

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



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Report reference: AMED-005-2014/15

Date of meeting: 21 October 2014

Portfolio: Asset Management and Economic Development

Subject: Economic Development Report

Responsible Officer: Chris Pasterfield (01992 564124)

Democratic Services: Jackie Leither (01992 564756)

Recommendations:

(1) To 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:

1. **Waltham Abbey Town Centre** - Having circulated the Waltham Abbey Economic Development Plan (EDP) to the town council for comments a second iteration of the plan has been produced and circulated to partners at both the town council and town partnership. A subsequent meeting has been held to discuss the next steps for that plan and to highlight some of the key projects being undertaken.

The High Street Summit was successfully held in July, offering Waltham Abbey Town Partnership, in conjunction with a number of district council officers, the opportunity to directly engage with a number of businesses from the town as well as other key stakeholders. As well as discussions which took place on the evening, a range of feedback and suggestions were also collected which will be considered as part of ongoing work to reinvigorate the town and additional suggestions were also subsequently received by post and email.

Further development of the Waltham Abbey EDP will be undertaken in the light of the findings of studies commissioned from Peter Brett Associates and Colliers International. It is

anticipated that these reports will be received by the end of November.

2. **Heritage Lottery Funding** - An officer working party has been established to look at submitting a bid to Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to undertake a heritage based development project in the Market Square area of Waltham Abbey. This is at a very early stage and to date a site visit to identify the critical heritage buildings to be incorporate into such a bid is the only concrete step taken. The next stage will be to submit a project enquiry to HLF and seek a meeting with them to identify both the weaknesses in a previously submitted unsuccessful bid and the scope for a successful revised bid.

3. **Economic Development Priorities and Plans** - having developed the Waltham Abbey plan as mentioned above, outline plans are now being drawn up for both Epping and Ongar town centres. Initial walkarounds of each town will be undertaken to identify particular issues and a process of consultation with key partners will commence shortly afterwards.

4. **Tourism** - Under the direction of One Epping Forest, the Tourism & Visitor Board has recently held its inaugural meeting. Positive discussions took place around issues such as joint ticketing, and collaborative working and it is planned that a second Tourism Summit will be held later this year to discuss these and other issues that face the visitor economy in Epping Forest district. It is planned to coincide this event with a workshop to launch the Visit Essex Rural Escapes Toolkit and will be an excellent opportunity to help shape the way that our rural tourism economy develops in the future.

5. **Access To Funding Roadshow** - In conjunction with the Essex Innovation Programme it is planned to host an Access to Funding Roadshow at the Civic offices on November 17th. This will bring a number of key funding exhibitors, including NWES, Growth Accelerator, Start-Up Loans and others, together to present some of the funding opportunities which exist for businesses in our district. The event will be part of a programme of events throughout Essex and will hopefully attract a number of local businesses.

6. **Start-Up Loans** - it has been agreed to tie up with Start-Up Loans, a government backed agency that offers loans up to £10,000 to businesses that are pre-trading or within their first 12 months trading, to actively promote the scheme via the council's website and other media outlets in order to encourage wider take-up of the scheme amongst the district's fledgling businesses. A meeting is planned to discuss the next steps and it is hoped that this will be taken forward in the next couple of months.

7. **Partner Liaison** - The Economic Development team continue to liaise with, support and attend meetings with a number of Partner Organisations. These include, at varying intervals:

- Lea Valley Food Taskforce
- Essex Economic Development Officer group
- Essex Tourism Officer Group
- Epping Forest Town Team
- Eastern Plateau Local Action Group
- Stansted Airport Local Authority Forum
- Tourism & Visitor Board
- West Essex Skills & Learning Forum
- Waltham Abbey Town Partnership

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 and Diversity:

N/A

Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications? **N/A**

Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? **N/A**

What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?
N/A

How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group? **N/A**

Due Regard Record

This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **unlawful discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

Not applicable as this is a progress report on work already undertaken.