

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

From: Councillor Gerard Brewster Cabinet Member for Economy	Report Number: CMU18
To: Council	Date of meeting: 26 July 2018

TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMY

1. Overview of Portfolio

- 1.1 Increasing jobs, productivity and supporting our businesses to thrive and grow.
- 1.2 Attracting and encouraging inward investment.
- 1.3 Business friendly and collaborative strategies to support being 'Open for Business'.
- 1.4 Build relationships with local businesses.
- 1.5 Liaise with neighbouring authorities and other organisations such as New Anglia LEP, South East LEP and the Haven Gateway Partnership to support cross-border economic development and investment.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Council notes the report.

3. Key Activities/Issues Over the Past Six Months

- 3.1 'Visioning for Prosperity' work for Greater Stowmarket communities continues to progress. Cabinet approved the recommendations at its meeting of 4th June 2018 and the final documents were presented to the public at an open day at the Natwest Bank on 16th June 2018. Further presentations will be provided to Parish Councils between August and October. The team are currently working on the decision-making criteria and process for the shop front and accessibility grant funding schemes.
- 3.2 The Joint BMS Economic 'Open for Business' Strategy was endorsed by Cabinet in February 2018 and has now been published on the Councils' website (here: <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Economic-Development/OpenForBusiness-Strategy-with-links.pdf>).
- 3.3 The Open for Business Team have been successful in commissioning Nautilus Associates to develop the Phase 1 feasibility study to progress a Technology Hub for the Mid Suffolk area. Work towards this will commence immediately with an initial interim report anticipated in early Autumn.
- 3.4 The Open for Business Team, alongside the Chief Executive and Strategic Director, continue to work with Suffolk Chamber of Commerce to develop a Central Suffolk Chamber. Progress on this will be reported to Cabinet in August.
- 3.5 Planning permission for the Gateway14 Enterprise Zone site was granted on 20th June 2018.

- 3.6 Significant tourism and visitor economy work remains ongoing and a workshop with stakeholders was attended by over 30 people on 6th June 2018. Discussions with Suffolk Libraries continue with a view to them providing some visitor information services as happens elsewhere in the county.
- 3.7 The team are supporting two interns over the Summer (which started on 11th June 2018) and also a work experience placement in July. This provides vital work experience, mentoring, coaching and skills support to these young people and the organisation gains their ideas, insights and perspectives.

4. Future Key Activities

- 4.1 Progressing all of the above to the next stages.
- 4.2 Officers will also be continuing several collaborative and commercially sensitive lines of conversation with some significant businesses, attractions and developers. This increases the potential for high value inward investment and links to unlocking stalled sites and promotion of our Enterprise Zone/Food Enterprise Zone designated sites. This work also potentially helps to create jobs, increase the options for our micro and SME businesses, increase value of existing businesses and attract New Anglia LEP and central government investment, including vital infrastructure. Influence and networking is growing with businesses, utility sectors and other partner organisations, all focusing on sustainable growth, jobs and productivity.
- 4.3 Tourism strategy work streams will continue to progress.
- 4.4 The Open for Business Team will be progressing the Needham Lake Visitor Centre priority work stream by working up a feasibility specification for commissioning the next stage of this project.
- 4.5 Officers will continue to work with SCC and other stakeholders to progress Skills and Youth Employment Service strategy during the next period including direct discussions with West Suffolk College on occupational skills and with *the Mix* in Stowmarket that could result in a bid to the Council's Growth and Efficiency fund.
- 4.6 Officers will also be progressing regulatory policy/local standards reviews in the Gambling Act 2005 and Taxi/Private Hire Vehicle matters.
- 4.7 Continuing to support the inaugural 'Stars of Babergh & Mid Suffolk' Community and Business Awards preparations, nominations and event, to be held at St.Mary's Church, Hadleigh in October 2018.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The above demonstrates that the Council is continuing the momentum that has been achieved on key activities and collaborations, delivering against set priorities. As well as guiding officer activity, the Open for Business strategy also outlines the breadth of work underway and demonstrates the Council's impact. There is a lot of other supportive activity and 'business as usual' engagements underway in addition to the above report headlines. The next period will progress all of the above work further, including the key activities in section 4. As progress is made there will be difficult decisions and choices to be made, including on resource investment, and therefore a clear and transparent strategic approach is crucial to underpinning this.