
REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 17 SEPTEMBER 2014**PORTFOLIO: ENTERPRISE****REPORT FROM HEAD OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION****SUBJECT: ROCHFORD GROWTH STRATEGY ACTION PLAN****1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 That, subject to any comments by the Executive, the Rochford Growth Strategy 2014-2017 Action Plan (RGS17 Action Plan) be agreed as the framework of actions for delivering the RGS17 and promoting economic development in the District, and that updates and amendments, as required, be agreed by the Portfolio Holder for Enterprise to ensure that the document is kept up to date. (A copy of the RGS17 Action Plan is attached as appendix 1 to this report.)

2 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Rochford District Council Growth Strategy was approved in March 2014. Since the previous Economic Development Strategy (EDS 2009-2014) was approved there have been many changes to the arrangements and opportunities for delivering economic development, and the Rochford Growth Strategy seeks to reflect those changes in setting out a framework of work to achieve growth and development in the district.
- 2.2 The Government's decision, in 2010, to create a number of Local Enterprise Partnerships, with Essex being part of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), is a key consideration for the RGS17 to take into account along with Rochford's continued participation in the Thames Gateway South Essex.
- 2.3 The SELEP Strategic Economic Plan was submitted to the Government and funding was granted to SELEP for allocation to prioritised schemes, as submitted to them by District, Borough, and County Councils and regional partnerships, including Thames Gateway South Essex.
- 2.4 The draft RGS17 provides a strategic framework to show how we will deal with the opportunities flowing from the SELEP as well as identifying a number of more locally focussed schemes, including the development of the London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan business park.
- 2.5 It is also important to bear in mind that the RGS17 and its Action Plan is intended to be a flexible, living document which will be amended and updated on a regular basis. This is considered to be a better arrangement than agreeing a static, unchanging document for the next three years, particularly with the ongoing process of allocated funding being granted through SELEP

and other opportunities that may emerge through European fund programmes in particular.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Economic Development Unit is committed to delivering the RGS 17 and the RGS17 Action Plan, and all objectives are programmed into their work streams. There are no immediate resource implications arising from the approval of RGS17 Action Plan. There is a risk that without a clear growth strategy and action plan opportunities for investment and development in the District will be lost.

I confirm that the above recommendation does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.



SMT Lead Officer Signature: _____

Head of Planning and Transportation

Background Papers:-

Rochford Growth Strategy 2014-2017.

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Rochford Growth Strategy Action Plan

Corporate Strategy Economic Growth priorities	Rochford District Growth Strategy Priorities	Team Tasks	Economic Development Team Aim	Economic Development Team Actions	Timescale
Formation of Town Teams to promote the District town centres	Online Shopping	Promote the services and retail offers available in the District, and encourage retailers and businesses to widen their offer by offering training courses on social media and online marketing and sales	Manage the delivery of Rochford's Economic Development Strategy	Produce, review and monitor the Economic Development Strategy (Rochford Growth Strategy)	Annually
				Produce, review and monitor the Economic Development Strategy Action Plan (Rochford Growth Strategy)	Annually
			Provide a wide range of business support services	Business Support enquiries	On-going
				Assess the feasibility and viability of charging for RDC specialist services - for example accountancy/legal advice/specialist business advice	Nov-14
				Assess the costs and viability of training team members to give specialist business advice at a fee to businesses (impact on businesses in the District providing similar advice needs to be considered)	Nov-14

Corporate Strategy Economic Growth priorities	Rochford District Growth Strategy Priorities	Team Tasks	Economic Development Team Aim	Economic Development Team Actions	Timescale
				Update RDC Business website to reflect the business needs - provide a business focussed advice site on the RDC website (www.business.rochford.gov.uk etc.) to show that the Econ Dev team are business focussed and business facing	Nov-14
				Business Networking events	On-going
				Website updates	On-going
				Chambers Meetings	Quarterly
				Local Business Reps	Quarterly
			Assist in the co-ordination and delivery of Shop At My Local	Attend meetings and coordinate SAML activities - continue to investigate ways that this could be self funding	On-going
				Arrange networking meetings for SAML	On-going
				Arrange Pro Actions and other seminars	On-going
			Manage the Rochford Business Network	Update and maintain RBN database	On-going

