

Economic Development Team Update

January 25th 2018

1. COASTAL COMMUNITY TEAMS

1.1 Maldon and Blackwater Estuary CCT

- A promotional leaflet similar to that produced by the River Crouch CCT is being created by a working party to promote this area as a visitor destination and is expected to be ready by Spring 2018.
- The Historic Vessels Apprenticeship programme to train 12 apprentices per year has been further developed and has now applied for Heritage Lottery Fund support. Maldon District Council supplied a letter of support for this application in early December. Additional funding sources will be considered for aspects of the project.

1.2 River Crouch CCT

- The Middle Crouch ferry crossing (Fambridge crossing) was discussed on 6 December. A decision has been made to apply for RDPE funding rather than LEADER funding as a larger grant is required than the maximum available under LEADER. Since the RDPE fund is focussed on rural tourism infrastructure, it has been decided not to focus on the commuter element of the project's business model. That decision also resolved the potential issue of requiring a change in planning permission for the parking lot to allow earlier and later parking for commuters.
- The Lower Crouch crossing from Burnham-on-Crouch to Wallasea Island was to have applied for CCF funding. Since the expected match funding has not materialised due to a change in the pontoon to be used in Burnham-on-Crouch, it has been decided to break the project into its four component parts and fund each separately, applying for relevant grant support. The visitor centre on Wallasea Island will now be funded through a Heritage Lottery Fund application and the pontoon on Wallasea Island will be funded through a separate RSPB grant application. The Town pontoon in Burnham-on-Crouch will be utilized appropriately upgraded for disabled access. Existing CCF funding already exists for part of this upgrade, but additional funding will be required to complete the full upgrade. The ferry purchase and operation will need a separate funding application once the other components of the project are in place.

2. BRADWELL LEGACY PARTNERSHIP

- A Bradwell Legacy Partnership meeting was held on 23 November at Bradwell Marina.
- An application for a ferry from Bradwell Marina to Mersea Island has been submitted to the MMO. There is also interest in extending the service to Tollesbury.
- The Maldon District Enterprise Centre feasibility study bid to Magnox was successful and received funding of £60k plus £10k match funding provided by ECC. The tender process was launched on 19 December 2017 with applications to close on 26 January 2018.
- Magnox informed that the Bradwell A plant will go into C&M in November 2018, but applications for funding of transformative projects will still be considered for 1-3 years.

3. BUSINESS SUPPORT

3.1 BEST Growth Hub

ED continues to work closely with the BEST Growth Hub that is currently offering a programme of workshops to SMEs throughout January and will be hosting a Business Show at Hylands House, Chelmsford on 8 February 2018. The ED team have referred 8 companies to the BEST Growth Hub for support and signposting to funding opportunities since October 2017.

4. BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

4.1 Causeway Business Forum

A breakfast meeting of the Causeway Business Forum was held at the Oak House on 23 November 2017 from 08h00 to 09h30 to further discuss the formation of a Causeway Business Forum. The decision to establish a formal Causeway Business Forum was confirmed and a lunch meeting was scheduled for Thursday 18 January 2018 to discuss Terms of Reference for the new grouping and elect a new chairman. This meeting will be directed by local businesses and Maldon District Council will only be present as observers and to provide administrative support. The possible creation of a Business Improvement District will not be an item for consideration at present while the core group of supporting businesses is solidifying.

4.2 Burnham-on-Crouch Chamber of Commerce

Burnham-on-Crouch Chamber of Commerce prioritised the Small Business Saturday Bus Tour as their last event, promoting it heavily to businesses to engage, as well as getting involved in the mentoring on the bus, having a stand, and subscribing to the promotional offers.

Their next event is planned for 31 January 2018 with the theme of Apprenticeships. Venue and the final list of speakers will be confirmed shortly.

4.3 Small Business Saturday

The Small Business Saturday bus tour took place between 10am and 2pm on Thursday 16 November 2017, in the Butt Lane Car Park, Maldon. Maldon District was chosen as one of the 25 towns/cities visited across the UK which also included places such as Edinburgh, York, Brighton and Belfast. The purpose of this national campaign is to promote shopping local for goods and services.

A number of businesses from the Maldon District exhibited at the event and there was the opportunity for local businesses to access free one to one business support on the bus, again some of Maldon District's businesses were providing this support. Secret Hamper, also a Maldon District based business was highlighted as one of the top 100 businesses identified by the national campaign. The Economic Development Team also collated from Maldon District businesses a number of promotional discounts and offers into a brochure to help promote local business.

The event was well attended including the Mayor from Maldon Town Council, the Chairman from Maldon District Council and the Deputy to Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, Skills, Infrastructure and the Digital Economy, from Essex County Council who sent a

personal email message to the Economic Development Team post the event commending them on its organisation. It also received good press coverage.

