

ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY 2017: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report introduces an implementation plan for noting by the Sub-Committee to support the Economic Growth Strategy 2017 approved by the Executive on 6 December 2017 (Key Decision Reference 11/17).

2 ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY 2017

Development of the Strategy

- 2.1 Rochford District forms part of South Essex, which is a functional economic area, with each local authority having differing economic compositions influenced by a range of factors including geography, population, infrastructure and economic drivers.
- 2.2 It is important that the District has a clear direction and priorities to achieve continued economic growth. The Economic Growth Strategy 2017 sets out the Council's framework for promoting economic development in the District; it is not, however, a planning document.
- 2.3 The local business community and other interested stakeholders were consulted on the draft strategy via the Council's website, both on the Business and 'Have Your Say' pages and through social media. The document was also circulated amongst local business groups, including the 3 local Chambers and Essex Chambers of Commerce, and to all business subscribers of the Council's e-bulletin service 'Tell Me More' (848 business news subscribers as of 21 November 2017). It was available to comment on during the month of October 2017.

Economic Growth Priorities

- 2.4 The Economic Growth Strategy 2017 identifies four main priorities of the Council's Economic Regeneration function. This is the business support, engagement and regeneration arm of the Strategic Planning and Economic Regeneration team. The four priorities identified within the strategy are as follows:-
- To encourage inward investment;
 - To support business growth and retention;
 - To develop skills and employability; and
 - To support new businesses.

Implementation Plan

- 2.5 At its meeting on 6 December 2017, the Executive was advised that an Implementation Plan would be prepared and reported back to the Executive at a later date. The implementation plan is scheduled to be considered by the Executive on 11 July 2018 (Key Decision Reference 7/18).
- 2.6 The implementation plan, attached at Appendix A for reference, has now been drafted and sets out 10 key performance indicators that the Economic Regeneration function will be measured against. These range from the number of businesses engaged with, to the number of events hosted, to the number of informative e-bulletins circulated to the 1051 business subscribers to 'Tell Me More' (as of 13 June 2018). The key actions include:-
- Attending relevant business events that showcase the district;
 - Developing a customer relationship management system, to enable growth and retention of businesses;
 - Supporting and encouraging the development of enterprise centres offering flexible and affordable work and meeting space within the District to new and start-up businesses; and
 - Being responsive to planning consultations to support business growth and investment and being pro-active in resisting residential conversions of commercial space wherever possible.

3 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Without an implementation plan to accompany the EGS17, the Council would have no clear direction of travel to deliver the priorities set out in the strategy. There is a risk that, without specific planned projects, opportunities for investment and development in the District will be lost and risk damaging the Council's reputation within the business community.
- 3.2 The implementation plan establishes a framework to guide how the Economic Growth budget will be spent within this financial year 2018/19. Following this plan, ensures efficient monitoring of this budget to achieve best value for money and prevent both an underspend and overspend of existing budget.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This work has been achieved within existing budgetary constraints and through officer's current workloads. There are no immediate resource implications arising from the approval of the Implementation Plan as the temporary Regeneration Officer is now in post to assist with delivery. Any initiatives or schemes linked to the implementation plan which require resources which cannot be met from the existing department budget will be brought to the Council for a decision.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed as no decision is being made.

7 RECOMMENDATION

7.1 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee **RESOLVES**

That the implementation plan, attached at Appendix A, be noted.



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Background Papers:-

Economic Growth Strategy 2017.

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