

Report to the Cabinet



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Report reference: C-031-2020-21

Date of meeting: 19 October 2020

Portfolio: Finance and Economic Development – Cllr Philips

Subject: Covid 19 Development Projects Update 1

Responsible Officers: Nick Dawe, Chief Operating Officer and Andrew Small,
Strategic Director Resources

Democratic Services Officer: Adrian Hendry (01992 564246)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To review and discuss the scope and progress of the Covid Recovery projects detailed within this report and agree any actions required; and**
- (2) To review the overview of the project portfolio across the council and agree any actions required.**

1. Introduction

In July 2020 a series of actions were recommended that could assist with the economic recovery from Covid 19.

When Cabinet gave approval to proceed with the projects it was recognised at the time that these projects would need to have;

- Short-term objectives, i.e. that would need to be delivered in this financial year.
- Medium-term objectives, i.e. that are coherent with the approved plans and priorities of the Authority.
- Longer-term objectives i.e. that are coherent with the strategic objectives and emerging strategic objectives of the Authority.

The project briefs, that are attached below, set-out the work and considerations that have taken place in August and September.

They are very much still work in progress, but it should be noted that the intent is to bring forward short-term and medium-term options with decision to the November 2020 and December 2020 Cabinet meetings.

It should be noted that all project costs to date are in line with the priority development proposals approved in the 2020/21 Budget.

That a number of projects have now been mobilised to deliver the work with a number of Service Directors refocused to deliver these projects. This report sets out the overview of those projects, the expected outcomes and high-level milestones. In addition, the progress that has been made on these projects to September 2020.

Programme: Town Centre development programme

Project	Town Centre 'future proofing' – phase 1 feasibility including office local initiative
Programme and Project Senior Responsible Officer	Nick Dawe
Project Lead	Julie Chandler
Member Involvement	Cllr Philip (TBC)
Project Overview	<p>To create vibrant high streets and town centres of the future across Epping Forest District</p> <p>Feasibility study which sets out opportunities and remedies for barriers in relation to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High Streets in Waltham Abbey, Ongar, Loughton, Buckhurst Hill, and Epping• Identification of status(viability) of businesses on the high streets• Establishment of Town Centre 'Task Forces'• Identification of opportunities and removal of constraints where needed• Status of vacant/soon to be vacant premises• Options for mixed high street offer – ie. retail, office and residential• Attracting new businesses into High Street/ nearby locations including large grocery stores

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of varied opening times/offer • Look at shared space and office facilities (office local) • Consideration of artisan retail opportunities • Liaison with Qualis on town centre building development plans
Project Outcomes	The feasibility study will identify the benefits that could be realised through the recommendations
Project Milestones	High level aspirational dates for delivery and outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November on-line event • December 2020 – Feasibility for Waltham Abbey produced • January 2021 – report to Cabinet on options
Progress Sept 2020	<p>1. Studio 3 Ltd. Business Development company appointed to lead work on town centre regeneration. An initial appraisal of Waltham Abbey has been undertaken which is in draft and identifies key issues, opportunities and limitations.</p> <p>2. Focus of regeneration will be on mix of high-level commercial opportunities; mixed economy delivery and general town centre improvements, with view of ‘new provision’ as opposed to salvage of failing businesses.</p> <p>3. Meetings arranged and being held with key local stakeholders and businesses through to mid-October</p>
Project Targets	An initial working assumption of an increase in employments levels by 5% form a pre-Covid 19 baseline and the generation of apprenticeship and skill development opportunities.
Additional Resources Committed	Specialist consultant advice on developing town centres (within agreed Budget for 2020/21 of £65,000)
Decisions and guidance sought	Current priority is Epping and Waltham Abbey followed by Ongar and followed by remaining town centres. Originally it had been assumed this was a 10-year programme but Covid and other needs suggests 5-year programme. Cabinet's views on the sequence and timing are requested.

