

**CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL – 20<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2009**

Agenda Item 8(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 21<sup>ST</sup> JULY AND ENDING 9<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2009**

**TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT**

BDC proceeds with the OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union) process. The submission of the Outline Solutions from the short-list of prospective development partners is due on the 11<sup>th</sup> September. The Council proceeds with the acquisition of 19/21 Bocking End for the purpose of relocating the Victoria Street Community Association.

The Council sets aside appropriate funds for the Braintree Town Centre Scheme.

The council is also looking at further options with the Witham Town Centre project as owners of the Newland Shopping Centre, Glanmore investments Limited, is in breach of its lending covenants and therefore is unable to progress matters until they have resolved these issues with their lenders.

With regard to the land East of the High Street, Halstead, eight offers have been received for the site. The consortium of vendors has selected a short list of four bidders and asked them to submit their best and final bids by 20<sup>th</sup> September and answer a number of questions to qualify their bids.

A report is due to go to Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> October providing members with an update and certain recommendations as above.

**THE APPOINTMENT OF A TOWN CENTRE MANAGER**

At the Cabinet meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> September approval was given for the appointment of a Town Centre Manager whose principal role will be one of assisting and promoting the District's three towns. The appointment will be for one year and will be underwritten by LAGBI funding. Monitoring of results will be undertaken by the Economic Development and Transport Board

**COORDINATING BUSINESS SUPPORT WITH BDS AND BUSINESS LINK**

At a recent meeting with BDC and Business Link, we discussed areas where they could assist Business Development Services provide a more complete support to small businesses, in these difficult times. The contribution made by Business Link in holding seminars such as the recent one at Earls Colne Business Park, was noted and future events may be held.

## **PREPARATION OF THE RIVENHALL AIRFIELD APPEAL**

Work continues with building the Authority's case against ECC's approval of the waste plant development at Rivenhall. The public enquiry will begin towards the end of this month and witnesses from BDC and certain parishes will be giving evidence to the Inspector.

## **WARNER TEXTILE ARCHIVE**

It is important to secure the long term future of the Warner Textile Archive due to its importance both locally and nationally and the enormous amount of work undertaken in 2005 to bring the Archive back to Braintree and create a home for it at Warners Mill.

To this end, the council along with the Braintree Museum Trust have been looking into options to ensure that the Archive is kept open to the public in the longer term.

Approaches have been made to a number of organisations including the Victoria and Albert Museum who have a significant collection of Warner textiles themselves.

Ipswich and Colchester who run a combined museum service across the two councils have expressed a particularly strong interest in forming a partnership with Braintree to maintain and display the archive for the foreseeable future.

## **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

The LDF Panel has completed its review and recommendations of growth locations for both housing and employment land. These will now be incorporated in the core strategy for submission for independent review in 2010. Meanwhile further supplementary evidence needs to be gathered and examined.

The Panel has decided that work on the Allocations Document will commence early in 2010, and not to await the Inspector's report on the viability of the core strategy.

## **ECONOMY & INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMME BOARD**

The EIPB has a number of projects which are ongoing and of which the most important are:

- \* Town Centre Regeneration
- \* Use of Growth Area Funding
- \* Modern Apprenticeships; development of a programme to raise skill levels in the District
- \* Identify a location for a new Business & Enterprise Park in Braintree
- \* Supporting (new) businesses through the recession

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

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