

**Report of the Chief Executive**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

1. Purpose of report

To update members of the Committee on recent work within the Economic Regeneration Team.

2. Background

In line with the Council's updated Economic Regeneration Strategy, which was approved in November 2017, various work has been undertaken. A summary of the recent work is included within the appendix and the Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

3. Financial implications

Any external funding received for the purpose of economic development will be utilised in accordance with the Economic Regeneration Strategy. The details will be reported to the relevant committee for consideration with revenue and capital budgets amended accordingly.

**Recommendation**

**The Committee is asked to NOTE the report.**

Background papers

Nil

**APPENDIX****Health Check Events**

Businesses are being continually supported through our provision of health check sessions, held in conjunction with the D2N2 Growth Hub. The last session was held on the 30 April and supported five businesses in total.

These sessions offer support to established businesses looking to develop and move on to their next stage. We have also supported businesses through the Brexit transition process, using our email updates and seminar sessions available elsewhere in the N2 area.

**Business Grants**

Broxtowe business start-up grants were launched on the 22 October 2018. The grant is designed to assist businesses starting up and create at least one job which will be based within Broxtowe and assist new businesses in the tricky first year within business.

The scheme has a maximum award of £1,000 grant with 12 full grants being initially being available to businesses.

To date we have had 12 applications and nine successful bids, with a total of £8913.87 spent on grants assisting businesses thus far. The scheme has been successful and all monies have been spent for the first round. We will be sending a report to the September Jobs and Economy meeting to seek further approval to continue this grant scheme.

**Incubator Hub**

Broxtowe Business Incubator Hub was opened on the 14 November 2018. This is space designed to support businesses in taking the next step and renting their own premises.

As approved, the space will offer a tapered rent rate, with rent going up over the four years. Prices will be worked out on the basis of price per rentable square meter and will be based on the size of the available office space.

- Year 1 – Cover running costs such as business rates and utilities.
- Year 2 – The business will pay one third of the rentable value
- Year 3 – Two thirds of the rentable rate will be covered by the business
- Year 4 – Full rentable rate will be covered by the business.

To date we have two full time businesses within the hub with more enquiries currently being pursued.

### Town Centres

Beeston continues to operate above national retail occupancy and will soon benefit from the Phase 2 development, which aims to boost the NTE. In anticipation, the monthly farmers' market in Beeston has approached the Council in anticipation about launching a regular evening street food market at The Square, which would be complementary to the new development.

Stapleford will soon benefit from the redevelopment of the former police station building at the main gateway to the town (see section below). The towns retail occupancy rate sits below national average, however, with recent fit out works to be completed shortly, Stapleford will welcome three new businesses, with occupancy rate aligning with the national for the first time since mid-2016.

100 Nottingham Road, which is the most prominent vacant shop unit in Eastwood and at 10,000 square feet, the single largest amount of vacant commercial floorspace in all the Borough's town centres, has recently seen a lease agreed between owners Central England Co-Op and JEVT Ltd. This lease is extremely important to the town and with the anchor property now occupied, this should hopefully improve investor appetite on a local level and encourage further lets on the high street.

Kimberley will see the demolition, rebuild and division of previously vacant retail space at 44 Main Street. It is hoped these new units, which are located near to Kimberley prime retail frontage, will be more appropriate for the town as they will likely carry a lower asking rent p/a than the previous single unit. The former Lord Clyde Pub has also been refurbished to a high standard and is located on the south gateway to the town.

Through the issuing of permits for use of our town squares and the greater control afforded from the Consent Street Policy in Beeston, the Council has received £3,400 in this current financial year. It is estimated permits will produce an income of £10,000 in year 19-20.

### Town Centre Wi-Fi

The project to install municipal Wi-Fi into Eastwood and Kimberley has unfortunately been delayed. Issues with stable connection speeds and line of sight between access points have led to a change in locations for the broadband connection install, requiring further permissions. To control costs, the intention is to install both systems at the same time. It is hoped that the Wi-Fi will be in place during the summer, where a launch event will be held. The municipal Wi-Fi will bring the same advantages it does in Stapleford, monitoring footfall and user numbers. Additional benefits will be seen in Kimberley where the mobile phone signal is extremely poor. The installation of free Wi-Fi will give visitors use of their phones, which will hopefully increase dwell time as visitors are not rushing away to be able to communicate, access emails and social media, an intrinsic part of daily life now. Members will be kept up to date with progress, with a further report to committee on completion of the install.

### Industrial and Retail Occupancy Rates

The team carry out monthly occupancy checks in the Boroughs four main town centres, as well as quarterly checks at the 40 biggest employment sites. Regular monitoring allows the team to benchmark performance against other towns regionally and nationally, as well as react to sector specific initiatives fed down from the D2N2 LEP. The checks also serve to provide data which feeds into the Pentana system against KPIs in the current Business Growth business plan.

The current town centre occupancy rates as of the most recent survey are:

- Beeston - 94.6%
- Eastwood - 87.5%
- Kimberley - 87.7%
- Stapleford - 86.4%
- National - 89.6%

The industrial occupancy rate for the Borough is currently 95.44%

A more detailed report on Industrial and Retail Occupancy will be provided at a later committee. This data has previously been provided to members bi-annually, with further progress updates on all vacant retail properties where available and site specific noting reports on request.

### Stapleford Hub

The team are working to submit a final bid with full businesses case to the N2 Town Centres programme, requesting a total of £88,135 in European Local Growth Funding. This involves £82,865 of co-funding from the Council, in order to deliver a redevelopment of the disused police station building. Should the bid be successful, a transformation of the brownfield site will provide nine brand new offices, acting as a natural progression to the start-up businesses moving from the Council's incubator hub, as well as those looking for smaller format office space. This investment looks to provide the Council with circa £16,000 p/a in rental and business rates income and approximately 15 new full time jobs in Stapleford. The building has been vacant since its purchase over five years ago. This will be the Council's second submission to N2 Town Centres programme, following a successful bid from which Broxtowe were awarded £750,000.