

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK GROUP UPDATE

Executive Summary

Councillor Ian Johnson, Chairman of the Economic Development Task Group, provided an update from the last meeting of the Task Group that was held on 21 October 2020:

“The task group reviewed, in October prior to the latest lockdown, progress on the programme within the Framework for Recovery Programme established in April (and previously reported to Overview and Scrutiny) in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Business Liaison team’s activity was focused on the action plan to reopen the economy following lockdown, providing good communications with business and the public and managing the public realm to enable the local economy to open successfully and safely.

Messaging campaigns through “Love Local” as an extension to #WeAreWoking “we are open” to encourage people back into Woking, along with a re-enforcing health message were all designed to promote a post-lockdown Woking. This marketing material was used on social media and in public spaces, car parks, Woking Magazine and Woking News & Mail.

Help was provided to business via the Woking Works website, which gave guidance on reopening, with support from a number of local firms, one to one business support and promotion of services provided by Surrey Chambers and Woking Chamber of Commerce. A number of webinars were produced with guest presenter, including Cllr Kevin Davis as portfolio holder in one case, which were well attended. Other Council teams who were busy providing advice included Environmental Health who had advised 130 businesses, particularly in respect of social distancing such as at supermarkets.

These efforts were showing some signs of success as footfall slowly improved though judging by car park ticketing was still nearly 50% down in September over 2019. A great deal of effort had been put into creating a positive and safe environment throughout the town centre, including in privately controlled premises.

Woking firms were nominated in the majority of categories in the Surrey Food and Drink Awards 2020 and the results were announced at the end of November with the following winners in their category: -

Best Independent Food and Drink Retailer- Deli Class, Horsell

Sustainability Initiative Award – Good Living Brew Co, Horsell

Customer Service Award – Boz’s Fruit and Veg, Woking

The following were highly commended in their categories: -

Best Independent Food and Drink – Boz’s Fruit and Veg

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Butcher of the Year- Prince and Son Family Butchers. Horsell

Food Producer of the Year – The Goldfinch Kitchen, Horsell

Drink Producer of the Year – Thurston’s Brewery, Horsell

Sustainability Initiative Award - Eden Greens Urban Farm, Woking

In these challenging times these firms have done Woking, and themselves, proud and deserve congratulations on their successes.”

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That the update be noted.

Background Papers: None.

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