

Economic Development Strategy

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council

Introduction

- 1.1 The Borough of Epsom and Ewell is far more than a dormitory area, serving as a commuter town to the City. There is a vibrant local economy in the retail, engineering, credit, leisure and race horse training sectors. The Borough is home to a number of major international and national headquarters, to small independent enterprises and everything in between.
- 1.2 Regularly voted in the top ten of best places to live in the UK, the Borough boasts a significant amount of protected green space and has excellent road and rail links, with central London less than 30 minutes distant and access to the rest of county facilitated by the adjacent M25.
- 1.3 The Council's aim is for the Borough to remain affluent, by anticipating and responding to changes in employment and business patterns and stimulating both. The area needs to keep its high income and highly skilled residents, while also continuing to invest in skills provision and graduate retention.
- 1.4 The Epsom and Ewell Economic Development Strategy provides a framework for delivering sustained prosperity setting out the Council's ambitions, key priorities and related actions for the economic development across the Borough. It builds upon Local Plan policies that have consistently set out to create a healthy environment for economic development to take place.
- 1.5 The five themes selected for this strategy support commercial and retail vitality, maintaining good links with the business community, ensuring that there is availability and choice of business accommodation, supporting skills development and working with the Gatwick Diamond Initiative and Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership to secure inward investment and infrastructure funding in the area. They have been developed based on elected Councillors' priorities, the Local Plan and, the Corporate Plan plus with input from local business key stakeholders and consultants. The themes have been identified as the areas that will have the greatest positive impact on the Borough and with which the Council has the greatest influence.
- 1.6 In formulating this strategy we have worked closely with the local business community and with other relevant partners including the County Council, Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership, the Gatwick Diamond Initiative, and the Surrey Chambers of Commerce.
- 1.7 The Action Plan included at the end of the Strategy sets out in greater detail the interventions that the Council will undertake to meet the range of objectives for securing continued economic prosperity for the Borough. The Action Plan also identifies which parts of the Borough Council will lead on the delivery of these objectives and the mechanisms for monitoring their performance. In most cases performance monitoring will be carried out in tandem with the Local Plan – which shares a number of key objectives with this Strategy.
- 1.8 The following section of the Strategy provides an informal overview of the themes.

1. Improved accessibility and infrastructure

How will we do this?

- Support the delivery of Kiln Lane Link Road
- Support the delivery of Plan E Highway improvements
- Support the campaign for Zone 6 status for Epsom Railway Station

- 2.1 The construction of an underpass at the end of Kiln Lane under the railway will have a major impact on easing traffic in the Borough's main business areas and will relieve traffic in the town centre. There is an acute need to improve circular journeys and to reduce congestion at the existing two road rail crossings which serve east-west traffic.
- 2.2 Plan E is a comprehensive development framework covering Epsom town centre. It covers a range of transport and public realm improvements which will reduce congestion, make the town centre safer, more attractive and vibrant, and enhance the cultural and leisure offer. The Plan E infrastructure improvements will in parallel enhance vehicular, cycle and pedestrian connectivity, enabling the A24 to remain fluid and improve the public realm in general.
- 2.3 Businesses report to the Council that one of their biggest drawbacks in recruitment for central Epsom is the town centre lying outside of Zone 6 and the railway station not accepting the Oyster card. Likewise retailers bemoan the difficulty in attracting shoppers etc from London for the same reason.

Benefits	Risks and issues
<p>Epsom town centre would be able to attract more businesses, customers and quality employees, while the surrounding areas would become more easily accessible for both private and public transportation.</p> <p>Increasing pedestrian connectivity, easing access to shops and leisure facilities across the Town Centre</p> <p>Increase out of Borough footfall to central Epsom</p>	<p>Dependant on third parties (Highway Authority and Railway)</p> <p>Dependant on funding from LEP</p> <p>This is a commercial decision by a business over which the Council has little influence.</p>

2. Widen the choice of commercial property

How will we do this?

- Produce flagship employment sites programme
 - Introduce a Business Growth incubator
- 2.4 There are a number of employment sites which have scope for innovative development. They can provide Epsom and Ewell with a good mix of high quality sites and premises, fundamental to securing economic growth diversification. The aim will be to have a suitable choice of sites available for accommodating inward investors and expanding local businesses, for maintaining high quality office stock and in parallel, and creating a diverse range of small business accommodation which is fit for purpose
- 2.5 The area has a notable concentration of creative practitioners, with the presence of the UCA and elements of Nescot. A business growth hub would be a catalyst for further development of the new high value industries within the area. It would bring positive benefits for the revitalisation of the town centre, help with the creation of new businesses and assist existing businesses, including those which are home based. It could increase graduate retention and prevent the exodus of existing socio-economic wealth.

Benefits	Risks and issues
Revitalisation of the town centre, Creation of new businesses and assist existing businesses Increase graduate retention and prevent the exodus of existing socio-economic wealth.	There are funding issues associated with the introduction of a Growth Hub (including acquisition of a suitable building).

