

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**8 SEPTEMBER 2021**

### **ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY ACTION PLAN ANNUAL UPDATE 2021**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To provide the annual update to Members on progress of the interventions and actions identified in the delivery of the Economic Growth Strategy 2021-2026. Further, to identify changes, including new actions for the next 12 months in the delivery of Economic Growth for the District.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

2.1. In October 2019, Members of the Council identified a need to develop a new Economic Growth Strategy for the District that provided the priorities for growth and the interventions that the Council would undertake to deliver. The 2020 Global Pandemic provided a challenge to both national, regional and local economic development that would have challenges and implications on what was need, and how growth would be delivered.

2.2. In June 2020 the Business Manager - Economic Growth started employment with Newark & Sherwood District Council and immediately started working on developing an Economic Recovery Plan that would be a foundation stone in the a new Economic Growth Strategy. In November 2020, Members of the Economic Development Committee agreed a new [Economic Growth Strategy 2021-2026](#) that identified the following five priorities:

1. A prioritisation of work activity on Newark as the main town and centre for the district and a focus on key areas of deprivation.
2. A focus on digital connectivity and infrastructure to areas with poorest connectivity or potential for impactful growth with the local economy.
3. Accelerating economic growth and resilience in manufacturing, construction, accommodation, food, retail, health and social care.
4. Accelerating the upskilling and reskilling of people into education, employment or apprenticeships with a focus on young people and older workers.
5. Diversifying Town Centres to have increased residential, higher footfall and an increased diversity of offer including culture, leisure and health.

2.3 As part of the Strategy, the delivery of the priorities required the Council to undertake different roles, from direct delivery, collaboration, partnership working, commissioning, influence and lobbying. Further, the Council sought to identify the approach of setting out our intent, providing detail on how growth would be implemented and to show what the intended impact would be. To do this a comprehensive Action Plan was created at **Appendix A** of the Strategy, which would set out what the Council would actively do. On approval of the Economic Growth Strategy, the Business Manager (Economic Growth) stated that an annual report would be provided, that showed the progress against the identified actions. This updated annual report is attached as Appendix A.

## **Economic Growth Action Plan – A Review of September 2020 – August 2021:**

2.4 The last 12 months have been challenging for the local and UK economy, the Council, and importantly many residents and businesses within the District. The pandemic and lockdowns have meant that significant parts of the economy has been closed and resilience has been a priority. In undertaking to support the local economy a priority of provision of grants to businesses has been provided with the council administering well over £50m of grant to the local economy. There are other notable successes, including:

- Securing the £25m Newark Town Fund, and starting work on the required business cases for the 9 priority projects, as well as ensuring the governance and delivery mechanisms are created and maintained
- Supporting the safe re-opening of the high streets in summer and autumn 2020 as well as Spring 2021
- Working with Lincoln College Group to deliver a new Construction College
- Creation of a High Street Diversification Fund that supported over 130 independent retailers
- Provision of 'staycation' and 'door steps days out' campaigns to support our visitor economy strategy.
- Creation of a Business Growth & Resilience Programme that will deliver support and growth to over 50 businesses in 2021
- Delivery of the Kickstart scheme with partners at the College and DWP supporting over 80 young people into work placements.
- Delivery of five new footfall cameras within Newark's Heritage Action Zone funding to monitor and evaluate footfall, dwell time and visitor numbers.
- A series of business support events on procurement, business growth, intellectual property, investment. Further support with information, advice and guidance including seeking grant funds to over 150 businesses locally.
- Ensuring the safe re-opening of the Buttermarket and securing Specsavers, resulting in the full letting of all ground floor units. Work with preferred tenants for the upper floors continues.
- Completion of the former Robin Hood Hotel development and associated opening of the 66 bed Travelodge and availability of 3 no, ground floor commercial units.

