

North West Chilterns Community Board
Economic Regeneration & Development Action Group
Briefing Report for Community Board Meeting on 23rd November 2023

Purpose: This report provides a brief overview of the work undertaken by the Action Group since the Community Board Meeting on 27th July 2023.

Priority Objectives: The Action Group continue to focus on the following:

- To seek schemes and initiatives that support new and existing local businesses (urban and rural).
- To prioritise schemes and initiatives that help achieve the Council's Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy.
- To consider any adhoc application in regards to Economic Regeneration & Development.

Action Group: The last meeting was on 9th March 2023. Meetings are normally held quarterly (approximately) , but due to various reasons, the last was held on 8th November 2023.

Progress on actions since the last Community Board meeting are as follows:

- **Business Networking Event** – The event will be held on 29th February 2024. The group originally agreed with the Economic Development team at Buckinghamshire Council (BC) that the event would be held in October 2023. However, it was later felt that this may be unrealistic as the Visitor Economic Strategy had to be go through Cabinet and timescales would be tight.

Matthew Broadbent, Senior Economic Development Officer, confirmed on 9th November that the Strategy was due to go to Cabinet on 12th December 2023.

The comms material has been produced. The promotion of the event will start week commencing 20th November 2023. The Community Board Manager will contact all local businesses, promote on Facebook and place flyers in venues where a community board exists. Visit Bucks have also offered to help publicise.

Town and Parish Council's will also be invited, as Ruth Bryant, BC's Film Officer, will be presenting the various opportunities that are available to them, as well as other organisation's.

- **Reducing Energy Consumption** – The Action Group are currently focusing its efforts on helping local businesses reduce their energy usage.

Bucks Business First (BBF) have recently secured funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to support Buckinghamshire Businesses (incl those in the NWC Community Board) on reducing their Carbon Footprint.

The Shared Prosperity Fund could also support for example, new refrigerated equipment, which would lower energy bills for our businesses. BBF will be contacted to find out if a proposal for reducing energy consumption can be agreed.

- **Carbon Footprinting for Local Businesses** - The action group have discussed how they could make local businesses more aware of their own carbon footprint and understand how to reduce it. The Environment and Climate Action Group are considering the Carbon Literacy Training that the Environment Team at BC have produced. It is hoped that this will be piloted and will include an invitation to businesses to attend). Note: see the Environment and Climate Action Group report for further information.

In addition, an initiative in providing local businesses with practical information about what actions are possible (including adaptation) and what the risks and opportunities are, is something the group will consider after they have investigated the proposal in terms of reducing energy consumption for organisations.

- The action group will continue to explore other sources of data that evidence the needs of local business, organisations and individuals and research other possible project opportunities.

Chairman: Cllr Matthew Walsh