Corporate Strategy Economic Growth priorities	Rochford District Growth Strategy Priorities	Team Tasks	Economic Development Team Aim	Economic Development Team Actions	Timescale
	Town Centres	Promote the use of town centres as community hubs - helping the town centres keep up with the demanding trend to become multi use places	Rayleigh Town Team	Ensure continued development of Rayleigh Town Team to develop an events programme, and set up as an independent body with a budget (funding to be sourced externally)	Dec-14
			Hockley and Rochford Town Team	Roll out Town Team model to Hockley and Rochford areas	Sep-14
			Promote development of the rural economy and tourism	Produce Tourism Strategy	Dec-14
				Organise and implement rural networking group (subject to viability)	Dec-14
			Support the implementation and delivery of the Councils core Strategy and area action plans	Feed into all planning policy documents	On-going
			Seek opportunities for inward investment in the District	Look into funding opportunities	On-going

Corporate Strategy Economic Growth priorities	Rochford District Growth Strategy Priorities	Team Tasks	Economic Development Team Aim	Economic Development Team Actions	Timescale
			Investigate and pursue opportunities for grants and financial investment through SELEP and European funding mechanisms	Attend and feed into SELEP processes to ensure all funding opportunities are taken	On-going
	Business Breakfasts and Networking Events	Host business breakfasts where indicated they are needed, and host a variety of training events in subjects indicated as needed by businesses attending the business summits	Organise and host three business breakfasts per year	Organise and host 3 business breakfasts per year with a minimum of 3 attendees. Econ Dev to agree speakers and themes	On-going
			Host 2 business summits per year to seek feedback from businesses	Organise and host 2 Business Summits, liaising with business community prior to the events	Nov-14
			Produce feedback, action plan and outcomes document from Business Summit for businesses	Provide notes from the meeting, and produce an action plan arising from the outcomes = update businesses on the progress of any actions monthly.	Nov-14
Encourage new business start up in the	Address the Skills Gap	Close working with JCP to ensure that all initiatives are	Communicate all JCP initiatives out to Rochford Business Network	Ensure that all JCP initiatives are communicated out to the Rochford Business Network at an appropriate time	On-going

Corporate Strategy Economic Growth priorities	Rochford District Growth Strategy Priorities	Team Tasks	Economic Development Team Aim	Economic Development Team Actions	Timescale
District		communicated out to the businesses and education providers in the locality	Promote JCP initiatives to all appropriate and suitable business queries	Inform all related business enquiries regarding suitable and appropriate JCP initiatives	On-going
			Host events with JCP in order to boost employment and reduce unemployment	Host joint events with, and/or ask JCP to attend any suitable events that we are hosting	On-going
	Low Carbon Business	Continue to promote the LCB initiative, and grants to local businesses	Host events with LCB to promote the initiative	Invite LCB representatives to attend suitable events that we are hosting in order to raise the profile of the initiative and reach more businesses	On-going
			Work with local businesses to enable them to save money and be more green by promoting the LCB initiative	Highlight to local businesses the benefits and money saving initiatives being offered as part of the LCB initiative and encourage as many businesses as possible to approach the LCB team for advice and/or funding	On-going

Corporate Strategy Economic Growth priorities	Rochford District Growth Strategy Priorities	Team Tasks	Economic Development Team Aim	Economic Development Team Actions	Timescale
Reduce the costs of operating a business in the District through targeted schemes and incentives	Business Engagement	Engage with the businesses through interacting with the three Chambers in the District, and assisting/advising wherever possible	Host regular meetings with the three Chambers representatives - both informally and formally	Meet the three Chambers representatives regularly, with various staff members including Portfolio Holders in order to build a good working relationship and to keep communication channels open	Quarterly
			Attend meetings hosted by the three Chambers to give a Council perspective and to provide information and advice, whilst building up a good working relationship	Attend meetings hosted by the three Chambers, including the joint event that is hosted by them. Prepare documents and information as requested by the Chamber representatives, and also disseminate any information that may be considered useful to them.	Quarterly
				Ensure that the Chambers and their members are aware of the services offered by Economic Development through the preparation of a leaflet advertising the services that we offer and through dissemination of this leaflet to Chambers, their members, and other Rochford District based businesses.	On-going
			Engage and attend/host events with Essex	Build up a working relationship with the Essex Chambers, and attend events hosted by them in	On-going

