

ECONOMY PDG
26 MAY 2016

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Cabinet Member Cllr Richard Chesterton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development
Responsible Officer Amy Tregellas, Head of Communities and Governance

Reason for Report: To provide members with an update on the work and projects of the Economic Development and Regeneration team.

RECOMMENDATION(S): That the PDG note the contents of the report

Relationship to Corporate Plan: The economy is one of the Council's key corporate priorities within the Corporate Plan.

Financial Implications: None at this stage.

Legal Implications: No legal implications.

Risk Assessment: None

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report will provide members with details of current work being undertaken in respect of Economic Development and the projects that will be worked on in the coming financial year.

2.0 LEADER funding

2.1 The REAL Devon LEADER programme was officially launched on Monday 9th May 2016 at Muddiford Court. This EU-funded programme will be distributing £1.2 million to small businesses in the Mid Devon area over a five year period. In practice, the programme has been open for applications since November last year. However, it has had a number of teething problems to sort out, particularly in the interpretation of the complicated rules.

2.2 The funding is available to support small businesses or projects in the Mid Devon area through a grants programme. The priorities for the programme have been set by DEFRA as:

- Support for increasing farm productivity
- Support for micro and small enterprises and farm diversification
- Support rural tourism
- Provision of rural services
- Support for cultural and heritage activity
- Support for increasing forestry productivity,

but there will be local decisions on how the money is applied.

- 2.3 A Local Action Group (LAG) has been formed made up of representatives from the business sector, community and voluntary sector and local authorities. This group will make decisions on how the funding will be spent. At the last LAG meeting in April, four applications were approved for funding totalling £ 84,000, including grants to Wellhayes Vineyard, Clayhangar, Little Emlett Orchard, Black Dog; Trolley Bags, Tiverton & Fortescue Farm, Thorverton.
- 2.4 We are currently advising 10 businesses at different stages in the application process:
- Landfall Artwork
 - The Bear Project
 - Silverton Vineyard
 - Hopkins Machinery
 - Room 4 U
 - Lydcott Nursery
 - Middlecombe Farm
 - St Boniface Trail
 - East Street Café
 - LARCS Bampton Library
- 2.5 The Economic Development and Regeneration Team will continue to play a role in respect of the LEADER project fulfilling the role of project development officers. This will mean that the team will work with small businesses to help them put together funding bids and businesses cases. Unfortunately, just as the programme is getting underway it will be hit by the European Elections purdah period, which means that from 27th May to 23rd June 2016 it will not be able to actively promote itself and what it is doing.

3.0 Supporting Key Businesses & Inward Investment Opportunities

- 3.1 The Economic Development Officer along with the Chief Executive, Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development have been visiting the strategic businesses within the District (see Appendix 1). The purpose of these visits is to develop a stronger rapport and increasing our profile with our key businesses.
- 3.2 Business visits are going well. The businesses are positive about the relationship they want with the local authority and there don't seem to be major issues facing our strategic businesses that are likely to cause problems for the district in the short to medium term.

4.0 Exeter and the Heart of Devon (EHOD)

- 4.1 The Economic Development Officer has been working in partnership with colleagues at Exeter City Council, East Devon District Council and Teignbridge District Council as EHOD. Some of the key projects are:
- Developing a joint Economic Development & Inward Investment Strategy

The EHOD group won an Local Government Association (LGA) grant for consultancy time to help develop our strategy, and this is being driven forward with an expected completion in August / September. The consultant delivering the support is David Howells, who has been chosen from a list of CVs provided to our group by the LGA

- Exploring shared resources between the 4 local authorities
- Procuring joint Business Support Service for the EHOD area
EHOD jointly procured a business support contract. The Business Boost project has launched and BIP are making the effort to set up workshops and support activities across the 4 local authority areas. They have ambitious targets which will demonstrate the value added by entering a joint contract agreement
- Developing key projects that will support our functioning economic geography

5.0 Better Business for All (BBfA)

5.1 The purpose of BBfA is to simplify regulatory processes and improve the relationships between public services and the business community.

5.2 The work of the Economic Development Officer within the local authority aligns with the objectives of BBfA, and this has led to our EDO being invited onto the regional BBfA steering group, and for Mid Devon to be seen as a leader in adopting and developing its ethos within our services.

