

Business Growth and Increased Productivity Portfolio Report**1. Enterprise Zone - Stowmarket Enterprise Park Site**

Good progress is being made around the G14/Stowmarket Enterprise Zone/FEZ allocation. Discussions with New Anglia LEP are progressing well and agreement regarding the principles, funding, governance and operation of the enterprise zone are nearing conclusion, albeit the work involved between all partners and the local developers/landowners in delivering the site will remain ongoing. The LDO is still out to consultation and, further to comments made by SCC, will now be part of a phased approach to LDO delivery on the site.

2. Business Survey

The initial phase of our on-line business survey, towards growing our intelligence and awareness of our business, is due to finish by end-July 2016. This information will be multiple-use, and contribute towards our evidence-based policy development, account management trial and locality intelligence. The Council is carrying out activities to develop an up to date baseline of information, which will inform future trends/gaps and commissioning activity (e.g. ELNA Employment Lands Need Assessment phase 2 survey).

3. Tourism Roadmap

We are currently speaking to our TICs to increase our understanding of demand, value to local economy, developing attractions and offers – towards our stock-take review. This is one strand of the broader tourism strategy work underway, and a full mapping exercise of this activity (with key milestones and interdependencies) is currently in progress.

4. Event Support

The large public outdoor events that go on in Mid Suffolk are continuing to be well-supported by the multi-agency Safety Advisory Group as co-ordinated by the district licensing team. This supports successful, safe and popular events which contribute much to our tourism offer, celebration of our heritage and support of the local economy. The latest support has been on-site to help the Museum of East Anglian Life prepare for their upcoming Living History event.

5. Navigator Project

Ten secondary schools across Babergh and Mid Suffolk are now engaged with the project and feedback from them has been very positive. Two schools, Holbrook and Stradbroke have started pupil sessions prior to the end of this term with the rest commencing in the 2016 autumn term.

We have several large employers and National employability schemes engaged in the project already and on the 26 July are meeting to discuss business engagement to the project for local employers. The formal launch event for this will be the 19 Sept with invitations coming out hopefully in the next few weeks. Clare Free will put a “hold the date” notification in the Portfolio Holder calendars but would be grateful for direction of anyone else that should be invited.

6. Call for Sites and Planning Performance

Important progress has been reached in development of the new Joint Local Plan with a further 'Call for Sites' having gone out this month. The call is for land which may be suitable for a range of uses. For housing, sites should be of at least a quarter hectare or capable of accommodating five or more dwellings, although for self-build sites there is no minimum size threshold, so small individual plots can be identified. There is however some caution about the suitability of sites in very rural locations. As promised at the June meeting offers of sites will be acknowledged on receipt prior to consideration of suitability as a matter of courtesy.

I understand Members interest in planning performance and would therefore encourage everyone to attend the Member Briefing on the 15 August when this subject will be on the agenda.

Gerard Brewster