

Report of:	To:	Date of Publication	Item No.
Cllr. Gordon McCann, Economy Portfolio Holder	Council	18 October 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 We are currently using a graduate volunteer appointment to undertake a review of the work undertaken to date. It is important to note that this work does not replicate work that has previously been done. Neither is it to deliver a Fish and Food Park at this stage. The scope of this work is to review and update the situation and reconsider the project's feasibility. Perhaps one of the most critical issues will be investigating the potential and the role of the private sector in the delivery process.

(b) Town Centre Improvements

- 2.2 **New Funding Opportunities:**  
 Since July when we were notified that Wyre had not been successful in being named as one of the extra 12 towns for the Portas Pilot scheme it has been announced that an X Fund is to be established, whereby a town has 12 months to achieve what they can without funding. At the end of the 12 months a successful town could receive a £1million Grant. In addition to that potential funding, a £10,000 grant for Town Teams which took part in the Portas Pilot initiative is to be awarded by DCLG to enable them to implement any actions. Wyre has submitted its application, which has been supported by our MPs Ben Wallace, Eric Ollerenshaw and Paul Maynard.

- 2.3** Town Centre Plans:  
A document called 'Investing In Your Town Centres' has been completed and will go out to consultation to the business communities shortly. The consultation documents include a background paper, a mini health check document for each of the five towns namely; Cleveleys, Garstang, Fleetwood, Poulton and Thornton, a map of the Primary Shopping Areas, and a list of consultees. The idea will be 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.
- 2.4** Get Rewyred Business Support:  
The pilot 'Get Rewyred' business support scheme was agreed by the Cabinet on 12 September 2012 is to be launched in the New Year. The criteria and contract specification needs to be developed and advertised on the Council's CHEST Portal system. The production of Town Centre Plans and the pilot 'Get Rewyred' scheme will 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.
- 2.5** The planning application for a new Booths food store and link road in Poulton was granted planning permission at the Planning Committee meeting on 3 October.

(c) Other Business Support

- 2.6** 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 including Bay Business Centre, Orvia and Enterprise Lancashire who currently cover businesses in the west of Lancashire and specifically Wyre. The programme bid is currently being appraised by DCLG and if the outcome is positive we will then be in a position to send an 'Award' letter to SELNET.
- 2.7** 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

**2.8** We have received a draft Employment Land and Commercial Leisure Study from consultants, which will be finalised shortly. This will provide robust evidence to demonstrate the need for, and delivery of, employment allocations across the Borough. This study will form a key part of the evidence base underpinning the emerging Local Plan.

**2.9** Specialist viability work will be commissioned in the next few weeks to establish if the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is viable in the Borough. This work will also assess the viability of the relevant Local Plan policies, which is now required by regulation.

**2.10** Meetings have been held with officers from Ribble Valley, Blackpool and Fylde with regard to the Duty to Cooperate, which is a legal requirement of the Localism Act and is included in the NPPF.

(e) Poulton to Fleetwood Rail line

**2.11** 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.