

Business Growth and Increased Productivity Portfolio Report**1. Joint Local Plan**

Reports have been taken to Executive Committee in May and June where Councillors endorsed the parameters for the new Joint Local Plan and then subsequently endorsed the Local Development Scheme which sets the timetable for the production of the plan. The Plan will cover a period to 2036 and involve consideration of a number of levels of growth to reflect the different economic and environmental conditions across Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts.

The draft Joint Local Plan will be prepared over the next twelve months. The finished document must identify the jobs, housing and infrastructure needs of the communities of the area and demonstrate how those are going to be met.

As part of producing the plan a range of evidence documents will be published. One of the first of these, the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), was published on the Councils' websites on Friday 27th May. In light of the many comments received from Members about the number of sites not included in this document and having regard to good practice in keeping the SHLAA up to date, it is intended to make a further Call for Sites commencing in June, in order to provide additional and comprehensive levels of information about development capacity to inform the new Plan.

2. Growth Engagement Campaign – Building a Sustainable Future

The Growth Engagement Campaign has commenced, which is covered in more detail within the Community Engagement theme. The first events have taken place now and we are learning as we go. We've had really positive feedback on the content of the messages but recognise that we haven't given some communities the advance notice they would have liked and that we need to continue to try new things to engage as widely as we would like.

3. 'Open for Business' Project

Various work streams continue in this key Mid Suffolk and Babergh project. Project outcomes and milestones have been recently refreshed so as to continue the momentum and better understanding of the local business community. The project team is exploring how we deploy our resources to overcome business barriers (whether real or perceived) and gain maximum value in the way we work collaboratively to effectively meet the needs of our businesses both now and in the future.

Recently a second 'Better for Business' evening was held successfully this time in Babergh, at the Delphi Centre in Sudbury.

Councillors and Officers have continued pro-actively engaging with businesses in our Districts, learning more about their business aspirations for growth, and where the districts can support or facilitate their next steps. This links closely into the Account Manager Trial work underway and with our engagement activities with the Chambers of Commerce.

4. New Anglia 'Space to Innovate' Enterprise Zone – Stowmarket Enterprise Park, (Gateway 14)

Several work strands including commissioned financial modelling and legal work are now coming together for reporting to the July Committee cycles.

Portfolio Holders and MSR's will shortly receive an update which will include:-

- Local Development Orders (LDOs) have been developed and are being progressed to support FEZ/EZ sites with a target approval date via the Planning process of late summer/early autumn 2016. Progression of the LDO for Mill Lane has utilised the separate FEZ DEFRA grant funding available, bringing efficiencies /savings to the EZ project.
- The inaugural Suffolk / Norfolk/ NALEP Enterprise Zone Development Group (EZDG) meeting took place at Diss on 28th April 2016. The EDDG will be a quarterly good practice and programme steering meeting in support of the full 'Space to Innovate' EZ.
- Leaders signed-off a letter to New Anglia LEP in early May 2016 reiterating commitment to the EZ as a precursor to the Memorandum of Understanding and legal agreement consideration to be reported to Members in July.
- The Council has created a multi service internal team of officers (EZ Delivery Team) to drive the project work, and this group meets regularly and includes Finance and Legal Team representatives to support and inform our view on the key project risks and develop ongoing monitoring arrangements.

5. Tourism Strategy

Following the Suffolk Growth PFH meeting in June 2016, and a follow up meeting of the Suffolk tourism Partnership where key outcome actions were discussed and agreed with Visit Suffolk, development of a roadmap is now underway to illustrate the links, interdependencies and work needed to deliver this strategy – from grass roots Local Tourism Action Groups up to regional, national and European tourism activity. The roadmap will allow the districts to focus their limited resource on the transitional shift towards a private sector-led tourism offer across Suffolk, which may vary place to place as the 'best fit' options emerge. A regional business-to business (Destination Management Organisation) support workshop is also being set up, co-ordinated by Visit Suffolk, for September 2016 available to Councillors, further details will be available in due course). This will showcase the variety of DMOs or equivalent in operation and aims to stimulate and enhance local activity and networking across our two districts.

Councillor Gerard Brewster