

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO CABINET

25 March 2015

<u>Title:</u>	Newcastle Economic Development Strategy: Year Three Review and Year Four Action Plan
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<u>Portfolio:</u>	Economic Development, Town Centres, Business and Customer Services
<u>Ward(s) affected:</u>	All

Purpose of the Report

To review progress made in taking forward the Borough's Economic Development Strategy, in particular by reviewing the progress in Year Three and considering the actions proposed in the Year Four Action Plan.

Recommendations

That the review of the Economic Development Strategy Year Three Action Plan be noted and that the Year Four Action Plan be approved following consideration of the Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendations.

Reasons

By reviewing progress against last year's action plan and proposing an up to date prioritised range of actions for the forthcoming year the Council can ensure that the aims of the strategy are converted into deliverable actions. The proposed action plan has been subjected to scrutiny by the Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee and appropriate recommendations will have been put forward to Cabinet before the final Action Plan is approved.

1. Background

- 1.1 Cabinet agreed the Economic Development Strategy for the Borough in 2012 following consultation with partners and the local business community on an earlier draft. Printed copies of the strategy, illustrated with plans and photographs, have since been widely disseminated, including to Cabinet Members. The approved strategy has a five year timescale (2012-17) and included the preparation of an Action Plan for Year One (2012-13) which identified a number of concrete actions which could be taken in a shorter time scale.
- 1.2 This report provides a review of the Year Three Action Plan (2014-15) and (in part informed by this) sets out a Year Four Action Plan (2015-16) for your consideration and approval. By

its nature this Action Plan is fairly detailed and for this reason is contained in appendix form. The draft action plan is to be considered by the Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee on 18th March and a supplementary report will be given on any recommended revisions they may make.

2. **Issues**

- 2.1 Strategy is inherently about making choices – making the case for why certain actions should be prioritised over others and to what intended effect. The annual action plans on the other hand are more about adding the practical delivery detail to those priorities, setting out what actions are to be taken, so that the actions proposed can be seen in the context of the broader objectives. The annual review also provides an opportunity to consider any new initiatives from Government or a key partner or changes in the economic or financial landscape and seek to capitalise on them. It may also suggest changes in emphasis or priority (and perhaps what might no longer be pursued so that new things might be tried).

3. **Options Considered**

- 3.1 When the preparation of a new Economic Development Strategy was first discussed, it was initially proposed to provide a ‘mid-term report’ half way through the five year horizon of the strategy to review progress made and consider whether any changes in emphasis (or even direction) were required. Cabinet instead requested an annual review in the form of an annual Action Plan in which progress made in the previous year’s Action Plan was reviewed and a detailed Action Plan for the following year drafted and agreed. This report follows that approach.

4. **Proposal**

- 4.1 The appendix to this report contains a review of the Year Three Action Plan (2014-15) and sets out a proposed Year Four Action Plan (2015-16) for your consideration and approval. The annual Action Plans set out in more detail how the aims and objectives agreed will be carried out. These are based around the four themes of:
- Promoting enterprise and supporting local businesses to grow;
 - Improving the skills of the local workforce;
 - Marketing and development, and;
 - Strengthening the vitality and appeal of the town centres.

5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

- 5.1 To continue to act as a basis for dialogue with other partners to encourage complementary action and to direct the activity of the Regeneration and Economic Development Team.

6. **Outcomes Linked to Corporate Priorities**

- 6.1 The Economic Development Strategy falls within the Borough Council’s corporate priority of ‘Creating a Borough of Opportunity’.

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 7.1 It is not a statutory requirement on the Council to prepare an Economic Development Strategy though it is good practice to do so and to take decisions against the background of agreed priorities, up to date data and following consultation with partners. In view of the relevant powers and duties placed upon Local Authorities in relation to economic well-being it is appropriate for the Council to have an up to date action plan.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

8.1 No differential impact has been identified. Specific actions which are designed to improve the prospects of particular sections of the community (for instance, those without work) will be subject to subsequent reports, which may themselves require an EIA.

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

9.1 Where actions are proposed which require proposals for expenditure these will be the subject of specific reports to Cabinet.

Key actions highlighted within the Action Plan include some committed Council expenditure:

Action	Budget
Support for the TCP Enterprize competition	£7k in business rate support has been budgeted for.
Training and Business Support for existing market traders	Market Support Budget.
Work in partnership with Make It to attract new employers to the Borough and support existing businesses to expand	£13,000 contribution from service budget.
Secure agreement with HDD for the development of the Ryecroft site	Budgetary provision has been made for the necessary work to bring the project forward to the stage of a developer agreement; should the scheme proceed further funding may be required and this would be subject to further Cabinet approval.
Procure external advice to carry out Keele Options appraisal and master planning study	Up to £139,280 is allocated for the Council's contribution.
Use of the Enjoy website and promotion for tourism from the Destination Management Partnership	£3,000 contribution from service budget.
Support NTCP to apply for further funding from Arts Council England for an event in 2015	£1,000 match-funding from the Strategic Investment Framework.
Work with the County Council to refurbish two town centre subways – Friar Street and Pool Dam	S106-funded from the development of Aldi.

10. **Major Risks**

10.1 These will be considered on a project by project basis.

11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 The strategy will affect more than two wards of the Borough. Approval for specific expenditure will be subject to more detailed later reports.

12. **Earlier Cabinet Resolutions**

- 12.1 At its meeting on 14th March 2012, Cabinet considered the draft strategy; following final modifications the final strategy was adopted by Cabinet in May 2012.
- 12.2 At its meeting in September 2013 Cabinet adopted the Year One Action Plan Review 2012-13 and Year Two 2013-14 Action Plan.
- 12.3 At its meeting 18 June 2014 Cabinet adopted the Year Two Action Plan Review 2013 -14 and Year Three Action Plan 2014 – 15.
- 13. **List of Appendices**
 - 13.1 Year Three Action Plan Review 2014-15 and Draft 2015-16 Action Plan.
- 14. **Background Documents**
 - 14.1 Newcastle Economic Development Strategy 2012-17