULTS

- 4.1 During the consultation period there were 12 submissions, one of which was a duplication and has been removed from the data, resulting in 11 submissions. Out of the 11 responses 5 were business representations and 6 were resident representations.
- 4.2 The first question set out to see if respondents agreed, or disagreed with the proposed Action Plan:

Do you agree or disagree with our action plan, in principle?	
Agree	63.7%
Disagree	27.3%
Don't know	9%

4.3 No businesses disagreed with the proposed Action Plan however some of the residents couldn't see the value of the Council supporting economic development.

4.4 The next section of the analysis breaks down the 4 strategic objectives and the aims that sit within them. Respondents were asked to respond 'agreed', 'disagree' or 'don't know' to each of the proposed objectives and aims.

Aims within Strategic Objective One:			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Strategic Objective One: Increase in communication with local businesses	9	2	0
Aim 1: Engage with 10 largest businesses, SMEs and Networking groups through face-to-face meetings	8	3	0
Aim 2: Increase communication on Hart District Council's digital media channels	8	3	0
Aim 3: Support and facilitate business events	7	4	0

Objective Two:			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Objective Two: Increase skills and qualified workforce	8	3	0
Aim 1: Improve links with Colleges, Schools and businesses to promote courses and training.	9	2	0
Aim 2: Facilitate a highly skilled and well qualified workforce	7	4	0

Objective three:			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Objective Three: Provide business support	8	3	0
Aim 1: Improving relationship with external partnerships	9	2	0
Aim 2: Business Mentoring	4	7	0
Aim 3: Be a support and signposting service for local businesses	7	4	0

Objective four:			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Objective Four: Desirable business location	9	2	0
Aim 1: Space for growth	9	2	0
Aim 2: A connected place	7	3	1
Aim 3: Promote Hart as a desirable filming location	6	3	2

- 4.5 Overall the objectives, and aims, were broadly supported by respondents, with the exception of Objective 3, Aim 2 – Business Mentoring. This was surprising to see as many one-to-one meetings held with local businesses over the past 7 months have all strongly supported this aim, resulting in the inclusion within the Action Plan. Exploring this further showed that all 6 resident representations, but only one business representation, disagreed with this aim, meaning it was largely supported by businesses.
- 4.6 Further analysis of the results showed that out of the business submissions all businesses agreed with all the 4 Objectives. One business disagreed with the Strategic Objective 1, Aim 1, of engaging the top 10 businesses, and Objective 3, Aim 2 – Business Mentoring.
- 4.7 Additional comments from local businesses at the end of the consultation have been summarised below:
- Encourage faster and greater/wider roll-out of digital broadband to the rural areas of Hart.
 - Explain why Hart's approach to economic development, as evidenced by its current policies, has changed so radically - years ago Hart was not interested; now it really is - which is much to be applauded.
 - Facilitate local employment areas and prevent office permitted conversions to housing. Encourage business through 20 minute free parking and other initiatives.
 - A great idea, a lot of small business runs in Fleet and it would be nice to feel connected to Fleet and know that the County Council would like to support us for the future.
 - I disagree with Hart focusing on building relationships with the 10 largest businesses. I feel the focus should be on understanding the pressures and needs of the smaller business owners. Fleet has a high number of small independent businesses whose needs should be understood and responded to and there should be space for incubator businesses in Hart so that local entrepreneurs have the ability to make the next steps. The high street will move to leisure as retail outlets diminish and support will be essential in helping the town make that transition.
 - All aims appear to be sound and would result in a much stronger local economy and much better supported business community. We would be happy to help in any way that we can.
 - The Hampshire Chamber of Commerce welcomes the continued engagement with the Economic Development Team and looks forward to building on this over the coming years. We would also welcome the opportunity to work with you on future events, as we have done so previously with the Meet the MP event. From our Members, we have received the following comments.
 - In general, the plan to reach out to businesses in the area seems sensible.
 - What was the output from these in previous years?
 - Sub plans all look sensible.
 - The original plan was 2015 so have you changed anything since?
 - Are you making progress?
 - I would be more interested in the outputs as we move forward, what are the plans for sharing these?