5.3 Currently the BBfA are working on:

- Regional steering group member representing Economic Development
- Working with business and South Hams to develop a project with TESCO supplier network
This work is continuing, though at a relatively slow pace due to barriers that must be overcome to bring the project to fruition. These barriers relate to Primary Authority issues, but progress should accelerate once the issues have been resolved
- Developing activities to make regulatory services more business compatible

6.0 Growth Hub

6.1 The Growth Hub (GH) will be a service that signposts businesses to relevant support that can help their business to develop and grow. It is broken into two elements, one which provides the back end support, including the website, phone line, and CRM (the customer database system), and the other which delivers the detailed diagnostics for businesses and then develops bespoke packages of support for them.

- 6.2 There was a significant concern between district authorities, local business support organisations and Devon County Council (DCC), that the Growth Hub concept was being driven forward in a manner which favoured a large national organisation stepping in to deliver a generic service across the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area. We therefore decided to work collaboratively to bid for the Growth Hub service, with local delivery organisations supported by district councils, and DCC acting as the accountable body. This concept was developed and sold to partners by our Economic Development Officer and the decision was taken to submit bids for both elements.
- 6.3 It was hoped that the whole service would be delivered by a single body, as one of its key aims is to simplify the business support landscape, but the first bid was won by Serco, who will now deliver the entire back end of the service, and are actively promoting themselves as the Growth Hub. We are now the only bid for the second part of the Growth Hub service (the detailed diagnostics and pulling together of bespoke packages of support), and the full application will be submitted by the 13th of June 2016. We hope that this element of the service will go live as soon as possible after the awarding of the contract. We are also in discussions with Serco about how we work with them and the elements that they fund through their own GH service.

7.0 Incubator Space / Work-hub project

- 7.1 Mid Devon District Council is looking to lead a pan-EHOD bid for European funding to deliver a work-hub/incubator space in Cullompton Town Centre. The new-build premises would become a centre for businesses in their infancy, operating in the digital and data industries, with specialist services put in place to support their growth and help them to become more successful enterprises.
- 7.2 The project will act as a catalyst for making the town of Cullompton into a specialist incubator town for businesses operating in a wide range of sectors. There are sites that will be developed over the next 5 years that will provide incubator space for light industrial / manufacturing businesses, and the town centre could look to provide a stepping stone for new independent retailers. This will give Cullompton a unique identity that will be attractive to entrepreneurs and potential business investors. It will encourage innovation in the supported industries, and this could create strong links with Exeter Science Park, Exeter University and other key organisations.
- 7.3 The project would be valued at around £2m with the majority of the funding being spent in the Cullompton area. The concept is already receiving support from the local community, and ideas are coming forward to link the potential new centre with other activities taking place across the town.

8.0 Mills & Hydro-Power Project

- 8.1 A project is now being taken forward to bring Mid Devon mills back into use as hydro generating systems. The project is likely to be a pan-Europe project, with ourselves (representing the UK), working with Germany and France to share knowledge and best practice. There are several elements of the project

which require funding to be sourced. These include capital funding, staff, feasibility studies and learning opportunities. However, pots have been identified for each of these elements and are now being actively pursued.

- 8.2 It would be viewed negatively if MDDC don't get involved in the project, as it has strong buy-in from South West Water (who are keen to become purchasers of some of the energy generated), Western Power (who are committing funding towards the project), the LEP, and many other organisations. If successful, it would be viewed as a pioneering piece of work in the UK, and could act as a significant policy-changer, by reducing our reliance on the national grid infrastructure (which is recognised as requiring major improvement over the next 10 – 20 years), and would shift our district towards a local power infrastructure model that would be highly resilient. It would also have a significant positive impact on water flows and upstream issues that unless addressed can pose future flooding risks. The Environment Agency is looking to become a partner in the project for precisely this reason.
- 8.3 The project is being led by Brendan Bellis, the owner of Flock Mill near Rewe. He has been supported by the Economic Development Officer, and in December 2015 received a letter from MDDC's chief executive to offer ongoing support the project. There are currently 25 mill owners who have partnered together to set up a limited company with a Community Interest Company (CIC) sub-structure that will take the project forward. MDDC does not need to become a part of the enterprise, but if we partner with them to drive the project forward, it could bolster their credibility and strengthen their proposal. We could also look to help them to access funding opportunities, as this is a strength that MDDC has, which other partners are less adept with.

9.0 Rural Broadband

- 9.1 A project idea is being explored to develop access to high speed broadband services across Devon. MDDC could lead the development of this project, with learning from the Lancaster example of the B4RN (Broadband for the rural north) project. The EDO is looking to take the idea forward and to pull together an initial meeting towards the end of May 2016. There is an opportunity to draw in funding to pay for representatives of the B4RN project to visit Devon and to help steer a project on a consultancy basis.

