

Business Growth and Increased Productivity Portfolio Report**1. Joint District Business Survey**

Information received from around 400 responses has been analysed, this will be shared broadly and will provide evidence to inform some actions going forward. The next step will be to link up conversations around Open for Business and Public Access. That information will also feed into the ELSA (Employment Land Survey Assessment) which will inform the Economic Development Plan and Joint Local Plan updates. Updates on the ED Plan and Tourism will be going to the Theme Board in November.

2. Tourism

Work on Tourism is ongoing and an update/steer report is being prepared for SLT and Administration Meetings in November. This will include Destination Research commissioned data and the Economy Team is drilling down further to specific Market Towns and key visitor destinations (value of tourism to the local economy). That data and trend analysis will be multi-purpose feeding into the ED Strategy and Local Plan and Market Town work. The Tourism Action Group development work remains ongoing. Tourism in our two districts has great potential for growth and given the current situation around Brexit, Visitor Destinations and 'staycations' have the potential of boosting the local economy significantly.

3. Skills and Education Updates

ICanBeA - icanbea.org.uk - Having been live since August the ICanBeA platform was officially launched on Friday 14 October. While there are many businesses currently engaged with the site which is free to use, there are still a number of business gaps in the Mid Suffolk and Babergh areas on the map and it would be good to encourage more local businesses to join up. The platform offers young people the ability to research the employment market on line and learn more about what interests them and what they might aspire to do in their future working life. If anyone has a contact with businesses who might be interested in registering on the site, please contact Clare Free in the Economy Team, she will be able to advise.

Connect ED Navigator – As referred to in my last PH Report the Navigator Schools Project was officially launched on 26 September. An inspiring occasion attended by representatives of schools including parents and young people, business and our local authorities, the event was hosted by Connect ED. Mid Suffolk and Babergh have recognised the need to work with Partners and Business in our schools to help students raise aspirations and encourage them to begin to plan for their future at an earlier age. This year our partner, Connect Ed together with interested businesses will be working with students from year 9.

Mygo in Stowmarket – The main Mygo contract started in Ipswich in November 2014 with the Mid Suffolk offer launching in August 2015. During that time 456 customers have been registered from the Mid Suffolk District, of these only 126 were referred by JCP (Job Centre Plus), 71 were in education or employment which demonstrates that the other 259 young people were not claiming out of work benefits, or in education or employment. Out of the 456, 304 (67%) came directly through the Stowmarket area.

It is necessary to be cautious about statistics as we are unable to get really clear outcome data as the method of capturing these have changed through the lifetime of the service and have thrown up some anomalies. However, the Stowmarket service has achieved a higher level of sustainment and support for our young people.

We do know that a sustained progression is measured as 6 months in work or training following attachment to the service and of the customers who have been attached to Stowmarket long enough to measure this outcome, 32.8% have achieved it, this is well in excess of the Ipswich Centre figure of approximately 17%.

Certainly the level of those young people accessing the service is a clear indicator that it offers something that although not previously available is very welcome and achieves positive outcomes. **The Mid Suffolk contract with the service ends in December 2016.** Although there will still be delivery from the Mix we are currently working with Mygo and Suffolk County Council to fully understand what that will look like; this will contribute to the possible need for further input by Members.

Gerard Brewster