

RESOURCES AND SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 AUGUST 2020

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (GOVERNANCE)

A.2 TENDRING BACK TO BUSINESS PRIORITIES AND PROJECTS 2020/21

(Report prepared by Keith Simmons, Lisa Hastings and Richard Barrett)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To enable the Committee to contribute to the development of 'Priorities and Projects' to be incorporated as part of the Council's Back to Business and Recovery Plan, and Performance Management framework for the Council for 2020/21 in advance of any decisions by Cabinet/Council on those matters.

INVITEES

The Deputy Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Governance and Corporate Finance, Councillor G V Guglielmi, has been invited to attend the meeting to set out the position in relation to the development of the Back to Business Priorities etc. to be considered by the Committee.

BACKGROUND

Tendring District Council's adopted Corporate Plan 2020/24 sets out the Council's key strategic aims and priorities, the document includes three specific whole Council cross cutting themes. The Corporate Plan forms part of the Council's Policy Framework. The whole Council cross cutting themes are:

- Community Leadership
- Transformation
- Tendring4Growth

Within those themes there are five strong strands:

- A Growing and Inclusive Economy
- Building Sustainable Communities for the future
- Delivering High Quality Services
- Strong Finances and Governance
- Community Leadership Through Partnerships

Determining the impact of COVID on the District's economy and what actions and initiatives can be taken to support its recovery in the Council's Community Leadership role.

Set against this overall aim, the following have been identified as key objectives:

- Reviewing the Council's projects and priorities following the impact of COVID;
- Determining the impact of COVID on the Council's recovery of operational services;
- Assessment of our resources to deliver the priorities;
- How we work with stakeholders; and

- Development of specific deliverables for success to be measured against.

In preparation for a more detailed report to be presented to a future meeting of Cabinet, wider consultation with members and in some instances, the businesses has taken place and is ongoing. This Committee is able to examine the consultation responses and to identify to Cabinet those strands of work that it believes should be a focus.

As the new 'normal' evolves so we must also review arrangements to secure good performance, avoid things like mission creep, and maintain the Council's focus where it can be most impactful. The performance management arrangements will need to be reviewed to ensure that it is fit to meet this purpose.

The Covid-19 pandemic, the resulting national lockdown and the restrictions on social gatherings, and safety measures in retail and leisure facilities mean that simply continuing to report performance based on pre-lockdown criteria would not reflect the agility and flexibility of the Council to respond to the demands now facing the District and the Council. We will work to bring forward a new performance management arrangement for 2021/22.

Having considered this report, and the associated data to be provided to it, the Committee is invited to make recommendations to Cabinet on those strands of work that it believes should be a focus for the Council.

DETAILED INFORMATION

In order to develop and implement measures that will be particularly impactful in delivering improvements in economic and wellbeing advantages for the District, all Councillors have been asked to contribute to the ideas around restarting the local economy, keeping residents and visitors safe and harnessing the power of the voluntary sector to deliver much needed services and improve the quality of life locally. This encouragement of ideas included through the All Member Briefing on 1 July and a direct request from the Deputy Leader. Small groups of Councillors have also been invited to come together to discuss actions and feed in views that way. Likewise, Members of this Committee were supported to discuss these matters in small groups as part of the work it is undertaking as part of the overall exercise underway at the Council.

In addition to the above there has been:

- A business questionnaire has been issued to develop an action plan to support the local economy 'Back to Business', following the Covid-19 restrictions on trading. The plan should complement the emerging Economic Development Strategy and contribute to the Council's target to 'develop a growing and inclusive economy' by supporting existing businesses. The project has the overarching aim of driving footfall, raising the District's profile and place shaping to protect jobs and stimulating the local economy throughout an unprecedented period.
- Preparation to reopen Council services in a 'Covid Secure' manner, through thorough risk assessments whilst reviewing business planning in respect of the current climate, e.g. Sports Facilities, Princes Theatre.
- Drafting a Housing Acquisition & Development Strategy, which is a key aspect of the Housing Strategy and the Council's commitment to increasing our housing stock by 200 homes. It is important as homelessness is expected to rise as a result of COVID and house building will have a beneficial impact on the local economy. This will be

presented for approval following adoption of the Council's Housing Strategy.