- Where is the Strategic Vision from Hart for business in the Council area? Do we want to be a leader in Aviation manufacturing, Insurance, Computer Technology or some other industries? I do not get the impression from the Action Plan that it sits underneath a true Vision that all parties education, Council, existing businesses etc can work towards. Should we be looking at encouraging supporting supply chains for the key industries in the area to help growth and to encourage exporting as part of an industry focus?

5 ACTION

- 5.1 Even through the response to the consultation was low, it has provided a small snapshot of views, which has been used to update the proposed Action Plan. See Appendix I. Broadly the results indicate that the objectives and aims within are suitable to meet the needs of local businesses and that the Council should continue to base its Economic Development activities around this Action Plan.
- 5.2 It is clear from the general comments of the consultation that there seems to be lack of reporting on the Economic Development activities. This could be enhanced in the Service Planning of the Council and an annual report of Hart District Council Economic Development service could be produced, reporting progress of the service, outputs achieved and being more accountable to local businesses.

Contact Details: Amy Summers – Amy.summers@hart.gov.uk - 01252 774460

APPENDICES

Appendix I - Hart Economic Development Action Plan 2017-2020

Hart Economic Development Action Plan 2017 - 2020

Introduction

The following actions have been designed to be achievable and practicable and link into existing activity and infrastructure. The strategy actions cover the period up to 2020. Progress against the action plan will be monitored annually and the action plan and strategy will be updated and reviewed in 2020.

Strategic Objective One: INCREASE IN COMMUNICATION WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES

Strategic Objective One: Increase in Communication with local businesses	
Aim:	Aim 1: Engage with 10 largest businesses (based on business rates), SMEs and Networking groups through face-to-face meetings
Description/aim(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic business engagement with Hart’s 10 largest business based on business rates to understand issues facing these businesses and how the council can support them to continue to invest in Hart • Meet with at least 10 SME businesses a month through one-to-one or networking to understand the issues and challenges faced by Micro and SME businesses. To listen and signpost businesses to council services and other third party support.
Partners & council role and next steps:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development team to identify the largest businesses based on business rates – Joint CEX/Leader/Cabinet Member to meet • Economic Development team to directly meet with businesses and attend local networking groups • Partners: To work with the business services team at Hampshire County Council and neighbouring authorities in the Invest in Hampshire programme • To agree a client management approach and service offer (property, skills, networks, trade, innovation, finance, statutory services, aftercare) • To support all business growth aspirations, brokering a range of solutions that will either remove barriers to growth or increase growth generating activities, e.g. through Enterprise M3, Hampshire County Council, the Growth Hub, Business South and other appropriate organisations • Engage with small businesses by email, meetings and through attendance at networking groups. This will help to reach those businesses in the District which are hard to identify.

Potential economic impact/outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify largest business rate payers and visited 10 organisations • 120 micro and SME businesses met and engaged with per year by the Economic Development team
Costs	Staff time and cost of attending networking events up to £500

Strategic Objective One: Increase in Communication with local businesses	
Aim	Aim 2: Increase communication on Hart District Council’s digital media channels
Description/aim(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the information and support provided on Hart District Council website for local businesses based on local business requirements • Maintain an up to date business database • Engage with local businesses on the business social media pages (Twitter & LinkedIn) on a regular basis promoting activities of the Economic Development team and general information and support for businesses • Send out business e-news monthly to all businesses registered on our database
Partners & Council role and next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic development team to update the Hart District Council website, making it more user friendly which will increase the usage • Gather all the up-to-date information to update the Business Rates, Business Support, Skills and Training, and Strategic Projects & Working with the Council pages on the website. • With the update to the business pages this will improve the signposting of support for example information to funding, such as LEADER and Growth Hub. • Maintain an up to date events calendar showing the different business events in the district and surrounding areas. This will provide a single point of all networking locally and it will improve the promotion of networking groups • Gather all contact details for the businesses in Hart and keep regularly updating the business database, using a range of sources such as MINT reports, online searches and sign-ups through the website or networking. • Manage the @HartForBusiness twitter account and Hart LinkedIn company page to engage with local businesses whilst promoting key messages. • Business Development and Events Officer to gather news and events to write in the e-news and Hart News
Potential economic impact/outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better communication channels and links with businesses through the Council’s digital media channels • Better promotion of information, support and networking opportunities
Costs	Staff time and cost of MINT reports £4,000

