

**Economic Development Strategy Consultation Review**

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	<i>John Foster</i> – Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	<i>Chris Inwood</i> , Regeneration and Economic Development Manager
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

**Executive Summary**

To provide a summary of responses to the draft Economic Development Strategy following the Strategy's public consultation over the summer, and consider the proposed amendments to it to enable the committee to adopt the Economic Development Strategy and five-year action plan.

**Purpose of Report**

*Decision – to approve the Economic Development Strategy and five-year action plan for full adoption.*

**This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

That approval is given to adopt the Economic Development Strategy and five-year action plan.

**Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee	14 September 2021

# Economic Development Strategy Consultation Review

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	<p>The relevant Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure</li> <li>• A Thriving Place</li> </ul>	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage is Respected</li> <li>• Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced</li> <li>• Deprivation is reduced and Social Mobility is Improved</li> <li>• Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected</li> </ul> <p>An adopted EDS supports the following cross cutting objectives: 'Heritage is Respected' the brief includes a section on building on our current rich assets. Health Inequalities are addressed and reduced: The economy is one of if not the biggest determining factor in reducing health inequalities 'Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved' the brief includes a section on Skills and progression in work and our consultants will liaise with the councils Inclusion Board as part of the consultation process. 'Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected' the brief includes encouraging businesses to reduce their carbon footprint, waste, and energy consumption.</p>	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
<b>Risk Management</b>	Without an adopted EDS the Council is at risk of not reaching its targets on Inclusive growth and post COVID 19 Economic Recovery.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
<b>Financial</b>	The Kent Business Rates Pool and the Capital Programme will be the main sources of funding to deliver the Strategy. Funding will be sought from external sources, partnerships and COVID 19 Grant.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

<b>Staffing</b>	We will deliver the recommendation with our current staffing	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
<b>Legal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The objectives and actions outlined in the State of the Nation report are matters which the Council is permitted to undertake under the Functions Regulations and section 111(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, which empowers the Council to do anything (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.</li> <li>• Under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 local authorities have a duty to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness".</li> <li>• The review of the Economic Development Strategy demonstrates compliance with the statutory duty. It is a function of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee to oversee the development, review and implementation of the Council's Economic Development Strategy and, therefore, it falls to this Committee to consider the recommendations in this report.</li> </ul>	Legal Team
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	The data will be held and processed in accordance with the data protection principles contained in the Data Protection Act 2018.	Policy and Information Team
<b>Equalities</b>	An equalities impact assessment should be completed as part of the development of the strategy.	Senior Policy and Engagement Officer
<b>Public Health</b>	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	A vibrant economy, high employment rates, and well planned and designed towns with a strong	Head of Regeneration

	sense of place can help to reduce incidences of crime and disorder	and Economic Development
<b>Procurement</b>	<i>On accepting the recommendations, the Council will then follow procurement exercises where required. We will complete those exercises in line with financial procedure rules.</i>	Head of Service & Section 151 Officer

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 The Economic Development Strategy is designed to be high-level, acting as a positioning document to bid for future external funding support and shape the direction of the Economic Development teams focus over the next five-year period.

2.2 Following ERL committee on the 20 April 2021, it was resolved that:

- The comments on the draft Economic Development Strategy be noted and the five priorities endorsed;
- The public consultation programme for the revision of the draft Economic Development Strategy following the local elections in May 2021 be approved;
- The draft Economic Development Strategy be reviewed to reflect feedback from the public consultation;
- The completed Economic Development Strategy and five-year action plan be presented to the Committee in September 2021 for full adoption.

2.3 ERL's comments were included in the consultation draft that went to public consultation.

## 3. CONSULTATION DRAFT ECONOMIC VISION AND FIVE PRIORITIES

3.1 The council consulted on the following economic vision and five priorities. As a reminder these are set out below.

3.2 **Economic Vision:** By 2030 Maidstone will excel as the 'Business Capital of Kent', defined by a strong entrepreneurial spirit, an unrivalled urban-rural economic offer, and which offers opportunities for all of our communities.

3.3 Five Priorities:

**Priority 1: Open for Business:**

Maximising our economic role at the heart of Kent to create a positive and entrepreneurial environment in which businesses can grow and thrive.

**Priority 2: A greener, more productive economic base:**

Diversifying our economic base and boosting productivity by growing high value activity, building on existing strengths and growth opportunities.

**Priority 3: A thriving rural economy:**

Realising the potential of our rural assets and overcoming barriers to growth through enhanced infrastructure and connectivity.

**Priority 4: Inclusive Growth:**

Taking an inclusive approach to growth to ensure that all of our communities can benefit from economic success and prosperity.

**Priority 5: Destination Maidstone town centre:**

Reimagining Maidstone's town centre as a vibrant, mixed use destination modern county town.

