

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 25 April 2017

**Subject:** Assets and Economic Development

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor A Grigg

---

## **Recommending:**

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

---

### **1. Visitor Economy**

Tourism Website - The new website went live during English Tourism Week with an initial 65 pages and 320 images. This compares with the previous site's 16 pages and 22 images. The new site's configuration allows smart searches based on options in every area for editorial, and the events function contains far more detailed and searchable information. The current task is to expand the businesses and attractions listed and to regularly update the editorial content.

Accommodation Study - Phase 2 of this work is well advanced and a review meeting with consultants, Hotel Solutions, to explore findings is scheduled for late April.

### **2. Town Centres**

Town & Village Centres / District Economic Opportunities Fund - Work has continued to develop bids to the fund from a number of organisations. Funding for a floral town centre enhancement scheme has been approved as well as funding to support a young traders initiative which will see school-based teams forming trading businesses to compete against each other and will create a vibrant street market attraction in Summer 2017. Funding has also been approved for a project connecting primary schools with town centre businesses in order to raise awareness of the shops and services available in one of the district's town centres.

Waltham Abbey Wayfinding Project - The proposed fingerpost wayfinding scheme in Waltham Abbey has now moved into the beginnings of the Planning and Delivery Stage with the final design, locations and destinations having been agreed and signed off. The scheme aims to provide visitors to the town centre with an effective navigational system that will enable them to explore the town's attractions and encourage them to dwell longer within the town centre. The scheme is centred around the key town centre attractions such as the museum and the Abbey church and gardens and on movement between the town centre car parks but has also referenced attractions which sit outside the immediate town centre area.

### **3. Business Support**

One Business Briefing - The Spring edition of One Business Briefing was published in March and issued to the Team's expanding business and partner contacts database of 2000-plus and shared via social media channels. As always, it contained a rich mix of articles and contributions from the Team and external partners, ranging from success stories to details on business funding and support programmes and initiatives such as the area's new tourism website, the ongoing delivery of ultrafast rural broadband and a new young traders market project.

LoCASE - As reported previously, LoCASE (Low Carbon Across the South East) is a new EU funded project set up to help small or medium enterprise businesses across the South

East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) region to tackle and adapt to climate change, aiming to reduce business costs by cutting emissions and to promote the opportunities of the low carbon market. Economic Development Officers put CRATE on Oakwood Hill Industrial Estate in contact with LoCASE last year and they are the first in the district to have had a bid approved and to have implemented measures. A visit is being coordinated to understand more about the CRATE scheme (36 creative workspaces in upcycled shipping containers and a Costa Coffee) which is now complete and an impressive new facility for the district and to capitalise on opportunities for using it to further promote LoCASE in the district.

#### **4. Major Development Projects**

The Asset Management and Economic Development Cabinet Committee met on the 13 April and received an update on all the Council's Development Projects to include the regular item on progress with the construction and letting of Epping Forest Shopping Park. Full details are in the Agenda Pack.