

CABINET

Agenda Item: 7

Ward: District Wide

Portfolio: Economic Growth

Report Author(s): Portfolio Holder – Economic Growth – Cllr Tom Killen **Meeting Date:** 10/07/2017

SUBJECT: Draft Mendip Economic Development Strategy 2017-2020

Internal Use Only: Please complete sign off boxes below prior to submission to Democratic Services			
Report Sign off	Seen by:	Name	Date
	Chief Executive/ Deputy Chief Executive(s)	Tracy Aarons	27/06/17
	Legal	N/A	
	Finance	N/A	
	Group Manager	Ian Bowen	27/06/17
	Portfolio Holder	Cllr Tom Killen	28/06/17
	Ward Member(s)	N/A	
Summary:	<p>The previous Economic Development Strategy for Mendip was approved by Cabinet in January 2013 and has guided the Council's activities in supporting economic growth across the District between 2013 and 2016.</p> <p>The draft Mendip Economic Development Strategy 2017-2020 seeks to build on this work, and will form the strategic framework for the delivery of future growth activities across the District, in a rapidly changing economic landscape.</p>		
Recommendation:	<p>Members of Cabinet are asked to approve the draft Mendip Economic Development Strategy 2017-2020.</p>		
Direct and/or indirect impact on service delivery to our customers and communities:	<p>The Strategy is designed to support local communities and individuals to maximise their future potential, and create opportunities for all.</p>		
Contribution to Corporate Priorities:	<p>The Strategy is designed to support delivery of the Council's priority for Growth, as identified in the 2017-2020 Corporate Plan 'Shaping the District.'</p>		
Legal Implications:	<p>There are no legal implications associated directly with this Strategy.</p>		

	In future there may be legal implications for projects forming part of the delivery of the Strategy, and therefore legal advice will be obtained as the need arises.
Financial Implications:	Operational resource implications have been taken into account in preparing the Strategy. Specific funding for any new project proposals and/or investment by the Council will be explored with the Portfolio Holder as they arise.
Impact on Service Plans:	The strategic action plans in the draft Mendip Economic Development Strategy 2017-2020 will provide the framework for the development of the Economic Development operation plan. Cross-departmental actions and strategic input into other service plans, will be carried out in consultation with the Group Managers.
Value for Money:	By providing appropriate investment of resources, value for money may be achieved, both through the contribution of additional business rates income in the future to deliver public services, and through the increased job prospects and prosperity of local residents.
Equalities Implications:	The Strategy is designed to maximise potential growth, jobs and skills opportunities for all residents within the local community.
Risk Assessment and Adverse Impact on Corporate Actions:	<p>Failing to support the local economy would have an adverse impact on the Corporate Priority for Growth. The future financial sustainability and service delivery by the Council will be directly impacted by business rate income.</p> <p>Further risk assessments, including reputational risk, will be conducted as individual project plans emerge.</p>
Scrutiny Recommendation (if any)	The draft Mendip Economic Development Strategy was noted and endorsed by Scrutiny Board on 26 th June 2017.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The revised draft of the Mendip Economic Development Strategy 2017-2020, attached as Appendix A, is designed to guide priorities and focus engagement with partners and stakeholders as the local economy responds to fresh challenges arising out of Brexit and other local opportunities. The Strategy is proposed to cover the period 2017-2020 and will be reviewed and updated at the end of that time in light of the UK's emerging trade agreements and other issues as the country withdraws from the EU as currently planned by 2019.
- 1.2 The draft Mendip EDS 2017-2020 has a clear focus to build on the progress and achievements of the previous strategy (2013-2016) and strong ambitions to support the conditions for:
- a supportive environment for new business start-ups and SMEs
 - a more highly skilled workforce and retention of young people
 - increased awareness of local job and skills opportunities
 - better links between industry and education
 - expansion and retention of local business
 - attraction of new business investment
 - better infrastructure including broadband and mobile coverage
 - thriving market towns and a resilient rural economy

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Section 1 of the Strategy reflects on the national and regional economic context and sets out key local activity in the context of the emerging regional strategies including the Heart of the South West LEP Productivity Plan and the recently updated Somerset Growth Plan.
- 2.2 Sections 2-5 of the Strategy reviews progress against the previous Strategy's objectives and reflects further on Mendip's economic Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. A business survey was also circulated to approximately 4,000 businesses across the District, and the issues and challenges for Mendip's economy have been discussed extensively with partners and stakeholders involved in local economic growth. These include Town Councils, Chambers of Commerce, Mendip Tourism Limited, Somerset County Council, the Department of Work & Pensions and a variety of local businesses covering a broad range of business sectors and activities.
- 2.3 Section 6 presents the proposed Way Forward and Strategic Action Plans setting out the high level priorities and key initiatives we propose to take in supporting local economic growth and business success across the District. Responding to local issues, the revised Strategy is structured around the following Strategic Aims and Objectives:
- 2.4 **Business:**
- 2.4.1 To grow and develop our **Enterprise Mendip** programme - to support new start-ups and promote leadership, management and training opportunities,

as well as mentoring, innovation and business support activities across our diverse micro and SME base.

