

# TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Executive
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	7 June 2017
<b>Subject:</b>	Economic Development and Tourism Strategy
<b>Report of:</b>	Andy Sanders, Community and Economic Development Manager
<b>Corporate Lead:</b>	Annette Roberts, Head of Development Services
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Lead Member for Economic Development and Promotion
<b>Number of Appendices:</b>	One

## **Executive Summary:**

In June 2015 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved to establish a Working Group to develop a new Economic Development and Tourism Strategy.

This report outlines the Working Group's progress and asks the Executive Committee to adopt the Strategy, following its approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2 May 2017.

## **Recommendation:**

- 1. To adopt the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy.**
- 2. To approve the amendments to the Business Grant scheme as outlined in Paragraphs 3.3 to 3.5.**

## **Reasons for Recommendation:**

The Economic Development and Tourism Strategy is an essential component of the Council's delivery, supporting business growth across the Borough. It will set the context within which the Borough Council will deliver its Economic Development and Tourism Service. Economic development is one of the four main themes with the Council's current Council Plan.

## **Resource Implications:**

Regarding the Strategy, there are no resource implications directly resulting from the report, although the Strategy will set the priorities for staff involved in the Economic Development and Tourism service.

The amendments to the Business Grant scheme alter the amounts that can be awarded.

## **Legal Implications:**

No legal implications directly resulting from the report recommendation; consideration will be given to any specific legal implications arising from specific workstreams.

## **Risk Management Implications:**

There are no risk management implications associated with the report.

## **Performance Management Follow-up:**

The new Strategy includes an action plan with clear local indicators by which success will be

monitored and reported back through the quarterly Performance Tracker.

**Environmental Implications:**

None directly associated with this report.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

**1.1** Tewkesbury Borough Council has had a proactive approach to supporting local business growth, which has been a central priority within the Council Plan since 2011.

**1.2** The previous Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 'Regenerating and Growing the Economy' came to the end of its lifespan and, in order to reflect the changing nature of the local economy and the impact on businesses, the Council required a new strategy.

**1.3** In June 2015 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved to establish a Working Group to develop a new Strategy. The Working Group met on a number of occasions and considered a number of issues and opportunities, incorporating:

- national focus on growth;
- that this was a crux time for Tewkesbury Borough in terms of economic potential e.g. through the M5 Growth Zone, the Network Business Growth Hub;
- the current service delivery and opportunities for growth;
- analysis of tourism and economy data;
- review of the Business Grants Scheme;
- presentations from key partners, including the Local Enterprise Partnership;
- presentation from the Chief Executive on the major infrastructure projects;
- external funding, including a presentation of DEFRA LEADER funding; and
- the group also met at Gloucestershire Airport and received a presentation and tour from the Managing Director.

**1.4** A key element for the Working Group was the commissioning and development of an employment land review, economic assessment and business survey. This work was carried out by Bruton Knowles and funded through the Large Sites Infrastructure Fund. This study has been fundamental in the development of the strategy and providing key recommendations for the borough council to take forward. The findings from this work were presented to Members through a seminar.

**1.5** The Council has a comparably small and dedicated Economic Development and Tourism resource but has maximised this capacity by working creatively and in partnership to 'punch above its weight' e.g. working with the County's Economic Development unit and Cotswold Tourism. The new Strategy reflects the value of future partnership development. The Strategy also recognises the role of the Tewkesbury Growth Hub in promoting economic development and tourism in the Borough.

