

# **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

## **REPORT TO: Jobs Regeneration and Assets Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

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**Date of Meeting:** 15 December 2014  
**Report of:** Director of Economic Growth and Prosperity  
**Subject/Title:** Business Engagement – Strategic Account Management,  
Cheshire East's Top 100 Investors  
**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Don Stockton

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### **1.0 Report Summary**

- 1.1 This report is a discussion paper to inform members about the current context regarding business in the Borough the role of the Business Engagement Team and how councillors can contribute to refining the Council's engagement with businesses.

### **2.0 Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Committee note the report and consider the suggestions for further involvement contained within the report.

### **3.0 Wards Affected**

- 3.1 All

### **4.0 Local Ward Members**

- 4.1 All

### **5.0 Background**

#### Context

- 5.1 The borough has a strong track record of working with key companies to support growth and maximise the opportunities for major employers in the borough. The joint investment in Alderley Park and the support provided to Bentley Automotive to secure their recent expansion is testimony to the authority's ability to effectively support major companies in the area.
- 5.2 Supporting Cheshire East's top investors is critical to the economic prosperity of the borough. There is c18,000 businesses in the borough employing 177,100 people with a significant proportion (estimated to be c23%) employed in the top 100 businesses. In addition, the top 100 business deliver a significant proportion of Cheshire East's £9.2 billion GVA output.

- 5.3 Major companies have a significant impact on the prosperity for the borough. Typically, larger employers pay higher salaries, invest more in training their workforce, undertake higher value activity and have a greater impact on their supply chain. For context had Astra Zeneca relocated their entire Alderley Park operation to Cambridge this would have resulted in Loss of 3000 highly skilled R&D jobs to Cambridge (average salaries c£65k compared to average of £32k for Cheshire East as a whole.) This would represent an economic impact of £245m per year to the local economy and a reduction in the size of the Cheshire and Warrington economy of 1.2%.

#### The Business Engagement Team

- 5.4 The Business Engagement team is responsible for coordinating the strategic account management programme. The objective of the programme is to ensure the companies generating the greatest number of jobs, capital investment and GVA output to the area are provided with maximum assistance.
- 5.5 Core functions include;
- Develop a long term partnerships with key companies, understand their challenges and growth opportunities.
  - Provide a single point of contact on council issues such as highways, planning, regeneration and infrastructure.
  - Establish the company vision; define the partnership and developing a strategic plan to support growth.
  - Develop tailored support packages to encourage growth and expansion opportunities – ensuring Cheshire East takes a pro-active stance in how we utilise our assets and invest in infrastructure.
  - Provide effective access to central government support schemes including grant assistance such as regional growth funding.
  - Capture data to inform, and support the business case for how Cheshire East develops its infrastructure and assets.
  - The business engagement and inward investment team was established in May 2014, building on existing resource within Cheshire East. . Historically, key accounts, were managed on a reactive basis with senior officers within the Growth & Prosperity leading on individual relationships. This has produced some significant results, on which there is the potential to build, utilising the expertise and existing relationships with key members.

#### The role of elected members

- 5.6 Elected members have the potential to bring considerable value to the business account management process. This may be in their capacity as a local ambassador or via existing business relationships. Elected members can support officers in establishing relationships and gaining credibility with target companies. In the absence of an existing relationship members can add considerable benefit to company engagement through their appreciation of local issues and knowledge of key local stakeholders, (colleges, key assets, historical interest.) In addition, members are best placed to articulate the needs and challenges of the local community to key business.

- 5.7 If is important in a culture of continuous improvement consideration is given to how to further refine our engagement with businesses and the role elected members play in this engagement. Suggestions are set out below as a prompt to discuss this topic further.
- A. Revise the existing list of Cheshire East's top 100 investors. Commission research to determine Cheshire East's top 100 companies (examining company function, head count, turn over GVA output.)
  - B. Evaluate the performance assessing employee numbers, GVA output and value to the Cheshire East economy. Establish a baseline to track and bench mark future results.
  - C. Coordinate stakeholder groups to interrogate the research utilising local knowledge (potentially including wider stakeholders such as the Chambers of Commerce.)
  - D. Develop a uniform approach to developing key account plans and approaching key account relationships.
  - E. Undertake a relationship mapping exercise to determine which members have existing relationships with key companies and appropriate lead.
  - F. Identify other potential relationships e.g. UKTI Invest (for foreign owned accounts) or existing relationships with BIS.
  - G. Develop processes to track progress and measure results.

## **6.0 Access to Information**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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