3. Secure business investment and growth in the Borough

How will we do this?

- Deliver an employer attraction and retention programme

2.6 There is a need to create the profile needed to attract high quality inward investment and new employment, particularly from international sources. This will require proactive area promotion and the aftercare and support needed to ensure the retention and where possible expansion of key businesses in order to retain and create high quality jobs

Benefits	Risks and issues
Existing businesses stay and expand in the Borough Attract new businesses set up in the area, creating jobs and using local services	A highly competitive area with neighbouring boroughs all looking to secure new inward investment Surrey County Council's recently launched Invest In Surrey service requires local authority funding to participate in the marketing programme

4. Support skills development

How will we do this?

- Promote locally available Skills Programmes and initiatives

2.6 It is essential that the local workforce fully prospers by having the skills to sustain and benefit from higher value activity that the borough needs to attract and develop. The local HE and FE institutions have scope to align learning and skills provision with business needs if the objectives and profile of the new economic opportunities can be clearly defined. Opportunities to provide work placements for those in higher education and recruitment of graduates in local knowledge based businesses could be intensified. More widely in the local economy, more opportunities for apprenticeships and getting employed people into vocational training could be grasped.

Benefits	Risks and issues
Increase graduate retention within the borough and help prevent the exodus of existing knowledge based workers	Requires coordination and engagement and strong working relationships with key stakeholders, including the local education and training providers – these have not been easy to establish in the past.

5. Develop Town Centres

How will we do this?

- Support the establishment of an Epsom Town Centre BID (Business Improvement District) if this is something businesses want
 - Improve the Ewell business environment
 - Improve the Stoneleigh business environment
- 2.7 A BID is a business-led and business funded body formed to improve a defined commercial area. The Council's role is to promote and facilitate the process. The benefits of BIDs cited by the businesses they represent include businesses decide and direct what they want for the area, increased footfall, improved staff retention, area promotion. A BID can only be formed following consultation and a ballot in which businesses vote on a BID Proposal or Business Plan for the area. The ballot is run by the local authority (or outsourced by the local authority to a third party).
- 2.8 Epsom's marketplace is a huge asset to the Borough and to the town centre in particular. The Council aims to maximise the use of the marketplace for food, craft and other markets and for community events. Income created through commercial use of the marketplace is invested in environmental improvements and other events to make the town centre more attractive, to drive footfall and enhance the offer in the town centre.
- 2.9 Ewell village and the Stoneleigh Broadway retail areas have an important contribution to make in enhancing and maintaining the economic vibrancy of the borough. Support will be given to businesses to improve the business environment.

Benefits	Risks and issues
<p>The BID will provide an important level of resources for the regeneration of the town centre and could provide an effective vehicle for taking forward parallel initiatives which may be located in the town centre.</p>	<p>For a BID to go ahead the ballot must be won on two counts: straight majority and majority of rateable value. This ensures that the interests of large and small businesses are protected.</p> <p>Identifying the USP of Epsom.</p>

EPSOM AND EWELL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

Themes	Proposed Interventions	Outcomes Sought	Lead Officer	Monitoring
Improved accessibility and infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kiln Lane Link Road • Plan E Public Realm Proposals • Support inclusion of Epsom within Oyster Zone – Zone 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proven funding case and successful implementation • Improved attractiveness of Epsom as a business location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place Development Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)
Widening the Choice of Commercial Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flagship Employment Sites Programme • Identify wider SME business property needs and develop a small business workspace strategy and action plan • Development of a feasibility study and business case for a start-up incubator facility in the town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External funding to bring forward development sites • Strengthened property offer for attracting inward investors • Business incubation / start up facility for the creative hub • Enhanced workspace provision for small businesses • Creation of a master plan for Longmead & Nonsuch Trading Estates and East Street / Utilities opportunity site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Policy Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AMR
Business Investment and Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of existing business engagement programme • Working with partners to identify how we will secure inward investment for the Borough • Develop business content for the EEBC and other stakeholder websites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure opportunities for inward investment from multinationals into the Borough • A realignment of employment towards private sector led growth • Reduced dependency on London for employment • Retention and support of existing business in the Borough • Securing a diverse, self-sufficient local economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Vitality Officers' Group (EVOG) – reporting to Strategy & Resources (S&R) Committee

Skills Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for local skills programmes and initiatives • Survey of skills needs and apprenticeship opportunities as part of ongoing business engagement activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Jobs aligned through better skills alignment towards local residents • Higher than average graduate retention • Diversified employment base 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVOG / S& R reporting
Town Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the establishment of an Epsom Town Centre BID • Improve the Ewell Business environment • Improve the Stoneleigh business environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regenerating the Borough's high streets and retail centres • Economic diversification • Improved quality of life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Centres Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Partnership Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop partnership working with Surrey County Council, Gatwick Diamond Initiative and the Coast to Capital LEP with a view to maximising investment, funding and interventions in the Borough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximisation of funding attracted to Epsom and Ewell initiatives • Maximisation of borough and sub-regional economic benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVOG