

APPENDIX 1

Hillingdon Partners – Economic downturn action plan headlines

Grouped under the four key LSP themes to address the downturn, Hillingdon partners are delivering a broad range of help and support measures for residents and local businesses affected by the recession.

1. Supporting Residents

- A **Council Tax freeze** for two years from 09/10. Agreed by Cabinet and Council in Feb 09

- **Maintain affordable fees and charges** on range of council services. Cabinet has frozen charges for key services used by residents.
- **Hillingdon First and Leisure Link** offer residents discounts on parking, local shopping, leisure centres, arts and library facilities

Additional funding of £150k over two years for additional advice and support services, plus matching funding of £75k from Hillingdon Community Trust for one year including:

- CAB advice capacity - online telephone call back service, extra phone advice, offices open more days, training volunteer advisers
- Outreach debt and financial advice for Bell Farm Estate
- Extra counselling sessions from RELATE
- Age Concern have employed an outreach worker to deliver 'financial assessment', support and advice sessions as part of our Ageing Well activities across the borough. These will take place in Harefield, Eastcote, Ickenham, Ruislip, West Drayton and Hayes.

Support for residents having difficulty paying Council Tax, including:

- Extending payment arrangements to March 09 (collection over 12 instead of 10 months). Longer repayment periods in exceptional circumstances
- Cash payments made on any day on the month where accounts have been subject to recovery action.
- Recovery action will be suspended if there is a sudden loss of income, supported by evidence.
- All recovery communications include information on benefit entitlement
- Dedicated phone lines to CAB advisers to contact the Council on behalf of clients with council tax payment problems

Council rents reduced:

- Proposed rent increases for local authority tenants in Hillingdon halved from 6.2 per cent to 3.1 per cent.
- Changes to rent increase guidelines mean tenants receive a reduction in average rent for the coming year from around £4 per week to approximately just under £2.

Free careers guidance service for all residents

- Uxbridge College are offering a free careers guidance service to help residents of all ages improve their careers prospects and obtain more qualifications. The Service can help residents decide their options, provide advice on education or training, offer guidance on professional courses and support with job searches, CV writing and interview techniques.
- LSC 6-month offer for unemployed. Uxbridge College will be delivering a 15 month programme of flexible but intensive 'roll-on / roll-off' support for residents.
- Brunel University has successfully bid to the Economic Challenge Investment Fund for a package of support for small businesses and unemployed graduates to be launched over the summer.

2. Protecting the Vulnerable

- **Hillingdon is one of seven London boroughs to deliver the Fast Track Mortgage Rescue Scheme** that offers financial support to people at risk of repossession following a change in personal circumstances

APPENDIX 1

- **Hillingdon is working in partnership with West London Housing Partnership and Government to promote the 'Warm Zone' scheme**, which offers income-related grants towards insulation and replacing inefficient heating systems, a free benefits entitlement check across the benefits system, free fire safety checks and discounted home insulation measures
- **The Hillingdon Joint Team is offering support to people on low incomes to maximise their benefit entitlement.** The service, available to all residents, offers a full benefit check for entitlement for all benefits including pension credit, disability benefits and Housing, and Council Tax benefits. The Hillingdon Joint Team is a multi-disciplinary partnership body made up of Hillingdon Council, the Pension Service, Age Concern, Hillingdon Carers, CAB, Hillingdon Mind and JCP.
- **'Ruislip Streets Ahead' Credit Crunch advice drop-in session** – The Joint Visiting Team will talk to faith leaders about advice & support available to residents, particularly from hard to reach communities, during the downturn. A drop-in session will also be held for all residents to seek benefits advice and support, including help with filling out claim forms. The event forms part of 'Streets Ahead – week of action' and will take place on 23rd September 09.

3. Supporting Businesses

'Speed up during the slowdown'

- Hillingdon is working with Google to help local small businesses develop their online presence during the downturn. Interested business can attend a seminar on 10th November that will showcase free business tools to get online and will show businesses how to attract more customers, use online marketing and understanding how online tools can group their business.

Support and payment plans offered to businesses experiencing difficulties paying business rates to contact us for help to plan payment, including:

- Hillingdon is working with Hillingdon Chamber of Commerce to promote the take-up of Small Business Rate Relief. 1,000 small businesses that are eligible for SBRR, but have not yet applied, have been contacted to raise awareness and increase take-up.
- Hillingdon Chamber of Commerce is supporting businesses to arrange payment of rents on a monthly basis. Hillingdon Property Services support businesses to pay rents on a monthly basis.

Endeavour to pay invoices within 10 days of receipt

- 230 local SMEs have been identified by postcode, and payment terms changed from 30 days to immediate to support local smaller businesses.
- In addition all invoices received from businesses in Hillingdon are also marked for immediate payment.

APPENDIX 1

Supporting local business to access supply chains

- A European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) bid has been successful securing £295k to deliver a 3-year programme of supply chain support including Heathrow Meet the Buyer, and public sector procurement opportunities within Ealing, Hillingdon & Council. The first events for business starts on 28th Sep (Hillingdon) 30th Sep (Ealing) 1st Oct (Hounslow) ready for 2-day Heathrow Meeting the Buyer event on 17th & 18th Nov.
- Hillingdon is working with the Chamber of Commerce to contact business members and promote the opportunity of free advertisement listing in the Hillingdon Business Directory 2010-12.
- Business Link in London are offering a 'Rapid Response' service for businesses that need urgent advice on bankruptcy or redundancies and to individuals that are looking at starting a business. In 2008-09 Business Link supported 143 businesses in Hillingdon and dealt with 4101 business enquiries.
- Jobcentre Plus offers a coordinated 'Rapid Response' service to businesses and business receivers considering large-scale redundancies. This provides employees support to seek advice, find new jobs, apply for benefits, and look for training opportunities.

