

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

25 April 2017

Western Dorset Economic Growth Strategy Action Plan

For Decision

Portfolio Holder

Cllr Penfold

Senior Leadership Team Contact:

M Hamilton, Strategic Director

Report Author:

N Thornley – Head of Economy, Leisure and Tourism

Statutory Authority

Local Government Act 2000 – Promotion of economic and social wellbeing

Purpose of Report

- 1 To agree a high level dynamic action plan for the delivery of the recently adopted Western Dorset Economic Growth Strategy.

Recommendations

- 2 (a) That the Western Dorset Economic Growth Strategy Action Plan is adopted as the first five year whole council dynamic action plan for delivery of the recently agreed strategy.

(b) That progress on the action plan is reported to Western Dorset Growth Strategy Member Board.

Reason for Decision

- 3 To agree a dynamic action plan that guides the work of the four councils and others engaged in Economic Regeneration in Western Dorset in order to deliver the recently adopted economic growth strategy.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

4. The Western Dorset Economic Growth Strategy was approved by each of the four Councils (Dorset County Council and the 3 councils in the Dorset Councils Partnership) in December 2016 and is the first joint economic strategy embracing all four councils and all service areas.
5. This report proposes an extensive and dynamic 5 year action plan through to 2022 to address the local economic challenges and opportunities expressed in the objectives from the strategy.

6. The development of the strategy has been informed through economic analysis and forecasting of: employment growth; employment land and housing delivery; and sector strengths and sector change. This analysis has identified opportunities for growth or intervention.
7. In addition, the strategy and action plan have been informed by the Growth Deal 2 Dorset LEP funded studies (£600k) covering:
 - i. Transport and Movement – including roads, cycling walking, rail, public transport and parking – principally for the Western Dorset Growth Corridor but also for the major road and rail connections across the area. The rail element of this study area is approaching completion.
 - ii. Skills – looking at the skills and education requirements to meet the current and future growth needs across Western Dorset.
 - iii. Culture and Tourism – considering the work required to develop the tourism offer through attracting higher spend visitors to the area and the role of events and festivals, museums and heritage and the public realm in supporting and growing the tourism offer.
 - iv. The development potential for the 5 identified sites from the Weymouth Town Centre masterplan.
8. The LEP funded studies have enabled the councils to engage industry experts in an objective review of issues and challenges in Western Dorset. The studies have produced an extensive set of recommendations which have been incorporated into the action plan appended to this report.
9. In addition to the actions from the economic analysis, and the Dorset LEP funded studies, the plan has been informed by the economic aspirations of others from across the area, such as the coastal community teams (CCT), private sector and educational partners and as expressed in their published plans.
10. It is anticipated that the strategy and action plan together will both influence others in their decision making and underpin applications for funds whether made by the Councils or other delivery partners such as the CCTs.
11. The Government recently launched its green paper: Building our Industrial strategy. The green paper identifies 10 pillars on which the national strategy will be developed:
 - science, research and innovation;
 - skills; infrastructure;
 - business
 - growth and investment;
 - procurement;
 - trade and investment;
 - affordable energy;
 - sectoral policies;
 - driving growth across the whole country; and
 - Creating the right institutions to bring together sectors and places.

The Western Dorset Economic Growth Strategy and the action plan have been developed around five themes: Infrastructure; Homes and Employment Sites; Employment and Skills; Businesses and Sectors; and Assets and Policy. These themes and identified actions can be directly related to the majority of the Governments 10 pillars of the national industrial strategy.

12. The action plan as presented is an ambitious and dynamic work programme, with several work streams that will require their own detailed delivery plans and both assessment and identification of resources required. It is not anticipated that the partnership will deliver on all actions, but will use its ability, informed by the strategy and action plan, to influence key partners (including Dorset LEP, Dorset Employment and Skills Board, HCA, Highways England, Dorset Growth Hub, Dept. International Trade, DCCI etc.) and the private sector to deliver projects and services, accessibly and appropriately, for economic growth in our area. Relationships with many delivery partners are well established, and there will be a need for members and officers to build new relationships with potential deliverers and deliver a consistent message from the strategy and action plan.
13. Regular progress reports adopting a RAG system will be presented to the Western Dorset Growth Strategy Member Board at no less than six monthly intervals.

Implications

Corporate Plan

The Council has a corporate priority: Building 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 strategic action plan may increase positive and lessen negative impacts.

Equalities

There are no equalities impacts directly associated with this report.

Environmental

There are no environmental impacts directly associated with this report.

Economic Development

This report establishes the priority actions for the next 5 years in order to deliver the recently agreed strategic objectives.

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

The Councils enjoy good working relationships with a number of local businesses and groups such as the chambers of trade. There are regular meetings on key topics and a newsletter is distributed to over 1000 businesses on a regular basis. A high profile launch event is being planned for the new strategy and action plan to promote the area as being 'open for business' from a local authority perspective.

Appendices

Appendix A: Action Plan

Background Papers

Western Dorset Economic Growth Strategy

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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