

Local Economy and Parking Policy Development Advisory Group
24 SEPTEMBER 2019

Present: Councillors: Paul Clarke (Chairman), Tony Hogben,
Richard Landeryou, Gordon Lindsay, John Milne, Colin Minto,
Mike Morgan and Belinda Walters

Absent: Councillors: John Blackall, Roy Cornell and Jack Saheid

Also Present: Ruth Fletcher, Frances Haigh and Nigel Jupp

7 **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the meeting held on 10 July were received.

8 **FULL FIBRE PROGRAMME UPDATE**

Director of Corporate Resources gave a presentation to the Group on the county-wide programme to increase broadband speeds and connectivity by updating and expanding the fibre network in towns and rural areas throughout the county.

The Group were advised of the proposed routes and timescales for delivering the four projects that made up the programme: Rural, North and South, Coastal, and Horsham & Crawley.

Funding was primarily through the business rate pool and some LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) funding. The Director of Corporate Resources advised that the anticipated level of funding from business rates was still to be confirmed.

The Group discussed the preferred business models for each project and tender processes over the coming months. This was an ambitious large-scale programme and the Cabinet Member emphasised the importance of extending this service across the district.

9 **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

The Head of Economic Development gave a presentation to the Group to update them on some of the key projects undertaken by the department:

Horsham Business Improvement District (BID) Since the last PDAG a Steering Group had been set up. One of its roles was to advise businesses of the benefits of joining this business-led partnership for Horsham town. Consultants had been appointed to help implement the ballot of town businesses. Should this be successful the BID could be established by August 2020.

LEAP Grants The Economic Development Team had received 31 applications from small businesses seeking grants through the Local Enterprise Apprenticeship Platform. The Economic Development Team had secured £46,766 of funding for awards to be granted over three rounds, with the second round closing in December 2019 and the third round in April 2020. A report will be brought to a future PDAG summarising the awards and analysing the extent to which they have helped the businesses.

Current business enquiries The Group noted the number and type of business enquiries received by the Department over the last 12 months. A majority of the 21 businesses looking for premises were already in the district and looking to expand. The Group noted the importance of new development sites, including North of Horsham and Billingshurst, in fulfilling this identified need. The department had also given advice in response to approximately 100 general business enquires.

The Head of Economic Development agreed to supply the Group with more detailed data about business premises enquiries, showing the anticipated number of jobs generated.

Journey to Work The Group received an update on this long running employability programme. The Cabinet Member stated that the programme gave people confidence and support and was important in getting people into work. Of the 81 jobseekers placed on the programme since April 2018, 30 had found employment. The programme had support hubs in Billingshurst, Henfield, Southwater, Horsham and Storrington.

10 **FORWARD PLAN EXTRACT FOR THE LOCAL ECONOMY PORTFOLIO**

The forward plan extract was noted.

The meeting closed at 6.20 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN