

Waverley Economic Development Covid-19 Action Plan, October 2020-2021

A plan to support business and employment impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic

Pre Covid-19, Waverley was in a strong position economically, with well above average earnings, high levels of educational attainment and a relatively high number of businesses, with below average unemployment.

With Covid-19, the borough's largest sectors of employment retail, tourism and hospitality were closed almost overnight, which has led to vulnerabilities in the economy. A Waverley Borough Council business survey carried out in the height of the first wave of the pandemic reported that 30% of businesses would likely close. As time has elapsed, it has become more apparent that some business sectors are experiencing increases in turnover (cyber security, online sales and marketing, flexible work space) whilst others continue to face considerable challenges (arts, tourism, hospitality, retail). The impact on our local community is also visible in the significant increase in Universal Credit claimants.

This emergency 12 month resilience plan highlights the Council's commitment to assisting our business sectors at this difficult time and in recognition of the considerable contributions they make to the economic vitality and well-being of our borough. In response to the pandemic we responded quickly, we immediately increased our business newsletter frequency and undertook vital business surveys to ensure that our activities were informed and targeted and that our business community had access without delay to a range of support and funding from various sources.

We immediately established regular meetings with our towns and village councils, our local Chambers of Commerce and set up a Waverley Business Task Group. Through these mechanisms we continue to collect important business intelligence and promote initiatives, as well as ensuring that we improve the business customer journey through Waverley and provide directed support and assistance.

Furthermore we have a number of key stakeholders and partners, including the EM3 LEP, Enterprise South, Business South, and Visit Surrey, who we continue to work with at a much higher level on specific projects and initiatives, as well as promoting their services aimed at helping our business community to adapt, survive and thrive.

This living document builds on the longer term SWOT analyses both internal and external that the Economic Development team undertook and is designed to be flexible enough to enable the Council to respond to new legislation, as well as any new opportunities and threats that arise during the life of the Action Plan - for example, new growth sectors, further government or other external funding being made available, or further waves of Coronavirus resulting in local or national lockdowns. It must also not be forgotten that the UK has already, technically, exited the European Union and, at this time, it is unclear whether this will ultimately be with a deal or on a no-deal basis. The Action Plan must

therefore reflect the challenges also posed by Brexit. It needs to be responsive, adaptable and ensure we are engaging with, and supporting, where we are reasonably able, our import/export businesses within the borough.

It is acknowledged that the Action Plan crosses over into the next Financial Year and that a great amount of excellent work has already been undertaken by the Economic Development Team to support the local economy, employment and Waverley's businesses in the six months since the initial national lockdown. Nevertheless, this is intended to be a forward-looking Plan to guide efforts and resources over the coming 12 months, which will inevitably throw up many new challenges nationally, Surrey-wide and more locally.

Whilst the future of both local and national lockdowns and the resulting impact on business sectors remains uncertain, we will continue to monitor and adapt our priorities against the backdrop of the various Government measures and interventions as they are introduced, guided by the RCT Group in consultation with the Executive and relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees, as set out in this document.

Priority Area One

Embed Economic Development / business support across the Council

	Actions	Other Services/Organisations	Targets & Measures	Additional Funding (above staff costs)
1	Create new business support leaflet distributed to newly registered businesses	Business Rates	10% sign up to business newsletter by 31 Dec 2020	N/A
2	Strengthen internal links within WBC in respect of economic development matters through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-establishing quarterly Planning and Economic Development (ED) meetings • ED officer(s) to attend monthly Land & Assets and Project Team meetings • Establishing regular meetings with Sustainability Manager/Projects Team • Hos to attend Property Investment Board and ED to be represented at Land and Assets meetings 	Planning: Land and Assets; Project Team; Sustainability Manager; Property Team	Key metrics and information circulated to Executive	N/A
3	Learning and continuous improvement through: Updating Service Plan Target and setting SMART targets for the Economic Development Service within the corporate quarterly performance management report	Policy Team/Executive	Updated Service Plan and performance vigorously monitored by O&S and Executive Committees through inclusion of measurable targets within corporate performance management. Establish online for Q3 2020 monitoring period 80% of Action Plan Targets completed within agreed timescales.	N/A
4	Promote Waverley Training Services and report on apprentice employment data and skills training undertaken using net promoter scoring and key tracked data	Waverley Training Services	Aim for minimum 3% 'click through rate' (CTR) on WTS articles in newsletter Employment data and trends reported to Executive Briefing monthly (by report and/or in person, including no. or % of apprentices/users going on to gain employment	N/A

