

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



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Report reference: AMED-008-2014/15

Date of meeting: 11 December 2014

Portfolio: Asset Management and Economic Development

Subject: Economic Development Report

Responsible Officer: Mike Warr/Vicki Willis (01992 564472 / ext. 2799)

Democratic Services: Jackie Leither (01992 564756)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(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** - The studies of Waltham Abbey looking at the Town Centre, transport connections, tourism and unemployment are nearing completion and presentations to Members and the Town Council are intended to commence in February 2015, to identify the main areas of concern and what will be possible to address them. We will move forward with this work on to Epping and Ongar initially and then more widely, as well as district wide plans such as food production and industry.

2. **Economic Development Priorities and Plans** - In response to a question raised at the last meeting of the Asset Management & Economic Development cabinet Committee, an overarching document has been developed to set out the framework in which we are developing our Economic Development Plans and how these will contribute towards the development of an Economic Development Strategy. The document is not finished at the time of writing this report but it is hoped that it will be complete in time to circulate at the meeting if not in advance.

3. **Heritage Lottery Funding** - An officer visit to a HLF presentation was undertaken by an Economic Development Officer and the Conservation Officer. This enabled the team to learn some best practice on submitting a successful bid but also to talk to both HLF and Bedford Borough Council about their projects and get advice on the submission of a bid for Waltham Abbey. HLF positively encouraged us to submit a pre-application enquiry, which is hand. Another officer working group meeting is planned to discuss where we are in the light of the advice received and what will be the most effective steps to take next.

4. **Tourism** - A Tourism Development Manager has now been appointed and the Economic Development Team will work with them wherever possible to promote the District's visitor economy.

5. **Access To Funding Roadshow** - In conjunction with the Essex Innovation Programme we hosted an Access to Funding Roadshow at the Civic offices on November 17th. This brought together a number of key funding exhibitors, including Eastern Plateau, NWES, Growth Accelerator, Foundation East, UKTI, MAS and DWP as well as a number of further and higher education establishments to present some of the funding opportunities which exist for businesses in our district. The event attracted a range of businesses from the district and many useful introductions, conversations and links were made.

6. **Start-Up Loans** - We had hoped to have been actively promoting the Start Up Loans (SUL) scheme via a tie up between the Council's website and the SUL website. However, ongoing contact with SUL has proved difficult and we have not been able to make progress on this. Disappointing as this is, we were able at the Access to Finance Roadshow to make contact with both NWES and Foundation East, delivery partners of SUL for their scheme. We will hope to use these contacts to put together an effective way of promoting, not only the SUL scheme but a range of other funding initiatives.

7. **Business support** – we have a number of active threads of work under this banner. A further edition of the Business Briefing has just been published and is being distributed promoting current sources of funding for businesses, events, news and updates from EFDC and partners. We are supporting a business needs survey being conducted by ECC across the County funded through SELEP. We are expecting results in December 2014, including a report focused on Epping Forest district alone. This work will then help to inform the Growth Hub business support service that is set to be operational in the new financial year. The results of the survey will be reported to Committee for discussion. We are pleased to be providing support, largely in marketing terms, to a series of business briefing events in the New Year being delivered by Epping Forest College and Pro-actions, a business improvement specialist.

8 **Working with Essex County Council** – We have agreed to establish a quarterly meeting schedule with key members and officers at EFDC and ECC to discuss economic development matters. The first of these meetings is scheduled for mid January 2015. ECC has recently briefed us on its Economic Growth Fund for 2015/16 which in outline provides funding for early stage schemes which have the potential to create significant jobs and/or houses and we are raising this with EFDC officers as appropriate to take forward.

9 **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:

- Essex County Council
- South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)
- Invest Essex and Essex Innovation Programme
- 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

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.