

Economic Development Strategy (2019 – 2028) draft for public consultation

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Purpose of the Report

1. This report presents the text version of the Council's Economic Development Strategy (2019 – 2028) draft for public consultation.
2. **Due to the size of the document, it will be published in electronic format only** as a supplement to this Agenda. If you require a paper copy please contact the Democratic Services Specialist on 01935 462148.

Forward Plan

3. This report appears on the District Executive Forward Plan and was scheduled for November 2018. However, it was deferred to permit proper scrutiny of the processes and data used in the preparation of the Strategy by Scrutiny Committee.

Public Interest

4. The Economic Development Strategy (EDS) 2019-28 sets out the vision, key outcomes, priority themes and action plan to deliver economic development over the next ten years.

Recommendations

5. That District Executive:
 - i) Agree the draft Economic Development Strategy 2019 - 2028 for public consultation;
 - ii) Delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder to make amendments to the EDS in consultation with the appropriate Director/s, and
 - iii) That unless there are substantial changes as a result of the consultation, agree that the draft Strategy go before Full Council for agreement following the end of the consultation period.

Background

6. The Council's Economic Development Strategy 2019 - 2028 is a key document. It replaces previous versions of the strategy and sets out a rationale for the economic development aims, objectives and activities of the Council in the years ahead.
7. At the time of writing, national and local economies are experiencing times of continued uncertainty. A local economy does not operate in isolation of national and regional economies and thus our strategy is carefully aligned with wider economic strategies that will impact on South Somerset.

8. In order to prioritise our work for the local economy we have undertaken an extensive analysis of the available local economic data and trends. We have taken account of what the businesses of South Somerset tell us about the economy and have established what is currently working well for them whilst paying careful attention to what the current and future difficulties might be. We have also taken note of the aspirations aims and goals of our partner bodies who help define and shape the economy of South Somerset, so that we can work with them and help achieve our goals.
9. A good economic development strategy recognises that it is not possible to tackle all economic issues but helps us to prioritise our areas of work. This will help us to direct our resources into economic development activities where we can make a genuine and positive difference.
10. As its title implies, an Economic Development Strategy provides high-level strategic direction to our areas of work. It is not intended that the document provides a lengthy or exhaustive list of all our future activities. The strategy will help us to decide what our areas of work should be and to help ensure that our activities do align with our overall plan. Of equal importance will be the Delivery Plans that sit beneath this Strategy. These Plans will indicate the timescales and outcomes required to deliver the individual tasks.

Report Detail

11. In March 2018 the District Council procured the services of Chilmark Consulting to work with officers to produce this Strategy. Chilmark have strong record of researching and preparing economic strategy documents.

Research

12. The Strategy has been underpinned by thorough research of the relevant databases and policy documents. The latest available data was used to help develop an assessment of the local economy including skills provision. This enabled a District economic summary assessment to be prepared. This analysis revealed the key characteristics and performance of South Somerset in terms of population, employment structure, business demography, productivity and pay, skills and training, housing profile, place making and infrastructure, plus health and prosperity measures. The key data sources and the rationale for using them are set out in the appendices of the Strategy.
13. We have also ensured that the Economic Development Strategy is soundly aligned to other SSDC Policy Documents. This ensures close synergy with our Council Plan and Local Plan.
14. To provide a wider context for the current economic situation and likely projected growth, the EDS draws on the Heart of the South West LEP (HotSW) Strategic Economic Plan 2014-30; HotSW Productivity Plan 2018-36 and the Somerset Growth Plan. The EDS is also informed by central government strategies for industry and productivity. All of this helps to ensure that we work in a common strategic direction, it also helps us to make the most of partnership working and creates the best opportunities to attract external funding for economic projects.

Consultation

15. Our consultations included key employers in the District. Many responded positively and were actively involved, but some chose not to participate. Manufacturing and engineering consultees invited to engage included: Thales, TODS Aerospace, Numatic, Leonardo, Yeovil College, RNAS Yeovilton, WEAFF and iAero.

16. Engagement with smaller businesses was largely undertaken through representative Chambers of Trade and Business Associations in the District. These organisations included: Federation of Small Businesses, CBI, Institute of Directors, Somerset Chamber of Commerce, Yeovil Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Bruton Chamber of Commerce, Wincanton Chamber of Commerce, Ilminster Chamber, National Farmers Union. Additionally, we met directly with numerous smaller businesses during the Chard, Yeovil and Wincanton regeneration programme work and have fed that information and economic development matters and concerns into the EDS.
17. Our approach to stakeholder engagement was focused on greater depth rather than breadth of input. Contact methods included direct telephone contact with the named business representative; email follow-up; followed by structured in depth telephone or face-to-face. This approach (rather than a wide ranging business survey) is considered to be a more effective way of securing an in-depth analysis and understanding of business issues.
18. Two stakeholder half-day workshop events were set up and businesses and partner authorities/agencies were invited. Attendance and take-up for the half-day workshops was limited and one workshop was held.
19. Four Area based workshops were conducted for SSDC Members. These were held either before or after the Area Committees to ensure the best opportunity for members to attend.
20. A question and answer session was held with Scrutiny Committee with pre-prepared questions and answers plus additional questioning. This session was in addition to the normal cycle of reports that are taken to Scrutiny Committee before the District Executive Committee.

