



**Report To:** Economic Development Portfolio Holder  
**Lead Officer:** Director for Planning and New Communities/  
Director Health and Environmental Services

11 June 2015

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## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE AND FUTURE SERVICE DELIVERY**

### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of the paper is to provide and update on Economic Development Service delivery in the past six months and to note future planned economic activity for the 2015/16 service period.
2. This is not a key decision but is brought to the Portfolio holder meeting for information.

### **Recommendations**

3. It is recommended that the Portfolio holder:
  - (a) notes progress to date on economic development activity; and
  - (b) endorses the proposed activity planned for the 2015/16 service period.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

4. The report seeks to bring attention to the economic activity achieved and future activities as agreed in the Portfolio holder meeting of December 2013, the Economic Strategy (2010 - 2015) and relevant service plans.

### **Background: Progress to Date**

#### **Strategic Partnerships**

5. The Council has continued to participate in delivering economic development benefits through partnership working with strategic partners such as the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership (GC\_GPEP) and the London Stansted Cambridge Consortium (LSCC).
6. As noted in the 10 December 2014 Economic Development Portfolio holder report, the Council participated in the LEP Growth Deal Round 2 bid submitted in November 2014. Economic benefits, relevant to the District, will be realised across a number of programmes delivering housing, roads and skills. In addition, the Council has been supportive to TWI, located on Granta Park Business Park, in the delivery of a major £60m growth programme, following an award by the Regional Growth Fund, accessed through the LEP. This involved Council support for the funding bid as well as planning facilitation to deliver the company's new headquarters and training academy.
7. In respect of the LSCC, work on the Life Sciences sector and on Strategic Infrastructure, including lobbying for investment in the West Anglia rail route; and participation in regular Board meetings continues.

## **Business Support**

8. SCDC executed a suite of Business Support measures aimed to help business in District. The programme was customer-focussed and supported a range of businesses in various economic sectors from pubs to the High Tech Sectors.

### ***Business Support Workshops and Webinars***

9. From January 2015 – April 2015, SCDC commissioned Exemplas to continue running the sought after workshops that the Council has delivered since the closure of Business Link in 2010. These have been successfully delivered, including a still accessible webinar format for two sessions.
10. There have been around 8 – 10 businesses participating in the workshops/webinar business service. The uptake has been good and this may be due to the right needs of businesses being met as well as the marketing by SCDC, Exemplas and, the work with our partners (e.g. FSB, LEP, Chambers of Commerce) to help promote the workshops. Positive feedback has been received from delegates about the programme. This has also achieved significant results for SCDC in terms of profile and reputation through the media interview and case studies, involving the Portfolio holder.
11. Tangible results to businesses have contributed to the success of the programme. An example of this is a business that has grown to employ 15 people following the SCDC business workshop programme use. (Further statistics of industry sectors are provided in Appendix 1). Businesses who have attended the workshops have also been signing up for the business register, to receive the bi-monthly newsletter.
12. On 10 June 2015, it is proposed to hold a workshop aimed at Community pubs providing support on; legislation, digital connectivity and associated funding and business rates. The landlord of the Plough, Shepreth will share his own experience of reinvigorating a village pub, supported by the Council, Pub is the Hub and the Plunkett Foundation.

### ***Support to the Rural Economy***

13. A successful, final pilot village area workshop was delivered in Watebeach in January 2015, to the satisfaction of the local member. Activity has commenced in Gamlingay building on the Neighbourhood Plan process, of which economic development is a core element and proposed chapter. (Refer to paragraph 28 for future planned activity). This links to Planning and New Communities Service Plan focus on economic strategies of new settlements and villages in the District.
14. The Community Transport 'BikeBus' pilot has been extended to the end of October with funding from the SCDC Communities & Partnerships team budget. This was agreed to give the service longer to consolidate ridership over the full length of the summer. Ridership has peaked at 31 individuals but still needs to rise if the service is to become sustainable. To improve uptake a concerted marketing campaign has been launched.

