

Stratford Business Conference 2013

The District Council, in conjunction with Stratford Vision, hosted Stratford Business Conference 2013 which took place in April. The event provided a platform for business and public sector organisations across the District to hear and discuss the key issues and barriers to growth that affect the future of the economy:- an ageing population, affordable housing, employment land and skills retention.

The keynote speeches were well received with addresses from David Frost, CBE DL (Chair of LEP Network) and Paul Kehoe (Chief Executive of Birmingham Airport). The State of Business in the District presentation was delivered by Paul Lankester (Chief Executive of the District Council).

Panellists representing business and public sector organisations were able to share their views with delegates who were also invited to make a contribution to the discussions.

Visit the following link for full details of the conference-related documents and outcomes: www.stratford.gov.uk/sbc2013



▲ From left to right: Nadhim Zahawi (MP for Stratford-on-Avon), Cllr Maurice Howse (Portfolio Holder for Enterprise, Housing and Revenues), Will Hanrahan (FirstLook TV and Conference Facilitator), Paul Kehoe (Chief Executive of Birmingham Airport)

Other useful contacts

CSW Broadband

- www.cswbroadband.org.uk
- newsletters www.cswbroadband.org.uk/category/newsletter-archive
- latest news www.cswbroadband.org.uk/whats-happening/latest-news

Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce

- 02476 654321
- info@cw-chamber.co.uk
- www.cw-chamber.co.uk

Federation of Small Businesses

- 0808 20 20 888
- www.fsb.org.uk

Invest in Warwickshire

- 01926 412140
- invest@warwickshire.gov.uk
- <http://invest.warwickshire.gov.uk>

Stratford-on-Avon 4 Business funding portal

- www.open4business.info/stratford/default.aspx

Warwickshire Apprenticeship Hub

- 01926 412649
- apprentice@warwickshire.gov.uk
- www.warwickshire.gov.uk/getanapprentice

... and useful documents

Business Matters newsletter pdf version www.stratford.gov.uk/businessmatters

Business & Enterprise Strategy www.stratford.gov.uk/council/policies.cfm

Stratford Business Conference 2013 www.stratford.gov.uk/sbc2013

Stratford-on-Avon District Council Business Survey 2013 www.stratford.gov.uk/businessmatters

Useful contacts in the District Council

www.stratford.gov.uk

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businessmatters



Welcome to the first edition of Business Matters, Stratford-on-Avon District Council's newsletter for businesses in the District

As the Portfolio Holder for Enterprise Housing and Revenues, I am pleased to introduce the Council's first edition of Business Matters which is designed to update businesses on matters that affect and are important to them.

Through its Business & Enterprise Strategy, the District Council is committed to supporting and promoting business & enterprise within our District. We recognise the importance of growth and jobs and the value of business to our local economy.

My three aims are Communication, Co-operation and Collaboration. It is through these ideals that the District Council and businesses in the District can work together.

We hope that future Business Matters will provide an opportunity for local businesses to tell us about their activities, good news stories, current topical issues, matters of concern, business initiatives and good practice. We would also like to invite you to spotlight your business and would be pleased to hear from you if you would like your business to be featured. To find out more please contact Nancy Singleton, Business Enterprise & Tourism Manager, on 01789 260803 or email nancy.singleton@stratford-dc.gov.uk.

If you would like to receive regular updates please provide us with your contact details by either visiting www.stratford.gov.uk/businessmatters or scanning the QR code below.

The information provided will only be used for supporting business and will not be used for marketing purposes or passed on to a third party.

Councillor Maurice Howse
Portfolio Holder for Enterprise, Housing and Revenues



CSW Broadband Update

The District Council is supporting the CSW Broadband project which entered into a £14.57m contract with BT in June this year. The money will be spent on bringing improved broadband to those areas that will not be uplifted through the commercial plans of BT and other providers. The targets for the project are 100% coverage at the Universal Service Commitment (a minimum of 2Mbps, which could in practice be up to 23 Mbps) and 90% coverage at Superfast speeds, which is over 24Mbps. Some areas will get considerably more than 24Mbps and the actual speed achieved depends on a number of factors such as geography, topography, current infrastructure etc.

