

CULTURE, TOURISM AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 40

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Business Retention and Inward Investment Strategy and Implementation Plan - Update		
Date of Meeting:	23 November 2009		
Report of:	Director of Culture and Enterprise		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Andy Glover	Tel: 29-1093
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Key Decision:	No	Forward Plan No.	
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The Business Retention and Inward Investment (BRII) Strategy and Implementation Plan was approved at the Enterprise, Employment and Major Projects Cabinet Member meeting on 23rd March. This Strategy sets out the framework for the city council to work with internal and external partners to safeguard and develop the economic base of the city; setting out actions to support and retain existing businesses and attract new ones to the city. This report presents an update on activities carried out in the first 6 months against the approved Implementation Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 The Committee is recommended to consider the content of the report, and
- 2.2 Request further updates from the Director of Cultural Services on the actions contained within the Implementation Plan.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Background

- 3.1 The Implementation Plan as contained with the main Business Retention and Inward Investment Strategy sets out a number of activities for the successful delivery of the Strategy over the short, medium and long term. The short term activities cover the first 3 years of the Strategy and following on from this the internal Officer Working Group, charged with delivering the BRII has prepared a 1 year Action Plan for the first year.
- 3.2 The Action Plan is broken down into 7 key task areas with discrete actions underpinning each main task. This report will identify the main activities that have taken place during the first 6 months of the action plan under each key task heading.

1 – Marketing and Communications

- 3.3 The BRII has been launched to all the identified partners including the Economic Partnership, SEEDA, the city's commercial agents, Business Link and has also be launched on the council's web site.
- 3.4 A Welcome Pack has been prepared which is in the final stages of production which provides information to businesses that are already located in the city, businesses that are looking to move within the city and businesses considering Brighton & Hove as a business location. The Pack has been produced in such a way that it can be collated to meet the specific needs of the business enquiry.

2 – Investor Information

- 3.5 Research has been carried out to source the most appropriate database for information on investor information locally, regionally and nationally and after a series of tests of various databases, FDI Markets has been purchased and a member of the economic development team has been trained on how to use the database.

3 – Commercial Property

- 3.6 The current commercial property database which is managed by the economic development team in partnership with the commercial agents operating in the city has been reviewed and compared against comparator authorities. The provider of the database is currently making a number of significant changes to the database in line with the findings of the review and this will include a more effective monitoring and reporting system behind the database which will enable officers to track commercial space movement in a more robust manner. These improvements currently being tested by the database provider and are due to be launched on the councils web site at the end of November.

4 - Inward Investment

- 3.7 An Inward Investment Board has been formed as an early action and the representation comprises from the city council, the Economic Partnership, SEEDA, the two universities, City College and the commercial agents. This Board oversees the work of the Officer Working group and acts as 'ambassadors' when required for inward investment enquiries or hosting business events.
- 3.8 Inward investment enquiries previously have been handled in a reactive manner and information collated and provided when an enquiry is received. A generic report about the city and its benefits as a business location has been prepared and commercial property information is included at the end of the report to meet the property search requirements.

- 3.9 A sector specific workshop has been held with national, regional and local partners with regards to the handling of inward investment focusing on the digital media sector.
- 3.10 A Proposition Offer document for Brighton & Hove will be produced early in the new year working with colleagues from the Inward Investment team at SEEDA which will be used to promote the city to all of SEEDA's overseas reps. This will enable Brighton & Hove to compete for international inward investment along side other locations in the region more effectively.

5 - Business Retention

- 3.11 The key sectors for growth in the city were identified in the main BRII Strategy and the original action plan identified that the city council would work closely with SEEDA and other sector support agencies to carry out a co-ordinated approach towards business retention. Currently SEEDA are undergoing a review of their programme of sector support with a shift in emphasis away from the area based approach towards a sector based approach. They have identified the key sectors for the region and the majority of these coincide with the identified sectors in Brighton & Hove. This new working practice at SEEDA will be in place and operational from April 2010.
- 3.12 At a local level, information is being gained on the key sectors and a programme of activities to work with the various sectors in the city is being planned.

6 – Research

- 3.13 The position of Research Officer has recently been appointed within the economic development team. This officer will be able to provide up to date information on all aspects of economic development to support the delivery of the main Strategy and assist businesses when a request for research information is made.

7 – Events

- 3.14 A number of events have been attended to promote the BRII and a programme of activities for the remainder of the year is being drawn up with partners.

Additional Information

- 3.15 During the first 6 months the economic development team has been directly involved in the handling of 15 business retention and inward investment enquiries. To date these have resulted in one business relocation within the city and one inward investment into the city. A number of enquiries are still live and on-going.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Action Plan was prepared by the Officer Working Group and the BRll Board were consulted with regards to the actions contained and approved this at their first Board meeting.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The Implementation Plan has identified a series of actions that are required to enable a more structured and proactive approach towards business retention and inward investment. For 2009/10 an allocation of £60,000 has been made from the LABGI grant, the amount available to support this work in 2010/11 will be considered by Cabinet once the LABGI grant for 2010/11 is announced.

Finance Officer Consulted: Anne Silley, Head of Financial Services

Date:

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The recommendations in this report are consistent with the council's economic development and well-being powers and duties and there are no adverse implications arising.

Lawyer Consulted: Bob Bruce Principal Solicitor *Date:*

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The Strategy and Implementation Plan has not had an Equalities Impact Assessment completed at this time but one will be carried out in due course.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The Strategy and Implementation Plan fully supports sustainable development in the city.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 It is not considered that there are any direct implications for crime and disorder arising from the actions contained within.

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 A risk analysis has been prepared as part of the Implementation Plan identifying potential risks and mitigation measures.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.7 The condition of the economy has a major impact on the city. The Strategy has considered the relevant policies, locally, regionally and nationally in reaching its conclusions in the Implementation Plan.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

6.1 Not applicable in this instance

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The Business Retention and Inward Strategy and Implementation Plan will provide a structured and proactive approach to assisting local businesses and attracting new businesses to the city. The current economic climate makes this even more important and will provide the city with the tools to be able to compete for business growth.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. 1st year Action Plan

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. none

Background Documents

1. none

