

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

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Brighton & Hove
City Council

Economic Development

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The Economic Development Team develops the economy of the city by enabling opportunities for employment and business growth. The service straddles commissioning and delivery. Commissioning elements include work related to the City Employment & Skills plan (CESP) and the Business Retention & Inward Investment strategy (BRII). We work on policy development in the area of workforce development, employment & skills, business support and the release of employment land and commercial premises for business growth and employment.

Delivery elements are predicated on the intervention being necessary to demonstrate viability, address gaps that would otherwise not be addressed or as a tool for promoting partnership working leading to sustainable outcomes and activities.

The robustness of a city economy relies on a range of factors that inter-relate; issues such as transport, housing, resident skills, the relative strength of the business base and how the city links with the wider sub-region. Thus the team works internally across the council and externally with businesses, the community and regional and national agencies to conduct its work.

The City Employment & Skills Steering group (CESSG) comprises, private businesses and business representative organisations, Further & Higher Education, the community & voluntary sector and Jobcentre plus. The group exists to drive the CESP which sets a range of targets designed to ensure that the city is able to create at least 6,000 new jobs by 2014, equips residents with the skills needed for those jobs, and works nationally and sub-regionally to lobby for resources and support in achieving the targets.

The BRII highlights the challenges and opportunities for the city's economy; it focuses on the actions needed to ensure that we secure and grow our indigenous business base while also attracting new businesses from key growth sectors into the city. Among the sectors that we are working to support are digital media and gaming; creative industries, environmental technologies, high-tech manufacturing, retail and hospitality.

Building business resilience to economic shocks is essential to the survival and growth of the economy; to this end the teams work includes short, medium and long term actions. The CESP and the BRII represent the medium and long-term activity that the team is engaged in and projects such as Ride the Wave and the Building Futures Local Employment Scheme seek to provide more immediate business support.

The team also works with colleagues in the International Team to seek out opportunities for EU funding to enhance existing work streams and / or enable the development of new work areas that require additional resources in order to progress.

Recent successes

- Ride the Wave, (and the Business Lifebelt programme) were initiated by the Economic Development team in partnership with the local Chamber of Commerce; the recent Ride the Wave programme attracted over 500 business people to a range of workshops designed to equip businesses with the skills needed to sustain and grow their business and weather the recession.
- Economic Development in partnership with City College Brighton & Hove secured £1.2million to help the creation of the first city local labour scheme, Brighton & Hove Local Employment Scheme (BHLES) linked to key development sites.
- We have provided Planning with an employment & skills chapter for the new Guide to Developer Contributions which will, for the first time, require developers to notify their jobs through BHLES and provide contributions toward employment and training for residents.
- Project management of the Urban NOSE project which provides guidance and support to local social enterprises as part of a European Network of Social enterprises seeking to develop robust business models for the sector
- Produced the first Business Welcome Pack for new businesses in the city providing links to business support and advice services in the city and designed to ensure that new businesses have ready access to the support that they need in areas such as skills, business growth, council services and sector information.
- Helped 72 unemployed people access jobs through a partnership project generated through the CESP which linked Further Education, the community voluntary sector, the council and social enterprise.
- Conducted the first council funded business survey into key sectors including environmental services, creative industries and manufacturing to ascertain their resilience to recession and plans for business growth.
- Funded a local business support guide in light of Business Link rationalisation
- Part funded a new post-graduate certificate for the digital media sector developed by the Universities of Brighton & Sussex in partnership with Wired Sussex and designed to improve the employment prospects of graduates wishing to secure employment in the sector.