

Ward: N/A

Adur and Worthing Joint Overview and Scrutiny review of Economic Recovery

Report by the Chief Executive

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the progress with implementing the recommendations from a review into economic recovery in Adur and Worthing. The Joint Committee is requested to note the report.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In July 2010 the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee received the findings and recommendations from the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Working Group which had been set up to undertake a review into economic recovery in Adur and Worthing to assess what more could be done to help businesses through the worst recession since 1945.
- 2.2 The recommendations were agreed by the Committee and subsequently adopted by the Joint Strategic Committee. Progress in implementing the recommendations from the review was followed up with this Committee in January 2011, September 2012 and September 2013. The latest progress is set out in the attached appendix to the report.

3.0 Proposals

- 3.1 The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to consider the progress being made to implement the recommendations and the further action being taken.

4.0 Legal

- 4.1 Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to do anything to facilitate or which is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of their functions.
- 4.2 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a Local Authority to do anything that individuals generally may do (subject to any current restrictions or limitations prescribed in existing legislation).
- 4.3 Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 1999 (LGA 1999) contains a general duty on a best value authority to make arrangements to secure continuous

improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

4.4 Section 1 Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997 empowers the Council to enter into a contract in relation to any of its functions.

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 Any financial implications are included in the appendix to the report.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the progress in implementing the recommendations from the Adur and Worthing economic recovery review.

Local Government Act 1972

Background Papers:

Report from the JOSC Working Group – July 2010

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Schedule of Other Matters

1.0 Council Priority

1.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

2.0 Specific Action Plans

2.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

3.0 Sustainability Issues

3.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

4.0 Equality Issues

4.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

5.0 Community Safety issues (Section 17)

5.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

6.0 Human Rights Issues

6.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

7.0 Reputation

7.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

8.0 Consultations

8.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

9.0 Risk assessment

9.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

10.0 Health & Safety Issues

10.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

11.0 Procurement Strategy

11.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

12.0 Partnership working

12.1 Matter considered. The Review was undertaken jointly by Adur and Worthing.

Subject area	Officer responsible	Comments /Progress
<p>(1) That the Councils as soon as possible make arrangements to host a Business Survival Clinic with interested local parties from the private and volunteer and community sectors to provide advice on a face to face basis.</p>	<p>Director for the Economy</p>	<p>Economic Development is working with Enterprise Hub to encourage support for startup and small businesses. The Adur and Worthing Business Partnership delivered another successful Business Showcase, at the Town Hall, on the 20th March 2014 to provide business support and networking. Economic Development are working with WSCC who have launched the Be the Business Programme to provide one to one support to businesses in West Sussex. Further information can be found at: http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/doing_business/running_your_business/be_the_business.aspx Economic Development has continued to provide one to one business support across the Adur and Worthing area, to enhance business retention, inward investment and growth. Economic Development worked in partnership with Adur & Worthing's Food and Occupational Health Team, Community Development and East Worthing Industrial Estate to deliver one to one proactive safety advice and training to businesses with the aim to improve the health of employees. This project ran in from October 2013 – March 2014</p>
<p>(2) That the Councils, event organisers and local businesses continue to adopt a policy of organising, where possible at least once a month, events which encourage footfall to benefit businesses and promote the image of the areas as places to enjoy which should include where possible increased use of the promenades and beach areas along the coastline of each Council areas to utilise the use of these areas. The Working Group considers that the beaches and promenades in Adur and Worthing are major</p>	<p>Director for the Economy</p>	<p>The Regeneration Team continues to support and promote events across the area. Support and funding has enabled events across Worthing and Adur Resources within the Regeneration Team have also been identified in the continued promotion of concessions along the seafront to enhance the attractions along the seafront. The Seaconomics Project has drawn in over £200,000 of support for tourism businesses. There are 3 elements to this project – 1. capital investment in the seafront. This will take the form of a new playground at</p>

