

**CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL – 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2009**

Agenda Item 9(i)

**CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Nigel Harley**

**CABINET PORTFOLIO: Enterprise & Culture**

Portfolio covers:-

- District growth and infrastructure (inc. Transport Strategy)
- Economic Development Strategy
- Cultural Strategy
- Built Environment (planning policy)
- Business Support
- Tourism

**REPORT COVERS ACTIVITY DURING PERIOD COMMENCING 7<sup>th</sup> April 2009 AND ENDING 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2009**

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

1. The Small Business Rate Relief awarded on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 has resulted in a saving to local businesses of £360k per annum
2. A new Regeneration and Economic Development Officer starts work on 8<sup>th</sup> June, employed on a permanent basis. She will monitor the District's performance against the new Economic Development Strategy and also organize the EDTP Board.
3. 20 key economic indicators have been established and will be monitored on a monthly basis.
4. There has been positive support for the merger between Braintree College and the Colchester Institute. Should the merger be approved by the Secretary of State it will be effective from January 2010.
5. Business Development Services using the grant of £95k received from the Performance Reward Grant, have reported a good take up in the support services that they are able to offer.

## **PLANNING**

1. The average number of planning applications received up to April is 160, down on last year but there has been an increase in the months of April and May.
2. Since the introduction of the new fees and regulation at the beginning of April there has been an overall increase in the number of land charge searches (266 in April, 295 in May). The number of full local authority searches has also increased (115 in April, 183 in May).

3. The LDF continues to consider representations received during consultations on the Core Strategy relating to proposed growth locations. The following sites have been recommended by the Panel;
  - Land west of Panfield Lane, Braintree
  - Land west of the A131, Great Notley
  - Land South West of Witham off Hatfield Road (600 dwellings)
4. The Panel objected to the arbitrary changes proposed by the Secretary of State to increase the provision for gypsies and travellers in the Braintree District and instructed officers accordingly.
5. Rivenhall Airfield The Secretary of State has called in the application to develop a waste management facility and representations will be made by BDC. Arrangements for a public enquiry are now being made by the Planning Inspectorate.

## **CULTURE**

1. The Culture and Leisure Partnership Board have begun their work on delivering a new strategy for delivering cultural and leisure services in the District. The strategy includes a member task and finish group looking at the provision of leisure services and a sub group looking at the views of the community on a number of objectives and activities linked to the District's ambitions.
2. A new pricing structure has been introduced across Braintree District Museum and the Warner Textile archive where an admission ticket provides entry to either museum for unlimited visits within a month.
3. A project group tasked with securing the long-term future of the Warners Archive has been established with two encouraging meetings to date. Given the cultural significance of the archive it is vital to secure its future in a viable way, while allowing access to the public in some way.
4. The Town Hall Centre has seen the continued take up of the rented meeting space. This provides important revenue and offers local groups and organizations space in town centre locations. Plans continue to be developed to help maximize the potential of this key site and ensure its long-term viability.

**FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT CAN BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING:**

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