

MINUTES

Thurrock Business Board
Meeting Wednesday 27th June 14:00pm

Meeting venue:

The Old Courthouse, Grays, RM 17 5DD

Attendees: Perry Glading (Chair), Paul Kirsty(PK), Neil Woodbridge(NW), Brett Smallcombe(BS), Kristina Jackson(KJ), Lucy Harris(LH), Stephen Taylor(ST), Wesley Mercer(WM), Lisa Duxbury(LD), Andy Vickers(AV), Ian Lewis(IL), Steve Cox(SC), Lyn Carpenter(LC), Anthony McGarel(AM), Emma McCulloch(EM), Sophie Coston(SC), BJ Chong(BJ), Trevor Hutchinson(TH)

Apologies: Robert Singh, Robert Edge, Gustavo Silvo, Matt Kiely, Angela O’Donoghue, Louise Ince, Howard Oldstein

Item No.	Subject	Action
1.	<p>Introductions, apologies and minutes of the last meeting</p> <p>Members of the Board were welcomed to the meeting by PG and roundtable introductions were made.</p> <p>Minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record.</p> <p>PG wanted to advise the business board about how unique this group is and how positive input is important to make this group push forward.</p>	
2.	<p>Economic Commentary</p> <p>NW – Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions</p> <p>Shortage of recruitment supply in the local market, competitors, lack of skills in areas such as IT, undertaking training in procurement processes</p> <p>LH – Pixel Works</p> <p>Really busy, most work coming from property market, lots of filming, £15, 000 for work on website for project developer. Struggled with hiring/keeping apprentices</p> <p>KJ – CVS</p> <p>Struggling to pay correct wages and living wages, demand is high, commissioning for services remains a struggle</p> <p>BS – Business Referral Network</p>	<p>PG Asked ST – Enquiries to BEST, the support they receive, how can we get stats back? (to be discussed)</p>

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	<p>Steady membership and activity is good, LG networks good year 2017, SME work</p> <p>BJ – Palmers Solicitors</p> <p>Commercial clients active, residential property volumes good, similar to last year but is taking long time to finalise</p> <p>WM – S Walsh</p> <p>In London market is stalling, construction volumes falling, residential developers pulling out as want to move out of London area, businesses moving out into Essex</p> <p>LD – Ikea</p> <p>Lakeside has been in Thurrock for 22 years and employs 530 employees, competitive market and retail doing well</p> <p>AV – Barclays</p> <p>Small to medium sized business, Retention of staff, growth is still there, uncertainty surrounding brexit, struggling with small care home providers</p> <p>AM – South Essex College</p> <p>College sector, smaller colleges such as Basildon, Procat, looking to merge 1st January, engineering and construction courses, staff recruitment an issue, getting teachers for logistics is challenging, new initiative for 300hrs work experience in 2020, challenge to find placements</p> <p>TH – DP World London Gateway</p> <p>London Gateway taken on shipping lines, going strong, park 4th building operational in next few weeks (for S H Pratt) fruit company, submit application for 5th building end of year</p> <p>PG – Speaking for Invest Essex</p> <p>Thames enterprise park, development into London Gateway</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Economic Development and Skills Partnership – EDSP</p> <hr/> <p>PG introduced Neil Woodbridge, chair for EDSP board</p> <p>NW gave an overview of the EDSP group, who meet bi-monthly to discuss a range of topics in relation to supporting people into work and up skilling the existing workforce. Handed round evidence based district profile (EM to circulate with minutes) Projects the EDSP are involved in include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thurrock’s Next Top Boss – working with the Council and local schools. A group of students will take part in a specific project set by an employer • Thurrock Soup – social enterprise support project. Pay £5 for soup, people present their enterprise ideas and whoever is voted the winner gets the soup money to use towards starting up their business 	<p>EM to circulate district profile with minutes</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School of Social Enterprise – Going really well, people have completed year 1 to encourage people to set up their own Social Enterprises • Business Advisor Network – Local businesses volunteers go into local schools, have made a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) film as shortage of people with these skills in Thurrock. Spoke to people working in these industries to encourage young people it's a good career option • Thurrock Land of Opportunities – To support vulnerable people who struggle to get into work. This involved hosting an event on 19th July which brought together providers of health and support services in Thurrock. • Money Advice and Education (MAE) to educate people who have or are at risk of getting into serious debt • A representative from EDSP attends the SELEP Social Enterprise Group • Opportunities South East – PDMS – Website to easily advertise vacancies, trying to build up website, businesses to sign up • 60 Minute Mentor – mentoring students in schools to help them think about future career paths • Career Ready – Think logistics, go to schools and get young people to have a go at logistics and problem solving <p>EDSP are keen to collaborate with the Business Board.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Local Plan Update</p> <p>KP gave an overview of the Local Plan. The Local Plan is a statutory planning document – a spatial plan for the next 20+ years. It will set out locations for development of housing and commercial space, housing targets and policies that impact on many aspects of development.</p> <p>The last plan was updated in 2015 but development of a new plan is now underway. The plan is policy based and Thurrock are collaborating with other local authorities in South Essex to produce a joint strategic plan as well and alongside the Thurrock Plan.</p> <p>The Local Plan is being developed in consultation with the local community. Residents have participated in 'pans and tops' and 'your place your voice' consultations so far.</p> <p>EM to circulate KP's contact details for people to keep up to date with the local plan development.</p>	<p>EM to circulate KP's details</p>