Programme: Economic Development

Project	Digital Gateway for Place
Programme and Project Senior Responsible Officer	Nick Dawe
Member Involvement	Cllr H whitehead (TBC)
Project Overview	<p>An externally provided platform for ‘Place’ that will re-imagine Epping Forest District as a great location to live, work and do business.</p> <p>Platform for;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On-line local information and communication platform 2. On-line local business building 3. On-line local trading programme 4. On- line local community building 5. On-line local transaction and settlement 6. On-line local bookings 7. On-line local employment and skills development 8. On-line local health and wellbeing

Project Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local businesses will be able to grow both online and local/High Street trading and services. The Council will be able to proactively drive and support economic and socio-economic recovery across the district. Opportunities will be available to build social capital, crowd funding etc. Council will procure local services and trading/contracts as the first option. Provision of a 'one stop shop' for local business and community information. Qualis will be enabled to establish appropriate gap with EFDC especially in respect of news and other placement approaches The platform should increase local activity but reduce journeys and general environmental impact
Project Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business case to Cabinet - November January 2021 - Launch minimum viable product (MVP)
Progress Sept 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial scope for 'Place' portal developed, working from minimum viable product, with facility to expand and develop. Several nationally recognised technology companies contacted and interested. Plan for these companies to present proposals to EFDC in October, for final selection by panel including range of Council officers and relevant members.
Project Targets	Assist with an increase in employments levels and trade by 5% form a pre-Covid 19 baseline and the generation of apprenticeship and skill development opportunities.
Additional Resources Committed	Initial tender formation work contained within agreed Budget 2020/21 of £32,000. Subsequent expenditure required for IT platform development and running costs, but both should be off-set by additional income generation
Decisions and guidance sought	None, but input into tender award and layout and content design will be required in November and December.

Project	North Weald Airfield Development Zone
Programme and Project Senior Responsible Officer	Nick Dawe
Project Lead	Julie Chandler
Member Involvement	Cllr Bedford (TBC)
Project Overview	<p>Following formation, consultation and approval of the North Weald Employment Land Masterplan to develop financial and employment opportunities and heritage, leisure and environmental opportunities at the North Weal Airfield</p> <p>Feasibility study which sets out opportunities following enterprise zone approaches for.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain and enhancing current airside and general activity on the airfield. Provision of new and additional job opportunities linked with the development of the employment land.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of ancillary and amenity facilities with heritage and museum potential • Development of skill and opportunities with an environment and climate bent, e.g. aboral science centre.
Project Outcomes	Employment targets in Masterplan (draft) as a minimum to be met
Project Milestones	High level aspirational dates for delivery and outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February options to Cabinet
Progress Sept 2020	1. Awaiting completion of masterplan project work.
Project Targets	Employment increase as per Local Plan (draft)
Additional Resources Committed	None
Decisions and guidance sought	General comments on project content

Project	Local Businesses and Suppliers
Programme and Project Senior Responsible Officer	Nick Dawe
Project Lead	Kim Durrani
Member Involvement	Cllr Avey (TBC)
Project Overview	To recognise the broader economic and well-being impact of existing local businesses and attract new businesses to the area. Ensure contracts are explicit around the provision of local job opportunities and/or apprenticeships. Ensure terms and conditions (e.g. faster payment) recognises local business by scale and location of head office. Ensure lot size for contracts and/or preferred provider/contractor list contains a minimum of two local companies
Project Outcomes	Review Council's Procurement Strategy and Rules and identify appropriate changes that are permissible to encourage use of local suppliers. Create local T&Cs to encourage local supply chain use and create opportunities locally.
Project Milestones	Procurement Strategy update to be presented to Cabinet in December 2020
Progress Sept 2020	Review has commenced to enable full rewrite of procurement policy and guidance, system changes, appropriate order and payment prioritisation.

