

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO

CABINET 21 March 2018

**REPORT ON THE COMMENTS RECEIVED FOLLOWING CONSULTATION
ON THE DRAFT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2018 - 23**

Submitted by: Executive Director (Regeneration and Development)

Principal author: Regeneration and Economic Development Manager

Portfolio: Corporate and Service Improvement, People and Partnerships

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To report comments received on the draft Economic Development Strategy 2018-23, following consultation on the draft, and to consider recommended changes to the document in light of these comments.

Recommendations

- (a) That the draft strategy, as amended, be approved.**
- (b) That Cabinet authorise officers to publish the approved strategy subject to inclusion of appropriate images and photographs, along with any minor textual changes as may be required, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.**
- (c) That officers report back to the next meeting of Cabinet with a draft Year 1 action plan.**

Reasons

To strengthen the strategy and to ensure that it better reflects stakeholders' views.

1. Background

- 1.1 Cabinet approved a first draft of a new Economic Development Strategy for the Borough at its meeting on 4 January 2018 and agreed that this should form the basis of consultation with partners, LAPs, the local business community and other interested groups and stakeholders.
- 1.2 The consultation process began on 15 January 2018 and allowed six weeks for comment (closing on 1 March). The consultation has been promoted on the Council's website and sent directly to our partners and wider community through the LAPs.

2. **Comments received from the consultation process**

- 2.1 62 comments have been received and these are summarised in Appendix 1 to this report. The source of the responses is not identified (to avoid unintended bias). Nearly all responses have come via the Council's website and one by separate email. Officers have provided a summary response to each of the points raised and updated the Strategy where it has been considered appropriate (see Appendix 1).

3. **Options considered**

- 3.1 Members need to consider whether to approve the draft Strategy as originally prepared or to make revisions to it, taking account of the consultation responses received.

4. **Preferred option**

- 4.1 Members are recommended to approve the revised Strategy and to resolve that officers report back with a Year 1 action plan to the next available meeting of Cabinet. Before publication of the Strategy a range of photographs and illustrations will be added; this will help to animate the document. In addition the document will need to be formatted appropriately and minor textual changes may be required (no changes to the substance of the approved text); these will be undertaken in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

5. **Outcomes Linked to Corporate Priorities**

- 5.1 The strategy has been prepared in response to the Council's priority of 'Creating a Borough of Opportunity'.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 6.1 Aside from the well-being powers provided for in the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) there is not a strict requirement on the Council to prepare an economic development strategy. However, developing policies, committing resources and making investment against a rational set of agreed objectives is good business practice and having an adopted strategy is a good place to start when it comes to encouraging partner organisations to share objectives and develop concrete plans.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 No differential impact has been identified.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 8.1 There are staff resource implications arising from the preparation of the strategy and these are built into current work programmes.

9. **Major Risks**

- 9.1 The principal risk of *not* preparing a strategy for the promotion of economic development is that staff resources are committed and financial investment made without reference to the things which the Council and its partners

consider to be most important. This would most likely cause the Council's actions to be ineffective (or at best, not as effective as could be).

- 9.2 There is no obvious risk to preparing a strategy in itself, other than perhaps raising expectations from Members, staff and partners that everything in it will be achieved – but this simply reflects the inherent risk of setting objectives and targets. The strategy itself does not commit the Council to specific actions; these will be the subject of more detailed reports including future annual action plans.

10. **Key Decision Information**

- 10.1 This strategy will impact on two or more wards and has been included in the Forward Plan.

11. **Earlier Cabinet Resolutions**

- 11.1 January 4th 2018.

- That the Draft Economic Development Strategy, taking into account the views of the Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee and subject to modifications suggested by Cabinet, be used as a basis for consulting with partner organisations, local businesses and wider community.
- That comments received are reported back for Cabinets consideration.

12. **List of Appendices**

Appendix 1: Draft Economic Development Strategy 2018 - 2023, Summary of Responses.

Appendix 2: Updated draft Economic Development Strategy.