**£27million that could have been used by the local community wasted**

(LEP - Local Enterprise Partnership)

Councillor Eade said-;

* “In the current economic climate I find it unbelievable that last November the LEP had £27M of unspent funds in its coffers that it was desperate to unload and spend before it was clawed back by Central Government as unwanted and un-needed.
* Equally unbelievable is that this Administration seems to have been totally unaware of this unspent funding and - perhaps more damningly - had not produced any ‘ready to go’ schemes to grab that money for the borough.
* We should not have been waiting for an invitation to submit schemes to the LEP - we should have long been hammering on their door to grab the money with both hands
* We should also have suitable ***off the shelf schemes*** waiting in the wings ready to be activated. Lord knows there must be a myriad of green schemes which would benefit from such funding.
* Surely this Council is not so awash with millions of pounds of spare capital that it can afford such complacency and inaction?
* What about key green schemes such as bringing back brownfield sites into use for the benefit of deprived wards, **and of course** the delivery of the much vaunted Station Quarter at the Town Centre, new and sustainable homes, care facilities, new jobs to help with future employment pressures within the Borough. **The list is probably endless.**
* This is £27M that the Government have provided for local growth and development and we should have long been knocking at the door to relieve the LEP of a portion, if not all of that money and not left it to the last minute
* The other side of this debacle is of course the LEP itself and I wonder how they found themselves sitting on such a huge pile of unspent money and question its fitness to act as a local funding facilitator at this critical time.
* However this Administration needs to man up and make sure that it secures all of the funding that it possibly can.
* We have a lot to do in this much changed world.”