

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 27 September 2012

Subject: Asset Management and Economic Development

Portfolio Holder: Councillor A Grigg

Item: 6

Recommending:

That the report of the Asset Management & Economic Development

Portfolio Holder be noted

Economic Development

The council continues to work closely through One Epping Forest, with partners from across the district and beyond to support and grow local business. An update on some of the key recent activities is provided below.

A Tourism Task Force has been established. It contains representation from the main tourism/visitor attractions in the district. It has built www.visiteppingforest.org (VEF) and this has been operational since June. The site has attracted a great deal of interest and numerous page views. A new joint leaflet is in production, as is a poster, downloadable Apps are being investigated, and plans are being put in place for a Tourism Summit and agreement of a Visitor Strategy by early in the New Year. Partners are already reporting greater referrals to their own sites from VEF than from Visit Essex.

A major half day visit and tour of the district took place on 7 September, attended by the Chairmen of both the West Essex Alliance (MD of Stansted Airport) and the London Anglia Growth Partnership. The Tour was supported and sponsored by a range of local businesses and attractions. It aimed to increase knowledge about the district, its key attractions, current business profile and emerging priorities among leaders from neighbouring enterprise partnerships.

One Shops Local www.oneshopslocal.com has continued to grow although the pace of new registrations and traffic has slowed. Currently the site has recorded 6,300 visits, over 30,000 page views and has 221 Businesses listed. The Business Team has produced new leaflets to market the scheme to shoppers and potential greater use of social media to market the site is being investigated.

The partnership has been asked by the West Essex Alliance (WEA) to help develop a platform for business support, similar to that offered in Epping Forest, and will be supporting a small group including the FSB to produce recommendations for the next WEA Board meeting.

The partnership continues to provide guidance on the developing local Plan and the emerging Economic Development Strategy. It is hoped that a joint food summit can be organised with local food producers looking at opportunities for supporting productive landscapes.