

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Subject: Strategic Projects

Portfolio Holder: Councillor A Lion

Recommending:

That the report of the Strategic Projects Portfolio Holder be noted

Executive Summary

There are four key projects in the Strategic Projects portfolio for 2019/2020 programme. These projects cover the following areas:

Digital Innovation Zone (DiZ).

The London Stansted Cambridge Corridor Consortium.

Parking Review.

Street Lighting Review.

Digital Innovation Zone

5G and Digital Connectivity

The DIZ has hosted an initial workshop to explore the development of potential use-cases to support a bid to the DCMS Rural Connected Communities programme. This is a multi-million-pound Government funding scheme intended to test and develop uses for 5g technology that can be shown to be economically sustainable and scaled up across the country. Officers have attended the DCMS briefing and workshop on the scheme and are now awaiting the formal launch of the programme, which is expected in the next 3-4 weeks. At that point a further workshop will be held to further refine and explore the options for a bid.

Officers have also attended the recent BDUK (Building Digital UK,DCMS) 'Collaboration for Digital Connectivity' event in Westminster which set out BDUK's priorities for the coming years and their plans for the development of full fibre connectivity. Brief conversations took place with both the Chief Executive of BDUK and the Government's Digital Minister and invitations were extended to visit the DIZ and learn more about its work.

Smart Place Seminars

The most recent of the ongoing series of Smart Place Seminars was held on Friday 26th April. 'Empowering Community and Voluntary Services Through Digital' took place at Fletcher's Lea in Ware and attracted both a wide range of local and national speakers and numerous delegates from charity and voluntary sector organisations, service commissioners and interested businesses from across the DIZ. The event explored how the voluntary and community sector can be enabled to use digital to achieve better outcomes for communities. A follow-up event is now planned for

September at which a number of the key challenges identified and the potential digital solutions will be explored in conjunction with academics from Anglia Ruskin University with the aspiration that a number of initiatives can be taken forward to attract funding and develop into workable and scalable solutions.

Living Smart At Home

Council for Voluntary Services Uttlesford, in conjunction with Rainbow Services, Harlow and Voluntary Action Epping Forest are delivering a programme that will connect up a number of homes across the DIZ with the very latest in digital technology to enable residents to live safely at home, often when experiencing limiting health conditions. A small number of exemplar homes have already been equipped and officers from the DIZ recently visited the first of these homes to be equipped in the Epping Forest District. The equipment installed consists of an Amazon hub, a small mobile tablet device and movement monitors in various rooms plus door monitors in places such as the toilet and fridge doors. These monitors produce daily data sheets that display daily activity and wellbeing as well as building a picture of normal routine to allow the system to flag any deviation as a potential issue to be investigated. 'Open House' visits are arranged regularly and any members interested in visiting should contact officers who will be happy to put them in touch with the CVS team.

Local Full Fibre Network Programme

A positive response has been received from DCMS to the recent DIZ bid to the Local Full Fibre Network programme. The proposed project would deliver enhanced fibre connectivity across the DIZ based around the geographical locations of public sector assets. A number of operational and project management issues are now being worked through with partners and DCMS to understand how the project might practically be delivered and once this is established a process of assurance will need to be undertaken with DCMS before any practical delivery can begin.

DIZ Board Private Sector Membership

Continuing the aspiration to develop a genuine cross-border, public-private partnership on digital the DIZ Board has now been joined by a senior representative of Volker Wessels from Broxbourne Borough.

Digital Census

The DIZ is continuing discussions with a leading market research company on the development of a digital census that will enable the DIZ to ensure future technology initiatives are focused around the needs of all customers and end-users.

DIZ Matters

At the time of writing a draft version of the July 2019 edition of the DIZ Matters newsletter has been produced. It is hoped that by the time of the Council meeting this will have been published and made available on the DIZ website at www.diz.org.uk/resources

London Stanstead Cambridge Corridor Consortium

Members and officers attended the annual LSCC conference at the British Library in July. The LSCC has asked that EFDC lead a conference on digital connectivity across the London Stansted-Cambridge corridor and this has been agreed. Work continues

to establish an effective cross border economic growth partnership in the area between London and Cambridge and put in place resources to enable capacity to be put in place to underpin this work. Members and officers are actively involved in this emerging work programme.

Parking Review

The parking charges for all car parks across Epping Forest District Council were reviewed in 2018/19. In line with the commitment made last year a review will now be undertaken to assess the changes that were introduced.

Street Lighting Review

It is proposed to follow up on the work that has already been undertaken on the different arrangements for street lighting across the district to include the charging and timing.