Corporate Strategy Economic Growth priorities	Rochford District Growth Strategy Priorities	Team Tasks	Economic Development Team Aim	Economic Development Team Actions	Timescale
			Chambers of Commerce	order to meet an increased number and wider variety of businesses, and highlight and promote the services that the Economic Development Team can offer	
		Host business summit to ascertain what it is the businesses would like from the Council and how we can best help them	Host 2 business summits per year to seek feedback from businesses	Organise and host 2 Business Summits, liaising with business community prior to the events	Nov-14
	Liaise with businesses prior to the Summit to ensure that they are engaged with the process		Following meeting with the three Rochford District based Chambers of Trade, future business summits will be progressed in collaboration with the businesses in the District, through the three Chambers	Nov-14	
	Provide feedback from the Summit and a list of key actions		Once each business summit has taken place, a feedback/outcomes document will be produced, with action plans, and regular feedback on progress being made	Nov-14	
Encourage Entrepreneurial talent		Produce an Employment Skills and Business Group Action	Working with stakeholders and ESB group attendees produce an Action Plan,	A wide range of stakeholders attend the meetings, with the knowledge and resources to identify any gaps in service provision	Dec-14

Corporate Strategy Economic Growth priorities	Rochford District Growth Strategy Priorities	Team Tasks	Economic Development Team Aim	Economic Development Team Actions	Timescale
		Plan	identifying key issues and ways that they can be mitigated.		
		Host a Young Entrepreneur event with all secondary schools in the District	Work with Enterprise in Education to deliver a Young Entrepreneur event with the secondary schools within the District enabling students to gain entrepreneurial experience and skills	Consider revisiting the project being given to the students in order to increase the level of experience and entrepreneurial skills being gained	Sep-14
			Primary Schools	Consider and investigate operating a similar scheme to the Young Entrepreneur awards (relevant to the ages and abilities) at primary schools to give younger pupils an earlier understanding of relevant skills	Dec-14

Corporate Strategy Economic Growth priorities	Rochford District Growth Strategy Priorities	Team Tasks	Economic Development Team Aim	Economic Development Team Actions	Timescale
			Work with schools re entrepreneurial skills including primary schools	Look at different ways the Economic Development team can work with schools in order to promote the requirements for entrepreneurial and employment based skills, and also provide students with opportunities to gain these skills and boost employment prospects. Initial ideas include involvement with town teams and events, fashion shows, appearance at events, events organisation, meet the employer events, speed dating style events for employers and students	Dec-14
			Look at further events/initiatives that we can work with schools and education providers on in order that we ensure students have access to jobs, and that employers have access to students with the right skillset	Investigate initiatives run by other providers and authorities and assess appropriateness and costs of RDC providing something similar	Dec-14
		Continue to be involved in the progress of the Whole	Attend meetings and disseminate information and opportunities as		On-going

Corporate Strategy Economic Growth priorities	Rochford District Growth Strategy Priorities	Team Tasks	Economic Development Team Aim	Economic Development Team Actions	Timescale
		Essex Community Budget	appropriate		
Support new start up business units	Start Up Units	Continue to investigate and support the implementation of Start Up units/Eco Enterprise Centre, with a favourable location to be determined.	Continue to support the implementation of an eco enterprise centre through the JAAP	As the JAAP progresses through the planning system work with providers, developers and Invest Essex to ensure that the delivery of an enterprise centre through the JAAP is a priority and can be delivered.	Autumn 14
			Look at alternative and additional locations for start up unit provision	Several locations have already been considered but as properties become vacant, suitable alternatives may arise which should be considered thoroughly	On-going
			Consult with businesses as to the requirements and need for such a service	Ask businesses further questions at the Business Summit as to what is needed, where and why	Nov-14
			Work with Invest Essex regarding the most suitable and appropriate location for such a service, and ascertaining exactly how we can provide it	Meet regularly with Invest Essex regarding Enterprise Centres and Start Up Units and ensure we are well supported	Sep-14

Corporate Strategy Economic Growth priorities	Rochford District Growth Strategy Priorities	Team Tasks	Economic Development Team Aim	Economic Development Team Actions	Timescale
Advance the business development aspects of the town centre plans		Work with the Planning Policy team to ensure that businesses are fully involved with the Area Action Plan process	Continue work with the Planning Policy team to ensure full business involvement with the Area Action Plans and business related documents and policies	Engage regularly with the business community regarding any planning related policies or schemes that may be of interest/impact businesses to ensure they are fully engaged with the planning process	On-going
Promote and develop the business park as part of the Joint Area Action Plan	JAAP	Work to ensure that opportunities afforded by the progress made with the JAAP are made available to local businesses	Engage with the business community at all stages of the JAAP process and ensure that not only are they aware of the opportunities being made available to them - but that they can receive assistance to make the most of them	Engage with the business community at all stages of the JAAP process and ensure that not only are they aware of the opportunities being made available to them - but that they can receive assistance to make the most of them	On-going
	Saxon Business Park	Ensure that existing businesses are aware of the new and	Engage with the business community at all stages of the JAAP process and	Engage with the business community at all stages of the JAAP process and ensure that not only are they aware of the opportunities being made	On-going