10.0 Tourism

- 10.1 The Tourism Action Plan for 2016/17 was approved by Cabinet on 7th April 2016 (attached as Appendix 2). This action plan outlines the work that will be completed in the 2016/17 financial year, some of which will feed into the Tourism Strategy.
- 10.2 Current progress is as follows:
- Tourism audit – over the next couple months we will be auditing Mid Devon's attractions, accommodations and hot spots. This will involve creating a database to record this information. This data will help to measure the volume and value of tourism in Mid Devon (research conducted by the Heart of Devon)

- We are conducting visitor surveys across Mid Devon from May bank holiday to October half term to build the profile of our visitor. This research is crucial to understand our visitor and to help attract more visitors to the area. We will have a better understanding of the following aspects: Type of visitor and their characteristics, how they source information about their visit, visitor opinion, likes and dislikes, main reason for visit / length of stay, activities undertaking in Mid Devon and possible spend in the area.

10.3 An update on progress against the Tourism Action Plan for 2016/17 will be brought to the PDG in due course.

11.0 Crediton

11.1 The Crediton Town Team is the youngest of the Mid Devon Town Teams. The team is up and running and now has a good cross section of representation from the business sector, voluntary and community sectors and local authorities, including the town's arts and cultural sector, the new Crediton Chamber of Commerce. The activities planned by the Town Team have a strong arts focus, designed to make the town centre more vibrant and attractive and draw visitors into the town.

11.2 Crediton Town Team current projects include:

- St. Boniface Feast Day, Sunday 5th June re-enactment "The Story of St. Boniface" in Newcombes Meadow
- Crediton Food Festival, Sunday 19th June re-enactment "The Story of St. Boniface" in Crediton Town Square
- Haywards Primary School, November 2016 (date TBC) re-enactment "The Story of St. Boniface"
- Landscore Primary School, November 2016 (date TBC) re-enactment "The Story of St. Boniface"
- Crediton Festival 2017: The last festival in 2015 was an Intergenerational Celebration – a four week community festival between 13 June and 11 July designed to bring local agencies together to celebrate their work. Over 60 events took place, including a 'Festival Finale' on 11 July and linking in with the 7th Crediton Food Festival, which was held on the 13 and 14 June
- Crediton Food festival 2016: Crediton Food Festival is an annual event, with its 8th year in 2016 taking place on 18th and 19th June.
- Crediton Flag Project 2016 – This will be the 4th year for the Crediton Flag Project. The project which started in 2013 has so far involved more than 60 local businesses and voluntary groups, each making their own flags to represent their work or role in the community. The flags are designed to make the town more attractive and to increase footfall and trade within the town. The flags can be seen from mid-June to mid-August.
- Creating a 'community and cultural' hub for the town

11.3 Crediton Chamber of Commerce is now up and running and is in the process of organising events throughout the year and at Christmas.

11.4 Paul Tucker (Grants and Funding Officer) continues to provide support and assistance to the Crediton Town Team and the Crediton Chamber of Commerce.

12.0 Cullompton

12.1 The Cullompton Town Team has been established for a number of years now and since April 2013 has brought in £114,000 of funding to deliver projects within the town.

12.2 Projects that have been delivered over include:

- Cloth trade project
- Shopfront scheme
- Tidying up 'grot spots' in the Town
- Sheep notice boards
- Archive Project

12.3 As well as these projects the Cullompton food and drink festivals have been a huge success. The first festival (Autumn Fruits Festival) took place on Saturday 10th October 2015 and the second (Cullompton Spring Festival) took place on Saturday 9th April 2016. Both events were a huge success. For the most recent event, the Spring Festival, a full programme was delivered across the Walronds, Community Centre, Library, Market & Town Hall (with Devon Kitchen, China Orchid and the Bakehouse taking part). Footfall records were high (growing on from the first Autumn Fruits Festival) with 1740 people recorded between 12 noon and 1pm in Fore Street. Cullompton Town Council have acknowledged the success of the event, writing to the working group congratulating the team, stating that 'they have never seen the town so busy'. Station road carpark took £259.60 compared to £108.30 the previous week. There was great coverage in the press and online. Next month planning work begins for the Autumn Fruits Festival in October.

