

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 1 November 2018

Subject: Assets & Economic Development

Portfolio Holder: Councillor A. Grigg

Recommending:

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

1. Business support

The Team continues to work to attract external grant funding for businesses within the District. Officers have recently met with Best Growth Hub and South East Business Boost to understand further joint opportunities for encouraging take-up of its support and funding more widely across the district. Economic Development has been engaged throughout the current Eastern Plateau LEADER programme which supports projects that will benefit the rural economy. The programme, which has so far approved investment of more than £300,000 locally, 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 before the programme closes.

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. Key local civic representatives and governors from the local schools will also be invited.

2. Digital Innovation Programme & Superfast Broadband

This element of the Economic Development Team's work is covered in greater detail within Councillor Lion's Portfolio Holder Report so here I reference only that the new Phase 4a Superfast Essex broadband project is progressing within the planning stage and that once plans are sufficiently progressed, economic development officers will work closely with the contractors and 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.

3. Visitor Economy

I am happy to report that preparations for the 2018 Tourism and Visitor Summit on 26 October at the Marriott Hotel Waltham Abbey are underway and indeed, the event will have taken place before the Council meeting and so I will be able to update verbally. Work is also progressing for a Food Fair in 2019 for Waltham Abbey on 05 and 06 May involving many local partners 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.

4. Epping Forest District Skills Board

I am pleased to report 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.