Once the initial planning of the network is complete the project will be publishing a 12-month rolling programme of works, which will be updated on a quarterly basis, and which will show which exchanges, cabinets and other infrastructure are to be upgraded. All information is available through the project website www.cswbroadband.org.uk

To keep up to date on the latest news regarding the CSW Broadband project visit www.cswbroadband.org.uk/category/newsletter-archive to see the newsletters or sign up to receive the updates by email. The very latest news for the CSW Broadband project can be found at www.cswbroadband.org.uk/whats-happening/latest-news



Scan the QR code to subscribe to businessmatters

What is the District Council doing to support businesses?

Business Rate Relief (National Non-Domestic Business Rates)

Depending on the type and size of your business, business rate relief may apply:-

- Mandatory rate relief of 80% for charities or organisations operating for charitable purposes
- Mandatory Rural Rate Relief of 50% can be awarded where your business is the only village shop or post office with a rateable value of up to £8,500 or the only public house or petrol station with a rateable value of up to £12,500. Discretionary Rural Rate Relief can be awarded to top up the 50% mandatory relief or to any rural retail business (up to 100%) with a rateable value of up to £16,500
- Discretionary rate relief as top up (up to 20%) for mandatory relief or up to 100% for any non profit making organisations
- Small business rate relief if your rateable value is less than £6,000 (100% relief), or between £6,001 and £12,000 (sliding scale 100% down to 0%)
- Hardship rate relief if your business is suffering financially. Applications for this type of relief are considered on a case-by-case basis and can be awarded for up to 12 months.

For more information contact the District Council's Business Rates Team on 01789 260993 or email ndr@stratford-dc.gov.uk

Invest in Warwickshire

The District Council is working closely with Warwickshire County Council through Invest in Warwickshire to promote and encourage growth in the District.

Invest in Warwickshire generates and acts on inward investment enquiries from all over the world. It also deals with expansion enquiries from thriving local companies by assisting with free and confidential services including:-

- Access to a comprehensive commercial property database
- Excellent local intelligence – from demographics to sector analysis
- Introductions to local networks and organisations
- Helping your employees with information about the housing, schooling and leisure opportunities across the County.

Visit <http://invest.warwickshire.gov.uk>

Stratford-on-Avon District Council Business Survey 2013 - Summary

Thank you to all the businesses who completed the questionnaire that went out in the summer.

The survey was used to obtain the views of business to influence, shape and inform the development and delivery of current and future plans and strategies. The way Stratford District Council (SDC) administers National Non Domestic (Business) Rates was also examined and the best ways of supporting businesses in the future were questioned.

3,384 questionnaires were posted to businesses in May 2013 across the District. A reminder mailing was sent out towards the end of June to help boost response rates, with a deadline of mid July. Over the two mailings, 142 of these were returned undelivered for various reasons. 940 of those delivered were completed during the time period allowed, a small number were returned online. This is a response rate of 29%.

73% of businesses employed between one and five full-time employees, and eight out of ten had between one and five part-time employees (82%).

Location of Business

▶ 54% of businesses responded that the nature of the site/premises was the main reason for their location, down 3 percentage points from the 57% recorded in 2011, with 27% saying it was the proximity of their customers, down by a couple of percentage points from the previous survey. 20% stated the quality of the environment, and 14% mentioned the nature of the local economy.

▶ 87% felt their premises were suitable for their current or future likely needs.

▶ 73% felt they were likely to stay at the current location, 15% were thinking of expansion, 11% interested in relocation and 1% said their intention was to reduce in size.

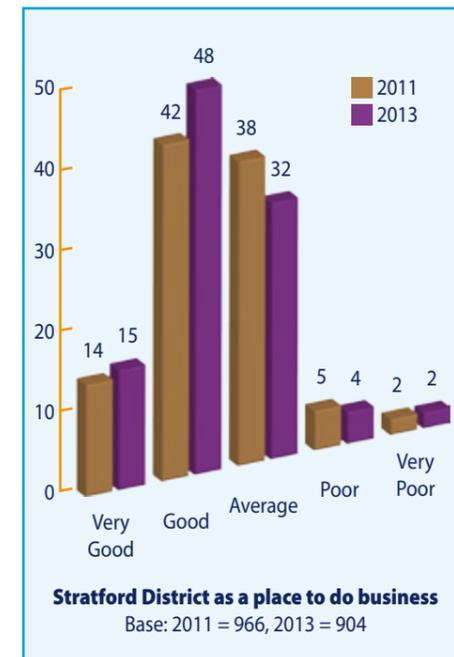
▶ 57% of businesses stated that one of the main problems that affect the operation of their business was rising costs, down by 8 percentage points from the previous survey (65%). One quarter (25%) of businesses stated market demand/competition, 15% stated legislation/red tape (6 percentage points less than in 2011), and 14% stated the cost of suitable premises.

