

## **Item 6 – Economic Development Strategy**

The attached report was considered by the Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee, relevant minute extract below:

### Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee – 21 October 2014 (Minute 23)

The Chief Officer Communities and Business presented the revised final draft of the three year Economic Development Strategy and three year Action Plan (2015-2018), following the public consultation period. Members were advised that the current document would be redesigned for the final version. The action plan had focused targets and measures to achieve the targets set. The Committee was advised that Appendix B was the summary of public comments with the Council's response which, on occasions, resulted in a change being made to the document. A response from Sevenoaks Town Council, Riverhead Parish Council and National Farmers Union was tabled.

It was discussed whether further investigation could be taken forward with the inclusion of Bat and Ball and Enysford train stations in the Zone 6 proposals relating to Swanley. Concerns were raised that it could have an impact on the Darent Valley Villages including additional parking problems and that it could seem as if the villages were part of a London Borough. Members discussed whether there would be any additional benefits of the inclusion but agreed that Swanley should be part of it as there was already some Zone 6 benefits in place. Members were advised that at Swanley and Dartford stations there was a change to contactless payments but it was unknown if this would include the Oyster card and Zone 6.

Members' attention was brought to the comments made regarding attracting retailers to the area and were advised that the Council could not control retailers that came into the area. A Member expressed concern that there should be greater support for planning and that businesses could find it hard to set up in rural areas due to listed buildings and conservation sites which prevented businesses starting up.

A Member queried why Broadband was not listed on aim 3.6. Members were advised that '21 Century Connectivity' included Broadband but the wording could be amended to read 'Broadband and other 21 Century connectivity'. Members agreed it had been a good consultation process and that issues had been identified. It was queried what resources could be put into obtaining funding. In response, the Chief Officer Communities and Business informed Members that there would be a change in structure and that a Head of Service was being recruited for a merge of the Economic Development and Property teams to ensure that funding was secured and to encourage future investment.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for their diligence and quality of work for the document.

## Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: **That it be recommended to Cabinet** that subject to the comments and views made above the final draft of the Economic and Development Strategy and Action Plan, be approved.

*Note: The additional papers tabled at the meeting are attached.*