12.4 They are working on the following projects:

- Further food and drink projects and festivals for 2016
- Townscape Heritage Initiative – potentially up to £1m external funding to support improvements to town centre conservation area
- Public art projects including improving the entrance to the town
- Tourism projects including town guide, events listing, interactive touch screen information, coach tours
- Art House project

12.5 Culm Valley in Business (CViB) – had their AGM last month. New members have joined including high-street traders which is positive. They have just produced a 'shopper's guide to Cullompton' leaflet which was distributed at the Spring Festival and will be going out in estate agent packs.

12.6 Penny Bayer (Grants and Funding Officer) continues to provide support and assistance to the Cullompton Town Team. Amy Dugard (Consultation and Youth Involvement Officer) has been working with the Culm Valley in Business Group to give a liaison role between the business group and the Council.

13.0 Tiverton

Tiverton Town Centre Partnership

- 13.1 The Town Centre Manager has been working with businesses in Tiverton to discuss whether they wished to investigate a Business Improvement District (BID). At this time the businesses were not keen to take a BID forward but instead they agreed to form a Town Centre Partnership. The Chair is Stephen Brennan from Velvet and Enchanted and the Vice Chair is Jan Wheatley from Frou Frou, Mojos and Mdme. Mojos. A secondary group has also been formed which is the events committee chaired by Paul Mathews from Velvet.
- 13.2 First projects going forward are the Tiverton brand, with banners for the town centre and flags and bunting for other events so that there is some colour in the centre at all times, this gives us the options of changing things around at certain points in the year. Other projects are Christmas events and the re-introduction of a Tiverton Carnival which we are currently working on.
- 13.3 Member of the Town Centre Partnership communicate via what's App, Facebook and email and the membership is growing daily, it is a free group currently and we are developing into a Community Interest Company (CIC) and writing a business plan to be able to obtain funding. We will also be looking into using crow funding platforms.
- 13.4 Other projects include a Town map and working with Tourism community to develop an information sheet, advertising on back of tickets bus and rail and a Tiverton Pound scheme.

Events Committee

- 13.5 The team has facilitated the setting up of an Events Committee and this has been successfully working with groups who are running events in Tiverton and the surrounding area. This has enabled a programme of events to be developed and joint marketing and promotion to take place. Members from the Town Centre Partnership are keen to set up their own events committee so the Town Centre Manager will work with them to amalgamate both groups whilst still giving them an individual identity.

Living above Shops

- 13.6 The Town Centre Manager is currently writing a business case for both the Head of Housing and Property Services and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services about the possibility of working with private landlords to help look for tenants to live in own centre flats we have helped to maintain. We now have a new Empty homes officer and with the Private Sector Housing Team we are taking this project forward. There is some interest from landlords and it is envisaged that a pilot will be developed that then can be used for Cullompton.

Other projects

- 13.7 The Town Centre Manager is currently working on a number of other projects which includes:
- Looking into WIFI for the town centre and how this can be implemented and funded, including a Tiverton App for smartphones, etc.
 - Development of free business support training for market traders and Tiverton businesses including a Dragons Den type competition.
 - Building up a list of local retail consultants who find property for brands to get them to look back into Tiverton again and show what we have to offer. Having a launch for investment in Tiverton would be a good idea to pursue so The Town Centre Manager is working with the Economic Development and Regeneration team on this.
 - Developing an initial network with North Devon Economic Development team and Barnstaple Town centre management to share ideas, successes and challenges. We will be growing this to include Exeter, South Devon and other areas which have a working Economic Development department or a group for Town centre management, at first we are leaving out cities like Plymouth as they are large and the difficulties they face are different to ours.
- 13.8 Tiverton coach parking officially opened in April 2016 and the Tourist Information Service (TIS) are co-ordinating the bookings. We are planning to set up a similar arrangement in Cullompton. A database is being put together of coach companies to target and shared this information with the TIS. The towns are building our local offer in order to attract more coach parties to the area.