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5.	<p>What is holding back growth in Thurrock?</p> <p>PG - Opened discussion on any issues holding back growth for businesses in Thurrock.</p> <p>Robert Edge from Invest Essex has commented on shortage of warehouse staff and HGV drivers. Businesses are paying more for labour here than anywhere else.</p> <p>NW – Turnover of staff, EU staff members faced with uncertainty.</p> <p>LH – Travel to work patterns show that only 2.4% people coming across river to Grays for work. A need for improvements in ferry services, need to promote Thurrock as a good place to work and live as lots of people struggling with recruitment.</p> <p>KJ – Employment opportunities, right skills for workforce sector, commissioning opportunities for voluntary organisations. Need affordable accommodation for voluntary organisations.</p> <p>BS – Responses from network group, lack of collaborative working space. Broadband speed is an issue to businesses, bad in industrial areas and high streets.</p> <p>BJ – Recruitment and retention is an issue, losing staff as so close to London where you will earn more money. Need to pay staff decent living wage as accommodation costs high in Thurrock. Young people will opt more for travelling a little longer in order to work in London where wages are higher.</p> <p>WM – Once local plan is published along with good work Thurrock are doing this will stimulate growth in Thurrock. Development will encourage people to want to live here and more businesses to come here.</p> <p>PG asked if Thurrock’s image is a problem in recruiting and attracting labour? WM agreed, if local plan is done properly then Thurrock could be seen as an attractive place to live and work.</p> <p>LD – We have a voice in Thurrock but we aren’t clear on our brand that will attract talented young people to work in Thurrock.</p> <p>LC commented on the fact that Thurrock needs to be put on the map, to promote its brand and be seen in order to show people that it’s a good place to live and work and what it has to offer.</p> <p>TH – Struggling to give advice and guidance about logistic careers and that they are good careers to move into, need to raise awareness of opportunities in careers like logistics. The only route into jobs seems to be apprenticeships at</p>	

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	<p>the moment. Also tutors with an understanding of the industry are difficult to recruit.</p> <p>Problem in Thurrock is the North South infrastructure as London draws everyone towards there. Large organisations in Thurrock need to recruit from all over Essex but find it difficult because of the poor north / south transport links.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Opportunity South Essex/SELEP update/ South Essex 2050</p> <p>PG introduced Ian Lewis who is programme manager for Opportunity South Essex.</p> <p>South Essex 2050 LC updated on South Essex 2050 - 7 local authorities are working in collaboration on the South Essex 2050 initiative. The work includes a number of workstreams including the development of the Joint Strategic Plan which has already been mentioned by KP</p> <p>The JSP will sit as an umbrella above the local plan, the local plan will have all the detail whereas the JSP will take a strategic view of spatial planning in south Essex. The work has been part funded by a grant for Government and there will be further information on development of the plan in due course.</p> <p>LC proceeded up update on the Thames Estuary Commission who have now launched their independent report to Government about driving growth out of the Thames Estuary. Of 18 authorities in the Thames Estuary, they chose Thurrock to launch it at High House Production Park and LC to chair.</p> <p>The Commission have set the area a number of challenges and given stakeholders and Government six months to respond. Challenges include governance, creating an additional 1.3m jobs and a significant increase in housing by 2050.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Thurrock's emerging capital projects priority list</p> <p>ST reported that SELEP administers the Local Growth Fund, capital funding to deliver economic growth including new homes, new jobs, commercial floorspace etc. The fund is distributed in bidding rounds and in the past most has been spent on transport improvements such as the widening of the A13 now underway.</p> <p>There will be a further call for proposals to take place over summer. The call will be to allocate the £8m underspend in the programme at the moment together with any underspend from existing projects. There is the potential for the funding available to reach around £47m. Individual projects can be £250k -</p>	<p>Anyone that has a specific want or project in the area to contact EM</p>

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	<p>£8m and the funding has to be spent by March 2021. Projects across the SELEP area could be supported and competition will be intense.</p> <p>The call will begin with an expression of interest stage in the next few weeks. Project successful at this stage will then go on to develop full proposals.</p> <p>The council has an emerging capitol project's list and there are a number of proposals that meet the criteria and for which the Council is likely to develop Expressions of Interest.</p> <p>The Council will be sharing further information on proposals it is developing in due course but in the meantime if any business has a particular proposal that seems likely to meet the criteria please let EM know.</p> <p>PG suggested a further update is given at the next Board meeting but in the meantime if any business around the table that has a specific want or project in this area then put forward to EM.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Lower Thames Crossing</p> <p>WM reported he has been working hard in the task force to pressure Highways England to deliver more of what Thurrock wants and needs. They have now agreed to a Health Impact Assessment. HIA will inform the design and how the project moves forward.</p> <p>Thurrock have done a lot of work on a mitigation schedule for the project which is being used to inform discussion with Highways England.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>Close/ AOB</p> <p>Next meeting will include an update on GIFT (Giving for Thurrock) from KJ.</p>	

Date of Next meeting:

- 3rd September, 2pm venue: The Oldcourthouse, Grays