

Report of the Chairman of the Economy Policy Development Group

2016/17

We have now completed the first year as an Economy PDG. We have been working with the Economic Development and Regeneration Manager, the Economic Development Officer and other MDDC officers.

Areas which have been discussed are as follows:

Townscape Heritage Initiative for Cullompton

This would have provided over £1m of investment into Cullompton's historic built environment and help boost the local economy. Regrettably the initial bid was not successful but a further bid will be submitted in due course.

Tiverton Town Centre Action Plan / Market Strategy

A new experienced market Manager was recruited early in 2016. He is raising the profile of the market and providing monthly reports on events and footfall etc. A Strategy and Action Plan for both Tiverton Town Centre and the market was presented at the January meeting. The Economy PDG will continue to monitor the progress of this action plan.

Town Teams for Cullompton and Crediton

Both teams gave enlightening presentations regarding the amount of activity in both towns.

Visits to employers

The Chief Executive, cabinet Member for Planning and regeneration and the Economic Development Officer have visited a number of larger and growing employers to discuss ways in which MDDC can be of help.

Rural issues / small business

We received a presentation from the National Farmers Union regarding the importance of agriculture in Mid Devon. Mid Devon have also secured £1.2m under the LEADER programme. A number of small businesses have already applied for support.

Mills and Hydro-Power Project

A project to bring Mid Devon mills back into use as hydro generating systems. The project is likely to be a pan-Europe project for ourselves (representing the UK) working with Germany and France to share knowledge and best practice.

Tourism

Tourism links with town and rural issues. A tourism survey has been commissioned and reported on. We recommended to the Cabinet that the Plan should be approved for consultation but expressed concern regarding the small sample of people interviewed.

EHOD Exeter Heart of Devon Development Strategy

Mid Devon has been working with East Devon, Exeter and Teignbridge to develop a joint economic strategy. More details will emerge in the coming months.

Broadband

Fast Broadband is vitally important to the Mid Devon district, both for the existing businesses as well as encouraging new business into the area. It has been discussed at a number of meetings throughout the year and will be high on the agenda for next year.

Over the coming years we will be revisiting many of the areas mentioned above along with other new and exciting initiatives.

I thank all members of the PDG for their time and input and also the committee clerk for her help and advice.