

	<p>Assets, Regeneration and Growth Committee</p> <p>15 December 2014</p>
Title	Entrepreneurial Barnet
Report of	Cath Shaw, Enterprise and Regeneration Lead Commissioner
Wards	All
Status	Public
Enclosures	Appendix A: <i>Entrepreneurial Barnet: the public sector contribution to Barnet's economy 2015-2020</i> Appendix B: Equalities Impact Assessment
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<h2>Summary</h2>
<p>This report presents <i>Entrepreneurial Barnet: the public sector contribution to Barnet's economy 2015-2020</i>, aimed at making Barnet the <i>best place in London to be a small business</i>. It contains proposals relating to five theme areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting the basics right • A great place to work, live and invest • Skilled employees and entrepreneurs • Access to markets • Facilitating business growth <p>The reports incorporates the responses gained from residents, businesses and community groups as a result of a public consultation that ran from 10 September 2014 to 20 November 2014, and the views of area committees in relation to those elements of Entrepreneurial Barnet that relate to town centres.</p> <p>The approach has been developed in partnership with Middlesex University, Barnet and Southgate College, the Police, and CommUNITY Barnet, and actions from those partners are embedded throughout the proposals as set out in Appendix A.</p>

Recommendations

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| 1. That the committee approve <i>Entrepreneurial Barnet: the public sector contribution to Barnet's economy 2015-2020</i> (Appendix A). |
| 2. That the Committee requests officers to feedback to area committees any specific issues or suggestions from consultees relating to individual town centres. |
| 3. That the Committee endorses the approach to Town Centres set out in paragraphs 1.10-1.12 below. |

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 This report brings back to the Committee proposals it discussed at its meeting on 8 September 2014, in draft form, to make Barnet the best place in London to be a small business.
- 1.2 Since then public consultation has been undertaken to ensure that the views and expertise of locally-based businesses, residents, and community groups are accounted for and have been able to shape the final proposals.
- 1.3 Additional work has also been undertaken with our partners, particularly Middlesex University, Barnet and Southgate College, the Police, and Community Barnet to refine the detail of the proposals and to join up the approach to growth across the public and community sectors.
- 1.4 At its meeting on 8 September the Committee recognised that an evidence-based and carefully targeted approach to facilitating economic success is needed:
 - Because the Council and its partners have a significant impact on the local economy, and it is important to ensure that this impact is as positive as it can be.
 - To create an environment in which businesses can thrive and grow, and has the confidence to make medium and longer-term investments.
 - To capitalise on the entrepreneurial spirit of Barnet's residents and ensure that small local business are able to succeed. Barnet has the highest level of new business start-ups of any outer London borough, but a higher proportion of these businesses fail within the first three years than in other areas.
 - Because, along with other places across London and the wider UK, some of Barnet's town centres have struggled to respond to the combination of changing shopping patterns by residents and visitors, and tough macro-economic conditions.
- 1.5 The council also has a financial incentive to support local businesses to grow. The Government's Business Rates Retention scheme, introduced in April 2013, means that the Council stands to directly benefit from local growth.

- 1.6 An extensive process of research and engagement has been undertaken in the development of the proposals. This includes analysis of the structure of Barnet's economy and its relative strengths and weaknesses, input from subject matter experts from across a range of service areas, and engagement with local partners to gain their views and buy-in. Key partners include: Barnet and Southgate College, Middlesex University, the Police, and Community Barnet.
- 1.7 The Entrepreneurial Barnet proposals are divided into five broad "theme" areas, reflecting the ways in which the Council and the wider public sector impact on the business community. We recognise that if we get these right we can give a real boost to local businesses' chance of success; if we do not, we could seriously hinder prospects for growth. They are:

THEME A: Getting the Basics right

1. Streamlined regulation and planning
2. Improved customer access

THEME B: A Great Place to live, work and invest

3. Thriving town centres that people want to live, work and spend time in
4. Excellence in Regeneration and Growth
5. Fit for purpose infrastructure and transport networks