Corporate Strategy Economic Growth priorities	Rochford District Growth Strategy Priorities	Team Tasks	Economic Development Team Aim	Economic Development Team Actions	Timescale
		additional opportunities being offered by the new Business Park, and offer networking events, and training courses to strengthen the skills base	ensure that not only are they aware of the opportunities being made available to them - but that they can receive assistance to make the most of them	available to them - but that they can receive assistance to make the most of them	
Support rural businesses	Rural Business	Nearly a quarter of Rochford based businesses are classified as rural, and face a host of issues. Set up a network/forum/event to ascertain what the rural businesses need from us, and produce an action plan as to how we can provide it	Ensure that all businesses in the District - rural, urban, large and small - are aware of the work and services that the Economic Development team do, through providing all businesses with a leaflet advertising our services	Produce a leaflet advertising our services	Sep-14
				Disseminate to all businesses in the District through the Business database and through other methods (Business Rates)	Sep-14

Corporate Strategy Economic Growth priorities	Rochford District Growth Strategy Priorities	Team Tasks	Economic Development Team Aim	Economic Development Team Actions	Timescale
			Through the business summit, direct targeted questions to the rural business community and ascertain their needs in terms of Council services, and formulate an action plan around this	Through the business summit, direct targeted questions to the rural business community and ascertain their needs in terms of Council services, and formulate an action plan around this	Nov-14
Develop and deliver an empty shops strategy	Empty Shops Strategy	Produce an Empty Units Strategy to outline how the number of empty units in the District will be managed	Produce an empty units strategy	Provide vacancy survey reports on the town centres, villages, industrial areas and main high streets and feed this into the strategy	Quarterly
				Take into account work of the town teams and ensure this is accounted for within the Strategy	Dec-14
Work with commercial partners to enable a series of events across the District		Business Summit; Young Entrepreneur; Pro Actions; Essex Chambers; Three Chambers; UKTI; JCP; FSB; Business Breakfasts	Provide a series of events across the District in order to provide training, information and networking opportunities to the business community	Using feedback from the business summit, tailor events to meet the needs of businesses and try wherever possible to ensure that these events are free for attendees	Nov-14

Corporate Strategy Economic Growth priorities	Rochford District Growth Strategy Priorities	Team Tasks	Economic Development Team Aim	Economic Development Team Actions	Timescale
				Seek funding for events and initiatives to help businesses	On-going
Develop a Tourism Strategy in collaboration with Visit Essex to include Wallasea Island Wild Coast project	Tourism	Promote Rochford as a tourist destination through publicising the unique offering that Rochford District has.	Join Visit Essex and work with them to promote Rochford as a visitor location	Present business case for joining Visit Essex	Dependent on joining and Visit Essex event timetable
			Promote all events throughout the District through the RDC website, and through leaflets advertising the District	Through new business pages on the RDC website, promote all events. Through working with county wide EDOs promote all business related events	On-going
		Produce a tourism strategy to outline how the tourist information	Assess the feasibility and viability of providing a Tourism apprentice	Assess how a Tourism apprentice would fit to work streams, and how they would be managed	Sep-14

Corporate Strategy Economic Growth priorities	Rochford District Growth Strategy Priorities	Team Tasks	Economic Development Team Aim	Economic Development Team Actions	Timescale
		availability and quality will be improved	Assess the logistics of providing a Tourism apprentice - under which team, who would be responsible for them, who would allocate work, which team would fund them (if funding required)	Assess funding schemes for apprentices, and potential job descriptions	Sep-14
			Work with Leisure team and other key teams to produce a tourism strategy for the District (unless SMT make a decision regarding a lead team/officer for tourism)	Await guidance from SMT re responsibility for Tourism - set up a working group for all teams involved in tourism to produce strategy	Dec-14
Work with partners to seek financial resources from the South East Local Enterprise	SELEP	Assess options for accessing funding from SELEP and ensure that Rochford is well represented in any bids	Continue working with the TGSE steering group to promote the needs and schemes of the area	Attendance at TGSE meetings and input into funding scheme discussions to ensure that RDC is represented in any funding bids or documents	On-going

