



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
VISION FOR
EAST HERTS



A business friendly council

We will ensure we are supporting businesses as ‘customers’ of council services as well as listening to the needs of the business community.

Evidence of need

We have undertaken one off, limited consultation with businesses to help inform the strategy priorities. Continuing this dialogue is important given the link between business rates’ collection and council funding in future (we will need to increase transparency and accountability to businesses).

Large proportion of council customers are businesses (eg. requests for regulatory services/ submitting planning applications).

No direct evidence that regulatory functions are inhibiting economic growth, however anecdotal feedback from businesses is that a central point of contact/ more coherent support and business liaison is required.

20/15

16/17

Commission business need’s analysis in conjunction with LEP, focusing on:

- Demand for employment and commercial space (by geography and sector), also picking up demand for business start up and incubation space
- Demand for employment and commercial space for Old River Lane
- Sector or specific industry opportunities for East Herts (eg. creative/R&D).

Create landing pages for businesses on the Council website consolidating all information and services in one place (Business rates, planning, regulatory functions, procurement, customer profiles etc).

Model impact of introducing additional business rates’ relief

Maintain membership in and sponsor key events such as the Federation of Small Business (FSB) annual awards/ Chamber of Commerce (CoC) awards.

Support the “Better Business for All” partnership between Regulatory authorities in Hertfordshire.

How will we know if we are making a difference?*

Business counts (enterprises and local units)

Total income from business rates

Number of jobs and jobs by sector

Gross Value Added (GVA)

Transaction/ processing times for business queries/ request for service to be resolved (eg. invoice payment processing times)

Qualitative feedback from businesses on a regular basis (measure and questions to be developed)

17/18

Increase self-service options and create user accounts for local businesses to access council services in once place for key council services (aligned to customer services strategy).



Councillors and team members from the economic development team visiting local producers

18/19

19/20

Enabling entrepreneurs and business start ups

We will encourage wealth creation in the district and ensure businesses can access a wide range of locally sourced services.

Evidence of need

Overall growth in the economy has not kept pace with competitors in the last 5-10 years (Seeking more detailed GVA data from LEP).

Anecdotal feedback from businesses that more incubation space is needed. No indication of scale, industry cluster or size/type however.



2 year SLA with WENTA (15/16-16/17) to deliver business start up advice and support (virtual and face to face) and incubation space. Based in Herts Regional College (Ware Campus).

Sponsor the CVS “dragons den” event for entrepreneurs in schools.

Support the LEP with “growth hub” (enterprise network for local businesses to source support services such as finance, HR, training etc).



Ronnie, business owner of Hertford Porker, has gained support from the economic development team to help develop his business

How will we know if we are making a difference?*

Number of new business registrations

Number of businesses still trading after one year

SLA with WENTA also contains specific throughput measures which are monitored

Supporting the rural economy

We will maximise investment into the rural economy and ensure it remains competitive.

Evidence of need

Evidence in RDPE bid suggests growth in rural economy has been slower than urban areas, and that rural businesses (mostly smaller enterprises) are competing with larger (medium sized) urban businesses

Employment land review indicates broadband connectivity is a challenge for rural businesses



Lead on delivery of the Eastern Plateau Rural Development Programme administering EU structural funds (total fund of €1.8m), to rural businesses for increasing productivity, farm diversification, tourism, cultural and heritage activity

Support HCC with the roll out of broadband in the District (“Connecting Counties” programme)



Watts Contracting were a successful applicant in applying for a RDPE bid

How will we know if we are making a difference?*

No. of East Herts businesses applying to RDP

No. of East Herts businesses successful in applying to RDP

Amount of £ invested in East Herts through the RDP

No. of new jobs in East Herts created through the RDP

Vibrant Town Centres

We will ensure our town centres meet the needs and wants of our residents and visitors.

Evidence of need

Town centres are seeing a decline in the retail offer and an increase in other offers (eg. catering and hospitality sectors). This diversification reflects a global trend in shopping behaviours however feedback from businesses is that increasing footfall in the daytime will help support the retail offer.