THEME C: Skilled Employees and Successful Entrepreneurs

6. Working with employers to develop a skilled workforce
7. Supporting residents to develop the skills they need to succeed
8. Encouraging a culture of entrepreneurship
9. Healthier Workplaces

THEME D: Access to Markets – building local supply chains

10. Local and small businesses accessing contracts

THEME E: Facilitating Business Growth

11. Businesses enabled to grow and thrive
12. Connecting businesses and universities

- 1.8 The proposals focus on making sure the Council is easy to deal with (whether businesses are applying for licences, paying business rates, supplying goods and services, or any of the other reasons why businesses contact us); that initiatives are shaped by the business community as businesses know best

what they need to grow; and that the Council is seen by the business community as a help rather than a hindrance. The report explicitly sends a strong signal that Barnet is fully committed to economic success and growth, which itself contributes to creating a climate conducive to business growth.

1.9 *Entrepreneurial Barnet* sets out an approach to working with local residents and businesses to enhance Barnet's town centres, reflecting the central role of these areas in the local economy. To maximise the impact of Council activity, it is important that resources are effectively targeted to reflect the diverse nature and range of economic functions of different town centres. At its meeting on 8 September 2014, ARG Committee invited area committees to give views and recommendations about which town centres should be identified as "Main town centres", "District centres" and "Local centres" based on consideration of data relating to the size and function of town centres in their areas, and their local expertise. The proposals also proposed a tailored approach to boosting growth in each type of town centre.

1.10 Area committees were advised that, based on what we know about town centres in other areas, each constituency area would expect to have one or two town centres classed as "Main", meaning they serve a more-than local area with a wider range of services, including leisure and non-retail businesses. A total of eight centres were recommended as Main town centres by the area committees.

- *Chipping Barnet Area Committee*: The Committee recommended that Chipping Barnet be identified as "Main" for the constituency area. It considered that all remaining centres in the area should be considered District centres.
- *Hendon Area Committee*: The Committee recommended that Burnt Oak, Edgware and Mill Hill be identified as "Main" for the constituency area.
- *Finchley and Golders Green Area Committee*: The Committee recommended that East Finchley, Finchley Church End, Golders Green and North Finchley should have equal status across both the "Main" and "District" categories. It also noted that particular attention should be paid to Cricklewood given its location on the border of three boroughs.

1.11 Taking into account the recommendations provided by the area committees, the data about town centre size and function and proximity to other centres provided by the GLA, and the capacity the council has to support town centres, it is recommended that the following town centres are designated as "Main" in the *Entrepreneurial Barnet* proposals:

- *Chipping Barnet Area Committee* – Chipping Barnet
- *Hendon Area Committee* – Burnt Oak, Edgware
- *Finchley and Golders Green Area Committee* – Golders Green, North Finchley

- 1.12 In addition, Finchley Church End could be regarded as Main in relation to the approach to supporting the local evening economy (page 18 of Appendix A), reflecting the relatively high proportion of local premises in the area dedicated to serving this function. Three other town centres were identified by the area committees (Cricklewood, East Finchley, and Mill Hill). All play a significant role in the economic and cultural life of the Borough. Given their relatively smaller scale compared with the Main centres proposed above, which are often also in close proximity, it is considered they continue to be supported by the council as District centres through the town centre offer set out in page 18 of *Entrepreneurial Barnet*.
- 1.13 The Chipping Barnet Area Committee suggested that all town centres in that area other than Chipping Barnet be classed as District Centres. Given the significant differences in size and function between established district centres (e.g. Whetstone) and local centres (e.g. Great North Road, Hampden Way) this broad classification may not capture the inherently local nature of many of the smaller centres, which focus predominantly on providing high quality offer to residents in the immediate vicinity.
- 1.14 The Greater London Authority recently (11 November) invited a bid to the Mayor's High Street Fund, with a closing date of 1 December 2014. The Fund is different to its predecessor Outer London Fund, in that grant awards can be submitted directly from the local community as well as from Local Authorities. At the request of the GLA the Council has submitted a bid of £305,000 for Burnt Oak, to be matched by LB Barnet; and consistent with the approach set out in *Entrepreneurial Barnet*, it has supported bids from Mill Hill Neighbourhood Forum for £200,000 in respect of Mill Hill Broadway, and a smaller bid from for £20,000 to continue the work of the Cricklewood Town Team