Strategic Objective One: Increase in Communication	
Aim	Aim 3: Support and facilitate business events
Description/aim(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To hold two business events a year • Explore the opportunity of holding informal business networking events at the Council as a way of interacting with local businesses • To support/sponsor the INSPIRE awards • To promote local business networking events • To attend local Business Exhibitions
Partners & Council role and next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Economic Development team to organise two events a year that brings local businesses together and to improve the reputation of the Hart District Council • Economic Development team to explore holding informal networking events at the Council offices that complements the current networking offering across the district • Continue to celebrate the success of local businesses by supporting the INSPIRE Business Awards and other business awards • To promote local networking groups and encourage local businesses to attend • To work with other partners such as the Chamber of Commerce in planning and promoting business events, including a 'Meet the Council' event and a 'Meet the MPs' event • To attend all local business exhibitions as an exhibitor to raise the profile of the Economic Development team
Potential economic impact/outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More businesses will be aware that Hart District Council are here to support local businesses and wanting to bring the business community of Hart together by holding these events • Make sure that the team promote the INSPIRE Business Awards and other business awards to help local businesses to get recognised for their hard work • Networking/training opportunities provided to businesses
Costs	Staff time and £8,000 to contribute to local awards and Hart District Council run events

Objective Two: INCREASE SKILLS AND QUALIFIED WORKFORCE

Strategic Objective Two: Increase skills and qualified workforce	
Aim	Aim 1: Improve links with Colleges, Schools and businesses to promote courses and training.
Description/aim(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership with local colleges and schools to promote skills and training courses • Keep young professionals and skilled young adults working within Hart • Build relationships between businesses and education providers so the local skills need is being delivered by the schools and colleges. • Produce support literature for people who have been made redundant
Partners & Council role and next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To arrange meetings with local colleges and schools such as Farnborough College of Technology, Frogmore Community College, Guildford College, Basingstoke College of Technology and Queen Mary’s College, Calthorpe Park School, Court Moor School, and St Nicholas’s School • Explore the opportunity of having an event targeted at education providers to work with local businesses • Continue dialogue with a view to enhance the apprenticeship uptake with local Hart Businesses.
Potential economic impact/outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better links between schools and businesses could influence new academic courses in future as a result of local demand • More skilled people in the area will lead to more people being employable, having a positive impact on the local economy.
Costs	Staff time and £500 for the cost of running an event

Strategic Objective Two: Increase skills and qualified workforce	
Aim	Aim 2: Facilitate a highly skilled and well qualified workforce
Description/aim(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work within the adopted Armed Forces Covenant and support ex-military personnel and families with Surrey Heath (lead) and Rushmoor Councils • Develop and facilitate links between Hart Voluntary Action (HVA) and local businesses working together • Individual employer skills and training needs will be met through the Skills for Business element of the Enterprise M3 Growth Hub, which will provide collaboration and skills brokerage for businesses.
Partners & Council role and next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work alongside Hart, Surrey Heath and Rushmoor to establish a programme to support ex-military personnel and families • Continue dialogue with HVA to establish if an employment transitions project could be developed within Hart • Work with partners to and local businesses to identify skills and training needs and, if appropriate, develop a training programme for local businesses to attend at the Council Offices

Potential economic impact/outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A better connection between local authorities to specifically support ex-military personnel and families • More skilled people in the area, which could lead to more people being employable and provide a positive impact onto the local economy.
Costs	Staff time, promotional material of training courses

Objective Three: PROVIDE BUSINESS SUPPORT

Strategic Objective Three: Provide Business Support	
Aim	Aim 1: Improving relationship with external partnerships
Description/aim(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build and develop closer relationships with external partnerships such as Enterprise M3/Growth Hub, Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise First, FSB. • Support business initiatives such as Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) • Build and develop relationships with other local councils, especially neighbouring authorities such as Basingstoke and Deane Council, Rushmoor Council and East Hampshire • Build better links with other departments within Hart District Council that provide services for businesses, e.g Planning, Licensing and Environmental Health.
Partners & Council role and next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange regular meetings with the different partners to ensure effective joint working to provide maximum benefits to Hart businesses and identify how we can work more closely together • Work alongside Fleet BID and represent the Council on the board of directors • Arrange meetings and develop better links with other local economic development teams to share best practice and current projects • Enhance engagement with other departments across the council to improve internal communication relating to local businesses and for the department to provide information back to the business about the Economic Development service within Hart.
Potential economic impact/outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the support given from partners, to enable us to improve support to local businesses • To champion best practice and learn from other local authorities, offering the best services to Hart businesses • Understanding the trends, need, and wants of businesses in the area from issues raised from internal departments
Costs	Staff time, travel cost visiting partners Membership of partner organisations £2,500

