

**ECONOMY PDG
15 SEPTEMBER 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 are being progressed in this financial year.

2.0 LEADER funding

2.1 The REAL Devon LEADER programme was officially launched on Monday 9th May 2016. 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 After a protracted period following the EU referendum in which the LEADER programme could not announce the decisions made at the June LAG meeting, they have finally announced two more successful projects, making a total of 6 projects supported since the beginning of the programme, to the sum of £104 k.

- Wellhayes Vineyard, Clayhangar
- Little Emlett Orchard, Black Dog
- Fortescue Farm, Thorverton
- Planet Play, Crediton
- Trolley Bags, Tiverton
- Amia Ltd, Bow

2.3 However, the Government's recent announcement about EU funding has put a question mark over the future of the programme, as no one is quite sure what will happen after the Autumn Statement. The programme is therefore once again unable to publicise or promote itself to new projects in case the programme criteria or procedures change. In the meantime, the programme will be focusing on getting as many of the projects that are already in the pipeline through the assessment process before the end of October cut off point.

2.4 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. Members will be provided with a further update as and when this is available.

3.0 Supporting Key Businesses and Inward Investment Opportunities

3.1 The Economic Development Officer (EDO) 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 increase our profile with our key businesses.

3.2 The visits are going well, and stronger relationships are being forged with several of our key strategic businesses. Furthermore, any issues raised by these businesses have mostly been resolved, which has served to further improve our credibility and demonstrate a genuine desire to help the business community.

4.0 Exeter and the Heart of Devon (EHOD)

4.1 The EDO has been working in partnership with colleagues at Exeter City Council, East Devon District Council and Teignbridge District Council as EHOD on a number of key projects. The latest developments include:

- Developing a joint Economic Development & Inward Investment Strategy. This is being driven forward with an expected completion in October / November. There are workshops booked in September with planning leads, while chief execs and council leaders will be invited to the final workshop in the near future to conclude the consultation process.
- Procuring joint Business Support Service for the EHOD area. Business Boost is now established in the 4 areas. The business engagement figures for the first quarter were slightly lower than expected, though this was due to the fact that the brand had to be built from scratch in Exeter and Teignbridge. Regular monthly meetings are now being held with BIP and Cosmic who deliver the project, to ensure that it is getting back on schedule.

5.0 Better Business for All (BBfA)

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

5.2 The EDO sits on the regional steering group to ensure that activities are aligned with other business support activities. This way of working has resulted in better engagement with other Economic Development teams, many of which are now represented on the main BBfA group.

5.3 Currently the BBfA are active in:

- Working with businesses and South Hams District Council to develop a project with TESCO supplier network. Progress has now been made with this project, and a meeting with senior staff from TESCO HQ is likely to take place by November. The project will strengthen engagement between TESCO suppliers and regulatory services and attempt to develop new ways of working with suppliers to simplify regulatory processes.
- Identifying new projects to develop as a group, as work to bring forward the Growth Hub project has almost concluded.

6.0 Growth Hub

6.1 The Growth Hub (GH) will be a service that signposts businesses to relevant advice and 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 The final bid for the diagnostic and bespoke support element of the Growth Hub was submitted by Devon County Council in July. An announcement is likely to be made by the end of September 2016 to confirm whether or not the bid has been successful.

7.0 Incubator Space / Work-hub project

7.1 Mid Devon District Council is looking to support the development of business incubator space at locations in Cullompton and Tiverton. The Cullompton project would focus on supporting tech and digital businesses, while the Tiverton project would be focused on supporting independent micro businesses at the Pannier Market.

7.2 Funding applications have been submitted to the Devon Enabling Fund to undertake feasibility studies on the sites. The Tiverton project has been successful in its bid and will be awarded approximately £3,750 towards feasibility work. Devon County Council has requested that we resubmit the Cullompton bid in January once further work has been completed with Devon Libraries and the Hayridge Centre.

