

**Committee:** Council

**Date:**

**Title:** Report from the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development

21 February 2019

**Report Author:** Councillor Howard Ryles, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development

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## Summary

- 1 This report provides an update on all the ongoing key economic development activities.

## Recommendations

2. That Council note the Economic Development update and comment as considered appropriate.

## Financial Implications

3. Included in the report below.

## Background Papers

4. No background papers.

## Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	N/a
Community Safety	N/a
Equalities	N/a
Health and Safety	N/a
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/a
Sustainability	N/a
Ward-specific impacts	All
Workforce/Workplace	N/a

## Situation

6. The economic development update is provided below under the key project headings:

7. Saffron Walden Business Improvement District

- Saffron Walden BID Limited (limited by guarantee) has appointed a Board of Directors
- To date of the £94k per annum total BID levy being collected by the Council's Business Rate Team on behalf of the BID 94% has been collected leaving £6k still to be collected. The businesses that have not yet paid their levy bill have had numerous formal and informal requests to pay. In consultation with the BID, legal proceedings will now be undertaken to collect as much of the remaining £6k as possible.
- The initial marketing campaign delivered by the BID in the first month was considered very successful with the initial feedback being:

*Vintage Lodge's Buses*

The aim was to bring people into the town from Audley End with 1,250 people using the buses over five Saturdays. Most were visitors to the Audley End Miniature Railway including some from Norwich, Leicester, Chelmsford, London and Kent.

*Shopping prize draw*

The aim of the shopping prize draw was to encourage shopping locally. 55 independent businesses took part and there were 1,407 shopping prize draw entries from visitors and residents.

*Fairy and Elf Hunt & #saffronwaldenelfieselfie*

This competition was to encourage families to explore the town by looking for a hand-made Fairy or Elf in a shop window. 120 competition forms were returned. People who entered came from Jersey, London and Cambridge, with lots from Saffron Walden. General feedback was that it was a fun thing to do and got people moving around town.

8. Superfast Broadband

- Superfast Essex is awaiting confirmation that the Gigaclear delivery of Phase 3 of superfast broadband in Uttlesford will be completed by July 2020. Once this is in place Superfast Essex will review and suggest amendments to the £500k funding agreement it has with the Council.
- Gigaclear contractors are laying the fibre in various locations across the district. This will cause some short term disruption to these locations. Gigaclear have people and plans in place to communicate in advance and be available to respond to any issues as and when they arise.

## 9. Digital Innovation Zone Strategy

- The Essex-Herts Digital Innovation Zone (DIZ)'s "local strategy to secure future prosperity and health" has been approved by the Council. One of the outputs of the strategy will be to submit a bid for one of the Governments 5<sup>th</sup> Generation Rural Mobile Testbed Trials.
- The Economic Development Team is working with the DIZ to submit a Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) Proposal to the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS). The proposal would implement an infrastructure investment programme that delivers full-fibre broadband connections to all GP practices in the DIZ area under. The proposal is seeking full funding of £3.6million from the DCMS LFFN Challenge Fund.

## 10. Uttlesford Business Awards

- The 2019 Business Awards have been launched with local publicity encouraging businesses to enter. More information and an application form is available at [www.uttlesfordbusinessawards.co.uk](http://www.uttlesfordbusinessawards.co.uk)

## 11. Business Support Guide

- A revised corporate Business Support Booklet has been produced to be included with all the business rate invoices being issued in early March to approximately 3,000 businesses. The guide will also be utilized in the businesses exhibitions attended during the year by the Economic Development Team, including the BEST Business Show in February.

## 12. Car Parking

- The procurement to replace the existing ticket machines is underway with meetings being held with potential suppliers and the North Essex Parking Partnership to gain an in-depth understanding of the current technology available.
- St Johns Road, Stansted Mountfitchet and Caton's Lane/Little Walden Road, Saffron Walden. The Economic Development Team is working with the local residents and stakeholders to find solutions to the parking issues in these two locations.

## 13. Garden Communities

- Workshop events were held in December and a 3<sup>rd</sup> to be held in February to support the delivery of economic development plans for the three garden communities.

## 14. Tourism

- A cross border group has been established initially incorporating this Council and East Herts, Harlow and Epping Forest Councils. The collaboration will

seek to increase the opportunities to retain and build spend in the area, integrate offers, build packages, cross-promote and share capacity.

- It is anticipated that the size of the partnership will unlock bigger rewards for joint bids for infrastructure funding to expand area-wide projects like paths and cycle routes, green tourism and partnerships with major players such as Greater Anglia and London Stansted.

#### 15. Future High Street Fund

- The Government has launched this fund with £675 million, to help more high streets to adapt and meet changing expectations. There will be two rounds of applications. The deadline for the Expressions of Interest for the first round is 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019. Planning and Economic Development officers are meeting with ECC officers in early February to discuss a potential Uttlesford application.