Food and drink is increasingly more important for residents in the district, who we know are largely in 9-5 jobs outside of the district. The workplace count is smaller than the resident population hence there is a larger market for spend outside of the weekday 9-5 hours.



Develop Old River Lane, Goods Yard and Bishops Stortford North (Action to be shaped in due course as overall vision develops. Suggest also that the needs analysis supported by the LEP addressed the strategic requirements of this development).

Ensure employment land and needs are included with site development assessments (eg. Hertford Urban design study) and District Plan.

Investigate opportunities and test appetite for Business Improvement Districts.

Work in conjunction with town and parish councils to deliver special events and specialist markets (eg. farmer's markets) to increase footfall in the town centres.



Hertford Farmers Market

How will we know if we are making a difference?*

Vacant units in town centres

Town centre footfall (we are currently using a proxy measure of wi fi connections on market days in Bishop's Stortford for example)

Supporting the visitor economy

We want to raise the profile of local attractions and support businesses in their supply chain

Evidence of need

Value & volume studies of visitor economy (undertaken every 2 years since 1996) shows reasonable growth in visitor economy in East Herts over the past 15 years.

Although the district is not a “tourism” destination this is a growth area – value to East Herts economy in 2014 was £230m. There are also venues in the district (eg. Hertford Theatre) which attract visitors.



Support Visit Hertfordshire with their 5 year marketing strategy business networks (eg. for catering and hospitality businesses) – awaiting details of their delivery plan however we are likely to focus upon strengthening business networks in the supply chain and increasing the amount of marketing undertaken. May also lead to further investment in attractions such as Waterways.†

How will we know if we are making a difference?*

Expenditure on visits to East Herts (annual figure measured through Value and Volume Survey).

Lobbying for the right infrastructure

We will work with key partners to ensure East Herts can support growth in the right places at the right times.

Evidence of need

Employment land review and HCC Transport Strategy evidence base indicates road and rail infrastructure is a challenge for businesses (as is the state of commercial stock which is outdated and of poorer quality than neighbouring authorities).

LSCC growth commission on A10 corridor due to report on infrastructure needs mid 2016.

Bishop’s Stortford and A10 identified as a key area for future growth nationally (linked to Stansted Airport as well as Cambridge/London connection).



Work with partners (eg. theLEP) on identifying infrastructure requirements for the A10/ M11 corridor.†

Liaise with the LEP to understand strategic needs of businesses in East Herts and influence key partners.†

How will we know if we are making a difference?*

Investment (£) in transport infrastructure within the district.



Hare Street Farm holiday Barns

Other areas have been considered through the service planning and member engagement process however have not been included at this stage:

The skills agenda: currently the economic development team liaise with Hertford Regional College through occasional partnership meetings and likewise with the University of Hertfordshire through the LEP. Engagement with local schools is limited to the Dragons Den programme which is very small scale. Evidence suggests overall skill levels are not a challenge in East Herts (the skills base in the work place is lower than that of the resident workforce). There is evidence to suggest people in their mid 20's leave the district for opportunities elsewhere (and return in their late 30's) however this can in part be attributed to opportunities for career development a short commute South within London. The council could consider working with local businesses and other public sector organisations to create more apprenticeship/graduate placements (eg. by match funding). This would require additional assessment and consultation with businesses about skill shortages in particular sectors (this may be an issue but no deeper analysis has been undertaken) and ultimately investment to create new opportunities.

Employment initiatives: evidence shows that unemployment is not a large concern within the district. Even the most statistically deprived wards (Hertford Sele, Ware Trinity and Bishop's Stortford Central) have low unemployment rates (4.6%, 3.9% and 3.7% respectively) compared to the national average of 4.4%. As a consequence no projects or initiatives to increase our resident's employability has been put forward.

Regeneration of urban areas: many local authorities who invest a lot in economic development often focus their strategy on regenerating brown field sites in town centres or industrial parks (eg. enterprise zones). Given the geographic make up of East Herts this hasn't been an agenda which has been pursued. The lack of space and available sites remains a key barrier for this hence economic development hasn't had a large role to play in planning policy. This may change depending on the vision for Bishop's Quarter and opportunities around Bishop's Stortford North in general.

