

Committee: Full Council
Date: 23 February 2012
Title: Economic Development
Portfolio Holder: Cllr Rolfe

Agenda Item

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Item for information

Summary

1. This report updates Council on the intended approach to Economic Development. The report explains the approach over recent years and the changes which are suggested.

Recommendations

2. Note the update report.

Financial Implications

3. The direct costs associated with this report are covered by way of allocations within the Base Budget and also from the New Homes Bonus allocations.
4. The creation of this post is complementary to other initiatives that the Council is taking, such as reviewing its development plan, to support business growth. In the context of business rates localisation reform, a whole council approach to maintaining and enhancing business is essential to safeguarding the council's rate revenues.

Background Papers

5. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and is available for inspection from the author of the report.
 - Agenda Item 9 from Cabinet papers 16 February 2012 New Homes Bonus update
 - Budget papers contained elsewhere on the Council agenda.

Impact

- 6.

Communication/Consultation	
Community Safety	Enhances social cohesion by strengthening local businesses.
Equalities	The Council will work with all sectors of the

	community.
Health and Safety	No issues.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Human rights are not affected.
Sustainability	No issues.
Ward-specific impacts	All wards
Workforce/Workplace	Will impact on Planning and Building Control managers.

Situation

Background

7. The Council has worked with the LSP Uttlesford Futures on Economic Development issues over recent years. The Council officer support has been the Research and Intelligence Officer rather than an officer dedicated to the Economic Development role. This has resulted in the Officer being taken away from his main role. In addition the Council has provided a low level of business advice through a consortium. This has not led to a coherent or robust Economic Development strategy.
8. The collective money from both the base budget and New Homes Bonus would be used by Officers to appoint to a new two year temporary post of Economic Development Officer. This officer would take a proactive and sustainable approach to economic development, learning and skills issues in Uttlesford working with local businesses and business groups including the retail sector, in order to enhance the District’s economy.
9. The Officer would lead on the production and delivery of the District’s Economic Development Strategy and work with partners to ensure co-ordinated and high quality advice and support is given to businesses and individuals looking to start and expand their own business within the District. They would identify and develop inward investment opportunities to make a positive contribution to the district while contributing to the maintenance of the high quality of life in which the benefits of the unique character of the district are equally available to all residents, workers or visitors.
10. The Officers’ key responsibilities would be:
 - To develop and deliver the District wide Economic Development Strategy.
 - To develop links with the business community in Uttlesford and secure confidence of businesses in the Council.
 - To develop partnership working with the Local Economic Partnerships.
 - To ensure economic development issues and business perspectives are fully represented in all relevant Council policies and proposals.

- To identify opportunities for securing investment in and funding of projects and programmes and achieve delivery. Work with partner agencies to develop and submit appropriate funding applications.
- To work in partnership with, and provide appropriate support to, the district's business groups and Local Strategic Partnership to promote sustainable economic growth.
- To ensure advice/support is delivered to businesses.
- To develop good working relationships with key employers to seek opportunities to deliver sustainable business practices and capitalise on corporate social responsibility.
- To work with appropriate partners to develop interventions designed to enable local people to access training and employment.
- To liaise with Planning Policy and Development Management Teams on economic development issues.

Risk Analysis

11.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Failure to appoint a suitable candidate	2	2	Job Description evaluated recently. Advertise in appropriate places.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.