14.0 Tiverton Market

- 14.1 The new Market Manager has been in post since 9th April 2016 and within this short time has introduced:
- Series of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) introduced i.e. footfall, stall usage, trading levels, events, new traders etc.
 - Monthly property and environment checks
 - About to introduce a more efficient car park pass system for traders
 - Monthly traders meetings
 - Working towards designing branding which is specific to the Market.
 - More use of social media with pictures
 - More entertainment
 - Better liaison with town centre businesses through new town centre partnership
 - New traders in lock-ups must be open for minimum of 3 market days
 - Events calendar
 - Put up bunting and flags in Pannier Market to add colour
 - Market base for live broadcasting of local community radio (now live.)
 - Creating social areas with astro turf for outdoor activities.
 - Plan to paint and cleanse the whole area and add colour internally
 - Action plan being developed and this will come before this PDG in due course

Longer term

- Work on the policies and regulations and trader licences

- Site layout and improvements are in progress working with the Head of Communities and Governance and Estates team
- Marketing plan and trader attraction is in progress and will widen once the cleansing and brightening have taken place.
- Teenage Market

Action plan headings

- Offer
- Experience
- Economic -This covers employment and business development
- Social and Community
- Environmental
- Cultural Fabric - Demographic and Tourism
- Media and Marketing
- Structural
- Education
- Food and Health - Working with chefs and looking at using spaces to grow your own veg, encouraging people to use market produce.

15.0 High Street Innovation Fund

15.1 In October 2015, the second phase of High Street Innovation Funding was allocated to the following projects:

1. Tiverton Museum of Mid Devon Life- £10,000 for a “Tivvy Bumper” sculpture trail. This project would bring footfall into town and also links to tourism.
2. Cullompton Town team - £7,000 for projects of festival development (food and drink festivals in 2016/17, Christmas festival and town summer festival 2016), pop up museum, sheep noticeboards, travel guide aimed at coach parties and interactive display boards for Cullompton Services to bring visitors into town
3. Bampton Business Group - £1,275 for producing the Bampton Business Guide. This funding will focus on a centrefold map of the town promoting local businesses on the High Street. The money will also be used to widen the circulation of the guide.
4. Age UK - £5,000 for Dementia Accessible Tiverton Project. This project would give Tiverton a Unique selling point and would potentially increase the number of shoppers and visitors to the town
5. Cullompton Farmers Market - £9,500 for a Cullompton Farmers Market community shop, which would benefit shoppers and increase footfall in the High Street by creating a destination shop
6. Crediton Town team – £2,300 for Crediton Flag project 2016. The previous iteration of this project increased footfall/ visitors into the Town
7. Crediton Town team – £1,500 for town entrance signage design project

8. Crediton Town team – £1,500 for a design competition for a canopy for the Town Square
9. Crediton food festival/Crediton Town Team - £1,912 for pop up market stalls for extending the Crediton food festival into the High Street
- 15.2 Rachel Jenman (Town Centre Manager) and Amy Dugard (Consultation and Youth Involvement Officer) has been working with the various groups, helping them develop their projects. Below is an update as to the current status of each project:
- 15.3 The Tivvy bumper trail will be launched on 2nd July 2016 and there will be 21 sculptures in the shape of the Tivvy Bumper steam engine (housed in Tiverton Museum). The sculptures will be located in and around Tiverton, located by key retail and leisure facilities. The trail is designed to appeal to local families and visitors to the area, and there will be a map directing people around the town (it's inspired by the Shaun in the City trail in Bristol and many others). The trail will run until 30th October 2016.
- 15.4 As outlined in the earlier update for Cullompton, the Cullompton Town Team are working on the projects that they received funding. To date Cullompton Town Team have delivered two hugely successful festivals and managed to raise money from local businesses to match the funding.
- 15.5 The Bampton Business Group have produced and distributed the Bampton Business Guide
- 15.6 The Tiverton Dementia Action Alliance is moving forward, Sue Moore the coordinator started on 10th May working three days per week. Initially Sue was going to be situated at the market but this has proved unsuitable so we are looking at alternatives as are the Town Council. The steering group is made out of Town Council and Cllrs, Alzheimer's Society, Town centre management and representation from the Business Forum. The plan is two-fold, the creation of a Tiverton Dementia Action Alliance and secondly a personalised card system stating anything the person has difficulty with. They show this to the shop owner/staff and they can help them shop, it endeavours to give more confidence so the community use the High street more and are not confined at home.
- 15.7 Cullompton Farmers Market are putting together their business case for a market shop, they are finding it difficult to find an appropriate vacant shop.
- 15.8 Crediton Town Team have completed the pop-up stalls project and received their funding. The flag project has also been completed. The remaining two 'conceptual' projects are in hand and will be on show at the food festival in June for consultation on the canopy design and welcome signs.

Contact for more Information: Amy Tregellas, Head of Communities and Governance

Circulation of the Report: Cllr Richard Chesterton and Management Team