Corporate Strategy Economic Growth priorities	Rochford District Growth Strategy Priorities	Team Tasks	Economic Development Team Aim	Economic Development Team Actions	Timescale
Partnership (SELEP)			Ensure that RDC initiatives and needs are promoted through County and Regional documents to ensure we have maximum potential of accessing funding	Work with the ICS group (Essex Economic Growth Forum) and regional groups/meetings to ensure that RDC have access to all funding streams	On-going
	Importing and exporting	Promote overseas markets to Rochford businesses	Work with all importing / exporting companies to ensure that they have access to all opportunities available to them	Through joining Tractivity (budget dependent) assess those companies through the database that import and export and start to build a working relationship with them	Oct-14
			Ensure that through work with relevant organisations and parties (UKTI/Invest Essex/Essex Chambers) businesses based in Rochford are accessing the information and opportunities that are available to them.	Promote work done by partner organisations that will benefit businesses	Oct-14

Corporate Strategy Economic Growth priorities	Rochford District Growth Strategy Priorities	Team Tasks	Economic Development Team Aim	Economic Development Team Actions	Timescale
		Arrange for a UKTI workshop to be held to help promote import and export opportunities	Work with UKTI to promote their services to Rochford based businesses to enable Rochford based businesses to assess the potential for growth into exporting markets	Liaise with UKTI to arrange a suitable and appropriate workshop	Oct-14
		Work with Essex Chambers of Commerce to promote workshops, events and opportunities for local businesses	Through collaborative working with Essex Chambers of Commerce, and through the results gained from the business summit, ascertain the need for events/workshops/training required by businesses and assess how these needs can be met	Organise appropriate workshops to meet the business needs as outlined through the business summit outcomes	On-going
				Investigate events that are being hosted and organised by Essex Chambers and promote these (and all other business related events) to all businesses in the District	On-going

Corporate Strategy Economic Growth priorities	Rochford District Growth Strategy Priorities	Team Tasks	Economic Development Team Aim	Economic Development Team Actions	Timescale
	MedTech	Ensure that all opportunities offered by the locating of Med Tech in the District are made available to local businesses	Work in partnership with Med Tech and Southend Borough Council to deliver Med Tech and ensure that all opportunities that are available are taken by Rochford based businesses	Promote the Med Tech campus to all Rochford based businesses	On-going
				Work with Med Tech to ensure their procurement incorporates local businesses	On-going
				Work with local businesses to ensure that they are ready to take advantage of opportunities offered by Med Tech	On-going

Monitoring measures:

Measure	Timescale	Notes
LPI TBA – Number of empty units by town centre (Rayleigh Rochford Hockley)	Quarterly	Site visits carried out quarterly
LPI TBA – Number of empty units on industrial estates	Annually	Site visits carried out quarterly
LPI 559 – Total number of business properties	Annually	Sourced from ONS data or Business Rates data
LPI TBA - % of business properties that are empty	Annually	Devised from total number of businesses and total number of empty businesses
LPI TBA – New business floor space in the District	Annually	Taken from the Annual Monitoring Report produced by Policy Team
LPI 616 – Number of participants in the Rochford Business Network	Monthly	Monitored monthly
LPI 619 – Number of Job Seeker Allowance claimants in the District	Monthly	Sourced from NOMIS
LPI TBA – Number of businesses by sector	Quarterly	Sourced from ONS
LPI TBA – Rochford GDP	Annually	Sourced externally (no data has as yet been found on this)

Measure	Timescale	Notes
LPI TBA – Number of new businesses in District	Annually	Sourced from ONS/Business Rates data
LPI TBA – Number of closed business in Rochford	Annually	Sourced from ONS/Business rates data
LPI TBA – Business growth in District (number of new business-number of closed businesses)	Annually	Sourced from ONS/Business rates data
LPI TBA - Number of business enquiries received and successfully dealt with within a 4 week period	Monthly	Sourced internally
Host 3 business breakfasts per year with a minimum of 60 attendees	Annually	Sourced internally
Host 2 business summits per year with a minimum of 60 attendees	Annually	Sourced internally
Increase membership of RBN by 10% per annum	Annually	Sourced internally
Establish Rayleigh Town Team to be managing 4 events (minimum)per year with a stand alone bank account and clear set of roles and responsibilities	Annually	Sourced internally
Establish Rochford and Hockley Town Teams to be managing 4 events (minimum)per year with a stand alone bank account and clear set of roles and responsibilities	Annually	Sourced internally