

## **BUSINESS GROWTH PORTFOLIO REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2016**

### **Tourism**

The Open for Business Team have visited the Tourism Information Centres in Lavenham, Stowmarket and Sudbury over the past few weeks to gain a greater understanding of the offer, profile (including demand) and value to local tourism and local economy. This work forms a key strand of Tourism project baselines and mapping for reporting to Councillors later in the year, in support of the transition from LA funding to private tourism sector led tourism offer (which is also in line with devolution agreement principles). On Friday November 18<sup>th</sup> there will be a Suffolk DMO (Destination Management Organisation) Workshop to support the next steps at a County and Regional level. Project work will remain ongoing between now and then. Tourism was also on the agenda of the recent meeting of (Suffolk) Growth Portfolio Holders in order to monitor the work currently being undertaken by 'Visit Suffolk' to support and grow this important industry across the County.

We are now at the part of the trial to pause and evaluate success and challenges going forward. Narrative case studies will be collated as part of this work. There have been some good outcomes and several key relationships formed with key sectors and business in the districts. Whilst some of this work is slow burning, we are deploying the right level resource at key points to ensure that elements requiring District support or networking are effective, timely and adding value. Pro-active visits to businesses in the district continue with usually myself and an Officer meeting with Business Management in order to understand the business better and to provide advice and support where possible and appropriate.

### **Business Survey**

We have now completed the main business survey tranche and received more than 400 responses. The survey will remain active, with information analysed to evidentially influence policy, locality intelligence and service development work.

### **Enterprise Zones/Food enterprise Zones**

Officers are working with the newly established New Anglia EZ Support Team to finalise site documentation, review investment opportunities and initial infrastructure development. The first phase LDO (Local Development Order) is due to be considered by Planning Referrals Committee on the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016

### **Skills**

Mygo Phase 2 is now live as is the IcanBeA website, [www.icanbea.org.uk](http://www.icanbea.org.uk); the platform is still building but is well worth viewing. Discussions have been had with

People Plus and SCC Skills Team to ensure that the Stowmarket Mygo offer at the Mix is maximising its impact up until the end of the contract and have begun the conversation around the data needed to seek further Councillor input into what happens after December 2016.

The launch of the Navigator Schools Project will be held on the 26<sup>th</sup> September at Suffolk Food Hall. Council Leaders have been discussing devolution of skills responsibilities and budgets at regional level, with devolution of the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE) in Norfolk and Suffolk having taken place from August 2016.

The Suffolk Skills Show is back for its third year at Trinity Park, Ipswich on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October. Further information on the event is being sent to all schools, colleges and influencers over the coming weeks and BMSDC will be represented on the Board and at the event. This is positively the largest Skills Event in Suffolk with a great number of Employers present showcasing their businesses and speaking with the several thousand students from across Suffolk who will be attending.

**Councillor Gerard Brewster**  
**Business Growth and Increased Productivity Portfolio Holder**