- The Climate Emergency declaration and net zero by 2030 target is a key piece of work. COVID has created a scenario where we have reduced carbon emissions by remote working. We must take this opportunity to continue with this working arrangement where possible, whilst setting out clearly our action plan for becoming net zero carbon by 2030.
- Programme planning moving towards the creation of a new Garden Community on the Tendring/Colchester Boundary to provide a long-term programme of growth aimed at delivering high quality development of housing, employment and infrastructure and maximising the area's economic potential.
- Specific promoting the rejuvenation of Clacton Town Centre by supporting short-term interventions to boost footfall and trade and managing the medium-long-term transformation to a centre of diverse economic and community activity in response to the decline of traditional retail.
- The launch of the following 3 Business Grant Schemes:
 - 1) Small Business Rate Relief Grants Scheme
 - 2) Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants Scheme
 - 3) Discretionary Grants Scheme

The schemes remain open until the 28 August 2020 (the deadline set by the Government), with phase 3 of the Discretionary Grants scheme launched on 3 August 2020 which sees a focus on local supply chain businesses e.g. manufacturers and wholesalers who were not eligible for support under the earlier Government Schemes set out in 1) and 2) above.

The refreshed Economic Strategy for the District referred to earlier was approved by the Council's Cabinet at its meeting on 24 July 2020. The Strategy reflects the commitment of the Council and its partners, to creating the conditions needed to stimulate economic growth in the period to 2023. The refresh highlighted that further work would undoubtedly be required when the economic consequences of the pandemic were fully understood and whilst it is clear that those consequences are not yet fully known the Council can play a major role in starting to address the impacts, and, indeed is already doing so.

The Strategy identified **five key Objectives**. In summary these are:

Objective 1: Targeting Growth Locations – Intervening in locations where the potential for growth is highest and where there is a strong case for intervention (Clacton & Jaywick Sands, Harwich & Dovercourt and the Tendring / Colchester border).

Objective 2: Targeting Growth Sectors – Focusing activity on the sectors that are most important not only to Tendring, but also to Essex and the UK economy (Clean Energy and Care & Assisted Living, in addition to a range of wider sector opportunities).

Objective 3: Ensure Residents Have the Skills and Information to Participate – Working with education providers, training organisations and businesses to ensure that Tendring residents have the means to access opportunities in Tendring and beyond.

Objective 4: Support Growth & Innovation in Tendring's Businesses – Working with existing businesses to ensure that they are given support to grow and to innovate in Tendring, particularly those businesses that have high growth potential.

Objective 5: Delivering Housing to Support Economic Objectives – support an increase in population and housing (alongside appropriate infrastructure), to support a stronger labour market and increased local spending.

The nature of the Strategy means that there will be a need to maintain a strong dialogue between the Council and its partners. Also fundamental to the success of this Strategy will be the Council's ability to work alongside national, regional and sub-regional development partners (including the South East LEP, Essex County Council and neighbouring districts) and to ensure that partners can see the long-term vision for Tendring's economy.

As a demonstration of its commitment to the aims of the Strategy, Cabinet agreed to allocate £862k from the 2019/20 Outturn to deliverables around 'Back to Business'. This is in addition to the £100,000 allocated from uncommitted resources within the Council's Regeneration Budgets to support the development and delivery of projects that will deliver key interventions against the five objectives of the Strategy.

In this report mention has already been made of the Council's Economic Growth Team's business survey aimed at securing intelligence on the range and type of business support required by the District's businesses. Data from the survey will be available for consideration by this Committee and otherwise will be used to inform project interventions.

Likewise, the submissions from Councillors as part of the consultation with them will be submitted to this Committee as part of its work in developing a submission to Cabinet on strands of work that it believes should be a focus over 2020/21.

In view of the timing of the meeting of this Committee, the publication of its agenda and this report and the ongoing work on gathering data for it to consider, the detailed information of collated responses from businesses and Councillors will be published closer to the day of the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee identifies its collective view on the themes and activities that should be key strands of work to focus on helping the district recover and includes restarting the local economy, keeping residents and visitors safe and harnessing the power of the voluntary sector to deliver much needed services and improve the quality of life locally.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Data from businesses and Councillors on priorities for the Council as part of back to business **(Appendix is to follow)**