<p>assets and are currently underused. The Working Group considers that officers should continue work with local businesses to provide further continued support to support local tourism initiatives and tourism which would help promote the local economies and increase footfall in the towns. (The application process for external organisations to hold events on the seafront be reviewed).</p>		<p>Beach House Grounds; 2. Business Support and Training – this is has been rolled out during the early part of 2013 with training on issues such as food hygiene, foreign languages. 3. Marketing of the destination – this will take the form of niche targeted campaigns and more exposure at trade shows etc.</p> <p>A new post of Events Officer has now been created to promote new events and assist external promoters to organise their events.</p>
<p>(3) That the Councils investigate the feasibility of adopting a 'Buy Local' initiative with the aims of encouraging residents/businesses to buy local to improve the local economy.</p>	<p>Director for the Economy</p>	<p>A "Buy Local" initiative has already been launched in Adur.</p>
<p>(4) That the Council's websites be revised to include more information for local businesses to help them through the recession such as information on business rate relief for small businesses.</p>	<p>Director for the Economy</p>	<p>Economic Development have regularly updated business support and funding options on to the business pages of the councils website.</p>
<p>(5) That Worthing Vibe and Adur Outlook include business briefings in future editions to make local businesses more aware of the services available to them to help them during the economic downturn as well as promoting good news stories about businesses that have been launched successfully in the economic downturn.</p>	<p>Head of Communications</p>	<p>Worthing Vibe and Adur Outlook have been discontinued and the Communications Team are now working with the new Director for Economy to help develop the communications offer to meet modern digital needs. This involves working on individual projects eg The '£ to Park campaign' in Worthing.</p> <p>There is also the opportunity now to use social media such as Twitter and Facebook to assist local businesses where appropriate.</p>
<p>(6) That the Councils continue to promote the take up of all unclaimed grants and benefits for local businesses using the Council magazines and all other media channels as appropriate.</p>	<p>Head of Communications</p>	<p>As with (5) above the Communications Team support the Director for Economy and Regeneration Team on individual projects as considered appropriate.</p>
<p>(7) That where office units in</p>	<p>Director for the Economy</p>	<p>The Government has now</p>

<p>the town centre areas, above ground floor level become vacant and it is not possible to relet them, efforts should be made to establish if those properties can be changed back to residential units.</p>		<p>introduced temporary Permitted Development Rights to enable conversion of office space to residential without the need for planning permission.</p>
<p>(8) That the Councils give more consideration to providing additional funding for the Empty Shops Network because it was considered that £35,000 was not considered to be enough funding to make a difference. The Working Group is pleased that the Worthing Cabinet is being asked to ring fence the £52,000 DCLG funding for continuation of schemes to improve the town centres.</p>	<p>Director for the Economy</p>	<p>The Regeneration Team continues to work on securing additional external funding for empty shops initiatives.</p> <p>Five shops in Lancing have completed the regeneration of their shopfronts, taking advantage of the Lancing Vision Shop Front Grant, with a further three in the pipeline.</p>
<p>(9) That the Councils work with the Adur and Worthing Chamber of Trade and Commerce to provide local businesses with more support for new start up businesses and homebased businesses with a welcome pack for new businesses which will provide them with basic information eg Business Rates advice, contacts at the Councils, details of any grants available and information to help businesses through the recession.</p>	<p>Director for the Economy</p>	<p>We have been successful in reaching the second stage of Coastal Communities Funding to convert Colonnade House, Worthing to a creative hub. This will provide affordable workspace for the creative sector as well as support for new creative businesses.</p> <p>Economic Development have updated the Business Directory page on the council website to include an electronic version of the Adur & Worthing Business Guide. Updated funding, business rates and business support information has also been added to the website.</p> <p>Worthing and Adur Chamber have been commissioned to provide a Business Support Navigator who will signpost businesses to funding and business support in Adur and Worthing.</p>
<p>(10) That all landlords be encouraged to offer flexible terms for new businesses which will encourage occupation of premises eg lower rents/flexible lease periods.</p>	<p>Director for the Economy</p>	<p>Economic Development have continued to work with landlords and businesses to match requirements and enable the take-up of commercial properties in Adur & Worthing.</p> <p>Economic Development continues to publish a commercial property register for both Adur & Worthing.</p>
<p>(11) That the proposed appointment of a Major Projects Officer be welcomed and that the</p>	<p>Director for the Economy</p>	<p>The Regeneration team is active in supporting funding requests and seeking external funding to deliver the regeneration agenda</p>