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**4. PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROGRAMME:**

- 4.1 Following the May Local Elections, the Economic Development Strategy Public Consultation ran for an eight-week period ending on the 7<sup>th</sup> July. Due to Covid 19 restrictions at the time we were unable to undertake any face-to-face activity.
  - 4.2 The Economic Development Team worked closely with the Councils Communications Team to promote the consultation programme. A press release was published on the 12<sup>th</sup> May which was circulated to all Members and published on the Councils consultation webpage.
  - 4.3 The Economic Development Team promoted the consultation to all businesses on the Councils e-business newsletter data base (3,234) and used their social media accounts to encourage wider participation from local businesses, residents, and interest groups.
  - 4.4 The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager made direct contact with our key stakeholders involved in the original consultation workshops and 121 interviews.
  - 4.5 These stakeholders included Kent County Council's Director for Economic Development, The Greater North Kent Partnership (formerly the Thamesgateway Kent Partnership), South East Local Enterprise Partnership, Kent and Medway Growth Hub, Locate In Kent, Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, Kent and Medway Federation of Small Business, Maidstone Economic Business Partnership and Mid Kent College.
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**5. CONSULTATION RESPONSES AND REVIEW:**

- 5.1 The council received five responses from key stakeholders, Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, Kent and Medway Federation of Small Business, Mid Kent College, The Education People (Member of Maidstone Economic Business Partnership), and Kent County Council's Director for Economic Development. One special interest group Maidstone Museum Foundation, and two residents.

- 5.2 In the main responders believed that the Council had identified the correct Economic Vision, Priorities and Actions for the strategy. They highlighted a number of suggested amendments where the Council could put further emphasis to realise the strategy's goals and future partnership working.
- 5.3 Litchfield's have provided a summary report of responses with suggested actions for the Council to review for potential inclusion in the final Economic Development Strategy for adoption.
- 5.4 The summary report was reviewed by Regeneration and Economic Development Manager with a briefing held for the Chair of ERL comments and views on the 18<sup>th</sup> August, and Corporate Leadership Team on the 17<sup>th</sup> August.
- 5.5 The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager collated these views and shared with Litchfield's to be included in the final recommended Economic Development Strategy. The full summary of responses and review comments can be found in appendix two.

## **6. PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

6.1 In February 2019 Full Council, in response to a motion, noted the considerable progress made in Economic Development over the previous 5 years including projects at Maidstone East, Brunswick Street, Union Street, the Business Terrace and the Kent Medical Campus and agreed that looking forward to the update of the Economic Development Strategy in the future, the Council should promote a positive role in Economic Development which can be achieved through encouraging and directly investing in the arts, parks and open spaces improvements, the destination management plan, the visitor and leisure economy , promoting low or carbon neutral growth and building on our current rich assets. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 17.5, the motion, was referred to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration. Subsequently, at its meeting on 27 March 2019, the Policy and Resources Committee referred the motion to ERL Committee. ERL debated the motion on the 4th July 2019 and finally approved that: This Council notes the considerable progress made in economic development over the last 5 years including:

- Maidstone East
- The Business Terrace
- Kent Medical Campus Innovation Centre
- Public Realm improvements
- Investment in infrastructure e.g., Bridge Gyrotory, Cycle Path etc...

In the review of the Council's Economic Development Strategy, planned for later this year, the Council resolves to ensure that, through encouraging and enabling direct investment, the positive role that the following can offer in supporting the local economy is recognised:

- Place making initiatives such as improvements to parks and open spaces, arts and cultural developments, public realm.
- The visitor and leisure economy, events and festivals.
- Protecting well located and attractive employment space and bringing forward new employment space.

- Encouraging businesses to reduce their carbon footprint, waste and energy consumption.

Following ERL on the 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021 it was resolved that:

- The public consultation programme for the revision of the draft Economic Development Strategy following the local elections in May 2021 be approved;
- The comments on the draft Economic Development Strategy be noted and the five priorities endorsed.
- The draft Economic Development Strategy be reviewed to reflect feedback from the public consultation;
- The completed Economic Development Strategy and five-year action plan be presented to the Committee in September 2021 for full adoption

## **7. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

7.1 Approve the Economic Development Strategy and five- year action plan for full adoption.

7.2 Do nothing, without an adopted Economic Development Strategy the Council is a risk of not reaching its targets on Inclusive Growth and post COVID 19 economic recovery.

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## **8. PREFERRED OPTION**

- Approve the Economic Development Strategy and five- year action plan for full adoption.

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## **9. RISK**

- Without an adopted Economic Development Strategy, the Council is at risk of not reaching its targets on Inclusive Growth and post COVID 19 economic recovery.

## **10. APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1 Final Economic Development Strategy and five-year action plan.
- Appendix 2 Consultation response and review actions summary.