

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICE UPDATE**

**Cabinet Member(s):** Cllr Richard Chesterton  
**Responsible Officer:** Jenny Clifford, Head of Planning, Regeneration & Growth

**Reason for Report:** To update members on progress with key Economic Development Service Priorities.

**RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted**

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** It supports the corporate objectives for the economy.

**Financial Implications:** There are no additional financial implications arising from the report.

**Legal Implications:** None

**Risk Assessment:** None

**Equality Impact Assessment:** None anticipated

**1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This report provides an update on the progress of key projects and initiatives developed or supported by the Growth, Economy and Delivery team (GED team).

**2.0 Devon Hydro and Smart Grid Project ('Mills Project')**

2.1 The funding bid to the Heritage Enterprise was unsuccessful, but we received feedback suggesting we may wish to consider submitting a project purely focused on Thorverton Mill, as this had the strongest links to the heritage element of the funding programme. Consideration is now being made to how to progress with trying to access further funding for this project.

2.2 Initial scoping and feasibility work has continued regarding Tiverton Weir, with Hydromatch Ltd having ongoing discussion with the Environment Agency (EA). The pre-application discussion has led to a few elements of the proposed scheme being altered to give the project the best chance of getting through the (EA) full application stage. Rough designs of the site have now been drawn up so that talks would be able to progress with regards to land lease / purchase of the site. A paper is being prepared to discuss how the Council wants to progress with this project.

2.3 A similar process is being followed with schemes developing at Flock Mill in Rewe (nr Silverton) and at Thorverton, with full feasibility work being completed, and progress being made into discussion with the EA. Though the local authority will not be responsible for the delivery of these schemes, their development forms part of a wider approach to supporting hydro generation and demonstrating Mid Devon's buy-in to the low carbon economy.

### **3.0 Enquiries and Investments**

- 3.1 The GED team are continuing discussions with land owners across the district to ensure that their land will come forward for economic development activities. Though much of this information is commercially sensitive, land at J28 has now been brought to the market for commercial development adjacent to Kingsmill Industrial Estate, and the GED team have been working with the land owners and agents to help make this happen.
- 3.2 Demand for business space in the district is still high, and a number of enquiries have been received, though supply of premises and sites is still limited. Some of the more common enquiries received are proving difficult to accommodate within the District, particularly for small and medium sized industrial units which seem to be the most commonly sought premises that businesses enquire about. This includes buildings offering between a few thousand to 20,000sqft, of which there are only a couple available.

### **4.0 LEADER Programme**

- 4.1 The EU-funded LEADER programme is fast drawing to a close. There are now just two Local Action Group (LAG) meetings to approve successful applications before the close of the programme in March 2019. The last round for applications will be in November with a deadline for full applications by the 15<sup>th</sup> November. This will allow time for the applications to be processed and assessed before the final LAG on the 30<sup>th</sup> January.
- 4.2 The fund is currently over 70% committed, with further large applications in the pipeline. There is still a good list of projects being developed but there remains a risk that some applications will not be able to meet the 15<sup>th</sup> November deadline. However, at this stage there is reasonable expectation that the fund will be able to be fully committed.

### **5.0 Tiverton Market Events**

- 5.1 Tiverton Pannier Market has a busy round of events during the summer, including:
- Electric Nights Streetfood: There were 5 Electric night events during the summer, each with a different theme. This year crafts and artisan foods stalls were introduced alongside the normal street food and drink offer. All events have been well attended and traders have been content with trade. The entertainment provided was also varied and was complimentary to the theme of the market. The special Christmas Electric Nights will be held on Saturday December 1<sup>st</sup> and is run in conjunction with the town's Christmas light switch-on. The theme for this will obviously be the celebration period of Christmas with choirs and Christmas music provided by a disc jockey. The dates for next years (2019) Electric Nights have been set and the themes proposed. This has already been publicised to traders and already there is interest in attending.
- 5.2 Other Events: During the year there have been a number of events. These have been organised by the traders and management working together to ensure their success. With the support of the traders, there has been some kind of entertainment or event at least once a month during the summer and autumn periods. These have been events like the 'Wild West Show' and the Peoples' Choir. There have been buskers and other musicians providing entertainment such as the local operatic

society promoting their shows. There have also been various exhibitions and displays held at the market during the year. Art and craft classes have been introduced on a Wednesday provided by traders and a local artist. There is now also sessions where people can 'have a go' at spinning wool and 'lap weaving' which compliments the wool stall.

- 5.3 Car Boot Sales: Following requests and expressions of interest from the public and traders, the Market's Sunday Car Boot Sale returned on 30<sup>th</sup> September. The Car Boot Market is run by a third party on a hire agreement at the Pannier Market on the last Sunday of the month. The first one was well attended and did bring people to the market. There will be a special one on 9th December to compliment the Sunday opening of the market.
- 5.4 Farmers Market: The Tiverton market is reintroducing a Farmers Market after several years of not having one. This will be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of the month, the first being November 21<sup>st</sup>. There will not be one during December but will commence again in January. The market will be held in the south hall of the Pannier Market and operate between 9am and 2pm.
- 5.5 Christmas opening. Throughout December from 1<sup>st</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup>, the market will be open 7 days a week with Sundays providing special markets which include a craft market and a last minute gift fayre. This is also supporting and complimenting the decision by the Town Centre Partnership that Sunday trading will take place rather than late night shopping. There will be entertainment on certain days throughout the Christmas period, which includes the visit of the reindeer to the market on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup>. There will be a strong emphasis on this 'Festival of Christmas' as the town will be promoting this.

## **6.0 Cullompton Railway Station**

- 6.1 Work is progressing with regard to the provision of railway stations at Cullompton and Wellington. Further feasibility work is in the process of being commissioned to inform a Strategic Outline Business Case. A meeting with the local MPs is currently being scheduled. An update will be provided to the Economic Policy Development Group following this meeting.

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**Circulation of the Report:** Cllr Richard Chesterton  
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**List of Background Papers:** None