
Report for: Economy and Assets PDG

Date of Meeting:	20 November 2025
Subject:	Economic Development Team Update
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Steve Keable, Planning and Regeneration
Responsible Officer:	Adrian Welsh – Strategic Manager – Growth Economy & Delivery
Exempt:	N/A
Wards Affected:	All wards
Enclosures:	N/A

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

To update Members on projects and activities undertaken by the Growth, Economy and Delivery Team.

Recommendation(s):

That Members note the contents of the report.

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report provides an update on activities carried out by the Growth, Economy and Delivery Team since the PDG meeting of 18th September 2025.

2.0 Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) 25/26

2.1 As reported at the previous meeting, some projects have required procurement and time for mobilisation. This has resulted in a shortened window of delivery for this programme, as all projects must complete by 31st March 2026.

Devon County Council Delivery

- 2.2 All Devon County Council delivered projects (Employment Skills, Business Support (Prosper) and Agri-support) are now in delivery phase.
- 2.3 The next events scheduled as part of the Business Support programme, are as follows:
- Bid Writing Masterclass at the Bookery in Crediton on November 13th;
 - AI and Automation Workshop, at the Future Skills Centre in Exeter on November 24th; and
 - People Planet Profit: Packaging and Waste Solutions' event for food and drink businesses, at Hawke Barn, Stoodleigh on 2nd December.

MDDC Delivery

- 2.4 Grant offers have been made for the following two SPF grant scheme projects: Community Commercial Hubs; and Improving Visitor Economy Assets. Recipient organisations are now moving to, or are in, delivery phase.
- 2.5 The Business Refresh Grant scheme (REPF), provides grants of up to £2,500 to SMEs to help existing commercial, retail, leisure, hospitality and tourism businesses refresh their look with priority given to those within our town and village centres remains open to receive applications and continues to receive a high level of interest. 12 applications/ projects have been approved to date.
- 2.6 Visitor Economy SPF project funding has been awarded to Visit Devon to allow 20 Mid Devon tourism businesses to experience 12 months free membership of this network. Work to upgrade the Visit Mid Devon website is also underway funded through the SPF programme.

3.0 Visit Mid Devon update

- 3.1 Visit Mid Devon's summer achievements focused on improving digital visibility and promotion, supporting local businesses (food & drink and attractions), town centre spaces and enhanced visitor experience through our grant schemes. Some examples of these activities are set out below:

Enhanced Digital Presence

- Mid Devon gained its first prominent page on the Visit Devon platform, giving the area wider exposure and complementing its existing website. At least 20 businesses have signed up to 'Visit Devon – Mid Devon' pages to create greater awareness of our offer.
- Work has taken place to improve the Visit Mid Devon website's accessibility.

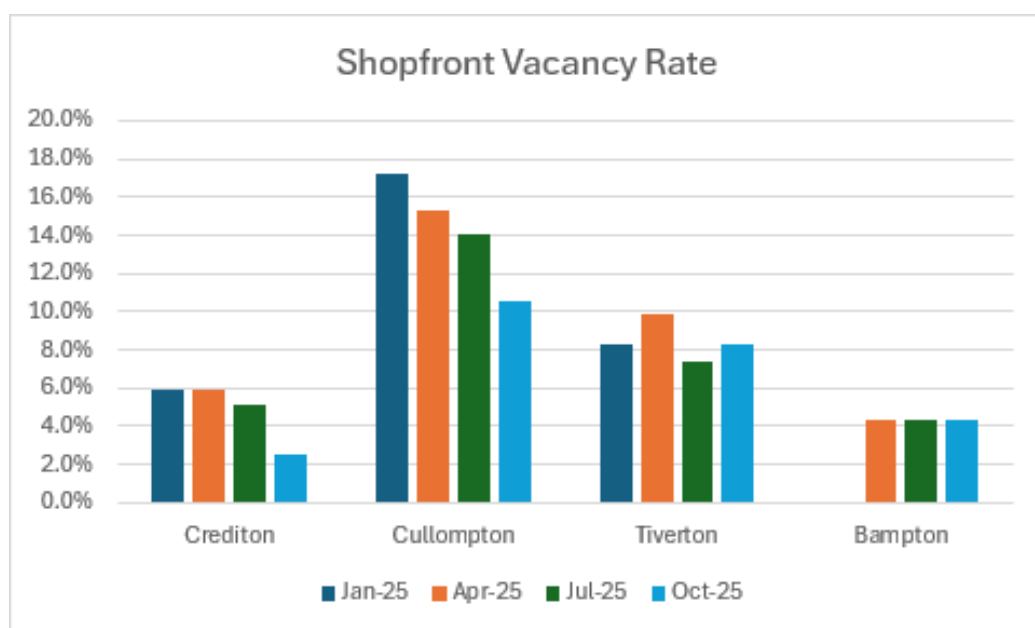
- As referred to above a new enhanced Visit Mid Devon Website will be launched early next year funded through the SPF programme.

