

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 1 November 2017

Subject: Assets & Economic Development

Portfolio Holder: Councillor A Grigg

Recommending:

That the report of the Assets & Economic Development Portfolio Holder be noted.

1. Town Centres

Waltham Abbey Wayfinding Project – The applications for the wayfinding signage are with Essex Highways for approval and we await their confirmation that the works can proceed. Once confirmation is received there will be a four week manufacture period after which the installation can take place.

2. Business Support

LoCase - In partnership with LoCASE, the Economic Development team visited over 50 businesses on Langston Road and Oakwood Hill on 12 July to promote funding and support that is available to businesses. Latest reporting (August 2017) identifies that 4 grants have now been approved within the district with more in the pipeline. In a similar vein to the industrial estates visit, Economic Development Officers liaised with BEST Growth Hub on a business support surgery which was held at Crate Loughton on 19 September. BEST sat down with 7 businesses to discuss in detail the support they might be able to access and visited all businesses at the recently established Crate Loughton.

Eastern Plateau Funding - The Economic Development Team continues to be active on the Eastern Plateau Local Area Action Group (LAG) and in promoting this funding within eligible areas of the district. The Group continues to perform well in terms of its allocation of funding to date and a further project has been approved in the district. This is the Rainbow and Dove pub in Hastingwood. The pub will receive a grant of approximately £124,000 towards the extension of its restaurant area and replacement and upgrade of its current outside eatery. This will enable the business to significantly increase the number of covers it can cater for and create 9 additional jobs.

2. Epping Forest Shopping Park

After the “soft” opening in early August, there are now four stores trading successfully at the Shopping Park. These are Hobbycraft, TK Maxx, Card Factory and Smyth’s Toys. Shop-fitting is ongoing on the other tenanted units which are now 85% let, with the major anchor store Next, due to open in mid-December for the Christmas period. It is at this point, that it is intended to undertake an official opening.

Final work is being undertaken by the Council’s Highways Contractor on the Section 278 Highways Improvements. The works have encountered a considerable number of problems in relation to drainage and utility services, which have led to delay and additional costs. This

will be reported on the conclusion of the final account. However, it is anticipated that all the highway related work will be finished by the middle of November.