## **2.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM STRATEGY**

- 2.1** As a result of the Working Group discussions, and in particular taking account of the Bruton Knowles findings, a draft Strategy has been produced. The Strategy provides strategic direction up to 2021. The Strategy can be found in Appendix 1.
- 2.2** The Working Group focussed on making Tewkesbury Borough the engine room for Gloucestershire's growth. To enable this to happen five key priorities emerged:
1. employment land planning;
  2. transport infrastructure improvement;
  3. business growth support;
  4. promoting Tewkesbury Borough; and
  5. employability, education and training
- 2.3** Under each of these five headings were a number of objectives, which can be found in the Strategy. In addition, a number of annual actions have been outlined under each objective.
- 2.4** Although the Strategy's legacy for Economic Development and Tourism will be over a sustained period of time, the Council will need to address its priorities now, to enable opportunities for growth to be maximised. The action plan reflects longer term projects, as well as initiatives that can be developed immediately. The actions will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that they are still relevant and achievable. The Council is embarking on an exciting period of growth and opportunities may present themselves, which weren't originally envisaged. Therefore the Strategy will need to be flexible and dynamic in order to adapt to changing circumstances.
- 2.5** Following the work of the Working Group in putting together these objectives, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorsed the Strategy at its meeting on 2 May 2017, incorporating some minor amendments. The Executive Committee is now asked to adopt the Strategy.

## **3.0 BUSINESS SUPPORT GRANTS**

- 3.1** Through the Working Group, one of the issues discussed included the Business Support Grant Scheme. The Scheme includes a programme of three business support grants, aimed at:
- supporting businesses that operate from home;
  - encouraging new business start-ups; and
  - helping existing businesses to develop and grow.

Since the inception of the scheme in 2012, 193 grants have been awarded.

- 3.2** The Working Group were very supportive of the Scheme as it was seen as an important way of meeting the needs of the of the business community, supporting economic vitality and encouraging growth. In addition, feedback from business had shown the value of the Scheme and feedback from Central Government via the Start-up Business Tsar has shown that they were impressed with the Council's pro-active support.

**3.3** The Working Group proposed that the three categories of grant and that the decision making process remain the same, through the Lead Members for Economic Development and Promotion, and the Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management, in consultation with the Head of Development Services and the Head of Finance and Resources. The development of the detailed schemes and application processes also remains with them. However, on this occasion the Working Group requested that the amendments to the Scheme were endorsed by Executive Committee.

**3.4** The Working Group also discussed the need to increase the amounts to enable the Council to provide increased support. It would also help to attract business to the area, rather than locating elsewhere. Therefore, the Working Group proposed that the award amounts and match funding were amended as follows:

- The Working from Home Grant to increase from £250 to £500, with 50% match funding.
- The Start-Up Grant to increase from £750 to £1,000, with 50% (currently 25%) match funding.
- The 'Growing Business Grant' to increase from £1000 to £1,500, with 50% match funding.

**3.5** The Working Group confirmed that the aims of the scheme would be to:

- facilitate an environment for Small/Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to set up and grow;
- generate employment opportunities;
- encourage occupation of premises;
- support local retail and business centres; and
- promote increased entrepreneurship and investment.

The Working Group also confirmed that the Start-Up Business and Growing Business Grant could provide financial support for a business initiative designed to generate growth within the business. It was also agreed to involve local Members where local knowledge could assist with particular issues.

Therefore, it is requested that the proposed amendments to the Business Support Scheme are endorsed by the Executive Committee.

#### **4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

**4.1** No other options considered.

#### **5.0 CONSULTATION**

**5.1** Consultation took place with the local business community, business networks and relevant partner organisations in the development of the Bruton Knowles report.

**5.2** The draft strategy has been considered, and subsequently supported, by the LEP and Business West.

#### **6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**

**5.1** Council Plan.

Tourism and Economic Development Strategy 2012 – 2015, Regenerating and Growing the Economy.

**6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

6.1 Government's National Growth Policy.

**7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)**

7.1 None directly associated with this report.

**8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)**

8.1 None directly associated with this report. The Strategy Review will include sustainability implications.

**9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)**

9.1 None directly associated with this report.

**10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS**

10.1 None.

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**Background Papers:** Overview and Scrutiny, 2 May 2017

**Contact Officer:** Andy Sanders, Community and Economic Development Manager  
Tel: 01684 272094 Email: [andy.sanders@teWKesbury.gov.uk](mailto:andy.sanders@teWKesbury.gov.uk)

**Appendices:** Appendix1 – Strategy and Action Plan