4.4 Chairman's Visits

The Economic Development team is working with the Chairman of Maldon District Council, Cllr Henry Bass to accompany him on some of his visits to local businesses. The objective is to gather their views and provide advice on what initiatives could be put in place to support the growth and sustainability of local businesses. A previous visit to CML Microsystems on 18 October 2017 has led to a meeting between Aquila Developments (who will be representing CML) and the planning department on 13 December 2017 to consider options for the development of Oval Park for employment use. Recent activity includes visits to Secret Hamper and Morley Skips.

4.5 Business Newsletter

On 30 November 2017 the Economic Development Team distributed a business newsletter by e-mail. Topics included reminders to businesses to nominate themselves or others for the Maldon District Council's Chairman Awards and to complete the Maldon District Skills Survey in respect of local business needs. Businesses were also encouraged to make use of the benefits of the Sense of Place branding and the BEST Growth Hub free one-to-one support service plus the current programme of training workshops.

4.6 Superfast Broadband

ED, together with the planning policy team, is gathering further information on whether the delivery of Broadband by BT is meeting the targets that were set and which they claim have been achieved. While on average some targets appear to have been achieved, there are pockets of poor access in certain rural areas. The high speed broadband provision is also limited to the green boxes, so properties some distance from these boxes report much lower speeds at their premises. This information will be used to prepare input for a meeting on 23 January 2018 to coordinate Essex local bids for the DCMS LFFN Challenge Fund.

4.7 Chairman's Awards

Following the closure date for applications on Monday 18 December 2017, there has been a substantial amount of interest from businesses again this year with over 30 applications received in the 4 categories of:

- Young Entrepreneur
- Best Established Business
- Fast Track Business
- Best New Business

Judging has now taken place and the winners will be announced at an Afternoon Tea at Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome on Friday 23 February 2018.

5. SKILLS

5.1 Maldon District Council Skills Strategy

The Economic Development Team has recently completed a draft Maldon District Skills Strategy. This document is in the process of updating considering analysis of data gathered from the Maldon District Business Skills survey that closed on 31 December 2017.

5.2 Essex Rural Skills Project

Essex Rural Skills Project which Maldon District Council is a working partner in, is being part delivered at Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome.

Following its launch in August 2017, this programme has proved to be very popular and is at maximum capacity of 16 trainees at Stow Maries, with a waiting list of further participants.

Consequently further funding is currently being sought via the Reaching Communities Fund in conjunction with Jacqui Stone from Abberton Rural Training who is delivering the current project and Ruth Stephens from the Big Lottery Fund. A meeting is to be held regarding this on 16 January at Maldon District Council Offices involving the Economic Development department.

5.3 Apprenticeship Event

The Economic Development Team met with Plume School in December 2017 and following the great success of the Apprenticeship Event organised last year a repeat event is now planned for 7 March 2018 with arrangements on their way. Other partnership working and actions were also agreed in relation to business engagement required in light of recent Government directive changes regarding Secondary School Careers Guidance and Education. The Economic Development Team will continue to provide appropriate business links in this capacity.

6. SENSE OF PLACE

6.1 A planning application has been submitted for approval for Sense of Place branding on the hoarding fronting the Causeway on the Blackwater Retail Park construction site – Application reference: 17/01378/ADV.

6.2 Charlie Fillingham, Chairman of the Sense of Place Board, has appointed Janie Robinson, of Osea Leisure Group, to head up the Visitor Economy role on the Sense of Place Board. She has already met with Alexis Brown of the TIC to discuss alignment of projects and will work with other teams at Maldon District Council on larger projects such as a new or improved Maldon Museum. Maldon Salt has met with us through an introduction by Charlie Fillingham and Steven Osborne has indicated his willingness to support such a project if it has a high quality and could include a section on Maldon Salt. ED, TIC, Planning Policy and the SOP chair are working together on a coordinated approach so that any activities are guided by existing Maldon District Council policy such as the LDP and Central Area Masterplan.

7. FUNDING

LEADER Funding

Maldon District is continuing to maintain its lead with regards to the number of projects accessing funding under this scheme and has another 7 out of the current 9 projects in the pipeline.

8. NATIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY – Strategic Vision for Rail

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling made an announcement on 29 November 2017 regarding the government's Strategic vision for rail. The official press release included the following comment:

“The Strategic vision for rail also commits to explore opportunities to restore capacity lost under the Beeching and British Rail cuts of the 1960s and 1970s by identifying new schemes that unlock new housing or economic growth and offer good value for money.”

Councils are therefore being asked to put forward proposals for re-opening rail lines closed under Dr Beeching in the 1960s. The railway line from Maldon East Railway Station to the Witham Main Line is virtually intact and still largely under ECC ownership with a few gaps along the route. ECC have asked whether we would like to make a proposal to government for the reopening of this line. After internal discussion officers have informed ECC that we do not intend to take any action due to the practical difficulties in reinstating previously closed lines, challenges in delivering a financially sustainable service, lack of clarity on the government's strategy and financial commitment to delivery at the current time. Officers will continue to monitor and if required investigate further.