

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

10 MARCH 2022

Report Title	Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan			
Purpose of Report	To approve the Economic Development Strategy and supporting Action Plan for the District.			
Decision(s)	The Committee RESOLVES to: a. Approve the Economic Development Strategy set out in Appendix 1 b. Approve the Economic Development Action Plan set out in Appendix 2			
Consultation and Feedback	Consultation and discussions have taken place with members of the Strategic Leadership Team, Regeneration and Investment Board, town and parish councils, local businesses and business groups.			
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Options	Option 1: to do nothing. This is not recommended as it could lead to the Council being without a clearly articulated strategy and objectives for supporting the local economy. Option 2: to agree or make amendments to the Strategy and Action Plan.			
Background Papers	None			
Appendices	Appendix 1 – Economic Development Strategy Appendix 2 – Economic Development Action Plan Appendix 3 – Consultation responses Appendix 4 – Policy Context Appendix 5 - SWOT			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

A Draft Economic Development Strategy was approved by Strategy & Resources Committee in November 2021 for a period of public consultation. The Economic

Development Strategy sets out the vision for the future, what the Council will do, how we will work with our partners and what the outcomes will be.

2. ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 2.1 The Draft Strategy was subject to a period of public consultation between December 2021 and February 2022. This involved a press release and publishing the documentation on the Council's website and on social media pages such as LinkedIn and via email to a mailing list with the request for the Strategy to be shared to a wider audience.
- 2.2 Responses have been received from neighbouring local authorities, GFirstLEP, local businesses, social enterprises including The Grace Network, DMO – Visit Gloucestershire, further and higher education providers, Hartpury University and SGS College, parish councils in the District, and members of public. A list of responses received is set out in Appendix 3.

3. A SUMMARY OF AMENDMENTS TO THE STRATEGY

- 3.1 Officers have considered the responses received, and are recommending that the following amendments are made to the strategy, to take account of the issues raised:
 - 3.1.1 Data set sources to be included on page three and four, the profile of our local economy
 - 3.1.2 Further detail included on page 10, highlighting sustainable agriculture practices that are taking place
 - 3.1.3 Amendments to the section "Developing an Action Plan" on page 21 and the action plan to be included as appendix to the Strategy
 - 3.1.4 Updating the dataset to most recent releases from open data sets such as ONS (Office of National Statistics)
 - 3.1.5 Included commitment to support local markets
 - 3.1.6 Following comments from parishes, removal of focussed priority areas for cluster groups due to confusion.
- 3.2 The Action Plan is a living document, and has more focus on the short-term ambitions that will help the Council meet its immediate targets. The long-term ambitions set out in the Strategy are highly ambitious.

4. ACTION PLAN

- 4.1 During the period of public consultation, a ten-year Action Plan has been developed. The Action Plan identifies how Stroud District Council will work towards being an exemplar and meet the objectives and ambitions of the Strategy.
- 4.2 The Action Plan has been developed with a focus on the commitments set out in the Economic Development Strategy, this has focussed on short-term actions.
- 4.3 The actions outlined have considered the current objectives of both the Council Plan and the 2030 Strategy, how the actions of the Economic Development Strategy can ensure we meet the shared ambitions with a matrix approach. The Action Plan has been developed

on a One Council basis, to ensure the actions reflect the work programmes of all relevant services across the Council.

- 4.4 The Action Plan considers ways the Council will work with partners to meet our objectives to be encouragers and enablers. Feedback from the Strategy consultation included the need for more emphasis on the objectives that can be met through partnership work.
- 4.5 The Action Plan is a living document, able to be updated as we transition through the recovery of the economy from the Coronavirus pandemic and priorities of local businesses change.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Following consideration by Committee, it is proposed to publish the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan and develop relevant indicators and performance targets. Progress of the Action Plan will be reported as part of the Council's performance monitoring framework.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications

At its meeting in July 2021 Strategy and Resources Committee agreed to ringfence £386k of Business Rate Pool funding towards economic development works. This funding can be allocated to fund the staff resource required to deliver on the Strategy and action plan.

Where specific actions or projects require additional resources in excess of those sums already allocated, they would be the subject of a separate member decision.

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6.2 Legal Implications

None directly arising from this report.

Section 1 Localism Act 2011 provides an overarching power of general competence which includes economic development of the council's area.

Legal advice and support will be provided, when appropriate, as there are specific legal powers and obligations applicable to the delivery of some of the commitments and actions in the proposed Strategy and Action Plan respectively.

One Legal

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6.3 Equality Implications

The Council's key objective of improving equality of opportunity and access to economic opportunities is set out within the Strategy. Detailed equality implications relating to the key projects and activities to be developed through the Action Plan will be assessed at

that time. Equality impact assessments will be carried out for any services, projects or other schemes that have the potential to impact on communities and/or staff on the grounds of protected characteristics.

6.4 **Environmental Implications**

Environmental sustainability and carbon neutrality are key objectives of the Strategy and supporting the green economy is identified as a priority area for the Strategy. A number of key commitments seek to reduce the carbon and ecological impacts of our local economy.