

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMY AND REGNERATION**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICE UPDATE**

**Cabinet Member(s):** Cllr Graeme Barnell

**Responsible Officer:** Mrs Jenny Clifford, Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration

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

**RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted**

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

**Budget and Policy Framework:** The projects identified in this update report have been included within the EDR budget (2019-20, and 2020-21) under Mid Devon's Economic Strategy 2019-24

**Legal Implications:** There are no legal implications arising from this information report.

**Risk Assessment:** Risks related to the individual projects are noted in the update spreadsheet

**Equality Impact Assessment:** None anticipated

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** The work of the Growth, Economy and Delivery team supports the corporate objectives for the economy:

- Bringing new businesses into the District
- Business development and growth
- Improving and regenerating our town centres
- Growing the tourism sector

**Impact on Climate Change:** The impact of individual projects on climate change will need to be factored into their business plans.

## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This report provides members with an update on progress with Economic Development projects as identified in the Council's Economic Strategy Year 1 Action Plan. The spreadsheet gives a summary of the latest activities, next steps and key risks / issues relating to each project. Projects have been given a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rating according to whether they are on track (Green), generally on track but delayed or facing issues that might delay their

implementation (Amber), not on track and facing issues that will jeopardise their implementation (Red).

1.2 At an informal meeting of the Policy Development Group on the 20<sup>th</sup> February 2020, members looked at the work programme for the Growth, Economy and Delivery team over the coming year. Cabinet will be reviewing the priorities for delivery of strategic development projects.

1.3 In addition to these strategic development projects members of the Economy PDG were asked to consider a number of smaller scale projects under the Economic Strategy's key themes of Employment and Skills, Place, Infrastructure, 'Hi-Tech, Innovation and Green Energy' and 'Agriculture, Food and Drink' for inclusion in the Year 2 action plan. These included:

- Shopfront Enhancement Scheme, Tiverton  
*To deliver a shopfront enhancement scheme to improve the appearance of shopfronts within the town centre through grant assistance.*
- Shopfront Enhancement Scheme, Cullompton  
*To deliver a shopfront enhancement scheme to improve the appearance of shopfronts within the town centre through grant assistance.*
- Shopfront Enhancement Scheme, Crediton  
*To deliver a shopfront enhancement scheme to improve the appearance of shopfronts within the town centre through grant assistance.*
- Tiverton Wi-Fi Project  
*To provide a free Wi-Fi network in Tiverton Town Centre*
- Cullompton Wi-Fi Project  
*To provide a free Wi-Fi network in Cullompton Town Centre*
- Tiverton Public Realm Project (Phase 2)  
*Improvements to street furniture in the town centre, including seating*
- Mid Devon Promotional Campaigns  
*To promote Mid Devon (for example through the Visit Mid Devon website)*
- Incubation / Flexible workspace  
*Site and detailed development option testing, to find financially viable models*
- Food Trails / Festivals  
*Work with local food producers to develop food trails and promote on Visit Mid Devon website; Support for Food Festivals in each of the three towns*
- Food and Drink Action Plan  
*Research needs of the sector and develop action plan to act on identified needs of the sector*
- 'Love your High Street' scheme  
*Scope a 'Love your High Street' Programme (cf. East Riding) for Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton, combining small grants for:  
Business owners looking to start up a new sustainable business;  
New events that will increase interest and footfall in the town;  
Groups of businesses wanting to create a stronger high street community; Property owners wanting to improve shop-frontages; Pop-*

*up shops or temporary displays in vacant shops, in order to increase interest and footfall in the town centres.*

- Championing a Low Carbon Sector in Mid Devon  
*Develop activities to support the low carbon sector*
- Events to support and promote strategic sectors  
*Develop and deliver a number of events to support and promote key strategic sectors in the District*

These projects will form the basis for the Council's Economic Strategy Year 2 Action Plan.

- 1.4 Members are asked to note that the above list of projects are considered deliverable with existing staff resources. At the time of writing this report a part time Growth and Regeneration post is vacant. Should staff resource be reduced, the impact upon the projects identified above would be as follows:

Postponement of the following by a year until 21/22:

- Crediton town centre masterplan
- The Crediton shopfront scheme
- The incubator/ flexible workspace project
- 'Love your High Street' scheme could not then be pursued for all towns

There would also be diminished capability to pursue external funding sources and deliver on championing the low carbon sector.

- 1.5 Members also discussed at the Informal Economy PDG meeting the possibility of working across the Council to take forward further corporate projects including initiatives such as a green cemetery, EV charging points, reforestation, cycling infrastructure, promoting town trails, capturing more of the M5 holiday traffic, farm-based tourism, 24 hr towns, promotion and advertising.

**Contact for more Information:** John Bodley Scott, Economic Development Team  
Leader 01884 234363  
[jbodleyscott@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:jbodleyscott@middevon.gov.uk)

**Circulation of the Report:** Cllr Graeme Barnell  
Leadership Team

**List of Background Papers:** None