



Council 30 June 2014

CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

Report by Cllr Alaric Pugh Economic Growth Portfolio

Portfolio includes:

- Economic Development
- Town Centre Management
- Markets (Strategy)
- Tourism (Strategy)
- Car Parking Strategy
- Transport

1. Economic Development and Growth

1.1 West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group

1.1.1 The second meeting of the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering group took place on 31 March 2014. The Group received a presentation from Mr Jonathan Cook, Director of SQW, on the preliminary finding of the research study they are undertaking on behalf of West Suffolk; which is looking into the business support offer in West Suffolk and the need for additional innovation/incubation space. Other items discussed were the relationship between Planning and Economic Development, infrastructure implications upon economic development and an update on the inward investment pack for West Suffolk. The Group continues to monitor progress against the Six Point Plan.

1.3 Business Engagement

1.3.1 The programme of leafleting individual businesses on our main industrial parks, with information on the availability of certain grant funds and other business support initiatives, continues. This is now beginning to lead to a small number of "follow up" requests from local Businesses that Officers in the team are dealing with.

1.3.2 The West Suffolk Business Forum continues to develop and held its second meeting on 15 May 2014. Representatives from both LEAs (New Anglia and Greater Cambridge – Greater Peterborough) attended and updated the Forum on the progress of their respective Strategic Economic Plans (SEPs) and their associated bids for funding from Government.

1.3.3 The New Anglia LEP is progressing with its plans to recruit a number of Growth Advisors to staff its Growth Hub and Officers from the ED&G team will continue to liaise with the LEP to ensure that this extra resource adds value to businesses in West Suffolk and integrates with the key objectives of the West Suffolk Six Point Plan for jobs and Growth. It is expected that Growth Hub will commence operation in the near future.

1.3.4 Key business opportunities/requests for support also continue to be dealt with on a 1-2-1 basis, primarily by the Principal Growth Officers, as and when they arise

1.4 Haverhill Masterplan

1.4.1 I am very pleased to have taken up a role as one of the Council's two elected representatives on the ONE Haverhill Board. This appointment is timely, since board members have started to carry out preparatory work to help develop the Haverhill Masterplan. I am particularly delighted to be the link member of the board for this master planning process, which will of course feed into the Haverhill Area Working Party for decision making.

1.5 Strategic Tourism

1.5.1 The Economic Development and Growth team continue to work with Visit Suffolk to take a lead on strategic tourism. The borough council has now been joined by partners 'Our Bury St Edmunds' on the Visit Suffolk Marketing Panel Board.

1.5.2 Visit Suffolk's off peak season campaign, 'Take me to Suffolk', was launched in January 2014 and ran until the end of April 2014. This campaign was supported by a robust content and distribution strategy, social media activity and PR. A mixture of paid advertising and organic messages were used to draw in social media users as well as creating a series of articles on a different topic every week.

1.5.3 A new head of PR has been commissioned by Visit Suffolk. New storylines have been created for each monthly pitch to long-lead 'glossy magazines' and press.

1.5.4 Visit Suffolk started e-trade newsletters in February 2014, with supplementary content available on the business section of visitsuffolk.com. The bi-monthly e-newsletters are sent to 1100 tourism businesses.

1.5.5 The Women's Tour took place in May (with the finish line on Angel Hill in Bury St Edmunds) and was supported via social media, PR and online. A dedicated video was produced to promote Suffolk as a county for cyclists.

1.6 Market Development

1.6.1 Love Your Local Markets events took place in Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and Newmarket. The focus of the Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill events were the Youth Markets which were well supported by West Suffolk College and Castle Manor Business College. The feedback from both was excellent and new links have been established for future events. The Newmarket event focused on family entertainment and tied in the Guineas Shopping Centre's 40th anniversary. There were 15 extra craft stalls, children's fairground, activities and competitions.

- 1.6.2 Working together with the East Anglian Daily Times, an 8 page supplement was produced highlighting all the markets in West Suffolk, their traders and events. The supplement was well received by the stallholders some of which paid to have extra advertising space. All local papers supported LYLM campaign with editorial before and after the events. A monthly advert has been placed in 'Market Trader' to encourage new stallholders and offering incentives to attend more than one market in West Suffolk. The 'trade for a tenner' promotion has worked well particularly in Haverhill where we have 4 stallholders still carrying on after their promotional time has ended.
- 1.6.3 Applications for stallholders for the Fayre have now closed and there is a waiting list of over 200 traders. Plans are going well for the opening evening with 4 schools wanting to take part in a parade.

2. *Parking Services*

- 2.1 New parking restrictions were introduced in two new areas in April – Lawson Place in Moreton Hall and at Southgate Community Hall car parks. These restrictions were introduced to help manage demand in these busy locations but without the need to introduce charged parking.
- 2.2 Following extensive consultation by Suffolk County Council, a new resident parking zone in Bury St Edmunds was introduced in May. This area covers Hospital Rd, Out Westgate and Ayre Close. Our front line team issued some 80 advisory notices in the first week of the scheme to cars that were in contravention of the new regulations. Known as Zone M, this is the thirteenth resident parking zone that we manage and enforce in the town.
- 2.3 In May, West Suffolk Parking Services took back responsibility for the small 20 space car park in Parkway Surface car park which had previously been leased to the owners of the Parkway Cineplex. The return of this area to short stay charging will increase the number of available short stay spaces close to the town centre giving greater choice to visitors at peak demand periods.
- 2.4 Parking Services have supported some major town centre events in the last quarter including The Bury Festival and Tour of Britain Cycle Race.
- 2.5 We have received a report on the feasibility and best practice for 'pay on exit' schemes. The first meetings with stakeholders are being arranged to introduce the material prior to considering the appropriate next steps.