

## 7. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

REPORT OF: ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
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Wards Affected: All  
Key Decision: Yes  
Report to: Council  
Date of meeting: 25 April 2018

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### Purpose of Report

1. Following consideration by the Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Resources, and Economic Growth at its meeting on 7 March 2018, this report seeks Council's approval of the refreshed Mid Sussex Economic Development Strategy (the Strategy), Profile and Action Plan.

### Summary

2. The current Mid-Sussex Economic Development Strategy was last updated in 2013. Since then there have been significant changes in the economic context of the District and in the way the Council approaches economic development. As a consequence a commitment to review the strategy was made at Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Resources, and Economic Growth at its meeting on 17 February 2016.
3. The proposed draft Strategy reflects those changes and sets out the Council's approach to maximise the potential for economic growth in the district. A progress report on the development of the draft Strategy was presented to Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 3 June 2017, and the refreshed Strategy, Action Plan and Profile were endorsed by Scrutiny Committee on 7 March 2018.
4. This paper:
  - Presents the draft Strategy and Action Plan (Appendix 1);
  - Sets out the Economic Profile (Appendix 2), which provides the evidence base to inform the Strategy's strategic priorities and actions;
  - Describes the consultation undertaken to inform the proposed Strategy and Action Plan.

### Recommendations

1. **Council is recommended to:**
  - (i) **approve the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan set out in Appendix 1 for implementation;**
  - (ii) **approve the Economic Profile set out in Appendix 2 which supports the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan;**
  - (iii) **give delegated authority to the Divisional Leader for Planning and Economy, to make typographical and minor factual corrections to the documentation as necessary before publication.**

## Background

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### Overview of the Strategy

5. The Strategy supports the Government's national ambition for economic growth set out in the Industrial Strategy, as well as regional aspirations set out in the Coast to Capital (C2C) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), and County Council's West Sussex Plan for 2017-2022. The Strategy is a key delivery tool for the Mid Sussex District Plan, and covers the same timeframe (2014-2031) as the Plan.
6. The Strategy sets out the vision for Mid Sussex as 'a vibrant and attractive place for businesses and people to grow and succeed'. The Strategy is structured around four Priority Themes of *places, premises, people and promotion*. Taken together these Themes set out the priority activities through the vision for a vibrant and growing Mid Sussex will be realised.
7. The Action Plan which accompanies the Strategy sets out the outcomes the Council intends to deliver and the actions to be taken with partners to secure those outcomes. In order that the Action Plan can be responsive to changes in regional and local economic circumstances it has a five year time frame that is 2018 to 2023. In addition, the Strategy will be monitored annually, and reported to the Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Resources, and Economic Growth.

### Consultation and Engagement over the Strategy and Action Plan

8. The process of developing the Strategy has been highly collaborative with extensive input from key partners and from the District's business community. Appendix 3 sets out a summary of the key stakeholders involved in the consultation and engagement process.
9. The substantive content of the Strategy was developed throughout 2017, with discussion of the Strategy and the supporting Economic Profile taking place at the Economic Development Members' Working Group meetings in January, April, July, October, and December 2017.
10. In addition two stakeholder events were held in early 2017, comprising a workshop for Mid Sussex District Councillors and a workshop for Parish and Town Councils.
11. Extensive engagement also took place with businesses across the District and with key public sector organisations including West Sussex County Council, the C2C LEP, and the Greater Brighton Economic Board. The businesses which were consulted are listed at Appendix 3.
12. The draft Action Plan, prepared during late 2017 was also shared with the local business associations, County, Town, and Parish Councils, and other partners. Responses to consultation on the draft Action Plan were received from two of the three Town Councils, from the Burgess Hill Business Parks Association and Haywards Heath Business Association, along with the Sussex Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses, and the Gatwick Diamond Initiative. This feedback has been incorporated into the Action Plan at Appendix 1.

### The Strategy and Action Plan

13. As noted in paragraph 6, the Strategy is structured around four Priority Themes of

*places, premises, people and promotion.* Within each of those themes the Action Plan sets out specific outcomes that the Council wishes to achieve. Those outcomes are summarised below.

Places:

- Viable and vibrant town and village centres with their own identity which meet the retail, leisure and employment needs of the growing population;
- The provision of business parks which provide an attractive environment which secure the retention and relocation of businesses;
- The delivery of infrastructure improvements which meet business needs.

Premises:

- An excellent supply of quality industrial and office space to meet the needs and demand across the District;
- An employment offer which is complementary across West Sussex County;
- The development of centres of excellence and clusters of specialist industries to facilitate retention, growth and inward investment into the District by these sectors;
- The development of hotel and conference facilities to meet the needs of visitors and the business community.

