

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 25 September 2018

Subject: Assets & Economic Development

Portfolio Holder: Councillor A. Grigg

Recommending:

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

1. Visitor Economy

Partnership working – I am happy to report that the 2018 Tourism and Visitor Summit will be held on 26 October at the Marriott Hotel Waltham Abbey. Work is continuing between Harlow, East Herts, Uttlesford, Broxbourne and Epping Forest District Councils to explore joint marketing and promotion opportunities.

Events - The proposed 2019 Food Fair for Waltham Abbey is moving forward with tentative dates of 05 and 06 May.

External funding – I reported previously 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 on this occasion. The Team will continue to work with partners to identify other opportunities.

2. Digital Innovation Programme

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 a few recent headline activities. Following the successful symposium to discuss the development of the Digital Innovation Strategy for the West Essex and Eastern Hertfordshire Digital Innovation Zone (DIZ) in June, the Team is organising a further seminar in December. This will have the theme of the Internet of Things (IoT). The first draft of the Digital Innovation Strategy has been received from Arup and it is hoped to launch the strategy later in 2018.

3. Economic Development Strategy

The Team is focusing on the delivery of a new long term Economic Development Strategy as referenced in my April report. Work is currently underway in compiling the economic evidence base. This will be finalised in the next month and there will then be a programme of engaging key partners, businesses and Members in developing the strategy with sign-off anticipated early 2019.

4. Business Support

I have reported previously that the Team has worked 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 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.

5. Partnership/ Strategic Working

The government published a review into Local Enterprise Partnerships in July 2018 and the Team will continue to work to ensure that Epping Forest District's needs and interests are represented at the LEP level. The Team promoted the 'call' for Expressions of Interest to Local Growth Fund Round 3b cascaded via LEPs in the Summer. 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. The Team 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.

The Team provided detailed input in August to a study commissioned by Essex County Council to identify available employment sites suitable to deliver commercial floorspace, and recommend a toolbox of targeted interventions that will address local supply issues to unlock the development of space to support. This commission follows previous work at County level that identified decline in availability of office/industrial space.

6. Epping Forest District Skills Board

Following the merger of Epping Forest College with New City College Officers are seeking to meet the new Leadership Team to understand the new college's role in the Skills Board.

7. Food Sector

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 BioBoost Project Economic Development is continuing to deliver this work.

8. Asset Management

Epping Forest Shopping Park

The letting to Home Bargains has completed and the new store opened for trading on 1st September 2018. The lease of the one remaining unit with Boots Plc is now in agreed form and completion is imminent pending approval of the tenant's fit-out and M&E works. EFDC continues to liaise with the project managers to resolve the roof leaks and with managing agents Savills regarding the improper use of car park.

Further to meetings with the Broadway traders, a retail impact assessment is due to be carried out very shortly.

North Weald Airfield

The new lease to NPAS is in agreed form and completion is expected shortly pending Secretary of State funding approvals that are being sought by NPAS. Terms are being finalised with the Air Ambulance for a new lease and their Board Approval for these are expected by the end of September 2018.

Discussions with the market operator are on-going regarding renewal of the operating agreement.

Landmark (former Winston Churchill PH / The Broadway, Debden)

The letting to the Mediterranean restaurant has now completed as well as the separation works and fit out works are imminent as well as the required extraction and signage work.

The lease to the pub is in agreed form and EFDC is currently awaiting agreement of rights to use the rear access for servicing before completion of this.

New letting agents are due to be appointed to conclude the lettings of the remaining space.

Pyrls Lane Nursery

Relocation of the nursery to Town Mead and vacant possession of the site is due by the end of 2018.

The marketing of the site has concluded and the two strongest offers on both bases per the 2017 Cabinet Report with respect to Social Housing will be reported to Cabinet for approval in October.