Project	Travel Local
Programme and Project Senior Responsible Officer	Nick Dawe

Project Lead	Kim Durrani
Member Involvement	Cllr Avey
Project Overview	To provide local travel options for more distant villages and towns off the underground route and thereby support local training and employment and shopping, build upon small travel buddle concept from Covid-19 together with sustainable transport options. Increase local transportation at no extra cost than current fares and existing bus subsidies.
Project Outcomes	<p>A DRT service to include a travel solution for staff will reduce reliance on car, improve feasibility for use by residents and partners, if DRT is proven to be successful it could be rolled out to other parts of the District,</p> <p>Any move away from single car journey will help the wider environment and greatly benefit the air quality challenges faced by Epping Forest.</p> <p>Success will mean an increased opportunity for greener sustainable travel for staff, residents and visitors</p>
Project Milestones	Trial a DRT solution by December 2020
Progress Sept 2020	
Project	Office Local
Project Lead	Julie Chandler
Member Involvement	
Project Overview	See email notes
Project Outcomes	
Project Milestones	
Progress Sept 2020	

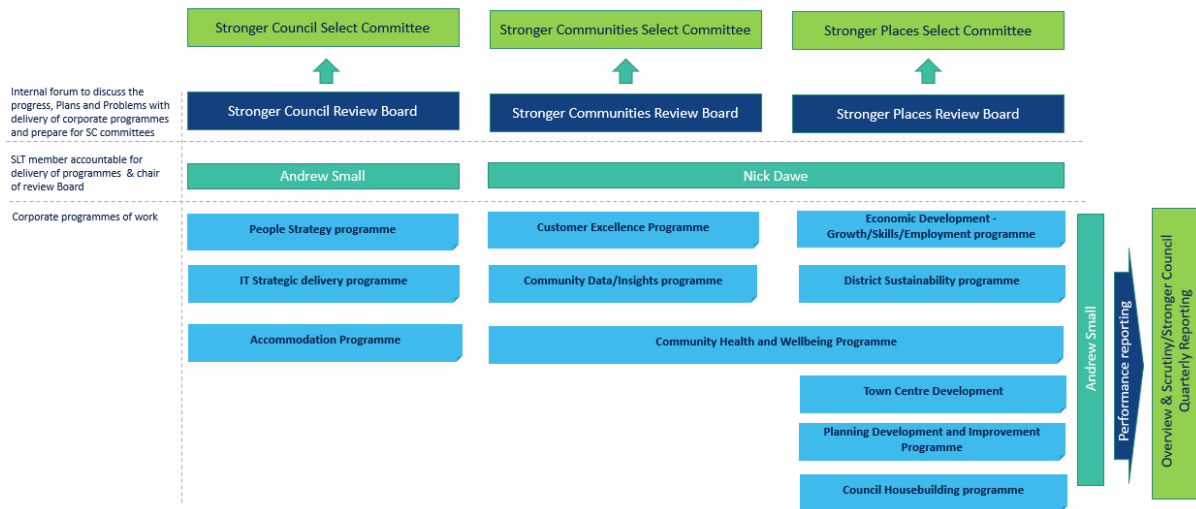
Project	Local Skills and Opportunities
Programme and Project Senior Responsible Officer	Andrew Small
Project Lead	Paula Maginnis
Member Involvement	
Project Overview	<p>To maximise work and training opportunities to lessen the negative impact of Covid 19</p> <p>High Level - in scope</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Government schemes, Kick Start, Trainee Schemes, internships ▪ Apprenticeship Programmes ▪ Volunteering schemes ▪ Work ready/new skills/resilience ▪ Developing a resources hub ▪ Working with partner organisations, specifically the NHS, Essex, DWP ▪ Working with local businesses including those leading infrastructure projects within or local to the district ▪ Accessing funding streams
Project Outcomes	Increase in employment opportunities
Project Milestones	Procurement Strategy update to be presented to Cabinet in December 2020
Progress Sept 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment training opportunities now available on website • Partnership advertising on EFDC website (Hertfordshire & West Essex Health and Care) • Link on our website for National Career Service • Received a demo employerability platform that supports individuals getting into work, coaching and CV Skills. • Registered on the government website our interest in becoming a kick start intermediary
Direction from cabinet	As the cost of becoming a kick start intermediary (supporting businesses in apprenticeships) is only partially supported via central government, additional costs and resources would be required to provide this within our district. Initial conversations have taken place with Harlow to look at a partnership in this scheme. Harlow have a larger Economic development and regeneration team that would be able to support this. This would result in reduced costs for EFDC. A direction is required regarding the support to progress discussions with Harlow regarding this partnership.