EDS Priority Actions

21. The priorities in the EDS are derived from the identification of 'Golden Opportunities' for the District. These reflect our analysis of quantitative economic data and are critically informed by the stakeholder consultee discussions held. Our review and analysis also enabled us to determine that the emerging priorities were in-line with wider good practice, policies and thinking. The Strategy then develops the six Priority Themes within which individual primary actions/projects and year one delivery milestones are identified.
22. The purpose of the Strategy is not to provide a lengthy or exhaustive list of all our future activities, but to provide a framework that guides and prioritises our delivery plans.
23. The EDS makes an important distinction between projects in which we will be the lead partner and those where we will assist other partners in the lead role. It is important that the EDS recognises what can be realistically achieved whilst ensuring that the Council does not duplicate the efforts and resources of other partners. Sound partnership working will ensure that the resources of all partners are deployed to best effect.

Monitoring and Management

24. The Strategy covers a ten year period, yet uncertainties over the future of the economy demand that we build flexibility into the document. The Strategy includes a proportionate degree of monitoring of our activities to enable us to respond quickly to the changing needs and demands that undoubtedly lie ahead. It is intended to be a document that provides strategic and robust direction whilst retaining our ability to be flexible. We will report quarterly and annually in line with the District Council Plan.

25. The EDS sets out key outcomes and identifies success measures under each priority theme. Initial project milestones are also set out and will be refined as each action/project moves forward to delivery. Delivery Plans will set out more detail and the appropriate performance monitoring and review mechanisms, which will be aligned to our Council Plan and any other relevant reporting cycles.
26. EDS delivery progress will be monitored by the Strategic Development Board. This protocol was agreed by Full Council in May 2018. Progress may then be reported to Area Committees if required. Financial updates on (an as yet to be agreed) EDS Delivery Budget will be provided regularly to the District Executive Committee, as part of the routine reporting procedure.

Published Format of the Strategy

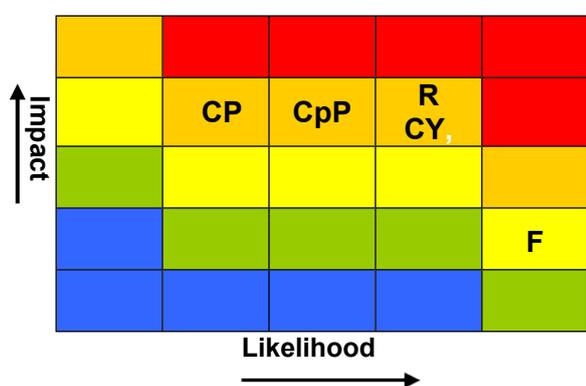
27. The main strategy document is not intended to be longer than 25 pages of text, covering our vision, key outcomes, priority themes and strategic action plan. This main document can be used separately from the three appendices that accompany it. The consultation document will be in DTP (Desk Top Published) format including pictures and graphics.
28. The final document will be available on-line. We do not intend to undertake a major print run of the document and will encourage the use of online or electronic versions of the document. Copies of the Strategy can be printed if required.

Financial Implications

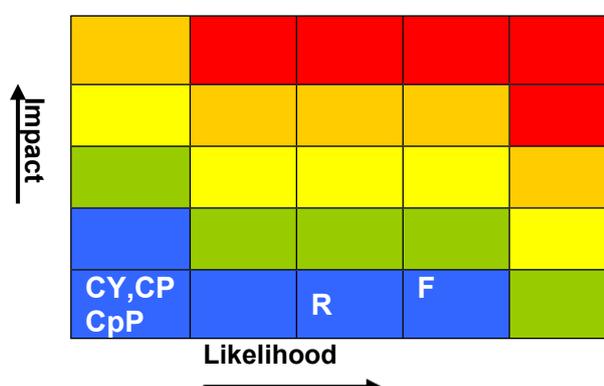
29. There are no financial implications that relate directly to this report. However an EDS budget for 2019/20 will be prepared to support delivery plans.

Risk Matrix

Risk Profile before officer recommendations



Risk Profile after officer recommendations



Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

Council Plan Implications

30. The Economic Development Strategy will be a key policy document for the Council. It will help to deliver 5 of the 8 priority projects listed in the Council Plan (2018/19) and contribute to all 6 Key Performance Indicators (2016 -21) used by Council to measure the local economy. It also aligns with the draft Council Plan for 2019/20.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

31. There are no implications at Strategic Level associated with this report. However, implications will be assessed for all projects included in the delivery plan.

Equality and Diversity Implications

32. Following consultation with our relevant specialist officer (Specialist - Strategic Planning, Strategy and Commissioning) it was agreed that it would be difficult to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment on such a wide ranging strategic document. It was however recommended that the work included in the delivery plans will to be considered for individual EQAs. Also, targeted consultation with groups representing protected characteristics will be undertaken as part of the EDS public consultation.

Privacy Impact Assessment

33. The economic data used in the preparation of this Strategy is sourced from documents that are already in the public domain.

34. Where information has been obtained through consultation with individuals or organisations we have:

- only collected the data necessary for the production of the EDS
- secured permission to use the information and opinions
- acted in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018

Background Papers

- SSDC Economic Development Strategy Public Consultation Draft - December 2018 **available electronically on the Mod.Gov app or on SSDC website at this link:**
<http://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=136&Year=0>
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