

Key Decision Required:	No	In the Forward Plan:	No
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CABINET

13 JUNE 2014

JOINT REPORT OF REGENERATION, INWARD INVESTMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

A.4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY - DELIVERY OF KEY PROJECTS

(PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION)

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To agree arrangements for the commissioning of studies to assess the feasibility and deliverability of projects that relate to the objectives of the Economic Delivery Strategy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Economic Development Strategy (EDS) was agreed by Cabinet on 8 November 2013 and endorsed by Council on 26 November 2013.
- Work is now ongoing to produce a delivery plan and to move forward on specific projects that directly respond to the objectives flowing from the EDS and which are identified within the SELEP's Growth Deal and Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and Essex County Council's Economic Plan for Essex.
- In order to improve the district's chances of securing funding via the Single Local Growth Fund, Essex County Council and other funding streams for internally generated projects, it is important that the Council is able to develop "shovel ready" projects. This involves commissioning feasibility studies, option appraisals, viability assessments, economic impact assessments, strategic planning, land acquisition, lease negotiations and land, property and building surveys.
- In order that work can progress, projects move forward and the Council respond flexibly to funding opportunities it is proposed to delegate authority to the Corporate Director (Public Experience) in consultation with the Regeneration, Inward Investment and Asset Management and Finance and Transformation Portfolio Holders to utilise funding within existing budgets to commission the necessary studies.
- On the 30th May 2014, the Portfolio Holders for Regeneration, Inward Investment and Asset Management and Finance and Transformation agreed the commissioning and funding of a feasibility study of the seafront from Clacton to Holland Haven. This study has been moved forward more quickly because thinking is more advanced on projects that might be possible and so as not to lose the impetus from the coastal works. The Council has also recently secured Essex Growth Strategy funding of £15,000 from Essex County Council for this project, which seeks to establish the opportunities afforded by the renaissance of this part of the district utilising the coastal defence project to secure long-term economic growth and the delivery of sustainable jobs.
- Two further projects are nearing the commissioning stage:
 - **Care and Assisted Living Innovation and Training Centre** - seeks to establish whether or not there is a real market for a Care and Assisted Living Innovation

and Training Centre (a suggested opportunity from the EDS) and secondly whether that opportunity exists within Tendring. The study would look at the feasibility of providing a high specification work space of varying unit sizes for businesses working in the Care and Assisted Living Sector (high tech/robotics) and an exemplar training facility to equip businesses and their employees/prospective employees with the skills required by the sector.

- **Harwich Innovation and Incubation Centre** - this is also a suggested outcome from the EDS. The project seeks to provide high specification work space of varying unit sizes for new and established businesses working in the marine, logistics, and engineering and offshore renewables sectors. A feasibility study has been completed and the proposed study will examine how this can be delivered on the ground in Harwich.
- Further projects will be developed and progressed and studies commissioned as they come forward. Where third party consultancy work is required, costs will be controlled in line with the Council's established procurement protocols and contracts will be awarded on a best value and fixed fee basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director (Public Experience) in consultation with the Regeneration, Inward Investment and Asset Management and Finance and Transformation Portfolio Holders to commission studies up to a funding limit of £250,000 to assess the feasibility of key projects that deliver against the objectives of the Economic Delivery Strategy.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

Regeneration sits at the heart of the Council's priorities. An opportunity now exists through the EDS as well as economic strategies of the SELEP and ECC to develop and deliver specific projects.

FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK

Finance and other resources

There is an existing budget of £1.2m for Business Investment and Growth. Funding of £35,000 from this budget will be utilised to commission consultants to undertake a feasibility study of the coastline between Clacton and Holland Haven. This budget will be used to meet the costs of further studies up to a limit of £250,000. The studies would support bids to secure funding for project delivery.

Risk

The undertaking of appropriate studies will ensure that projects are fully assessed for viability, cost and desirability before any substantial works are undertaken. It will help to ensure that the projects which are moved forward are those which people want to see or which will support and strengthen the local economy.

LEGAL

Part 5.30 and 5.36 (Items 5 and 6.3.5(c) respectively) of the Council's Constitution set out the financial rules for incurring expenditure and the authorised limits.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Any specific implications arising from each project will be considered as part of individual studies.

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

Members will recall that the approach promoted within the Council's Economic Development Strategy seeks to transform the district's economic performance with the aim of securing sustainable and long-term economic growth. The Strategy seeks to achieve this by:

- Promoting diversification within the local business base, recognising the need to target new sector specialisms which can support a more buoyant and resilient economy;
- Promoting Tendring's role in regional and national economies and celebrating the district's contribution;
- Valuing places within Tendring and ensuring that they are able to evolve as modern and effective economic locations;
- Recognising the importance of residents to the district's economic future, ensuring that they are equipped with the skills and aspirations to participate in the area's economic transformation;
- Encouraging growth within new and established sectors;
- Promoting improved partnership working to secure structural change in the district's economy; and
- Recognising that difficult decisions may have to be made and risks taken to ensure the district's economic success.

The Economic Development Strategy identifies five key objectives:

- **Objective 1: Supporting Tendring's Growth Locations - Intervening in areas where the potential for economic growth is highest and where there is a strong case for intervention particularly (but not exclusively) in Harwich, Clacton and West Tendring (developing commercial links with the Severalls Business Park and the University of Essex).**
- **Objective 2: Targeting Growth Sectors – Targeting the sectors which are best placed to support growth and job creation within Tendring's economy. In this regard the Strategy focusses attention upon the opportunities afforded by Offshore Renewable Energy and Care & Assisted Living.**
- **Objective 3: Skills and Information – Recognising that the district has some of the most disadvantaged populations in the country this objective seeks to build a stronger and more competitive economy by equipping local people with the skills and aspiration necessary to participate.**
- **Objective 4: Supporting Modernisation, Diversification & Growth within the Business Base – Improving business liaison, innovation and inward investment and creating dynamism in the economy that will make Tendring more competitive and resilient to national and international shock.**
- **Objective 5: Facilitating Population Growth where this Supports the Economy – Recognising that the district has an elderly and shrinking population, this objective seeks to build on the district's positive characteristic of being an attractive place to live and promotes population growth as a means of supporting the long-term future of the economy.**

By commissioning feasibility and deliverability studies in line with the above objectives, the Council will be in a better position to submit bids for third party funding as these become available and thus translate the ambitions of the EDS into reality on the ground.

BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION

None

APPENDICES

None