### ***Improved Broadband and digital connectivity***

15. The Council has been participating in the 'Connecting Cambridgeshire' programme set up in 2011 to ensure access to superfast broadband for at least 90% of homes and businesses and better broadband for most premises across Cambridgeshire and

Peterborough. Businesses benefitted from support via the Destination Digital element of the programme in the form of face to face business advice as well as grants to invest in digital technology, as reported in December 2014. This support part of the programme is now completed. Hardware access via capital grants have enabled 61 (up from 36 reported in December 2014) South Cambridgeshire businesses to be connected to broadband.

### **Key Account Management (KAM)**

16. Unrolling a Key Account Management programme to deliver effective customer-oriented co-ordination and relationship management with strategic businesses and stakeholders by a single point of contact within SCDC is progressing well. Key Account Managers, to the pilot programme, have been identified and briefed, with two training sessions taking place in February 2015. Systems are being developed using 'SharePoint' as a record for each of the key accounts (business/strategic organisation). Key Account Managers received one-to-one training sessions on these data system, which was completed in May 2015.

### **SCDC Business Hub**

17. South Cambridgeshire's Environmental Health & Licensing (EH&L) service, the County Council's Trading Standards and more recently Cambs Fire Service have been working on a proposal to develop a Business Hub to deliver more joined up and improved services that provide better outcomes for economic growth. The 'Business Hub' model is designed to become a self-financing commercial unit that provides businesses with access to quality advice/support services that are streamlined and efficient.
18. Based on the existing Trading Standards Primary Authority partnerships work, it is proposed to develop this as a commercial model that seeks to provide services to businesses on a cost recovery and income generation basis dependant on the nature of the specific service offered. The outline business case setting out a number of key objectives is currently going through the respective governance process for each of the partner agencies including Environmental Health & Licensing, Trading Standards and Cambridgeshire Fire Service. Subject to agreement it is hoped that the initial phase will be able to start operating during summer 2015 initially on a 12 month trial with an ambition to add other regulatory and business support services wherever possible. In particular opportunities may exist to offer planning advice and support to provide HR and employment law advice.

### **Tourism**

19. "Visit Cambridge and Beyond", the official tourism service for Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire and the surrounding area, currently led by Cambridge City Council will be transforming into a Destination Management Organisation (DMO). This will be a public/private partnership aimed at securing a stable model able to maximise the benefits of business and leisure tourism to the area. The Council has been involved in these plans and a separate paper has been put forward at this meeting for further information and discussion.

### **Growth Areas and New Settlements**

20. In Cambourne, meetings have taken place with the developer about the possibility of delivering affordable business space as part of the development of the village. A planning application is anticipated in the near future.

21. The Northstowe Economic Strategy, submitted as Part of the Phase 2 planning application, will be linked with devising a new Town Centre strategy.

### **Considerations: Future Activity**

#### **Strategic Partnerships**

22. A proposed Senior Officer led workshop to determine the Strategic Priorities of the LEP for both capital and revenue (EU funding) is due to take place later in June 2015. This will maximise economic benefits and aid in determining any future bids for any potential Growth Deal funding and European Structural Funding (ESIF).
23. The Council is also actively engaged with the LEP on developing their Business Support Hub (branded 'Inspire2Grow'), aimed at supporting businesses in the LEP geography. Pilots have taken place in two LEP areas and the City and South Cambridgeshire element is expected to start activity in the coming months.
24. Early discussions with the Growth Hub are taking place to establish links between the regulatory arm of the Business Hub and Inspire2Grow. There is an aspiration that ERDF funding may become available for a project to deliver regulatory and business advice to SME's, although this is still in the very early stages of development.
25. The LSCC hosts its annual conference on 16 June 2015, focussing on the area as a significant, global innovation corridor. LSCC is also developing the International Marketing for the Life Sciences sector in tandem with the LEP International proposals, involving Cambridge Network. The Council is part of these discussions and will continue to engage with both the LEP and the LSCC through the various board meetings, Senior-, and Officer meetings, as appropriate.