2.5 There has also been progress on larger infrastructure programmes and projects including:

- Influencing and engaging on the ongoing development of the A46 Newark Northern Bypass with Highways England on behalf of the Department for Transport
- Submission (outcome pending) of a £20m bid for the completion of the Newark Southern Link Road (SLR)
- Supporting NCC colleagues in the development and securing of the Non Strategic Roads Network funds for the A614/617 works, including at Ollerton Roundabout
- The progression of the Stodman Street Scheme (former Marks & Spencer store), with all of the preliminary works to get the scheme to planning application stage complete. Further remedial works to remove the asbestos have been undertaken.
- The start of redevelopment of Newark Gateway through the demolition of the old Cattle Market and liaison with the Lincoln College Group to develop plans for the International Air and Space Training Institute (IASTI®) Newark.

2.6 Officers have also undertaken significant work on policy, evidence, bidding, commissioning and preparation work including:

- The support and creation of a Nottinghamshire Economic Recovery Strategy.
- Creation of a business newsletter that communicates directly to businesses the services provided news, events and support on offer.
- The creation of a comprehensive database of large businesses in Newark & Sherwood.
- The support to retailer and business groups provided through representation, information and support.
- The creation and facilitation of a local Employment & Skills Board (ESB) with improved co-ordination in the design and delivery of new skills programmes.
- The facilitation, organisation, governance and assurance in the creation of the Town Board. Further the administration and programme management of the Town Funds and commissioning of Full Business Cases for priority projects.
- The creation of a commercial property database, hosting site visits, supporting inward investment and creation of the 'invest in Newark & Sherwood' campaign
- Monitoring and evaluation of data including collation, understanding and analysis, presentation of metrics on economic recovery, economic growth, tourism and regeneration.

2.7 There are also programmes and projects that have not been progressed or as successful, this includes:

- The Youth Futures Bid with other Nottinghamshire Councils not being successful that was seeking enhanced skills and employment activities.
- Limited progress on key account management activities with business due to the pandemic (this matter will be addressed via the additional Economic Growth officer post approved by the Committee with recruitment pending)

2.8 There have been other work programmes and challenges that have required Officer time and capacity on in the delivery of economic growth that were unknown or not stated in the report of November 2020, these include:

- Influence and design in the commissioning of the Community Renewal Fund programme that will deliver, if successful (decision from government pending) over £3m worth of investment from government into the Newark and Sherwood area by March 2022.
- Levelling Up Funds (LUF); A comprehensive bid for up to £20m for the Southern Link Road and a the ongoing development of a future LUF bid for Sherwood which will include facilitation, organisation, governance and management of a 'Sherwood Board'
- The organisation and roll out of the Welcome Back Fund, including Service Level Agreements to Town and Parish Councils providing funding to reopen the high streets.

### **3.0 Proposals**

3.1 As the Council starts to deliver into the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the Economic Growth Strategy there are identified actions that will be undertaken by Officers in 2021/22. There are also likely to be emerging opportunities and threats that need to be considered, principally amongst this will be the requirement for officer to consider the future LUF funds offer to Sherwood, the implications and offer that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) may provide, and the potential state of the economy as furlough and government support ends.

3.2 The Action Plan will be continually reviewed and new activities identified will be informed to members. It is therefore proposed that the Business Manager (Economic Growth & Visitor Economy) continue to provide monthly updates to the Portfolio Holder and the next annual report be prepared for September 2022.

#### **4.0 Equalities Implications**

4.1 There are no equalities implications within the detail of the report. However, an equalities impact assessment will be undertaken on all infrastructure projects led by the Council.

#### **5.0 Digital Implications**

5.1 Many of the projects and interventions have bespoke impacts to consider, mitigate, and develop. Each will be considered and addressed on its merits.

#### **6.0 Financial Implications**

6.1 None beyond those identified for individual programs, projects, and interventions.

#### **7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives**

7.1 Work on the ongoing review and implementation of the Economic Growth Strategy and Recovery Plan contributes to all Community Plan objectives.

#### **8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**That Members note the updates provided and proposed direction of travel in continuing to deliver the Economic Growth Strategy for the Districts businesses and residents.**

#### **Reason for Recommendation**

**To support the resiliency and opportunities to flourish for residents and businesses through the implementation of the Economic Growth Strategy.**

#### **Background Papers**

Nil

For further information please contact Neil Cuttell on Ext 5842

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