2.4.2 To work with significant, high growth, and key sector employers across the district to promote strategic opportunities for business retention and expansion, collaboration, innovation and international trade.

2.5 **Place:**

2.5.1 To communicate and expand our **Invest in Mendip** approach, by providing positive planning for competitive employment locations, premises, connectivity and skills to attract new, high quality inward investment, improve prospects for expanding and relocating local employers and create better job opportunities for all.

2.5.2 To drive new town working groups to explore strategic economic plans and encourage a destination management approach, reflecting the diverse strengths and identities of our market towns and the positive benefits of our visitor economy.

2.5.3 To champion improved transport, broadband and mobile connectivity to benefit Mendip's economy and address strategic network issues, by lobbying on future priorities for rural infrastructure funding.

2.6 **People:**

2.6.1 To develop an **Opportunity Mendip** initiative to promote career opportunities for all across Mendip; broadening and strengthening industry and education links across the district to support young people, and helping to create and communicate a range of opportunities for individuals of all ages and abilities aspiring to enter or re-enter the workplace.

2.6.2 To attract and develop skills within the local labour market to realise opportunities within the digital market-place and strengthen a culture of innovation across all sectors of our economy.

2.7 Our primary aim is to create the local conditions for businesses to grow and flourish, creating opportunities for all. Full realisation of the Mendip Economic Development Strategy will depend on committed leadership and direction from Mendip District Council working in strong partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, project partners and local organisations.

2.8 Once approved the Mendip Economic Development Strategy 2017-20 will be supported by an action plan that will lay out the actions we intend to take to deliver the aspirations and strategic priorities outlined in the strategy. This plan will identify the activities, key performance indicators and milestones we will use to show that we are successfully implementing the strategy. Where appropriate, these will also be aligned with the Somerset Growth Plan. Progress will be reported to key local partners and business organisations in addition to the Economic Development Group and Cabinet.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 The Strategy is designed to support delivery of the Council's priority for Growth, as identified in the 2017-2020 Corporate Plan 'Shaping the District.' A review of the Mendip Economic Development Strategy was therefore deemed appropriate, to follow on from the previous strategy which ran from 2013-2016.
- 3.2 Against a backdrop of the referendum and a new period of economic uncertainty, there have been calls both regionally from the LEPs, and from central Government, for local authorities to articulate their key issues and economic challenges.
- 3.3 In this context a decision was taken to review the strategy for a further period from 2017-2020, building on progress made to date, but also incorporating a new and stronger emphasis on future skill needs, and building better links between industry and education locally, among other priorities.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Members of Cabinet are asked to approve the Mendip Economic Development Strategy 2017-2020.

5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 By setting out key aims and ambitions to support future economic growth, the Mendip Economic Development Strategy 2017-20 will help the Council to meet its leadership role with businesses, partners and stakeholders, both locally and regionally. This will help to improve the delivery of stronger economic outcomes both for businesses and our local communities.
- 5.2. By adopting the proposed strategy, the Council will strengthen its ability to deliver one of the Council's key Corporate Priorities.

Contact Officer: Jenny Pitcher
Extension: 07827 983155
E-mail: jenny.pitcher@mendip.gov.uk

List of background Papers:

Baseline Socio-Economic Report Aug 2016, produced by PER Consulting, commissioned by Mendip District Council [online] <http://www.mendip.gov.uk/drafteds>

'Building our Industrial Strategy' Green Paper, published Jan 2017, Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy [online] <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/building-our-industrial-strategy>

'Devolution for the Heart of the South West: A Prospectus for Productivity', published July 2016, Heart of the South West LEP [online] <http://heartofswlep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Heart-of-the-South-West-Devolution-Prospectus.pdf>

'The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union' White Paper, published Feb 2017 and updated May 2017, Department for Exiting the European Union [online] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-united-kingdoms-exit-from-and-new-partnership-with-the-european-union-white-paper>