People:

- Residents have access to opportunities to develop the skills to succeed;
- Education and training providers are aware of the skills required to access jobs in the growing employment sectors and provide the courses to deliver this;
- There is provision of further education and higher education in the District;
- Ensuring businesses can access robust and effective advice and support for their stage of growth, including start-ups and scale-up businesses;
- Support and encourage local business growth through the provision of Council services and awarding of Council contracts;
- Improved workplace health.

Promotion:

- The benefits of the economic strategy are maximised by promoting the District's advantages clearly and widely, encouraging business retention and growth and appropriate inward investment.

## **Next Steps**

### **New Regeneration and Economy team**

14. To ensure that the Council has the resource to effectively drive forward the Strategy and Action Plan the Council has invested in a new Regeneration and Economy team that will provide dedicated staffing resource to drive forward the delivery of the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan. That team will provide the resource to deliver robust governance and management of key development projects and programmes across the district, as well as active engagement with partners to deliver the many collaborative actions within the Action Plan.

## **Launch and roll out**

15. Arrangements are currently being developed to launch the Strategy once it has been approved by Council. Specific details are still to be finalised, but key elements of the launch and roll-out will include:
- A launch event in May;
  - Active promotion of the Strategy through events held by the District's local business associations;
  - Working with regional partners including C2C and the Gatwick Diamond Initiative to promote the Strategy and making use of exhibitions including *Burgess Hill Means Business* to promote the Strategy.

## **Delivery**

16. The delivery of the Strategy will be a highly collaborative enterprise with extensive involvement of partners at local, County, and regional level. Whilst some actions within the Action Plan will be delivered solely by Mid Sussex District Council, many will be delivered collaboratively, and others will be led by partners with Mid Sussex District Council playing a key supporting role.
17. Examples of the collaborative activities featuring in the Action Plan include:
- Improvements to the public realm and enhancements to the economic resilience of our town centres, which will be led by Mid Sussex District Council in partnership with West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) and the Town and Parish Councils;
  - Promotion of Mid Sussex as a place for national and international investment, which will be led by Mid Sussex District Council with support from WSSCC, C2C LEP, the Greater Brighton Economic Board, Sussex Chamber of Commerce, and the Department for International Trade;
  - Many of the Burgess Hill infrastructure and sustainable transport actions will be led by WSSCC with support from Mid Sussex District Council, C2C LEP, and Burgess Hill Town Council.
18. Some of the actions will be new fixed-duration change initiatives such as the town centre regeneration in Burgess Hill. Others will represent continuations of rolling programmes of support, such as the actions focused on improving public realm, the actions to promote skills (especially in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects) and the actions to promote Mid Sussex as a place to do business for national and international investors. In those instances the actions have been developed in a way to complement and add value to existing activities.

## **Monitoring the success of the Strategy**

19. Progress in delivery of the strategy will be reported to the Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Resources, and Economic Growth through a formal annual monitoring report. This will be complemented by a range of additional reporting arrangements, which will include:
- Progress updates as part of the monthly Resources and Economic Growth Portfolio Briefings;
  - Periodic reporting to Council;

- Annual progress reporting against key measures of success, which will be included in the report to Scrutiny Committee.
20. A set of performance indicators has been developed to support the monitoring of the delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan. Some 39 indicators have been developed to monitor the delivery of the actions in a quantifiable way. Those indicators will all be monitored on an annual basis, and where appropriate, and where data availability allows, some will also be monitored half-yearly or quarterly.

### **Financial Implications**

21. The Council has invested some £187,000 in establishing a new Regeneration and Economy team. A key part of that team's role will be to provide a dedicated staffing resource to drive forward the delivery of the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan.
22. The delivery of the actions within the Strategy will be funded from within existing Council funding except where specifically noted. Bids for any additional resources will be made through the usual financial planning arrangements.

### **Risk Management Implications**

23. Actions through which the Strategy's outcomes will be delivered will be subject to proportionate risk management and monitoring arrangements, reflecting project and programme management best practice.

### **Equality and Customer Service Implications**

24. As part of the due diligence process all of the projects and development activities referenced in the strategy have been assessed for compliance with the Council's equality and diversity policies and key legislation, in particular the 2010 Equality Act. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed for the Strategy and is attached at Appendix 4.

### **Other Material Implications**

25. There are no other material implications.

### **Background papers**

- Appendix 1: Final Draft Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan  
Appendix 2: Economic Profile  
Appendix 3: Summary consultation and engagement schedule  
Appendix 4: Equalities Impact Assessment