

Report of:	To:	Date of Publication	Item No.
Cllr. Gordon McCann, Economy Portfolio Holder	Council	29 November 2012	9(d)

EXECUTIVE REPORT: ECONOMY PORTFOLIO HOLDER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Council of the current position on a number of issues within the Economy Portfolio, as set out in paragraph 2 below.

2. Current and Future Issues

(a) Fish and Food Park, Fleetwood

- 2.1 As previously reported a temporary appointment has been made to assist with this and other regeneration projects. Work undertaken to date includes collating all previous work. This has now been reviewed and initial site visits and meetings have been undertaken. Future work involves further meetings with stakeholders and investigating site availability and suitability. The postholder is also undertaking other urgent work on other projects so the work is being done on an ongoing basis. A further report will be submitted in due course.

(b) Business News

2.2 Get Rewyred

The Government has announced that a Future High Street X-Fund is to be established, whereby towns have 12 months to demonstrate what they can achieve. At the end of the 12 months a successful town could receive a £1million grant. To assist Town Teams who were unsuccessful in the Portas Pilot initiative a grant of £10,000 has now been awarded to Wyre Council by DCLG.

A portfolio holder report was submitted in November 2012 in respect of the 'Get Rewyred' business support scheme which proposes that the additional £10,000 awarded be used to 'top up'

the existing £15,000 grant pot. However it is also proposed that the additional £10,000 should be used in a more innovative way than simply awarding small grant and council officers are working in partnership with the appointed business support providers to consider a 'Dragons' Den' type of competition.

2.3 Town Centre Plans

Consultation on Town Centre Action Plans in Cleveleys, Garstang, Fleetwood, Poulton and Thornton commenced in November and will run for one month. The consultation documents are all available on line and hard copies will be made available if required. Analysis of the findings will be done during January followed by a report to Management Board and dissemination of the findings to the Town Centres. Action Plans will then be drawn up taking into account the deliverability of the proposals.

The idea is to gather project and business related ideas that will help enhance the vitality and viability of the town centres. By working in partnership with the business communities we will assist in developing the action plans, which will provide us with a better chance of securing funding for our towns in the future.

The production of Town Centre Plans and the pilot 'Get Rewired' scheme form two major initiatives which will run for the 12 month period and will serve to demonstrate Wyre's commitment to help regenerate its town centres.

Others will also emerge following the consultation.

2.4 General Business Support

A brand new business support programme is soon to be launched for the whole of Lancashire, funded with European Regional Development Fund monies. The support will extend to both new and existing businesses, urban and rural, and will include post set up and ongoing support. There will also be special provision for social enterprises. The delivery is by a partnership of existing agencies who currently cover businesses in the west of Lancashire including Bay Business Centre which specifically covers Wyre. The Council's website is continuously being updated to reflect the current and future business support provision.

2.5 In the aftermath of the Rural Growth Network bid in early 2012, it was clear that a Lancashire wide rural strategy was needed. This is to be established via the rural Lancashire local authorities, and the initiative is to be led by Wyre Council. The bid established the need for more work to be undertaken across rural Lancashire to look at various issues e.g. barriers for new start businesses and those surviving after 12 months, and barriers for businesses to grow and

expand. This initiative will commence in 2013, via consultation with the rural Lancashire authorities.

(d) Planning policy

2.6 Progress has been made in producing evidence to support the draft Local Plan (formerly called the Core Strategy). Consultants have completed an Employment Land and Commercial Leisure Study which will be used to demonstrate the need for, and delivery of, employment allocations across the borough as well as being a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

2.7 An Infrastructure Delivery Plan has been drafted which outlines and reviews the capacity of existing infrastructure in the borough and assesses what level of new or improved infrastructure will be required to deliver the growth proposed in the Local Plan. In addition, specialist viability work has been commissioned to establish if the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is viable in Wyre. This work will also assess the viability of the relevant draft Local Plan policies, which is now required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

2.8 Officers are in receipt of draft Local Plan consultation documents from Ribble Valley, Lancaster and Chorley Councils. Their content is being assessed and any important matters that are considered to require a response will be reported to Cabinet shortly.

(e) Poulton to Fleetwood Rail line

2.9 Network Rail, Wyre Councillors, officers and other rail group members met on 14 September 2012 to discuss the GRIP 2 process and to determine the precise remit for the GRIP 2 Study will follow shortly. Comments have been requested from all in attendance and will be collated by officers for further consideration.

3. Comments and Questions

3.1 In accordance with Procedure Rule 11.3 any member of Council will be able to ask me a question or make a comment on the contents of my report or on any issue which falls within my area of responsibility. I will respond to any such questions or comments in accordance with procedure Rule 11.5.