2. In addition to the Covid recovery projects, work has been progressed to scope the Corporate Programme and projects within the council. This will provide us with the baseline for delivery and benefit realisation, ensuring we are monitoring progress of this and contribution towards the financial plans. As there are limited resources and capacity within the council this will also allow us to align the work we are doing to the priorities within the corporate ambitions.

Each programme will have a clear brief, with defined benefits and a milestone plan which will be reviewed and discussed on a monthly basis and key information and decisions taken to the relevant select committees. The performance of all programmes will be reviewed under the Stronger Council agenda item of Stronger Council.

Programmes will be led by a director enabling Corporate Performance management to be aligned with individual performance management.



All projects have been aligned under the one of the 3 Stronger select agendas as detailed below. It is noted that as our recovery planning and response evolves projects will evolve and there are clear interdependencies across the programmes.

Stronger Communities Programmes and Projects, (SRO Nick Dawe)
<p>Community Health and Wellbeing Programme</p> <p>Lead officer: Jen Gould</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community health and wellbeing project (Pilot in WA and Ongar) Review and Rationalisation of Epping Forest Museum Collection
<p>Customer Excellence Programme</p> <p>Lead Officer: Rob Pavey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fix the Basics Customer Culture Development Digital customer journey Partnership hub Digital Payments Digital Members journey Integrated website
<p>Community Data/Insights Programme</p> <p>Lead Officer: Rob Pavey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and feasibility recommendations

Stronger Place programmes and projects (SRO Nick Dawe)
<p>Community Health and Wellbeing Programme</p> <p>Lead Officer: Jen Gould</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Private Sector letting initiative ▪ Sheltered Housing review ▪ Telecare offering review
<p>Council Housebuilding Programme</p> <p>Lead Officer: Deborah Fenton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council Housebuilding project ▪ Housing and Asset Management system ▪ Service Charge Review/Great Place to live
<p>District Sustainability Programme</p> <p>Lead Officer: Kim Durrani/Alison Blom-Cooper</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Climate Emergency actions ▪ Strategic Alternative areas of natural growth ▪ Sustainable Transport
<p>Planning Development and Improvement Programme</p> <p>Lead Officer: Nigel Richardson/Alison Blom-Cooper</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Digital Planning Process Improvement and digital solution ▪ Local Plan
<p>Economic Development</p> <p>Lead Officer: Julie Chandler</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Digital Enablement and Gateway ▪ Enterprise zone ▪ Feasibility on Epping Forest cultural and community hub ▪ Local Business and Suppliers ▪ Local Skills and Opportunities ▪ Office Local ▪ Travel Local
<p>Town Centre Development</p> <p>Lead Officer: Julie Chandler</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EFDC Investment Assets ▪ Epping sustainable growth ▪ North Weald sustainable growth ▪ Ongar sustainable growth ▪ Waltham Abbey sustainable growth

- Safer Spaces
- Leisure Management contract
- Waste Management contract

Stronger Council Programmes and Projects, (SRO Andrew Small)

Accommodation Programme

Lead officer: Sacha Jevans

- Refurb and AV
- Accommodation Commercialisation
- Corporate print solution
- Travel Plan
- Ways of working

IT Strategy Programme

Lead Officer: Paula Maginnis

- ICT Restructure
- Business Application review
- Cyber security review
- Service Management Project
- Mobile Phone project
- Infrastructure refresh project
- Flexible and Remote working
- Device, Desktop and Laptop strategy

People Programme

Lead Officer: Paula Maginnis

- Attracting, Onboarding and Retaining talent project
- Developing our skills and behaviours project
- Engagement and Wellbeing project
- High Performing and Flexible workforce project
- Internal Policy and process improvement project