

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER DELEGATED DECISION
COUNTY COUNCILLOR MARTIN WEALE
(PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR REGENERATION & PLANNING)
October 2017**

**REPORT AUTHOR: Gareth Jones
Professional Lead Regeneration**

**SUBJECT: Review of the Council's Economic Development
Strategy**

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Council's Economic Development Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 14th March 2016. This report provides a summary of progress made to date with the implementation of the Strategy.
- 1.2 The recently launched Vision 2025 sets out the new Cabinet's initial priorities for the authority and emphasises the importance of developing a vibrant economy. In order to ensure a joined up and consistent approach to economy development policy and implementation across the Council, it is proposed that the role, format and content of the current Economic Development Strategy is reviewed as part of the preparation of the delivery programme for the economy priority of Vision 2025.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The Council's Economic Development Strategy was prepared in 2016 to identify the mechanisms that would be used to deliver the Council's economic development priorities and interventions. The four objectives of the Strategy were to:
 - Grow Powys' strategic business sector
 - Attract new business
 - Increase visitors and visitor spend
 - Increase Powys' economically active population

The Strategy set out an evidenced based, framework for action to meet these objectives.

- 2.2 A summary of progress made with the delivery of the Strategy over the past 18 months is provided in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 In August 2017, the new Cabinet launched Vision 2025 which sets out its

mission and initial priorities for the next 7 years. The four priorities identified are the economy, health and care, learning and skills, and residents and communities. Central to Vision 2025 is a renewed emphasis on the development of a strong, vibrant and enterprising economy in order to make Powys a more attractive place to live, work, visit and do business.

- 2.4 Delivering this economic vision and its key outcomes will require a joined up approach across the Council, the targeting of resources and partnership work with external stakeholders. In order to support this process, it is proposed that the role, format and content of the current Economic Development Strategy 2016 is reviewed and updated as part of the preparation of the delivery framework for the economy priority of Vision 2025.
- 2.5 This process will be undertaken over the next four months jointly with the Strategic Programme Manager for the economy priority and include consultation with the business sector and other key stakeholders. The new economic development policy framework and a prioritised action plan will be in place for implementation from April 2018.

3. Options Considered/Available

Option 1: The proposal to undertake a review of the Economic Development Strategy 2016 as part of the development and implementation of the economic priority of Vision 2025 is endorsed.

Option 2: The proposal to undertake a review of the Economic Development Strategy 2016 as part of the development and implementation of the economic priority of Vision 2025 is not endorsed. In this instance the current Economic Development Strategy would remain in place going forward.

4. Preferred Choice and Reasons

- 4.1 **Option 1:** is the preferred choice as it will provide an opportunity to review and update economic development policy and implementation to support the delivery of Vision 2025. This will help ensure consistency and an integrated approach across the Council.

5. Impact Assessment

- 5.1 A single impact assessment is not required at this stage however one will be undertaken as part of any review process.

6. Corporate Improvement Plan

- 6.1 The proposal will directly support the developing the economy priority of the Council's Corporate Improvement Plan. It will also link closely with the preparation of the emerging Powys Well-being Plan which aims include the development of a thriving economy, sustainable environment

and equality for all. Impact on these area will be assessed as part of the preparation of the new strategy.

7. Local Member(s)

7.1 This is a county-wide initiative.

8. Other Front Line Services

8.1 The proposals within this report look to promote joined up economic development policy and activity between services and the promotion of an open for business attitude within the council.

9. Support Services

9.1 The recommendations can be supported from a legal point of view

9.2 The Finance Business Partner for Places notes the content of the report and supports the proposal to “undertake a review of the Economic Development Strategy 2016 as part of the development and implementation of the economic priority of Vision 2025 is endorsed.” If any additional expenditure is incurred this will have be absorbed within the current financial budget for the service.

10. Statutory Officers

10.1 The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: “I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report”.

10.2 The Strategic Director Resources (S151 Officer) notes the comments made by Finance

11. Members’ Interests

11.1 The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any specific interests that may arise in relation to this report. If the Portfolio Holder has an interest he should declare it, complete the relevant notification form and refer the matter to the cabinet for decision.

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
That the Portfolio Holder: 1. Notes the current progress with the implementation of the Council’s Economic Development Strategy as outlined in Appendix 1.	To review progress with the implementation of the Council’s Economic Development Strategy and ensure alignment to Vision 2025 going forward.

2. Approves the proposed review and alignment of the Council's Economic Development Strategy with Vision 2025.	
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Relevant Policy (ies):			
Within Policy:	Y	Within Budget:	Y

Relevant Local Member(s):	N/A
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Person(s) To Implement Decision:	Professional Lead for Regeneration
Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:	30th November 2017

Contact Officer Name:	Tel:	Fax:	Email:
Gareth Jones	07754216512		Gareth.jones3@powys.gov.uk

Background Papers used to prepare Report:

Powys Council Economic Development Strategy 2016

APPENDIX 1

Economic Development Strategy – Summary of Key Achievements 2016/17

OUTCOME 1: GROW POWYS' STRATEGIC BUSINESS SECTORS

1. Engaging with Welsh Government to bring high speed superfast broadband to homes and businesses in Powys. Currently around 71% of premises in the County now have superfast connectivity. The programme is now tackling the “not spots” until 2023.
2. Working with Welsh Government and the local community to deliver a pilot project in Crai using TV Whitespace and Wi-Fi technology to connect 70 rural business premises to superfast broadband. Funding has been secured through Welsh Government’s Access Broadband Cymru Programme with installation due to commence in autumn 2017.
3. Working with Welsh Government to secure dedicated support for Powys businesses including:
 - The first free WI-FI town in Wales at Llandrindod Wells.
 - Provide bespoke technical support through Superfast Business Wales to help businesses exploit superfast broadband.
 - Successfully securing £6.75 million of funding to deliver the Powys Town Centre Loan scheme to provide a revolving loan scheme in the local growth zone areas of the County.
 - Working with Business Wales, Antur Teifi, and other key partners has led to 11% more businesses across the County receiving specialist advice and financial support.
 - The Regeneration Service has provided Business Clinics across the county to help 78 businesses to access a wide range of specialist support.
4. Developing the Young Engineers Powys skills project in partnership with Mid Wales Manufacturing Group. This involved businesses engaging with local schools and NPTC Newtown Campus to encourage interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Highlights included:
 - A 3 day visit from the Bloodhound Supersonic Car Project which visited Newtown in September.
 - Events organised with local primary, high schools and NPTC College
 - Powys businesses engaging with school pupils resulted in 8 apprenticeships being created with NPTC at the Newtown campus.
5. Engaging with the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership for South West & Mid Wales, to drive investment in skills.

6. Development and joint facilitation of the Growing Mid Wales regional partnership. The partnership has prepared a framework for action and is now developing an evidenced based proposals to support investment and funding bids.
7. Support was given to the Powys Business Awards 2016. The awards are a key tool for promoting entrepreneurship and excellence across the county and encourage business networking.
8. The Regeneration Service has produced an economic assessment to support the preparation of the Powys Well-being Plan.

OUTCOME 2: ATTRACT NEW BUSINESS

1. "Move to Mid Wales – Discover Powys" is a promotional initiative and website to encourage inward investment into the county. A soft launch was trialled at Hay Festival and led to 37 enquiries.
2. The Powys Business Champions network has been established with key industry leaders from across the County to help generate inward investment.
3. Working with Welsh Government Inward Investment Team and across the Council to encourage new businesses to relocate to Powys. The most recent development is from an automotive business based near Oxford looking to relocate their research and development unit into Abermule, Montgomery with the relocation of 40 skilled staff.
4. The Regeneration Service has now taken the lead to produce evidence based deliverable proposals for the region with a view to attracting strategic growth funding for Mid Wales.
5. Significant head way has been made to develop cross border links with the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership and the bordering English Counties. Also engaging with the Welsh Regions to exploit further opportunities for partnership working.

OUTCOME 3: INCREASE VISITORS AND VISITORS SPEND

1. Liaison with 4 destination partnerships across the County to co-ordinate visitor promotion and activity.
2. Strengthened web presence and business engagement through the tourism website "Mid Wales My Way."
3. Leading a co-operation project in the Cambrian Mountains, working closely with the Brecon Beacons National Park partnership and the North and Mid Wales Tourism partnership.
4. Meetings with Visit Wales are ongoing discussing potential projects across Powys and their new funding programme "The Wales Way"
5. Submitting a £250,000 Heritage Lottery project bid for the Swansea Valley area called "Ports to Peaks." Regeneration are the lead beneficiary, with Swansea City, and Neath Port Talbot Councils as partners.
6. Worked with the Royal Welsh Show Committee and Welsh Government to install a 4G mobile phone mast at the show ground.
7. Secured the hosting of a "finish" for the Tour of Britain in September 2016 attracting £500,000 investment into the Powys Economy.
8. Working with Visit Wales to support the development of the first "hotel" on the Royal Welsh Showground.
9. Applications have now been made for Powys to hold both a start and finish of the Tour of Britain in 2018.
10. Working with Welsh Government Major Events Unit discussing additional 2018 events for the County.

OUTCOME 4: INCREASE POWYS'S ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION

1. Delivery of a successful pilot project to support the 54+ age range economically inactive population. Key successes of the project included:
 - Engaged with the Department for Work & Pensions, Job Centre plus, PAVO and other organisations
 - 212 participants
 - 174 undertaking volunteering/ training opportunities
 - 95 moved into economic activity (setting up their own business or through paid employment)
 - Developed an evidence base for a further European Funding bid for a Powys wide project.
 - The Workways+ Powys funding bid was subsequently successful securing £350,000 of EU funding for a three year project across Powys. The program was launched in April 2017.
2. To address the skills agenda for young people the Regeneration Service secured c.£1M of EU-funding for a three year project to boost the prospects of young people in Powys. The Cynnydd project is now led by the Youth Service and will provide mentoring, coaching and training to young people to improve their future job and career prospects.
3. "Arwain" is the Powys Rural Development Plan which underpins a range of innovative pre commercial economic activities across the county. The programme can assist businesses with research and development which has knowledge sharing potential. This £3.7M programme will operate until 2021.
4. Discussions are being held with Welsh Government regarding a new "Employability Grant" and the forthcoming successor to the Vibrant and Viable Places Programme which could provide £7 million of support over three years to the Mid Wales Region.