Strategic Objective Three: Provide Business Support	
Aim	Aim 2: Business Mentoring
Description/aim(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a service that offers businesses support and guidance from people who mentor, this will help to encourage businesses to start up, and help existing businesses to grow.
Partners & Council role and next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development team to identify the business needs Economic Development team to refer the business to the Growth Hub or Enterprise First, depending on the business needs The Council to identify a business mentor so that if the business is looking for specific business mentoring (not offered by a partner organisation) then a referral can be made
Potential economic impact/outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow businesses to grow by signposting the business to get the correct support needed.
Costs	Costs of business mentoring – match funding from local businesses - Indicative cost £5,000

Strategic Objective Three: Provide Business Support	
Aim	Aim 3: Be a support and signposting service for local businesses
Description/aim(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase awareness that Hart District Council Economic Development team are here to offer business support and guidance for local businesses.
Partners & Council role and next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the Economic Development team to make sure that they are promoting that local businesses can contact them to get business support and guidance For the Economic Development team to increase communication with Micro businesses who are hard to find, and to make sure that they are aware of the services that Hart District Council provide To arrange meetings with other local businesses to see what type of support is needed (linking to the strategic objective of communication aims 1 and 2 in the plan)
Potential economic impact/outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help improve and support for local businesses to grow and have a positive effect on the local economy.
Costs	Staff time

Objective Four: DESIRABLE BUSINESS LOCATION

Strategic Objective Four: Desirable Business Location	
Aim	Aim 1: Space for growth

Description/aim(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information on available commercial premises in the district • Provide a work place, where businesses can hire desks and meeting rooms in the Hart District Council building • Ensure an appropriate supply of employment land and premises • Considering all options for the appropriate protection of employment land such as the use of measures to remove 'permitted development' rights.
Partners & council role and next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work closely with local commercial property agents in relation to inward investment and existing business parks and commercial property. Ensure that those looking for premises can see what is available in terms of serviced office space, rural business units, industrial space and high tech/office space • Work alongside Hampshire County Council and the Invest in Hampshire team • Subject to a positive business case, set up business space facility at the Hart District Council building to provide rent a desk and rent a meeting room service to local businesses • Adoption of the Hart Local Plan including policies relating to the protection of, and provision of employment land and support for economic development • Monitoring and review of loss of employment land and premises, including through permitted development rights.
Potential economic impact/outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform businesses of vacant premises and build relationships with commercial property agents • Providing businesses with a start-up space and signpost to support • Provision of sufficient employment land and buildings to meet future needs
Costs	Staff time, cost of creating the business space facility £4,500

Strategic Objective Four: Desirable Business Location	
Aim	Aim 2: A connected place
Description/aim(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support Hampshire County Council (HCC) in its project to improve digital connectivity (broadband) for businesses throughout the District, with a focus on enhancing the competitiveness of rural businesses. • Work with project partners to enable 5G in the area and explore the potential of having Wi-Fi in town and village centres across the district • The Council will lobby for strategic transport investment in the rail and road network • Adoption of the Local Plan and to ensure infrastructure meets the needs of local businesses

Partners & council role and next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband: Hart, Hampshire County Council • Transport: Hart, Hampshire County Council, private operators and companies
Potential economic impact/outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot new digital initiatives if applicable • Increased use of public transport and better quality services • Better roads and infrastructure connecting Hart
Costs	Staff time

Strategic Objective Four: Desirable Business Location	
Aim	Aim 3: Promote Hart as a desirable filming location
Description/aim(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work alongside Film Hampshire and Creative England to promote Hart as a desirable filming location • Assist with any direct enquiries and provide information on available filming sites
Partners & council role and next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work closely with Film Hampshire • Develop a relationship with Creative England • Include filming in Hampshire as a case study for inward investment
Potential economic impact/outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showcase Hart as a desirable filming location • Increased investment in local area and benefit to local creative industries
Costs	Staff time