Events & Business Support

- Visitor leaflet stands have been distributed across the district. Mid Devon businesses can advertise their leaflets for free in these stands.
- Support was provided to a range of businesses and organisations putting events on through a summer campaign, promoting our attractions summer opening and 'things to do' in Mid Devon which contributed to the tourism offer. This includes managing the events calendar for the district.
- A summer Visit Mid Devon Newsletter was issued for visitors with editorials and links to events and local news.
- Support was provided to leisure, tourism and hospitality businesses, recording 66 points of engagement. Created 15 new web listings including businesses and parish / place posts.
- Encouraging uptake for training courses such as AI.
- Promoting and supporting our tourism businesses to apply for our various grant schemes.

4.0 Town Centre Vacancies

- 4.1 Quarter 3 shopfront surveys took place in October 2025. Cullompton and Crediton have seen an improvement on the last quarter. Tiverton has seen a slight increase in vacant units since the last quarter. The latest reported national average was 13.9%. All our towns are performing better than the national average with regard to shopfront vacancies, although it is recognised that this data does not reflect the full picture of challenges our high streets are experiencing.



5.0 Tiverton Pannier Market

5.1 Over the summer months, the Tiverton Pannier Market has brought significant vibrancy and economic benefit to the town. A wide range of stalls offered local produce, handmade crafts, clothing, and street food, attracting both residents and visitors. Regular themed events, live music, and family-friendly activities created a lively atmosphere that encouraged repeat visits and supported local businesses. The market also provided opportunities for small traders and artisans to showcase their products, contributing to a stronger sense of community and boosting the town's profile as a welcoming place to visit / shop.

5.2 A few highlights from this quarter include:

- The team has provided support to a collective of traders to form a constituted 'Friends of the Market' group. This is an important step in strengthening the connection between the Pannier Market and the wider community. Such a group can act as a dedicated support network, helping to promote the market, organise events, and encourage local involvement. By bringing together traders, residents, and volunteers, the group can generate new ideas for improvement, assist with fundraising, and ensure the market remains vibrant and sustainable. It also provides a platform for regular communication between the market management, the traders and the public. The group has already been successful in securing funding towards the light switch on event.
- In addition to the general market days. The market has delivered 12 events over this quarter including: salvage fairs, food & craft markets, two 'Electric Night' street food events, a pirate party, a teddy bear fair, car boots, sewing classes and Market Fest. All of which had themed live entertainment, activities and promotion which attracts visitors and residents to the town.
- Also a recruitment drive was undertaken to attract new traders. It is pleasing to report that all the lockable units are now fully occupied.

5.3 Looking forward, the market has a couple of significant upcoming Christmas events. The Christmas Festival is being held on Saturday 22nd November from 2pm to 8pm, in partnership with the Town Council, and a Christmas Craft and Gift Fair is being held on Sunday 7th December between 10am and 4pm.

6.0 The Creative Communities Round 2

6.1 A second round of the Creative Communities fund was launched during the last quarter. This was a popular round and oversubscribed. 11 applications have been considered by the Funding Panel, 10 grant offers made of which 5 have been accepted at the time of writing.

7.0 Meet the Funder Event

- 7.1 The Economic Development Team was present at this successful Mid Devon event and was able to meet many organisations, hear about their work and projects and share information about funding.

8.0 Filming in Mid Devon event

- 8.1 An information event for Mid Devon landowners, venues, businesses and communities is being held with Screen Devon on 28th November 2025 at Coldharbour Mill, Uffculme. The event will provide information about how new locations can register and what to expect when hosting a production as well as how to become a supplier to productions.

Financial Implications

The report is an information report and does not of itself have any financial implications and require any decisions.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this information report.

Risk Assessment

There are no further risks associated with the updates in this report that have not already been reported. The key risk is failure to spend the optimum amount of funding as it is understood that unspent monies will be reclaimed by the Government and therefore timely delivery is key. It is for this reason that SPF schemes are proposed which seek to give most assurance on spend within the financial year as this is our key risk mitigation. Individual projects will be subject to their own risk management processes.

Impact on Climate Change

Every endeavour will be made to support projects which create positive climate and environmental outcomes (in the broadest sense).

Equalities Impact Assessment

It is acknowledged that there is a relationship between economy and equality whereby disadvantaged groups of people can have greater or lesser opportunities for economic advantage.

Mid Devon's Prosperity Programme and the Economic Strategy outline key projects to tackle these risks and grow the economy.

Key strands of the work of the Economy and Growth team continue to seek to address and tackle causes of inequality and deprivation.

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

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Date: 12.11.25

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 12.11.25

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford

Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director

Date: 12.11.25

Performance and risk: Dr Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 11 November 2025

Cabinet member notified: (yes)

Report: Exclusion of the press and public from this item of business on the published agenda on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. (No)

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Adrian Welsh, Strategic Manager for Growth, Economy & Delivery

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Background papers: