

Report to: **Hub Committee**  
Date: **19 March 2019**  
Title: **Enterprise Strategy**  
Portfolio Area: **Economy**  
Wards Affected: **All**

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: **After Call In 27 March 2019**

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**Recommendations:** That the Hub Committee **RESOLVES:**

1. To Note and support the draft Enterprise Strategy.

**1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 This report sets out the key objectives, actions and associated Officer resourcing of the draft Enterprise Strategy for West Devon.
- 1.2 The Strategy updates and adapts the WDBC Our Plan Annual Delivery Plan 2016-2018 (Economic Development Programme), primarily by aligning with the objectives of the Joint Local Plan and emerging Neighbourhood Plans.
- 1.3 This report summarises the key objectives, services, projects and actions of the Strategy.
- 1.4 The Strategy will be presented to the new Council with a view to reviewing followed by adoption at the earliest opportunity.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 West Devon Borough Council has a responsibility to support economic development in accordance with the Enterprise Theme.

- 2.2 The Council has not, however, been providing support proactively to commerce or pursuing Council-led opportunities in recent years since the staff resource has largely been focussed on preparing and adopting the JLP.
- 2.3 The JLP is approaching the point of adoption. This combined with the establishment of the Corporate Property Strategy has led to a number of Council-led projects advancing to the early stages; together with a more proactive approach to engaging with commercial interests and the economic needs of local communities. Some examples are outlined later in this report.

### 3 The updated Strategy

- 3.1 The Enterprise Strategy will establish that the blueprint for enterprise and growth for West Devon is set and defined by the South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP) and, as they emerge, Neighbourhood Plans.
- 3.2 It will also align with two higher tier plans, namely Devon County Councils 'A Strategy for Growth 2013 – 2020' (see <https://new.devon.gov.uk/economy/>); and the sub-regional strategy of the Local Enterprise Partnership, (the Heart of the South West – HotSW), (<https://heartofswlep.co.uk/>).
- 3.3 The Enterprise Strategy will be based on two key strands of activity for the Council:
- to act as the promotor and facilitator of development that is led by the private sector; and
  - to act within the market to directly deliver employment and enterprise, working with communities, businesses and land owners to deliver against the JLP, Neighbourhood Plans and identified need / other intelligence.

	Service	Brief Summary
<b>Enterprise to thrive and business to grow</b>	<b>Business engagement and support</b>	Support and advice from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Development Manager;</li> <li>• Strategic Planning;</li> <li>• Pre-app Services (Development Management);</li> <li>• Environmental Health; and</li> <li>• Assets</li> </ul> External (co-ordinate and fund) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heart of South West Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Hub;</li> <li>• Business Information Point Business Support; and</li> <li>• Greater Dartmoor Local Enterprise Action Fund</li> </ul>
	<b>Research and intelligence</b>	Town benchmarking Demographic projection figures and infrastructure needs (in collaboration with external partners) Retail assessment

		Leisure Assessment Employment Land Review Landowner survey
	<b>Maximising funding opportunities</b>	Guide, co-ordinate and collaborate to optimise benefits derived through s106 to support infrastructure needs Monitor to gain earliest knowledge of funding opportunities Prepare projects in outline in preparation for funding opportunities
	<b>Strategic working</b>	Alignment to the LEP Industrial Strategy Joint Local Plan delivery Network and lobby to improve success of funding bids Pre-application planning advice Broadband
	<b>Business Development</b>	Respond to enquiries received through HotSW LEP and DCC identify and collaborate to deliver business opportunities
	<b>Council Assets Strategy</b>	Existing assets strategy is to increase organically the holding of commercial employment units in our key towns and villages. This supports smaller enterprises looking for fit for purpose premises on fair lease terms.

- 3.4 The strategy recognises that the interests of the private sector don't always align perfectly with those of the Council and, importantly, it is through the second strand that we are able to mitigate that challenge.
- 3.5 Our adopted Assets Strategy and Commercial Property Strategy underpin our ability to deliver in the market. In approving these strategies, members recognise the importance of land ownership and commercial investment to support enterprise and our financial sustainability. Our Assets Strategy sets out a programme of development of commercial units on land that we own.
- 3.6 The strategy seeks to establish an approach whereby the Council empowers community groups to work through Town Councils and Neighbourhood Planning Groups to provide intelligence for each of the main towns and for rural areas. The Town Council could provide the focus for receiving and disseminating information and ideas from other groups including Chambers of Commerce, BIDs and industry groups including the NFU.
- 3.7 The Council's proposed Communities and Enterprise Directorate would then act as a conduit for ideas and opportunities that can be considered, assessed and, if viable and appropriate, acted upon by the Assets Team with a view to delivery. This would be either directly or through partnership.

## Strategic level

- 3.8 At the strategic level the objective will be to ensure that the opportunities identified in the development plan (JLP and Neighbourhood Plans) are realised:
- land for economy related uses are identified in the development plan;
  - guided by the policy framework of the development plan, Officers will work pro-actively with stakeholders to bring forward development on that land
- 3.9 Working with community groups the Council will better understand the needs of the different industry groups and seek opportunities to support stability and growth. One means to provide support will be to offer planning, environmental health and other services, including in combination with other agencies such as Trading Standards, through planning led agreements paid for by the company in question. Funds secured through this route could be used to employ agency workers to fill the officer resource gap needed to provide the service. Over time this would enable a view to be determined as to whether a part or full time Officer could be taken on to the pay roll.
- 3.10 During the immediate JLP post-adoption period the 2.5 full time equivalent Strategic Planning Team will be available to lead, co-ordinate and support these initiatives – although not full time. An example is the establishment of a Town Centres Working Group, which will be launched shortly and involve inviting each of the Town Councils to work together and individually to investigate and assess matters relating to the vibrancy of Town Centres and their role as a service centre to rural hinterlands. Led by the Head of Place Making, each Town Council will be invited to host a meeting to consider a specific subject and to discuss challenges and opportunities with representatives of the local community and the other Town Councils. The outcome would be a Borough wide Town Centres Strategy and a series of actions for Joint Ventures and private enterprise. This will enable the Borough Council to support and submit, on behalf of one of the towns, a bid to secure funding from the second round of the Future High Streets Fund (see details of the first round here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-high-streets-fund-call-for-proposals>, the second round will run in 2020.)

## Outputs

- 3.11 Through a more pro-active approach and collaboration to secure funding as and when opportunities arise, the Council will work with Neighbourhood Planning Groups and community stakeholders to identify and list deliverable projects, taking into account present and future economic land opportunities.
- 3.12 The over-riding objective of the strategy is to promote vibrant communities that effectively meet the needs of residents and commerce; and create opportunities for wealth generation within the community and for the Council.

3.13 More detailed monitoring may evolve over time. Initially, however, it is intended to measure success using the following Key Performance Indicators.

<b>KPI</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>National Benchmark</b>
Business unit rental	80% business rental achieved	None
Businesses support	To deliver support to over 60 businesses	None
Employment land brought forward	*	None

\* Figures to be informed by JLP targets and not to include the Dartmoor National Park

## **4 Implications**

- 4.1 The Enterprise Theme, the Asset Strategy and the Corporate Property Strategy commits the Council to a more proactive approach to economic development.
- 4.2 At this time it is possible to identify the Assets Team and, temporarily, Strategic Planning Officers as the appropriate staff resource to take this agenda forward.
- 4.3 The Council is proposing to establish a Communities and Enterprise Directorate that would lead this area of work supported by, amongst others, the Head of Place Making and the Head of Assets. Other resources to support actions and projects as they progress would need to be sourced as necessary. Potential funding exists through bidding for Government and LEP initiatives as well as Planning Performance Agreements. Revenue from successful Council-led projects could also be used to provide enhanced support. The latter would need to be appropriately structured and governed.
- 4.4 The success of the strategy requires collaboration between the Assets and Business Development functions of the Council with Strategic Planning and Development Management. During the next two years and until the review of the JLP, Officers in the Place Making function of the Council would have the capacity to provide appropriate support. For longer term success the strategy requires income to be generated through DM pre-app such that the internal staff resource could be maintained or enhanced.

<b>Implications</b>	<b>Relevant to proposals Y/N</b>	<b>Details and proposed measures to address</b>
Legal / Governance	Y	Collaboration between Assets, Business Development, Strategic Planning and Development Management.
Financial	Y	Long term reliance on pre-planning application fees
Risk	Y	The absence of certainty regarding long term resource mean that expectations of any external partners need to be carefully considered before committing to projects and actions.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	Y	No unusual matters identified
Safeguarding	Y	No unusual matters identified
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	Y	No unusual matters identified
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	Y	No unusual matters identified
Other implications	Y	No unusual matters identified