

**Report to the Asset Management and  
Economic Development Cabinet  
Committee**



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Report reference: AMED-003-2018/19**

**Date of meeting: 25 October 2018**

**Portfolio:** Assets & Economic Development (Councillor A. Grigg)

**Subject:** Economic Development – Progress Report

**Responsible Officer:** M. Warr/V. Willis (01992 564472/564593)

**Democratic Services:** J. Leither (01992 564756)

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**Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**That the Committee note the progress and work programme of the Council's Economic Development Section.**

**Executive Summary:**

This report updates the Cabinet Committee on a number of projects, themes and issues being explored by the Economic Development Team.

**Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

To appraise the Committee on progress made with regard to Economic Development issues.

**Other Options for Action:**

None, as this monitoring report is for information not action.

**Report:**

**Business Support**

1. The Team continues to work to attract external grant funding for businesses within the District. This has included working closely with South East Business Boost to encourage uptake within the District. Approvals have been strong this year following the EFDC hosted one-to-one sessions in February 2018. 10 businesses have now received grants totalling £86,000 (please note that the maximum grant available is £10,000 – whilst a fairly small grants programme it can help make the difference between a business being able to purchase a capital item that could help them grow their business and not being able to take that step). The Team is set to work with Best Growth Hub and South-East Business Boost to help them deliver more one-to-one sessions in employment areas across the district.
2. The Team has been engaged throughout the current Eastern Plateau LEADER programme which supports projects that will benefit the rural economy. The

programme is now nearing its end but the Team will continue its engagement and it is hoped that grant funding might be awarded to a couple of further projects within the district.

### **Digital Innovation Programme**

3. Work to promote the work of and raise the profile of the Essex and Herts Digital Innovation Zone (DIZ) continues with numerous engagement events undertaken. In particular, the work of the project team exploring digital opportunities to improve information flow to ambulance crews in emergency situations has been presented to health partners on the Urgent Care Local Delivery Board and the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership Clinical Expert Oversight Group. Discussions are taking place to explore the potential for local pilot projects. Presentations on the DIZ have also been given to the LSCC, and Superfast Essex Steering Board. The programme has also achieved coverage at a national level. A number of external bids have been made under the umbrella of the DIZ but lead by different external partners.

### **Superfast Broadband**

4. The new Phase 4a Superfast Essex broadband project remains in the planning stage. Once plans are finalised, economic development officers will look to bring the contractors, Gigaclear, in to a project kick-off meeting with key council departments to ensure the impact of the plans are fully understood and the interests of the council and its residents and businesses are properly considered. This £3.1million contract with Gigaclear will bring full fibre ultrafast speeds to a further 2,100 homes and businesses in Epping Forest District by December 2019.

### **Visitor Economy**

5. The 2018 Tourism and Visitor Conference is being held at the Marriott Hotel Waltham Abbey on 26 October. The event will include presentations from other neighbouring councils, Vibrant Partnerships as well as a funding update from Best Growth Hub. Attendees will also review the performance of the sector over the last year and discuss increasing levels of work and opportunities being explored across borders with neighbouring authorities.
6. Work is progressing for a major Food Fair in Waltham Abbey on Sunday 5 May 2019 and Monday 6 May 2019. A wide range of partners are engaged in the planning for this exciting event including, Waltham Abbey Town Council, Waltham Abbey Church, Waltham Abbey Town Partnership, Vibrant Partnerships, Epping Forest District Museum, Abbey View Produce, P A Sparks and Sons Ltd and One Epping Forest.
7. It was reported at the last meet that the Team was looking at an expression for an Interreg bid partnering with a town near to Paris. Unfortunately, the French partners have decided to withdraw from this bid. In the Summer Economic Development worked with EFDC Museums, Heritage and Culture and Broxbourne Council to submit an Expression of Interest to the Cultural Development Fund focusing on Waltham Abbey and Hoddesdon but bringing in some other locations across the area but unfortunately that was not successful. The Team will continue to work with partners to identify other opportunities, to secure investment in the area.
8. An initial meeting with four of our neighbouring districts concerning cross-border working on tourism has also been very successful and all participants have requested that a follow-up meeting should take place in November.

## **Economic Development Strategy**

9. As reported previously, the Team is focusing on the delivery of an Economic Development Strategy for the district. Evidence base work is nearing completion and this will form the basis of a programme of consultation with officers, Members, partners and stakeholders in order to develop the Strategy. It is intended that the Strategy will be put forward for approval by Members before the end of the financial year.

## **Food Sector**

10. A number of key partners from across the South East have indicated a willingness to become part of a new South East Strategic Food board and EFDC is making arrangements for the first meeting of this new group. Despite loss of the Team lead for the EU BioBoost Project Economic Development is continuing to deliver this work.

## **Partnership Working**

11. Updates of particular note at this time are that the Team is developing connections with the new Leadership Team at New City College following its merger with Epping Forest College earlier in the year.
12. Economic Development is supporting the Chairman of EFDC in hosting an event for local businesses in late November. Councillor Bassett has stated that he wishes to use his period as Chairman to understand what we as a district can do to help local businesses and celebrate the contribution our businesses make to the life of the district. The event will also seek to invite key local civic representatives and governors from the local schools.
13. In the Summer the Team promoted the 'call' for Expressions of Interest to Local Growth Fund Round 3b cascaded via Local Enterprise Partnerships. This led to a submission from Woodside Industrial Estate to help in the delivery of its second phase of new employment space and associated works.
14. Economic Development continues to work closely with neighbouring authorities which represent a central core of the London Stansted Cambridge Corridor (LSCC) on opportunities to collaborate to deliver economic growth and similarly is actively involved in the economic aspects of the delivery of Harlow & Gilston Garden Town and the Harlow 100 Vision.
15. Internally, Economic Development is working closely with Planning colleagues to provide input into sites that are beginning to come forward which have a substantial employment aspect and in providing comment on smaller scale applications with the potential to impact upon the local economy.
16. Beyond the updates provided above, the Economic Development Team continues to liaise with, support and attend meetings with a number of Partner Organisations. These include, at varying intervals:
  - Essex County Council;
  - South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP);
  - London Stansted Cambridge Consortium (LSCC);
  - Local Plan Officer Working Group;
  - Invest Essex and Essex Innovation Programme;
  - Lea Valley Food Board;
  - Co-op Officer Group/ workstreams of Harlow and Gilston Garden Town;

- Essex Economic Development Officer group;
- Essex Tourism Officer Group;
- Epping Forest District Town Team;
- Eastern Plateau Local Action Group;
- Stansted Airport Local Authority Forum;
- Tourism & Visitor Board;
- West Essex Skills & Learning Forum;
- Waltham Abbey Town Partnership;
- One Epping Forest;
- Superfast Essex;
- Princess Alexandra Hospital;
- West Essex CCG;
- Essex Partnership University Trust;
- Rainbow Services, Harlow; and
- Anglia Ruskin University.

**Resource Implications:**

None as this is a progress report.

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

None as this is a progress report.

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

None as this is a progress report.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

None as this is a progress report.

**Background Papers:**

None

**Risk Management:**

N/A

**Equality Analysis:**

The Equality Act 2010 requires that the Public Sector Equality Duty is actively applied in decision-making. This means that the equality information provided to accompany this report is essential reading for all members involved in the consideration of this report. The equality information is provided at Appendix 1 to the report.