

Economic and Community Development Panel

Cabinet Member Update - Cllr Ben Stevens

Economic Enterprise and Business Development:

- Continued development of an ambitious and vital digital strategy. This includes the CDS rollout as a small part of that jigsaw aimed at improving quality of life across the district (more detail in in later agenda item).
- The Bath Enterprise Area Masterplan brief has gone to consultants, we're looking to appoint in the next month and complete the project by spring 2014
- Bath Quays North and South scoping study (being completed by JLL) is on track to complete in the next couple of months. This will include a marketing document to ensure we can maximise benefit on these sites.
- Radstock and Westfield Economic Partnership agreed the terms of reference for a 3rd party loans provider, and will be going out for expressions of interest in the next month.
- Currently in the process of awarding a new business support services contract. Interviews are being held this week.
- The Guild co-working hub is formally opening tonight/opened last night (25th September). A huge number of people are interested in this exciting project, which really is a prestige piece for the Council.
- Working closely alongside the River Regeneration Trust to give advice on the potential for housing and economic development along the river.
- Continued rolling business visits to ensure we are responding to need.
- I have also become the Council's representative on the BID Board

Tourism (Heritage Services, Destination Management, Arts and Festivals including Film Office):

- Work is continuing on the Visitor Contribution (formerly known as the Tourism Levy), it will be a challenge but this is still on track to be delivered in line with the MTSRP
- Councillor Crossley and I visited the Bottleyard Film Studios just over the border in Bristol. The site is owned by Bristol City Council, so is a key element of the creative industries across the LEP and will be the new home of Deal or No Deal when that resumes shooting. We're already benefitting from this new facility and are investigating better ways of working together.
- The trading profit forecast for financial year 2013/14 totals £4.8 million, £758k above the annual target level forecast in the Heritage Services Business Plan.
- The Temple Precinct will be closed over the low season between November and March for the installation of a new step-free walkway and new interpretation. This is

part of the ongoing programme of investment to improve accessibility and public enjoyment of the site.

- Last week the Roman Baths and Pump Room hosted the autumn ALVA reception and dinner, at which the guest speaker was the Communities Minister and Bath MP, Rt. Hon. Don Foster.
- The latest exit survey, conducted in August 2013, revealed that only 3% (but 9% of local residents) said that charging for the large temporary exhibitions would stop them visiting the Gallery altogether.
- Cllr Crossley has asked me to convene a working party to look at options for improving the conditions in which our nationally-important archive collections are kept and accessed by the public. The working party has yet to have its first meeting but I will report progress back to this Panel as appropriate.

World Heritage Management:

- The 2010-2016 plan has now reached its mid-term position. Progress on the actions within the plan has been solid, with 44% of actions already achieved at the mid-way mark, 38% in progress, 10% not yet underway and 8% awaiting further monitoring information. The actions span across the work of the Council and beyond into partner organisations, and include items such as progression of flood risk measures, transport initiatives and production of planning guidance.
- In January this year a new independent Chair was appointed to lead the World Heritage Site Steering Group. Former Mayor and Councillor Peter Metcalfe took over from former Chairman David Beeton, who held the post for four years. The Council took full responsibility for the Steering Group and therefore the running of the site in 2008 from English Heritage, and has proved very capable in doing so.