

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 5 FEBRUARY 2019

REPORT BY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

DIGITAL INNOVATION ZONE STRATEGY

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To update the OS Scrutiny on the West Essex and Eastern Herts Digital Innovation Zone and presents the associated draft strategy

**RECOMMENDATIONS: FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
To recommend to the Executive that:**

A	The Digital Innovation Zone Strategy is adopted by the Council
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1.0 Background

- 1.1 The West Essex and Eastern Herts Digital Innovation Zone (DIZ) is an informal grouping of 11 different public (including local authorities, NHS trusts, education providers), private and voluntary sector partners across the areas East Herts, Epping Forest, Harlow, Broxbourne and Uttlesford. It's chaired by Epping Forest District Council who also act as the lead agency in driving forward its agenda. The Leader of East Herts Council is also a board member.
- 1.2 The DIZ exists in response to the 'smart cities' agenda which focuses on ensuring large urban areas are digitally enabled to take advantage of new and emerging technologies around logistics, healthcare, transport, social trends and working

patterns. There is currently no equivalent for smaller towns and rural areas. There is a risk that these communities will miss out on digital infrastructure investment. The DIZ provides a platform for these areas across West Essex and Eastern Hertfordshire to articulate a long term vision for the digital agenda and provide credible, collaborative governance arrangements to make a case to government for investment. For example the DIZ has submitted a bid on behalf of partners to secure funding from the Rural Connected Communities Programme (administered by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport). This approach is inherently stronger than East Herts bidding in isolation.

- 1.3 The DIZ has developed a draft strategy (**see Essential Reference Paper "B"**) which has been proposed for adoption by all partners.

2.0 Implications/Consultations

- 2.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers -None

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