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Entrepreneurial Barnet proposals have undergone a process of research, information gathering, testing with council partners and individual council service areas, and public consultation and engagement. They also take into account feedback received by area committees in relation to town centres in Barnet. It is now appropriate to recommend that the proposals are agreed and implemented.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 It would be possible to approach economic growth in the Borough in a more ad hoc and reactive way. The risk of this approach would be that important components of economic growth would be neglected, resulting in long term growth in Barnet being lower than may actually be the case. This in turn would result in businesses and residents being worse off, and would also risk LB Barnet retaining a smaller level of Business Rates growth than would be the case if the more joined up and coherent strategy set out here was implemented.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Should the Committee approve the proposals, work will commence on delivering the individual areas of activity set out within them, and on aligning the priorities of the various partners who have been engaged with its development, including Middlesex University, Barnet and Southgate College, and the Police.
- 4.2 Arrangements will also be put into place to return to the Committee on an annual basis to provide an update on progress towards delivering the vision to make Barnet the best place in London to be a small business.
- 4.3 The delivery of the proposals will be communicated in a targeted way to local business, residents, and potential developers to ensure they are leveraging as much value as possible for the Borough.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

The proposals in *Entrepreneurial Barnet* directly support the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2013-2016, particularly the following two corporate priorities:

- Promote responsible growth, development and success across the Borough
- Improve the satisfaction of residents and businesses with the London Borough of Barnet as a place to live, work and study.

The proposals relating to skills and learning in the workforce also relate to the third corporate plan priority area:

- Support families and individuals that need it – promoting independence, learning and well-being.

Where proposals relate to Corporate Plan priorities and indicators, the same indicators will be used to monitor progress. This will ensure continued alignment between *Entrepreneurial Barnet* and the Corporate Plan, and will also prevent any duplication of effort by the Council and its partners.

- 5.1.2 The draft strategy explicitly supports the delivery of Public Health priorities, particularly in relation to improving the health of the workforce via the pan-

London Healthy Workforce charter

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.3 The majority the proposals set out in the *Entrepreneurial Barnet* will be delivered within existing resources, particularly where they align with existing and already funded work programmes.

5.4 There are a number of proposals that will be delivered through grant funding from sources such as Central Government Departments and the Greater London Authority (GLA) e.g. in relation to public realm improvement or the development of an approach to small business support.

5.5 The intention is that, should it be approved, the Economic Strategy will be delivered within existing resources. Where additional funding is required it will be brought in from outside sources, for example Central Government or London Enterprise Panel funding.

5.6 Legal and Constitutional References

5.7 There are no specific legal issues associated with the draft Economic Strategy. The proposals are in line with the Localism Act (2011), and particularly the General Power of Competence given to local authorities.

5.8 Council Constitution, Responsibility for Functions, Annex A – details the terms of reference of the Assets, Regeneration and Growth Committee which includes “Engagement with the business community and measures to support local business” and “To approve any non-statutory plan or strategy within the remit of the Committee that is not reserved for Full Council or Policy and Resources.”

5.9 Risk Management

5.10 There is a risk that if partners in Barnet do not fully understand their role in supporting the development of a successful local economy in Barnet that other areas will out-compete, resulting in fewer and lower quality jobs being available to Barnet residents, less income to the Council as Business Rates rise more slowly than would otherwise be the case, and that Barnet will become, relatively speaking, a less attractive place to work, live and invest.

5.11 Likewise it is important that the key outcomes set out in the proposals are achievable and credible.

5.12 Equalities and Diversity

5.13 A principle embedded across the *Entrepreneurial Barnet* proposals is that all people in Barnet, no matter what their background or circumstances, should have equality of opportunity to succeed and gain from the growth of the economy here and nationally.