8.0 Mills and Hydro-Power Project

- 8.1 A project is now being taken forward to bring a number of 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 MDDC has been providing support to the project and has now started the lobbying process with Government to attempt to access central government funding and to improve support for hydro-generation through changes to legislation. The EDO and Brendan Bellis (the business and community lead for the project) have met with Neil Parish MP to discuss the project at length, and a site visit is now being organised. The next step with the project will be to invite the Undersecretary of State for DEFRA, Therese Coffey, to visit Mid Devon to promote the project.
- 8.3 A funding team has been developed for the project, with representatives from the public, private and community sector. Bids for funding are being submitted throughout September to the value of approximately £300,000 and will cover feasibility studies for the initial 25 sites. This should lead to further funding opportunities, and pots have been identified that will support the restoration of the viable sites. However, if Government funding were allocated to the project, this would negate the need for smaller funding bids to be submitted.

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 Director of Finance, Assets and Resources has been asked to work with the EDO to explore the idea in detail and the viability of the Council becoming a part of the project in collaboration with the private sector.

10.0 Tourism

- 10.1 The Tourism Action Plan for 2016/17 was approved by Cabinet on 7th April 2016. Current progress is as follows:
- 10.2 As part of an ongoing tourism audit we are continuously gathering information on tourism opportunities in the district and meeting with providers in order to build effective partnerships for the future. The Tourist Information Service (TIS) at Tiverton Museum is helping to build a database of Mid Devon's attractions and accommodation providers. This data will help to measure the volume and value of tourism in Mid Devon (research conducted by the Area Tourism Partnership).
- 10.3 'Who comes to Mid Devon?' - We have conducted around 200 visitor surveys (since May bank holiday) across Mid Devon. We will be conducting another

200 up to October half term. This research is crucial to understand the profile of our visitors and to help attract more visitors to the area. We will have a better understanding of the 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 undertaken in Mid Devon and possible spend in the area. This data will help inform project and campaign development and aid decision making at a local level to support marketing activity and drive growth.

- 10.4 We have been actively encouraging businesses to take part in the 'How's business survey' so that we can get an overview of the tourism industry performance in our area and identify any trends. The number of businesses taking part has increased since we have promoted it but there are not enough from the area at present to be considered reliable data. The Tourist Information Service and MDDC will continue to promote it.
- 10.5 Mid Devon Attractions Association has agreed its Terms of Reference (TOR) and has created an action plan. Its purpose is to promote and market the area and Mid Devon attractions and to be a strong strategic voice.

11.0 Crediton

- 11.1 The Crediton Town Team was founded in November 2014 and has a good cross-section of representation from the business sector, voluntary and community sectors and local authorities. The activities planned by the Town Team have a strong arts and cultural focus which build on past successes in the town to make Crediton an attractive place to live and work, as well as a vibrant and appealing visitor destination.
- 11.2 Crediton Town Team's current project portfolio includes:
- Planning for Crediton Community Festival 2017, which will bring all sectors of the community together over a two week period in June next year to celebrate the town. Funding has been secured to employ a coordinator for the 2017 Festival;
 - Developing the re-enactment of the life of St. Boniface on his annual Feast Day (5 June). The Town Team has established a working group that is now looking at expanding the St. Boniface re-enactments as a "Crediton Day" around the life of the famous saint;
 - The Council's Grants and Funding Officer has recently worked closely with Crediton Community Bookshop to secure a £150,000 grant from Power to Change. This will enable the bookshop to move from the margins of the town centre to a more central and larger High Street venue. The relocation will benefit Town Team projects as it will provide a more accessible box office for town events and offer the opportunity to provide tourism information and St. Boniface souvenirs;
 - Haywards Primary School and Landscore Primary School will be engaging in a re-enactment of "The Story of St. Boniface" in the lead up to Christmas, placing particular emphasis on St. Boniface's founding the 'Christmas tree';

- The 8th Crediton Food Festival, held during the weekend of 18-19th June 2016, was again a considerable success. This annual event continues to grow and funding has been secured to develop the event further in 2017 and for its 10th anniversary in 2018.
- The Town Team carried out a public consultation during the Food Festival on town entrance signage and making the town square more usable in inclement weather. The results of the consultation are currently being collated and analysed.
- 2016 marked the 4th continuous year of the Crediton Flag Project. The project involves 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 Town Team is currently attempting to secure funding to continue the Flags Project for a 5th year in 2017.
- A working group of the Town Team has spent the last two years consulting widely and researching the practicability of establishing a Community and Cultural Hub for the town. A Draft Feasibility Report has been produced and is currently being fine-tuned by members of the team.

