

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny
Date of Meeting:	23 November 2021
Subject:	Economic Development and Tourism Strategy
Report of:	Community and Economic Development Manager / Growth and Enterprise Manager
Corporate Lead:	Head of Development Services
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Economic Development/Promotion
Number of Appendices:	2

Executive Summary:

In June 2017 the Executive Committee resolved to adopt the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2017-2021.

This report outlines progress to date on the year four action plan, as well as outlining the actions for 2021/22.

Recommendation:

To CONSIDER the progress made against the delivery of the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy during year four and the actions identified for 2021/22.

Reasons for Recommendation:

To inform Members on progress of the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, provide actions for 2021/22 and provide opportunities for the Committee to scrutinise the action plan.

Due to the impact of the pandemic, and staff being redeployed onto COVID-19 response work, this update report was delayed last year from June 2020 to November 2020. To retain a consistent, annual approach this update is being reported in November 2021. The action plan also reflects both the response and recovery work to help support local businesses and the economy.

The Economic Development and Tourism Strategy is an essential component of the Council's delivery, supporting business growth across the borough. The strategy sets the context within which the Borough Council will deliver its Economic Development and Tourism Service, as well as influencing other departments. Economic Development is one of the key themes within 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 and actions for staff involved in the Economic Development and Tourism service. Delivery of the strategy also involves resources from other services across the Council, including Development Management, Planning Policy and the Garden Town Team. It also involves support from external partners.

Legal Implications:

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

Risk Management Implications:

None directly.

Performance Management Follow-up:

Annual progress is reported through the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Performance management is also reported through the quarterly performance tracker.

Environmental Implications:

None directly.

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** In 2017, following the commissioning and development of an employment land review, economic assessment and business survey through Bruton Knowles, the Council approved a new Economic Development and Tourism Strategy.
- 1.3** The Strategy provides five key priorities:
1. Employment Land Planning.
 2. Transport Infrastructure Improvement.
 3. Business Growth Support.
 4. Promoting Tewkesbury Borough.
 5. Employability, Education and Training
- 1.4** 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.
- 1.5** The Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorsed the strategy at its meeting in May 2017. Following this, the Executive Committee adopted the strategy in June 2017.

2.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

2.1 Over the last 12 months, a number of key actions from the strategy have been fulfilled. These are outlined within Appendix 1. It is important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to impact on action plan delivery, with some services still operating online. Staff have also continued to operate on a 'business as usual' service model wherever possible. The action plan reflects new response and recovery work areas. Actions of particular note are as follows:

- Year 3 delivery of Tewkesbury Growth Hub and Service.
- Continue delivery of Countywide Inward Investment Service including work on the development of Advanced Manufacturing and Cyber propositions.
- Successful delivery and completion of 'Uncover the Cotswolds' project.
- Successful Tewkesbury High Street Heritage Action Zone Fund launch and programme delivery.
- Appointment of a High Street Heritage Action Zone Programme Manager.
- A draft Supplementary Planning Document entitled 'Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage: Design Guidance for Tewkesbury Borough' produced for consultation and proposed adoption.
- The Growth Hub Team has continued to provide vital support to businesses. The Hub facility reopened to the public in July 2021; prior to this it was offered virtually. Delivery has included targeted events, growth plans and business support interactions for 2,773 enterprises.
- Re-opening of Tewkesbury and Winchcombe Tourist Information Centres
- Delivery of Welcome Back Fund (formally Reopening High Streets Safely Fund) – working closely with the retail centres in the borough, supporting the safe re-opening of businesses and return of visitors.
- Promotion and delivery of 'COVID SME and Visitor Economy Recovery Grants' and 'The COVID Digital Recovery Grants' through the Growth Hub Network service, including aftercare and events.
- Supporting the work of the Business Cell.

3.0 ACTION PLAN 2021/22

3.1 In view of the Council's clear aspirations for economic growth and the positive achievements from 2020/21, the action plan for 2021/22 sets out positive interventions to facilitate and encourage economic growth. Within Appendix 1, a number of actions have been developed for 2021/22. These sit below the priorities identified in the strategy. Following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic a focus remains on supporting the recovery and growth of local businesses and sectors. The action remains aligned to the Council's Recovery Plan.

3.2 Key priorities for year 5 (2021/22) include:

- Undertake an economic assessment and business survey to understand the needs of local businesses and help inform future economic strategy.
- Deliver tailored business support solutions through Tewkesbury Growth Hub, as a single point of contact to support business – helping businesses to innovate and thrive.
- Launch and delivery of Small Business Grant Scheme, linking with Growth Hub advice.
- Work with our partners at Cotswold Tourism and Visit Gloucestershire to encourage the safe return of visitors back to the borough.
- Work with partners to support employment and skills initiatives targeted at those affected by unemployment – including proposed Youth Hub Project.
- Support the revitalisation of the High Streets and retail centres through delivery of the Welcome Back Fund and Tewkesbury High Street Heritage Action Zone.
- Work with partners to identify funding opportunities and support key infrastructure projects.
- Promote Tewkesbury Borough as an excellent location for business and investment.
- Further development of digital marketing offer, to support the visitor economy

3.3 Therefore, based on the action plan in Appendix 1, the Committee is asked to consider the progress on year four of the action plan and the actions identified for year five – the final year of this current strategy.

4.0 UPDATING THE STRATEGY

4.1 The current strategy was a four year strategy running from June 2017 – 2021. As reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee last year, after consultation with the Lead Member for Economic Development and Promotion, it was decided to continue with the current Strategy until June 2022, alongside working on the Council's COVID Recovery Plan which outlines a number of key economic development and tourism actions. Following the completion of the economic assessment, the plan is now to review and develop a new Economic Development and Tourism Strategy for 2022 – 2026 for approval in 2022.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 None.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The business community were widely surveyed as part of the economic assessment that informed the strategy.

7.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

- 7.1** Tewkesbury Borough Employment Land and Economic Development Strategy Review.
Strategic Economic Plan for Gloucestershire.
Local Industrial Strategy for Gloucestershire
GFirst LEP Gloucestershire Recovery Plan – Think Gloucestershire.
Tewkesbury Borough Corporate Recovery Plan Covid19 - 2020

8.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

- 8.1** Government Industrial Strategy.
EU Structural and Investment Funds Strategy.
COVID-19 Business support guidance.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

- 9.1** The strategy relates to job creation within the borough, as well as employment land and premises.

10.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

- 10.1** As outlined within the report and action plan.

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

- 11.1** None directly.

12.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

- 12.1** Adoption of Economic Development and Tourism Strategy - Executive Committee - 7 June 2017

Background Papers: Adoption of Economic Development and Tourism Strategy - Executive Committee - 7 June 2017

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Appendices: Appendix 1 – Action Plan
Appendix 2 – Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2017-2021