▶ Asked if their company wished to relocate within Stratford District, 46% thought there were suitable sites or premises available, up by 3 percentage points from the 43% recorded in 2011.

Stratford as an Area for Business

▶ An overwhelming 79% wanted business rates and other charges reduced. In terms of communication, 42% required improved broadband connections, up by 14 percentage points from 2011. Three in ten respondents (27%) felt public transport needed improving and the same percentage (27%) wanted improvements to the road network. Just over one fifth of those surveyed (21%) said provide more business support and advice.

▶ 63% rated the District as very good or good as a place to do business, which represented an increase of 7 percentage points since the previous survey, with a further 32% saying it was average.



Support from Stratford District Council

▶ Businesses were asked what support role they felt SDC should have in terms of business start up. 38% wanted rates relief for a period during the set up and establishment of business. 16% cited expert advice and 14% were in favour of the provision of grants for businesses and low cost business loans.

▶ Businesses were asked what support role they felt SDC should have in terms of business improvement. 16% of respondents wanted a rates reduction for all businesses, and 8% wanted SDC to provide grants and low cost loans.

▶ Businesses were asked if SDC introduced a Regulatory Advice Service for business in the District, which included planning matters, whether they would be interested in it for their business. 56% were not interested as opposed to 44% who were.

Business and Tourism

▶ 31% of those surveyed supplied goods or services to the tourism industry, which represented a fall of 3 percentage points since the 34% recorded in 2011.

▶ Asked how important the tourism industry was to them, 58% said it was very important, up by 23 percentage points from the previous survey (35%).

Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership

▶ 65% stated they had not heard of the Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

▶ Of those aware of the LEP, before reading about the Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership in the questionnaire, 65% of businesses confirmed that they knew what they did. 16% had been in contact with the LEP for any reason.

NNDR

▶ 79% of businesses would normally contact SDC by telephone, a decrease of 9 percentage points on 2008. There is a greater emphasis on contact via email with a rise of 13 percentage points from 18% to 31% in 2013.

▶ 26% in 2013 had contacted the Council in the last 12 months about NNDR.

▶ In 2013, 59% of those respondents who contacted the Council in respect of NNDR felt the telephone call was answered quickly, up 8 percentage points on 2011.

▶ 42% of businesses agreed that when they made a call to SDC, they were transferred between several different people. This was an 8 percentage point fall from the level in 2011.

▶ 59% agreed that they were satisfied overall with the telephone service of SDC and 22% of businesses disagreed.

▶ Awareness of the small business rate relief has increased from 66% in 2008 to 98% in 2013. Awareness of the other reliefs had also risen or stayed constant in the five year period between surveys.

A prize draw was used as an incentive to complete the questionnaire, with the two £50 shopping vouchers going to a business in Dunnington and a business in Haselore.

Warwickshire Apprenticeship Hub

The District Council is supporting Warwickshire Apprenticeship Hub which was set up by Warwickshire County Council in response to local businesses saying that the apprenticeship programme is complex, ever changing and bureaucratic.

Warwickshire Apprenticeship Hub offers free support and impartial business advice to small and medium sized businesses across Warwickshire to support them in recruiting apprentices.

Apprentices can help businesses of all sizes to develop a skilled, motivated and qualified workforce. Employers have reported that they can also lead to improved products or services, new ideas being introduced to the organisation, higher staff morale and staff staying with the organisation for longer. Visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk/getanapprentice

Business Support & Advice

The District Council provides a number of services that can directly or indirectly support businesses within the District. Visit www.stratford.gov.uk/business/index.cfm

Funding Opportunities

If you are looking for funding to support business growth then the [Stratford-on-Avon 4 Business](http://www.stratford.gov.uk/business/index.cfm) funding portal might be able to help. You are able to set up searches that will alert you if funding for your sector becomes available. Funding includes grants, loans, venture capital and tax credits. Visit www.open4business.info/stratford/default.aspx

... and what are the District Council's plans for the future to support businesses?

Using business feedback gathered from a variety of sources, we are exploring ways in which we can provide further support and assistance to help with business priorities:-

- Working with Warwickshire County Council and neighbouring authorities to develop a package of support measures for business
- The establishment of an SDC Business Forum to enable businesses to engage directly with Councillors and Staff to discuss matters such as planning, business rate relief and business support.