11.3 The Crediton Chamber of Commerce was reformed in 2015 following advice and support from the Town Team. It has now held several well-attended meetings. A Chamber of Commerce logo has been created and a website and a Facebook page established. Membership of the Chamber appears robust and it is currently exploring ways in which it can support all local businesses, including reaching out to the Lords Meadow Industrial Estate, and put on events and activities to benefit the town.

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 include:

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

12.3 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
- 12.4 Cullompton Food and Drink Festival is taking place on Saturday 8 October. The committee members are busy finalising the details with the Walronds, the Farmers Market, the Town Hall, the Hayridge, the Bakehouse, Devon Kitchen, Hug Cullompton, the Children's centre, WI and more organisations all involved !
- 12.5 Following the departure of Penny Bayer (Grants and Funding Officer), Amy Dugard is now providing support and assistance to the Cullompton Town Team. Amy is also continuing to work with the Culm Valley in Business Group to give a liaison role between the business group and the Council.
- 12.6 Cullompton Townscape Heritage Scheme – Despite the unexpected departure of the main project officer just five weeks before the submission date, we were luckily able to call on the expertise of Tony Garratt from Torbay UA to help us complete the bid. He did extremely well to pull the bid together within the tight timeframe, and the application was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund by the 31st August deadline. The final bid was for a total of £1,152,000 of Lottery funding for a scheme totalling just over £2.2 million, which will help to repair and conserve the historic centre of Cullompton. Even though success rate on first applications is less than 50%, we are quietly hopeful. We will hear the result of the application in January 2017.

13.0 Tiverton

Tiverton Business Forum

- 13.1 Prior to her departure, Rachel Jenman, (the Town Centre Manager) had been working with the newly formed Tiverton Business Forum. The first AGM of the Forum takes place in September where the formal positions of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer will be elected. The Town Centre Manager helped the Forum develop its Constitution.
- 13.2 The Forum's Events Committee has been working on the Christmas event and the re-introduction of a Tiverton Carnival, which we are currently working on.

Other projects

- 13.3 The Town Centre Manager has also been working on a number of other projects, which include:
- 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 at 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. Initially, we are leaving out cities like Plymouth as they are large and the difficulties they face are different to ours.

13.4 Tiverton coach parking officially opened in April. The Tourist Information Service is co-ordinating the bookings and promoting the free parking to coach companies. To date they have received 5 bookings and 25 enquiries.

13.5 The Town Centre Manager has also been drafting the Town Centre Action Plan and the draft came before the Economy PDG in July before going out for a period of consultation. The revised version is also on the agenda for this meeting. As mentioned, Rachel Jenman has now left the Council. Alternative arrangements have been put into place to ensure that the Town Centre Manager resource is still available to the town. Alan Ottey (the Market Manager) will, from the 1st September, be splitting his role so that he spends 2½ days a week as the Town Centre Manager and 2½ days a week as the Market Manager. In order to ensure that the Market does not suffer as a result of this change, Alan's 2½ days a week at the Market will be backfilled by Zoe Lentell. This change has been put in place for 1 year (which takes us to when the two year fixed term contract for the Town Centre Manager was due to end).

14.0 Tiverton Market

14.1 Alan Ottey (the 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

14.2 The Market Manager has also been drafting the Strategy for the Market and the draft came before the Economy PDG in July before going out for a period of consultation. The revised version is also an agenda item for this meeting.

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 (Economic Regeneration and Growth Officer) have worked 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 launched on 2nd July 2016 and has been really well received by the public. There are 21 sculptures in the shape of the Tivvy Bumper steam engine (housed in Tiverton Museum). The sculptures are 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 is 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 Cullompton Town Team is concentrating on the development of the following projects: Festival Development, Pop-up Museum, Travel Guides, Townscape Heritage Project, Interactive display Boards, Sheep Notice Boards.
- 15.5 The Bampton Business Group has produced and distributed the Bampton Business Guide.
- 15.6 The Tiverton Dementia Action Alliance is moving forward. Sue Moore the coordinator has been appointed by Tiverton Town Council and started on 10th May working three days per week. The steering group is made up from 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 was finding it difficult to find an appropriate vacant shop so instead are rebranding and updating its website. They are in the process of developing a food trail.
- 15.8 Crediton Town Team have now completed all their projects, the remaining two 'conceptual' projects were consulted on e.g. the canopy design and welcome signs with photos to follow of the preferred designs.

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Circulation of the Report: Cllr Richard Chesterton and Management Team