

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee: Council**

**Date: 17 December 2019**

**Subject: Strategic Projects Portfolio**

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor Lion**

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**Recommending:**

**That the report of the Strategic Projects Portfolio Holder be noted**

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## **Executive Summary**

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

- I. Digital Innovation Zone (DIZ).
- II. The London Stansted Cambridge Corridor Consortium.
- III. Street Lighting
- IV. Car Parking

## **Digital Innovation Zone**

Work continues on the £2.1m DCMS funded DIZ Local Full Fibre Network project to take it through the DCMS Assurance process. On 14<sup>th</sup> November, the BDUK Projects Assurance Board formally acknowledged the first critical quality assurance checkpoint for the project (Checkpoint A - Agree Plan) following evidence submitted by the DIZ team. The Checkpoint was approved with no resulting conditions or actions. Work is now focused on preparing for the next Checkpoint B and preparing the project to be 'Ready to Procure'.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> November the Portfolio Holder and Strategic Partnership Specialist, presented to the Local Government Association Annual Digital Showcase, alongside Manchester Combined Authority, Norfolk County Council and West Sussex County Council on the council's development and leadership of the Essex + Herts Digital Innovation Zone (DIZ). Highlighting the work of the DIZ to adopt a 'place-based' approach and establish the local geography as a go-to area for digital innovation, the presentation has already led to a number of new engagement opportunities from a number of local authorities keen to learn more about the approach.

The Programme Manager for the DIZ also recently spoke at the Economic Strategy Stakeholder Conference highlighting the importance of digital to every aspect of business and community life and encouraging delegates to imagine and explore the opportunities digital offers them to impact on their own specific areas of interest.

The 'Digital First' team, an internal working group, has been established to promote and coordinate the use of technology and applications within the council. Officers are pursuing a project to achieve sign-up to the Government's MHCLG Digital Declaration which will in turn offer the opportunity to bid for access to Central Government support.

The DIZ team is also working together with neighbouring local authorities to establish opportunities for greater collaboration on ICT. The first joint meeting was held on 25<sup>th</sup> November.

The DIZ team recently organised a visit to the BT Adastral Park R&D centre, with delegates from across participating local authorities. This focused on emerging technologies and applications and the latest in customer management communication.

### **London Stanstead Cambridge Corridor Consortium**

Members and Officers continue to work closely with the London Stansted Cambridge Consortium to promote joint cross border activity to grow local economies and infrastructure and investment. Epping Forest District Council representative on the LSCC Board Cllr Lion has been appointed as a Deputy Chair of the Consortium. The LSCC is also supporting the recruitment of additional resources to develop cross border programs in the central area covering Harlow, East Herts, Uttlesford, Epping Forest and Broxbourne. The recruitment to a new post is expected to be completed by the end of December. Officers are in discussion with colleagues from London and Cambridge around a special conference in February to promote digital innovation organisations in the corridor.

### **Street Lighting**

Chigwell Parish Council signed the contract on the 27<sup>th</sup> November to turn on the street lights in hours of total darkness. Following a completion of democratic and administration actions, work to reprogram the lights is planned to start on the 5<sup>th</sup> December and will take a few days to flow through.

### **Car parking**

Work is continuing to monitor car parking throughout Epping Forest District. Parking policy is being considered in conjunction with the Local Plan.