A range of services to local businesses to help them increase success, advertise vacancies and develop their staff, including:

- Uxbridge College is offering a guide for employers with advice on how to boost business success. The guide includes information on free training, customised courses, facilities for hire and a range of other business development services
- Employers and voluntary organisations can advertise their full and part-time vacancies for free through Uxbridge College's vacancy programme. The Student Training and Employment Project (STEP) gives direct access to the student workforce and includes guidance and consultancy services on employment issues. Employers can interview and conduct testing on our campuses.
- Uxbridge College is offering free training in Leadership and Management worth up to £1,000 to local businesses. The Leadership and Management Programme is aimed at business owners/managers responsible for the direction of an organisation, including private, franchise, public and voluntary organisations employing between ten and 249 staff. Courses include; Programmes accredited by Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM), short courses lasting 1-2 days, bespoke courses available such as appraisal training or dedicated IT packages.

4. Prepare for the up-turn

- **Hillingdon has introduced the 'Workmates Scheme'**, as part of the West London Working City Strategy Pathfinder, which will provide a helping hand for working parents during the first 52 weeks of starting employment. This is a hand-up rather than handout, making sure all in-work financial support is applied for i.e. support with childcare arrangements. Evidence shows that of the benefit claimants starting paid employment only 37% are still in employment after just 4 weeks. Hillingdon will be first London council to implement such a scheme.

Help to access training and apprenticeships and help local people into employment, including:

- Hillingdon is working with Brunel University and Hillingdon Community Trust to offer people in the south of the borough advice and expertise to help them set up their

APPENDIX 1

own businesses (Enterprising Attitudes). Training sessions are provided on networking, legal issues, finance and market research.

- Hillingdon has accessed capital funding from LDA and provided revenue funding for the Hayes Business Studios launched in December 2008 on Uxbridge College's Hayes Community Campus. 10 purpose built business studios for business start ups.
- Uxbridge College contributes 2/3rds of the Local Area Agreement targets for working Hillingdon residents to achieve a Level 2 qualification through its Apprentice and Train to Gain programmes.
- **Heathrow Gateway 2012** - A Joint LDA/Hillingdon European Social Fund (ESF) bid on behalf of West London boroughs and strategic partners has secured £900K to maximise local workforce training and recruitment opportunities in Heathrow around construction, retail, security and customer service sectors. Progress will be reported through the West London Working Implementation Group. Currently, there are 30 confirmed job starts and a further 30 job offers that will start in October 2009.
- Council's have set a London target of at least 2,000 apprenticeships across all London local authorities from 2009-2012. The Hillingdon target of 45 in-house apprenticeships will contribute directly towards this. Hillingdon is also working closely with employers and training providers within the construction sector to develop the Hillingdon Construction Apprenticeship Programme, which requires developers to commit towards creating construction apprenticeships for all developments of 10 or more housing units. There is a target of 200 posts by 2010.
- Hillingdon are part of a West London Future Jobs Fund proposal to create 300 new additional posts across the six West London Alliance boroughs for young people approaching 10 months unemployment (see attachment). We will utilise these as six-month pre-apprenticeship posts to give young people "work ready" skills and a progression route onto further work-based training.
- The next annual Heathrow Apprenticeship Fair at the Heathrow Academy will take place in Feb 2010 and planning is currently underway. The Fair forms part of the local labour strategy and helps local young people find out more about apprenticeship opportunities provided by companies linked to Heathrow. 17 exhibitors with more than 300 apprenticeship places on offer.
- Uxbridge College is running a recruitment service for students known as Student Training & Employment Project (STEP). This allows employers to post their vacancies on college website and supports students to apply. www.uxbridgecollege.ac.uk
- Uxbridge College is working with Adult Education on the 'Accelerate Project' to provide learning opportunities for 58 unemployed Hillingdon residents in the North of the borough (Northwood Hills, Ruislip Manor, Harefield). Funding of £152k over 15 months.
- LSC Employability Pathways - Uxbridge College is working with Adult Education to secure additional employability support for 200 parents returning to work
- Uxbridge College is a delivery partner of Acton Training in delivering the Response to Redundancy programme for Hillingdon residents

APPENDIX 1

Attracting inward business investment into the borough

- The Sustainable Economy Taskforce brings together the Council, Uxbridge College, BAA, Chamber of Commerce, Brunel University, Business Link and a range of 15 business leaders to deliver the strategy for sustainable economy and coordinate business support initiatives.
- Hillingdon and Uxbridge College set-up the Hayes Business Studios, located at Hayes Community Campus, to support business start-ups. 10 studios built from LDA capital funding and LBH revenue funding. Currently 4 tenants in occupancy, 2 more pending.
- Hillingdon will be present at the 'Place West London' event on the 13 October 2009, which is a high-level economic development conference and networking event for both public and private sector to discuss issues around people, places, infrastructure and economy.
- Think London - Inward Investment confirmed on 1st May that the new Canon Europe headquarters will be located in Stockley Park, near Heathrow, expected to create additional 250 jobs. Spanish pharmaceutical firm Almirall have opened their new HQ at Stockley Park where 50 jobs will be located. 600 jobs (450 full-time) are expected to be created following approval for the new Riva properties 5-star Hotel at Heathrow.

Housing Investment

- Hillingdon has been awarded £7.7m funding by the Homes and Community Agency (HCA) to build new social homes in a number of locations throughout the borough. In total £460m will be allocated to 47 councils across England to build just over 2,000 new homes. Hillingdon are expecting to build 93 new social houses with the funding.