5.14 An initial Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed for the proposals with the final assessment being that the strategy will have a minimal positive impact. This assessment was made following a process of research and evidence gathering to identify any groups in the community who may gain. The full equalities impact assessment can be found in appendix B. The key findings of the EIA are summarised below:

- **Age:** Barnet has a growing and ageing population, and a report commissioned from Middlesex by Barnet Council suggests that there is an increasing proportion of this age group seeking work. The strategy acknowledges this and explicitly targets all age groups ensuring that the older population has equal access to opportunities associated with growth.
- **Disability (including mental health problems):** The Labour Force Survey (Quarter 2, 2012) notes that there is a 30.1% gap in employment rates between disabled and non-disabled people. The strategy focuses on support them into training and employment. It also aims to improve the identification and treatment of mental health in employment services and provide targeted support.
- **Pregnancy and Maternity:** The strategy will provide more opportunities for women with families as it aims to increase opportunities for self-employment, flexible working, and working from home.
- **Ethnicity:** The proposals recognise that some BAME groups have higher unemployment rates than others (ONS market status by ethnic group, 2013). Additional focus will be undertaken to engage with these groups.
- **Religion or belief:** statistics have shown that the Muslim population are more likely to be unemployed than other religions (ONS report on religion, 2013). Focus will be put on ensuring the Muslim population understand how they can access employment opportunities.
- **Gender/Sex:** The Annual Population Survey Employment Indicators (ONS, 2013) notes that the employment rate is lower for women than men. This strategy is inclusive of all and aims to minimise barriers to economic success and create more employment opportunities.
- **Carers:** Just over 9% of the Barnet population provide unpaid care. The strategy will increase opportunities for flexible working and also aims to provide extra support to families and residents that need it.
- **Lone Parents:** The strategy recognises that lone parents are less likely to benefit from economic growth, and that these parents are particularly disadvantaged due to the high cost of childcare provision. The strategy will place extra emphasis on reaching this group.
- **Young people and NEETs:** Barnet is performing well with respect to NEETs, with the fourth lowest number in England. Effort will be made to ensure that young people are able to get a sustainable job.
- There was no specific evidence or local data identified that the **sexual orientation** and **gender reassignment** equality strands will be specifically affected by the proposals.

5.15 The full equalities assessment can be found in Appendix B.

5.16 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.17 The proposals were consulted on between 10th September and 20th of November and yielded 25 responses. Overall, there was a positive response with regards to agreement with the five key themes. Separate feedback was also received in the form of four e-mails, and at the Barnet Business Expo attended by 61 small businesses on 23rd October.
- 5.18 There was widespread support for the aim of making Barnet the best place in London to be a small business. Several themes have emerged from the consultation, specifically:
- The Council needs to communicate more clearly with local business and ensure that information and support is readily available.
 - Systems need to be simpler, more efficient, and user-friendly
 - There should be increased opportunity for small businesses to procure work from the Council.
 - There was support for less red tape for small businesses.
 - The need for an effective car parking policy that supports local businesses was identified in a number of responses.
- 5.19 In addition to the online consultation, a number of issues were identified at the Barnet Business Expo event on 31 October 2014. These are briefly summarised in the points below. Local businesses identified:
- Affordable work premises and business rates relief for small businesses as important factors for encouraging local growth.
 - The provision of an easy to access and effective system that enables small businesses to access council procurement and supply chains, especially where their value is less than £10,000.
 - The importance of working with the Federation of Small Businesses and other networks to share knowledge and build connections. Also a wish in the responses to have a local business 'champion'.
 - More readily available information was desired about how to work with the council and access business opportunities. There is also concern that if too much focus is placed on regeneration, then small businesses will be overlooked, so continued support from the Council is necessary.
- 5.20 These points are recognised in the strategy and will be a particular focus for implementation.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 Developing Barnet's Economic Strategy, Middlesex University Report to Re:
<http://www.barnet.gov.uk/developing-barnets-economic-strategy>
- 6.2 Consultation page (consultation closed on 20 November 2014):
http://engage.barnet.gov.uk/consultation-team/entrepreneurial-barnet/consult_view