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# Economic Development Strategy Review

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<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	6 September 2022
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Ross Mackinnon
<b>Report Author:</b>	Katharine Makant
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	OSMC

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## 1 Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to present the Annual Progress Report on the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) Refresh 2021 for review and comment by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC).

## 2 Recommendation(s)

For OSMC to note the information in the report and to comment on the Annual Progress Report on the Economic Development Strategy Refresh 2021, published in August 2022.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	The Economy Team processed significant amounts of Covid Recovery grant funding during 2021/22, as well as project-related expenditure. The 21/22 Revenue Budget included provision for staffing and a small operating budget, as well as project-related budgets. Temporary resource to support the administration of Covid Recovery grants was funded via the Welcome Back Fund and Recovery.
<b>Human Resource:</b>	The Economy Team is responsible for delivering the EDS including through business engagement, partnership working, project management and monitoring and evaluation.
<b>Legal:</b>	None

<b>Risk Management:</b>	None			
<b>Property:</b>	The Council is the freehold owner of the London Road Industrial Estate, which is the subject of a regeneration programme for employment use.			
<b>Policy:</b>	The report seeks comment on the Annual Progress Report of the Economic Development Strategy Refresh 2021.			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	x			The EDS Refresh seeks to empower everyone to enter the workplace and is intended to have a positive impact on equality and inclusion.
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	x			The EDS Refresh seeks to empower everyone to enter the workplace and is intended to have a positive impact on equality and inclusion.
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>	X			The EDS Refresh seeks to support delivery of the Environment Strategy's green infrastructure targets and promote active travel modes.
<b>Health Impact:</b>	X			The EDS Refresh seeks to reshape our town centres to contribute to sustainable, inclusive growth
<b>ICT Impact:</b>		x		

<b>Digital Services Impact:</b>	x			The EDS Refresh seeks to improve digital infrastructure in the district in collaboration with partners in the pan- Berkshire Digital Infrastructure Group (DIG).
<b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>	X			<p>The EDS Refresh contributes to the following strategic priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting everyone to reach their full potential</li> <li>• Supporting businesses to start, develop and thrive in West Berkshire</li> <li>• Developing local infrastructure, including housing to support and grow the local economy</li> </ul>
<b>Core Business:</b>		x		.
<b>Data Impact:</b>		x		
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	<p>The original Economic Development Strategy was the subject of a public consultation in July 2019 for six weeks.</p> <p>The Annual Progress Report was considered in draft by Economic Development Board on 26 June 2022 and by Corporate Board on 16 August 2022.</p>			

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The original Economic Development Strategy 2020-2023 was built around four themes of People, Places, Infrastructure and Business Environment, recognising the district's strengths in blending the economic strengths of the Thames Valley 'turbo economy' with the environmental assets more often found in the South West. The Strategy was reviewed in 2021 to ensure that its priorities were aligned with altered needs of the local economy post Covid-19.
- 4.2 One year on from the ratification of the Economic Development Strategy Refresh, we have reflected on the progress that has been made, particularly around the provision of financial support to local businesses to aid Covid Recovery and in the development of place-making strategies to 'future-proof' our town centres and the London Road Industrial Estate. We have also reflected on those areas where we have had to reprioritise, particularly where we have less ability to influence the local economy. The results of this review are set out in the Annual Progress Report, published on the Council's website in August 2022 and attached to this report as Appendix B.

- 4.3 We will continue to work to deliver the overall priorities for West Berkshire set out in the Economic Development Strategy Refresh, recognising that the economy is facing a number of challenges over the next few years and that we must be ready to meet these as they arise.

## 5 Supporting Information

### Introduction

- 5.1 This report presents the Annual Progress Report on the Economic Development Strategy Refresh 2021 for review and comment by OSMC.
- 5.2 The West Berkshire Health and Well-being Board published its 2036 Vision for the district in 2020, outlining one of the key themes as 'welcoming business and enterprise'. The Council's own Strategy for 2020-2023 cites the theme of 'open for business' as an underpinning principle for its work over the next four years. Both ambitions are reflected in the Economic Development Strategy Refresh, which also aligns with those of the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Economic Partnership (LEP).