Priority Area Two

Provide targeted business support

	Actions	Other Services/Organisations	Success Measure	Additional Funding (above staff costs)
5	<p>Grow mailing list for monthly newsletter and expand variety of content</p> <p>Focus on any funding opportunities available for Waverley’s businesses (e.g. Government Covid funds, LoCase European business funding to develop low/zero carbon enterprises, new LEP funding to support High Street, etc.)</p>		<p>25% increase on circulation by 31 October 2021</p> <p>Achieve 3 successful bids for external funding by 30 September 2021</p> <p>Green Homes Grant Scheme to support local accredited businesses included in Shop Local directory links</p>	N/A
6	<p>Produce a business case to seek funding for FAME business database, as well as support for dashboard management, facilitating critical analysis and sharing (including 4 town/parish clerks) of key metrics and ability to identify growth/failing sectors, trends, and opportunities</p> <p>Identify import/export businesses and provide targeted support in response to pending changes and challenges as the Brexit transition period comes to an end.</p>	EDRF	<p>Funding Secured and dashboards created by November 2020</p> <p>Monthly Executive and SMT reports circulated for Fame database and internal data target data Jan 2021</p>	<p>£6,750 required for annual FAME costs - ERDF (20/21)</p> <p>Additional officer support for data management (c.£50,000 2020/21) – to be funded through SCC rebate</p>
7	<p>Expand Business Intelligence through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining regular online meetings with Clerks from the four main settlements and with the relevant Chambers of Commerce. • Joining Visit Surrey • Establishing and running a Business Task Group for key partners with keynote 	Town and Parish Clerks, Chambers of Commerce, Visit Surrey, Business Task Group	<p>Shared learning and genuine business intelligence that we can use proactively and positively to adapt our priorities & actions to address threats and opportunities as may arise.</p> <p>Clerks Meetings held on 3-weekly basis</p> <p>Chambers of Commerce meetings held on 6-weekly basis – promote town/village events, circulate government guidance and business intelligence.</p>	£1000 p/a for Visit Surrey membership

	<p>speakers on targeted topics (e.g. tech and gaming sector, medical, 5G, tourism)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective use of internally acquired data: Universal Credit figures, new businesses registered with business rates service, number of commercial planning applications and PDR (particularly in the borough's High Streets), footfall figures for high street/parking figures. • Vacancy rates undertaken bi-annually 		<p>Business Task Group Meetings held every two-months with representatives from at least 20 different partner bodies representing the sectors identified</p> <p>Circulate reports to RCT, Executive and Head of Service</p> <p>2 sets of vacancy rates undertaken and figures published on website by 31 October 2021</p>	
8	<p>Provide a targeted training and development programme through:</p> <p>Direct, support and promote the realignment of Enterprise South(ES)/Business South(BS) Business support offer to all businesses in Waverley.</p> <p>Shape content and promote ES/BS webinar programme</p> <p>Launch "Every Customer Counts" retail training</p>	Enterprise South and Business South	<p>Measure and monitor client data from Enterprise South re interventions, including online traffic, at least 4% CTR and downloads (Start Your Own Business book) and Waverley businesses attendance at webinars</p> <p>Number of businesses directly supported through ES/BS</p> <p>% of Waverley retail businesses who take up the ECC training (target 10% by 31 October 2021)</p> <p>Monitor training numbers and training assessments to inform future courses</p>	<p>£5000 per annum for Enterprise South and</p> <p>£2000 p/a for Business South membership</p>
9	<p>Administer and deliver allocated ERDF funds from Reopening High Streets Safely scheme by March 2021.</p> <p>Install Footfall Counters in four main settlements as part of RHSS fund. Monitor data and inform insights reporting</p> <p>Build and promote Virtual High Street template to harness change in consumer behaviour for independent businesses</p>	EDRF, Towns and Parishes, WBC Projects Team, Springboard	<p>Successfully obtain maximum available for borough from ERDF funds (£111,000).</p> <p>50% of allocated funds to have been paid out for projects by 31 December 2020. RHS Project completed by 31 March 2021.</p> <p>Footfall installation complete by October 2020 and data circulated and monitored on monthly basis</p> <p>Advertise tender and aim for two High Streets to adopt virtual high street model. Procure EDF funding.</p>	<p>£111,000 ERDF</p> <p>£14,000 ERDF</p> <p>£10,000 ERDF TBC</p>

