

**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO CABINET**

**16 March 2016**

**Title:** Newcastle Economic Development Strategy: Year Four Review and Year Five Action Plan

**Submitted by:** Neale Clifton

**Principal author:** Kim Graham

**Portfolio:** Policy, People and Partnerships

**Ward(s) affected:** 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 Four and considering the actions proposed in the Year Five, the final year of the Action Plan.

**Recommendations**

**That the review of the Economic Development Strategy Year Four Action Plan be noted and that the Year Five Action Plan is considered by the Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

**To authorise the Executive Director for Regeneration and Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Policy People and Partnership to make any amendments following the recommendations of the Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

**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 realisable actions.

**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 Four Action Plan (2015-16) and (in part informed by this) sets out a Year Five Action Plan (2016-17) for your consideration and approval. By its nature this Action Plan is fairly detailed and for this reason is contained in appendix form.

## 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 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 may also take the opportunity to consider new initiatives from Government such as Local Growth Fund (LGF) and from Europe such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) or a key partner or changes in the economic or financial landscape and capitalise on them. It may also suggest changes in emphasis or priority.

## 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 Four Action Plan (2015-16) and sets out a proposed Year Five Action Plan (2016-17) 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.

- 4.2 The draft action plan is timetabled to be considered by the Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. It would be appropriate for Cabinet to agree to the overall Action Plan subject to consideration being given to any recommendations from the Scrutiny meeting. In order to enable Scrutiny recommendations to be taken into account it is recommended that the Executive Director for Regeneration and Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Policy People and Partnership is authorised to make any amendments.

## 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 in line with the relevant powers and duties placed upon Local Authorities in the Local Government Act 2000 relating to promotion or improvement of the economic well-being of their area and to take decisions against the background of agreed priorities, up to date data and following consultation with partners.

## 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). Where new projects are proposed these 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 being supported by the Council's resources include:

- o Work in partnership with Make It to attract new employers to the Borough and support existing businesses to expand
- o Procure consultants to undertake work on the Keele master plan.
- o Support BID to apply for further funding from Arts Council England for an event in 2016
- o Support Go Kids Grove to apply for Heritage Lottery funding to design and create an interactive map to promote Kids Grove heritage and services to canal users
- o Introduce software to modernise payment methods for market traders
- o Use the Enjoy website and promotion for tourism from the Destination Management Partnership

## 10. **Major Risks**

- 10.1 These will be dealt with project by project.

## 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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

- 12.4 At its meeting 25 March 2015 Cabinet adopted the Year Three Action Plan Review 2014 -15 and Year Four Action Plan 2015 - 16

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 Year Four Action Plan Review 2015-16 and Draft 2016-17 Action Plan.

14. **Background Documents**

14.1 Newcastle Economic Development Strategy 2012-17