<p>appointment be made as soon as possible and that where possible the Councils should seek to support requests for additional funding to help with economic regeneration and renewal.</p>		<p>e.g securing EU funding for the Seaconomics Project.</p>
<p>(12) That the work being undertaken by the new Adur and Worthing economic regeneration teams to develop a new Adur/Worthing Economic Development Strategy be supported in the hope that it can be developed as soon as possible.</p>	<p>Director for the Economy</p>	<p>Economic Development have been working with partners to identify projects that meet the aims of the adopted Adur & Worthing Economic Plan and enable them to published on the future Economic Delivery Plan. Economic Development have produced a simple PID template and circulated this to partners. Economic Development have been working with partners to help them submit their projects.</p>
<p>(13) That the Councils keep an eye on the long term strategy and put their efforts into things that can create confidence in the economy which will attract inward investment and help those who want to invest.</p>	<p>Director for the Economy</p>	<p>The focus of the Regeneration Team is in ensuring that projects are delivered in the short term which inspire confidence in the local economy e.g events, concessions, public realm improvements. The resources within the group will also ensure that work proceeds on bringing forward the medium and longer term physical regeneration projects, in effect to ensure they are ready to go when the economic conditions improve. The work of the team has already generated a significant amount of income through the focus on concessions. Economic Development have launched the 2014 Adur and Worthing Business Awards which is due to take place on the 14th November 2014 at Worthing Pavilion. Economic Development has been working in partnership with LEP, CWS and WSCC to provide an Invest West Sussex portal which encourages inward investment. For more information please see: http://www.investwestsussex.co.uk/ Economic Development have been working with businesses to bring forward multi-million pound investments like GSK and Rayner to raise the profile of Adur and Worthing as a place to invest in..</p>
<p>(14) That the creation of a</p>	<p>Director for the Economy</p>	<p>Economic Development continues</p>

<p>new on line business directory be considered.</p>		<p>to provide an on-line Business Directory for Adur and Worthing. This can be viewed at: http://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/business-directory/</p>
<p>(15) That Worthing Borough Council continues its work with NCP to improve the costs of car parking and with NCP/NSL/WSCC to ensure a better public perception of car parking to increase visitors to the areas.</p>	<p>Director for the Economy</p>	<p>The Council is now operating the Off Street car parking service in-house from April 2014. An intensive marketing campaign was introduced to stimulate use of the car parks and tariff changes have been introduced which have stimulated additional use of the car parks.</p> <p>Discussions are also taking place with WSCC regarding the On Street service.</p>
<p>(16) That Adur District Council considers the costs of car parking and continues its work with NSL/WSCC to ensure a better perception of car parking to increase visitors to the area.</p>	<p>Director for the Economy</p>	<p>Work is ongoing to improve the perception of car parking to increase visitors to the area.</p>
<p>(17) That the work being undertaken between the Councils and the educational establishments be continued to ensure that education was involved in the economic recovery and the details/progress of this work be reported to other Members of the Council and relevant partners as often as possible</p>	<p>Director for the Economy</p>	<p>The Regeneration Team has established excellent working relationships with the local educational establishments. We have supported the creation of a new microsite which provides careers advice for 16-19 year olds.</p>
<p>(18) That Worthing's Cabinet continue to do all it can to facilitate the redevelopment of the Teville Gate site as quickly as possible.</p>	<p>Director for the Economy</p>	<p>To encourage progress with the re-development of the site the Council did write to the applicant advising that unless the current draft s106 agreement was signed by the end of July the Council would be forced to refuse the current undetermined application for a mixed use re-development of the site. The applicant, Hanson Capital Management was keen to sign the agreement but other land owning interests had delayed signing. The development of the site has stalled following the collapse of the Anglo-Irish Bank which had originally provided a loan to the applicant to assemble</p>

		<p>the site and ensure a comprehensive re-development. The Irish Government has appointed NAMA to oversee the recovery of the various loans but negotiations have failed to reach any conclusion. More recently an Official Receiver (GVA) has been appointed to try and resolve matters and the Receiver has provided an interim report to NAMA. A final report with recommendations on how best to recover the original loan is expected shortly. GVA has requested an extension of time to sign the s106 agreement and this is currently being considered. All options are being considered by Officers and Cabinet to try and encourage the sites early re-development. It appears that the current application may not be viable to implement and other development options are being considered. A further verbal update will be provided at the meeting.</p> <p>.</p>
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