

Meeting of the Local Growth Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday 27 June 2023

Update on Business Growth Strategy

Report of the Director of Economic Development

Classification	This report is public
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Contact Officer	As above

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is:

- To provide members with an update on the Council's Business Growth Strategy and Action Plan, including the work done over the years since its inception; and
- To consider the timescales for a review of the Action Plan to reflect the update to the corporate priorities and work plan of the team over the coming 36 months.

REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

1.1 Bolsover District Council's Business Growth Strategy focused on how the Development Directorate prioritised its own work and its work with internal and external partners to achieve the Council's ambition over the four-year period 2019-2023:

To become a dynamic, self-sufficient and flexible Council that delivers excellent services, whilst adapting to local aspirations and acting as the economic and environmental driver for Bolsover District.

1.2 To maintain focus on achieving the Council's ambition the strategy was organised around the Council's economic priorities:

- i. Making the best use of our assets;
- ii. Ensuring financial sustainability and increasing revenue streams;
- iii. Unlocking Development Potential: unlocking the capacity of major employment sites;

- iv. Enabling Housing Growth: increasing the supply, quality and range of housing to meet the needs of the growing population and support economic growth;
 - v. Working with partners to support enterprise, innovation, jobs and skills; and
 - vi. Promoting the District and working with partners to increase tourism
- 1.3 The action plan attached to the Business Growth Plan included specific details of how these priorities will be achieved through various ongoing projects. The action plan also contained a section dedicated to 'building back better' which highlights action we're taking to promote clean, inclusive growth and improve the environmental quality of the District.
- 1.4 The action plan has been updated and a full review conducted with updates on actions that relate most to the Council's economic priorities. The most recently updated action plan is attached in full to this report as Appendix A.

2. Details of Proposal or Information

- 2.1 **Building Back Better** – the focus of this strand is promoting the environmental improvements and nature recovery of the district, through investment in the built environment, but also in the carbon reduction and NO2 reduction through the introduction of sustainable methods of transport.
- 2.2 **Enabling Housing Growth** has seen a significant change over the last update period. Dragonfly Development Ltd was brought into full ownership of the council in November 2022. A full business case was presented to Council in February with a decision to transfer several services into the new company, which happened on 1 April 2023.
- 2.3 **Increasing Revenue Streams** – projects continue to progress, with consultation and engagement activities being carried out on both of the growth plans for Creswell and Shirebrook respectively. The Crematorium development continues to make good progress with a start on site expected in the late Summer.
- 2.4 **Making the Best Use of our Assets** – this strand has seen the biggest changes as part of this update, with new actions introduced in to the action plan, including the review of Independent commercial property and the Grazing and non-Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land. Now that the appraisal of garage sites is complete, and a receipt in excess of £1m received, it is important we now turn the focus on to other assets the Council own, and consider these for retention or disposal.
- 2.5 Work on the redevelopment proposals for Pleasley Vale are also now building momentum, following the recruitment of Kay Gregory in to the role of Senior Economic Development Officer (Pleasley Vale). Recent commissions include flood modelling, statement of significance, stakeholder engagement with Historic England, Environment Agency and Mansfield District Council.
- 2.6 **Promoting the District and Increasing Tourism** – progress is being made on the review of the tourism strategy and walking and cycling strategies. There has also been significant increase of activity around the business support

programmes being developed now we have secured the £1.9million UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation from Government. The business support and Visit Bolsover projects have commenced delivery.

- 2.7 **Working with Partners** – all four activity areas have seen significant progress over the last review period. As referenced in 2.6 above, the award of UK SPF monies to the Council has meant delivery can commence for business support initiatives.
- 2.8 There has been progress made with the Social Value Policy, with the Director of Development attending a series of workshops for learning and embedding best practice, but that there is a great opportunity for this local authority to review and better embed across all departments a strong social value ethos. Work is ongoing to strengthen our draft policy and revise it to best reflect the opportunity, which is further supported by the recent purchase of LOOP – a social value monitoring toolkit.
- 2.9 The Director of Development and the Business Growth Manager have been engaged with the One Public Estate (OPE) Team, informing a recent county wide engagement / consultation exercise on the potential for Opportunity Development Fund (ODF) for Bolsover Town. This fund and support would explore the publicly owned buildings within the town, scope for colocation, and opportunity for redevelopment and/or reconfiguration of the public estate within the town. This would have a strong alignment to the work already undertaken by the team on the recently unsuccessful Levelling Up Fund application, in readiness for round 3 later this year.
- 2.10 The recent local elections in May 2023, and appointment of new councillors, will undoubtedly bring about a review of the corporate priorities in order to best reflect the ambitions of the new administration. There will need to be a review of the Growth Strategy and Action Plan to ensure the priorities and activities are meeting the Council's Ambition. The timetable for this review is to be considered.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Local Growth Scrutiny is provided with updates on the Business Growth Strategy to ensure appropriate progress is being made on the Council's corporate priorities and to provide feedback or support where necessary to enable officers and members to work together to achieve the Council's ambitions.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 The alternative is not to provide detailed updates as set out in the proposed work plan but this may risk loss of focus on achieving the aims of the Council within the quickest practicable timescales. This is particularly significant given that income generation from projects and proposals in the Business Growth Strategy are included in the projections contained within Dragonfly's business plan and ultimately impact on the Council's MTFP.
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RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 1. Members to note the report and provide feedback on progress for officers to consider and take appropriate action where necessary.

Approved by Councillor John Ritchie
Portfolio Holder for Growth / Economic Development

IMPLICATIONS:

Finance and Risk: Yes No

Details: A number of projects and proposals in the Business Growth Strategy have risk and financial implications, of which, most are positive insofar as they are around bring forward good developments and income generation. However, these issues are worked through in detail and in consultation with the Section 151 Officer on a case by case basis.

On behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection): Yes No

Details: The Business Growth Strategy does not in itself have any legal or data protection implications but a number of projects and proposals in the Business Growth Strategy will. However, these issues are worked through in detail and in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council on a case by case basis as required.

On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Environment:

Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment.

Details: the update sets out the actions and interventions supported as part of the growth strategy to contribute to the environmental enhancements and carbon reduction across the district.

Staffing: Yes No

Details: The Business Growth Strategy does have some staffing implications insofar as the capacity and resource available will influence how quickly projects and programmes are delivered. However, staffing issues are dealt with separately as they arise.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

DECISION INFORMATION

<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p>Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i></p>	No
<p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i></p>	No

<p>District Wards Significantly Affected</p>	<p>(please state which wards or state All if all wards are affected)</p> <p>All wards affected</p>
<p>Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Executive <input type="checkbox"/> SLT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Details:</p>

<p>Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy and Environment.</p>
<p>As noted in the report, the Business Growth Strategy and associated action plan is closely linked to achieving the Council's ambitions and economic priorities.</p> <p>Achieving a number of the objectives in the Business Growth Strategy will also have a positive impact for our customers and the environment.</p>

DOCUMENT INFORMATION	
Appendix No	Title
1	Business Growth Strategy Action Plan June 2023

<p>Background Papers <i>(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive you must provide copies of the background papers).</i></p>
<p>None</p>