

MINUTES

Thurrock Business Board

Wednesday 23 January 2019 at 2pm to 4pm

Meeting venue

The Old Courthouse, Grays RM17 5DD

Attendees: Perry Glading (Chair), Steve Cox (SC), Amanda Sweeney (AS), Gary Staples (GS), Sarah Lane (SL), Lucy Harris (LH), Gareth Burton (GB), BJ Chong (BJ), Louise Ince (LI), Lyn Carpenter (LC), Howard Oldstein (HO), David Hart (DH), Mark Fennel (MF), Emma Wakeling (EW), Robert Edge (RE), Andy Vickers (AV), Sophie Coston (SC), Ian Lewis (IL), Stephen Taylor (ST).

Apologies: Neil Woodbridge (NW), Westley Mercer (WM), Emma McCulloch (EMc)

Item No.	Subject	Action
1.	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>Members of the Board were welcomed by PG and roundtable introductions were made.</p> <p>Agenda Item 3: Election of Chair This item was brought forward on the agenda and SC Chaired for this part of the meeting. PG was asked to continue as Chair for 12 months from 1st February 2019 after receiving 3 nominations</p>	
2.	<p>Notes of the last meeting and actions arising</p> <p>Minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate reflection and actions were agreed as up to date.</p>	
3.	<p>Election of Chair</p> <p>See item 1.</p>	
4. 5.	<p>Economic Commentary and Key Issues for 2019 Brexit</p> <p>These two agenda items were taken as one. PG asked members of the Board on trading conditions, any issues and any information on the impact Brexit is having on the business community.</p> <p>AS - From a voluntary perspective, the main concern is around a reduced workforce for the care industry following Brexit. The Christmas period was successful with good feedback and donations to Giving for Thurrock.</p> <p>LH – Everyone seems to be uncertain about the future in</p>	

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<p>regards to Brexit. Arts and Digital positive</p> <p>BJ – Residential property is slacking as customers are not buying properties. In retail, people are not paying rent on time. lack of amateur residential buyers to rent in the market</p> <p>LI – 29 businesses attended the first Networking meeting of 2019. Clients are holding off on purchases because of uncertainty around Brexit, businesses are not committing to any decisions in case of bad Brexit outcome. They are also not doing anything new; instead they're refreshing current practices.</p> <p>In terms of recruitment, businesses are starting to go down the apprenticeship route.</p> <p>HO – Businesses are struggling to keep members of staff, 40% of new starters leave their role after the first 6 months.</p> <p>DH – The uncertainty around Brexit is having a major impact on the construction sector. Housing is doing well.</p> <p>EW – Student intake has been really positive and the University has continued to work on a number of fronts.</p> <p>RE – Logistic warehouses are full as stock is staying there a lot longer than normal. There are some concerns about the retention of the labour force in some sectors.</p> <p>AV – Clients want decision on Brexit made sooner rather than later. There has been a substantial downturn in the London market; however clients are making the best out of the situation no matter what the outcome.</p> <p>LC commented that an update on place-making in Thurrock would be a useful item on the next meeting's agenda.</p> <p>PG then asked GS to explain preparations and contingency plans being made by public agencies to respond to whatever the outcome of the Brexit negotiations might be.</p> <p>GS explained that public agencies have been working together to prepare for Brexit and form contingency plans for the different outcomes that could result from the negotiations underway.</p> <p>Various forms have been established at a regional and local level.</p>	
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	<p>GS identified a number of issues or potential issues have been identified and he went on to explain some of the main risks and the responses proposed.</p> <p>One of the most significant concerns relates to traffic congestion and potential gridlock surrounding the Ports. The Purfleet Port was identified as being at particular risk and it could affect the wider South Essex area.</p> <p>PG commented that the Board should be kept informed when clarity comes by mid-February.</p>	
	<p>Action: Place-making update to be included on the agenda for the May Business Board Meeting</p>	EMc
<p>6. 7.</p>	<p>Small Business Unit Accommodation Local Plan Consultation</p> <p>These two items were discussed at the same time.</p> <p>PG explained that he asked for Small Business Accommodation to be included on the agenda because a number of businesses had raised concerns about supply. Provision of business accommodation in the borough is an important consideration in development of the new Local Plan.</p> <p>SC explained that the Council is consulting on development of the new Local Plan. Members of the Board were asked to participate and respond to the consultation by the closing date – March 8th. The consultation materials are available on the council website.</p> <p>The Your Place Your Voice consultation is focussed on issues and options for development and participants in the consultation exercise are asked a series of questions to prompt responses ranging on a number of issues including housing supply and employment issues. The consultation is available online and a number of events have been planned throughout the borough which members of the Business Board are welcome to attend.</p> <p>The consultation also reflects the impact of the Lower Thames Crossing route on the allocation of sites and options available for Thurrock.</p> <p>Highways England will be invited to a future Business Board meeting to talk about infrastructure. They have also been invited to the Thurrock Business Conference.</p>	
	<p>Action: EMc to circulate a reminder about the Your Place</p>	EMc

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	Your Voice Consultation to Business Board Members	
	Action: Highways England to be invited to a future Business Board meeting for an update on the Lower Thames Crossing	EMc
8.	Business Conference 6 March 2019	
	<p>The Thurrock Business Conference will be held on Wednesday 6 March at Orsett Hall, 7:30am to 10:30am.</p> <p>ST explained that there are currently more than 80 delegates booked to attend. The BEST Growth Hub Roadshow will follow the conference until 1pm.</p> <p>A number of stalls in the 'marketplace' have been booked - including one by Highways England and another for the Local Plan Consultation.</p> <p>As in the previous years a local Cllr will welcome delegates to the conference and LC will give a presentation on some of the big issues and the many opportunities facing the borough.</p> <p>The main issue the team are experiencing is identifying a key note speaker. A number of options had been considered. ST asked the Board if they had any recommendations.</p> <p>BJ asked about the theme for the conference and asked if the impact of Brexit may be appropriate. ST replied that given uncertainty around Brexit it would be difficult to arrange a conference on that theme. The conference falls in National Apprenticeship Week and the team had considered using skills as a theme.</p> <p>The board felt that the theme needed to be more clearly defined and a keynote speaker identified on that basis.</p>	
	Action: ST and EMc to work with the Chair of the Business Board to determine a theme for the conference	ST and EMc
	Action: EMc to circulate the Eventbrite details for the conference to the Business Board	EMc
9.	Updates	

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	<p>ASELA – LC gave a brief update on the work of ASELA and explained next steps.</p> <p>OSE – IL gave a brief update on OSE.</p> <p>SELEP & Local Growth Fund – ST stated that the decision making process will be in mid-March. No action is required from the Business Board at the moment; however ST will speak to the Chair if the Business Board can help make the case for projects in Thurrock in any way.</p>	
10.	AOB	
	<p>City of London Markets – PG stated that the Thames Enterprise Partnership are working with the Council and other partners to try to attract the Corporation of London food markets to Thurrock.</p>	
	<p>Action: ST to draft a letter of support for the Chair to send to TBB.</p>	ST
	<p>AS – Businesses are still asked to pledge their support for Giving for Thurrock day.</p> <p>LC – Gave a short update on work with partners to transform the way services are designed and delivered in the borough.</p> <p>HO – There will be an extension of Lakesides leisure schemes.</p> <p>RE – DP World will be introducing freight trains to transport cargo.</p>	

Date of Next meeting

Wednesday 15 May, Venue TBC