#### **Business Support**

26. The Business Support Workshops and Webinars now completed, the Council has begun to consider future delivery. In the spirit of the City Deal and a partnership working approach, a business support programme across adjoining Local Authority areas is being developed for consideration, with a proposed commencement in the Autumn of 2015. Progress will be reported at the relevant future Portfolio holder meeting.
27. The delivery of broadband and digital connectivity is continuing in and South Cambridgeshire and the County. Currently around 71,000 homes and businesses have been enabled of the target of 90,000. In recognition that certain areas remain with less than optimal coverage, a Superfast Extension Programme is underway as are discussions to consider options for areas not optimised. In respect of the Destination Digital and capital access grants, this programme has been extended to areas beyond the City and South Cambridgeshire to the wider County, in agreement with DCMS (Department of Culture Media and Sport).
28. The locality work in Gamlingay has commenced with consideration of a planning application, affecting employment, by officers as well as consideration and attendance of a Neighbourhood Plan parish meeting. This approach links to the Planning and New Communities Service Plan focus on economic strategies of new settlements and villages in the District. Two workshops are planned in the next 6 months to align with these plans. This work will also involve the Planning Policy and

Communities & Partnerships teams. Such village workshop programmes will also be held in Histon & Impington and Sawston Parishes.

29. A programme of actions to continue the roll out of the Key Account Management Programme is underway. This includes measures to review and adjust implementation and engage with the identified Key Accounts/Strategic Partners. Further training and evaluation is due in the next quarter and progress will be updated at a future meeting. Following a successful pilot the programme will be implemented across the Council corporately.

### **Growth Areas and New Settlements**

30. A new Town Centre strategy for Northstowe will be developed with the Homes and Communities Agency, Gallaghers and the Council, which will link with the Economic Strategy to encourage employment, develop the retail offer and consider links to education and skills, coupled to ensuring that infrastructure such as broadband is in place. A successful funding bid of £143k to CLG (Department of Communities and Local Government) Infrastructure Programme, will realise c. £60k spend on development of the Town Centre and c. £33,000 on the implementation of the economic strategy to accelerate delivery of these key objectives. Action plans for the accompanying activities will be brought to relevant future meetings.

### **Developing an Economic Plan of Action/Update of the Economic Strategy**

31. The current strategy is relevant for the period 2010 – 2015. Consideration of updating this to include changed delivery structures (e.g. City Deal, shared services etc.) is under consideration. This will seek to evaluate performance, underpin the measures agreed by the Portfolio holder in 2013, with external consultation and set an achievable, plan of action for the next 3-5 years. A cost of £10,000 is to be expected and budgeted for.

### **Options**

32. The measures are within the framework approved by the Portfolio holder in December 2013. An alternative option of updating the economic strategy to form an economic plan for the next 3-5 years is proposed.

### **Implications**

33. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

### ***Financial***

34. The Economic Development Budget has a budget of £30,600 for business support and related activity. The tourism budget, currently £25,000 is due to decrease to £17,500 in 2016/17 and then further to between £8,000 - £12,000 p.a. (refer to the separate paper on this item). A cost of c. £10,000 is anticipated in the review and development of a new economic plan, which could be achieved through the mentioned savings in the economic development budget.

### **Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)**

35. No formal consultation has taken place.

## **Effect on Strategic Aims**

36. Economic Development has a central place within the Council's Vision that says, 'Our District will demonstrate impressive and sustainable economic growth'. One of the Corporate Plan's 12 objectives is to 'Make the district an even more attractive place to do business'.

## **Background Papers**

Where [the Local Authorities \(Executive Arrangements\) \(Meetings and Access to Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: -

(a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council; (b) on the Council's website; and (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

### **Economic Development Strategy (2010 – 2015)**

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Economic%20Development%20Strategy.pdf>

**Planning and Economic Development Portfolio holder Meetings, 11 December 2013, 24 July, 2013 and 10 December 2014.**

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**Industry Sector and Business Stage**

