

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

15 DECEMBER 2016

WESTERN DORSET ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY

For Decision

Portfolio Holder Cllr Penfold

Senior Leadership Team Contact: M Hamilton, Strategic Director

Report Author: Nick Thornley

Statutory Authority

Local Government Act 2000 – Promotion of economic and social wellbeing

Purpose of Report

- 1 To agree a 'high level' economic growth strategy for Western Dorset, prior to consideration of a more detailed action plan early next year.

Officer Recommendations

- 2 That the Western Dorset Economic Growth Strategy be adopted as the basis for consultation with key stakeholders and the production of a detailed action plan.

Reason for Decision

- 3 To agree an economic growth strategy, appropriate for Western Dorset, to both inform the work of the four councils and others engaged in Economic Regeneration and to set out an expression of economic need and opportunity for Western Dorset.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

- 4 For some time, local authorities have been encouraged by central government to prioritise support for economic growth. This is reflected in the corporate plans of the three Dorset Councils Partnership councils where 'contribute to a stronger local economy' has been agreed as a corporate priority.
5. In recent years, West Dorset District Council and Weymouth and Portland Borough Council have worked to deliver economic regeneration in accordance with the adopted *Priorities for Growth 2014 -2020* economic growth strategy. North Dorset District Council has worked to deliver its *Economic Development Strategy for Action 2012-2015*.

5 The creation of the Dorset Councils Partnership, an opportunity to work collaboratively with Dorset County Council and a conclusion to the term of the North Dorset strategy presents the council with an opportunity to consider and agree an Economic Strategy for Western Dorset that:

- Builds on the previous joint strategy for West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland
- Develops the cross border working that has been developed through the Western Dorset Growth Corridor concept and defines an area which contrasts with Dorset's eastern conurbation
- Captures the economic growth ambitions and unique challenges of the area
- Demonstrates a joined-up approach to the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership and local businesses

6 The strategy has been developed and informed by a number of different activities:

- The promotion of the Dorset LEP's "Priority Projects Refresh" in summer 2015 across the Dorset Councils Partnership area identified significant growth ambitions from organisations across the three councils' area.
- An evidence based assessment of the economic conditions, opportunities and challenges for the area has been carried out by using established economic forecasting models at Dorset County Council. This has been refined to reflect anticipated or known local conditions which may be different to the forecasting models algorithms
- A consideration of the anticipated need for and delivery of new housing and employment sites as identified in both the West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland Local Plan 2015, and the North Dorset Local Plan Part One 2016
- Collaborative working with colleagues from across the Dorset Councils Partnership and Dorset County Council

7 In addition, following a successful bid by Weymouth and Portland and West Dorset councils to Dorset LEP under Growth Deal 2 in 2015 (for delivery on 2016), a number of research studies using external expertise have been completed across all or part of the Dorset Councils Partnership geography looking at:

For the whole area:

- Employment and Skills
- Transport including rail and parking

For the Western Dorset Growth Corridor area only:

- Tourism
- Culture
- Public Realm
- Events

For Weymouth only:

- Town Centre masterplan site specific assessments
- 8 The outcomes and action plans from these studies, together with the plans and aspirations of 2 BIDs and 4 Coastal Community teams have been used to both inform the strategy, subject of this report, and the developing action plan.
- 9 The strategy has a vision to have enabled or delivered by 2033:
- 20,000 new homes including affordable homes
 - 13,200 new full-time equivalent jobs (plus new jobs at the Dorset Enterprise Zone)
 - a minimum of 70 hectares of new employment land;
 - an increase in the proportion of workforce achieving Level 4+ qualifications from 25% to 35% and;
 - an additional £564 million of GVA from the Western Dorset Growth area
10. The strategy has been grouped into five action areas or themes:
- A. Infrastructure – addressing both physical (road and rail) and electronic (broadband and mobile) connectivity
- B. Homes and employment sites – addressing the delivery of new homes, including affordable homes and the release of employment land for business growth
- C. Employment and Skills - addressing skills shortages and raising skills levels to create a highly employable and economically productive population that can generate economic growth, improved productivity and a sustainable local economy.
- D. Business and Sectors – addressing productivity, start up and business survival rates and supporting growth in targeted sectors, supporting tourism businesses through media campaigns and the development of the visit-Dorset website, and working with the Dorset Tourism Association
- E. - Assets and Policy – addressing opportunity for economic growth through use or re-use of existing public sector property assets, and evaluation and development of policy, existing and new, to contribute to local economic growth
11. The emerging themes and priorities have been considered by both a wide joint officer Group drawn from DCP and DCC, and by the Western Dorset Growth Corridor Member Board (comprising Leaders and Briefholders/ Portfolio holders from all 4 participating councils) at both development and final draft stages. The Western Dorset Growth Corridor Member Board has now agreed this for formal presentation to the Councils and for wider external consultation.
- 12 The draft strategy is presented at appendix 1 for consideration.

Implications

Corporate Plan

The Council has a corporate priority to Contribute to a Stronger Local Economy

Financial

There are no financial implications directly associated with this report. Changes to current Government incentives such as new homes bonus, and the introduction of new incentives, such as business rates retention are likely to impact on the councils resources. Actions in this strategy may increase positive and lessen negative impacts.

Equalities

There are no equalities implications directly associated with this report. The final strategy and action plan will be subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.

Environmental

There are no environmental impacts directly associated with this report

Economic Development

This report establishes a strategic direction for economic development for the council

Risk Management (including Health & Safety)

There are no risks directly associated with this report

Human Resources

There are no human resource impacts directly associated with this report

Consultation and Engagement

A process of consultation will commence early in 2017

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Western Dorset Economic Growth Strategy

Background Papers

None

Footnote

Issues relating to financial, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

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