10	Amalgamate Shop Local and Business directories into a single directory and encourage expansion of this to include locally produced environmentally sustainable businesses, in addition to TrustMark and/or Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) registered tradespeople for the Government Green Homes Grant Scheme.	Communications	200 businesses included in directory by 31 October 2021 Monitoring of website traffic 5% CTR and data on total number of related web searches	Budget to develop Business Directory further (full costs not known at this stage)
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Priority Area Three

Encourage new business and employment opportunities to the borough

	Actions	Other Services/Organisations	Success Measure	Additional Funding (above staff costs)
11	Establish local network with Commercial Agents Make contact with agents, initially offer vacancy rates and 'Waverley: Better for Business brochure.'	Commercial Agents	Minimum of contact with one commercial agent across the four main settlements by 31 October 2021 Use of new 'Better for Business' brochure on website – minimum 4 CTR%	£564 (from Economic Development budget 2019/20)
12	Work with Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, Enterprise M3 and Surrey County Council's Secure funding Inward Investment service. Building and maintaining relationships and expanding the role of the HoS to strengthen these external links. Focus on working towards the securing of low/zero carbon businesses that will contribute to WBC's 2030 Corporate Plan targets, as well as innovative 'green' businesses	BEIS EM3 LEP Surrey County Council	Assist in securing investment/developments into borough. Establish inward investment target with Surrey CC (with SMART targets/dates)	N/A

13	<p>Facilitate setting up and growth of Job Clubs</p> <p>Continue to fund Farnham Job Club premises</p> <p>Create job club template that can be adopted by other villages/parishes.</p>	Town & Parish Councils, Chambers of Commerce	<p>Monitor number of clients – target 10% gaining employment within 6 months</p> <p>Provide support and help to source premises to establish two new job clubs across the borough by 31 October 2021</p>	£800 (from Economic Development budget 2020/21)
14	<p>Support and identify external funding opportunities for capital projects through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing bid writing skills within the team and across WBC • Identifying and seeking to fill skill gaps 	Projects Team	Achieve 3 successful bids for external funding by 30 September 2021	N/A
15	<p>Improving communications pathways and making it easier to do business in Waverley by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with EM3 LEP to encourage the provision of a full fibre spine into Waverley. • Working with Open Reach and other partners to expand provision of broadband/fibre across the Borough (particularly rural areas). • Investigating plans with stakeholders and Mobile Phone Operators to develop 5G services within the borough. 	EM3 LEP - Gigabit EM3 Steering Group, BT Open Reach, Planning Service, Main Mobile Operators	<p>20% increase in commercial and residential properties with fibre/Broadband access</p> <p>Delivery and approval of Waverley Strategy for broadband connectivity by 31 May 2021</p> <p>Delivery and approval of 5G strategy for Waverley by 31 May 2021.</p>	N/A