### Background

- 5.3 West Berkshire's local economy has long been strong and resilient with a high number of businesses representing a diverse range of industries, a well-qualified workforce and an excellent natural environment. Our local Economic Development Strategy which was first published in draft in March 2019, and was eventually adopted in early 2020, reflected on this position of strength and sought to ensure that more local people were able to take advantage of the opportunities our district has to offer.
- 5.4 The original Strategy was built around four themes: People, Places, Infrastructure and Business Environment, recognising the district's strengths in blending the economic strengths of the Thames Valley 'turbo economy' with the environmental assets more often found in the South West. The Strategy was reviewed in 2021 to ensure that its priorities were aligned with altered needs of the local economy post Covid-19 and with the economic priority within the Council's Recovery and Renewal Strategy. At the same time, we published a high level Delivery Plan setting out planned actions in the short, medium and long term.
- 5.5 At the time of publication of the EDS Refresh, we were between periods of national lockdown for Covid-19 and it was not known that they would continue for almost another year. We have had to be agile in responding to new Government initiatives to ensure they met local economic needs, for example Kickstart, the Additional Restrictions Grants (ARG) and Welcome Back Fund (WBF). In addition, we have responded along with colleagues to national crises including the Afghan and Ukraine refugee initiatives. This has been alongside continuing to deliver on pre-Covid commitments including the Newbury Town Centre Masterplan and London Road Industrial Estate
- 5.6 The Economy Team is responsible for delivering the EDS including through business engagement, partnership working, project management and monitoring and evaluation. The team processed significant amounts of Covid Recovery grant funding during 2021/22, as well as expenditure on regeneration projects. Temporary resource to

support the administration of Covid Recovery grants was funded via the Welcome Back Fund and Recovery.

- 5.7 Governance is provided by the Economic Development Board (EDB), which is a governance group chaired by the Executive Member for Economic Development and Finance. The Board membership includes the Leader of Council, the Executive Members for Education and Planning & Transport and the Executive Directors for Place and Resources. The Board leads on the development, implementation and monitoring of the Economic Development Strategy. EDB has one sub-group reporting to it - the London Road Industrial Estate Project Board, chaired by the Executive Director, Place.

## Progress

- 5.8 The Annual Progress Report outlines activities during the review period against the four themes as follows:

- **People** - good jobs and greater earning power for all in West Berkshire
- **Places** - creating prosperous communities across West Berkshire
- **Infrastructure** - future-proofing West Berkshire's infrastructure
- **Business Environment** - making West Berkshire the best place to start and grow a business

- 5.9 Each theme is broken down into sub-headings reflecting groups of actions set out in the EDS Refresh and high level Delivery Plan. Case studies are included where relevant to provide more detailed examples of activity.

- 5.10 The publication of the Annual Progress Report is an example of the service's desire to engage more with businesses and residents, and to showcase the district to attract talent and investment to benefit the local economy. Other examples include the [Businesswestberks](#) website, the monthly Business Newsletter, and building relationships with partners including Chambers of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

- 5.11 In the year to come, the focus of delivery is expected to be as follows:

- 'future-proof' our town centres through place-making initiatives;
- continue to ensure economic development is considered in the planning process;
- improve employment and training outcomes through large developments;
- work with the DWP and colleagues on supported employment;
- facilitate inward investment in the district through engaging and supporting business; and
- progress the London Road Industrial Estate regeneration project.

- 5.12 We will continue to explore partnerships and external funding opportunities for our town centre initiatives and to engage further with West Berkshire businesses, including our rural businesses, to understand and address the challenges they are facing. We will also seek to deepen our knowledge and build our evidence base on the state of the local economy in order to inform service improvement across the council.

5.13 The Report includes a useful summary of business support provided by the council in the period of review (noting that the Covid-related grant figures relate to the period for which the schemes were live (Nov 2020 to March 2022):

## Economic Development Business Support

**20** businesses have received a share of over **£85,000** in **Welcome Back Business Grants** to drive footfall after lockdown



**44** businesses have benefited from our **£700,000** in **Additional Restrictions Grant Challenge Fund** to aid recovery, green growth and innovation



**450** businesses have benefited from a total of **£6,420,000** in **Additional Restrictions Grant** to help with the impacts of the pandemic

**15** Interventions and events facilitated to support high streets

**22** Independent businesses have featured in our 'Shop Green, Shop Local' online magazine to promote sustainable Christmas Shopping



**4** Webinars and events held



Number of businesses supported with advice and guidance

**258**

Employments created (Kickstart)

**KICKSTART SCHEME**

**29**

Newsletter subscribers (May 21 – 22)

Subscribe



**2,294 to 3,293**

## 6 Other options considered

- 6.1 The Annual Progress Report was published in August 2022. The review represents a 'snapshot' in time of progress, adding to the information set out in the quarterly reporting of Key Performance Indicators for the service.
- 6.2 Monitoring and evaluation is a key part of the implementation of any strategy and comments from OSMC members are welcomed.

## 7 Conclusion

OSMC is invited to note the information set out above and to comment on the Annual Progress Report on the Economic Development Strategy Refresh 2021, published in August 2022 (attached).

## 8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment
- 8.2 Appendix B – Economic Development Strategy Refresh 2021 Annual Progress Report

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### Background Papers:

Economic Development Strategy Refresh 2021 available to view at  
<https://www.westberks.gov.uk/economic-development-strategy>

### Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☐ No: ☒

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Item is Urgent Key Decision  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Report is to note only   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Wards affected:** ALL

### Officer details:

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### Document Control

Document Ref:	EDS Review _OSMC_080922_Draft v1	Date Created:	08/08/22
Version:	V1	Date Modified:	
Author:	Katharine Makant		
Owning Service	Development and Regulation		

### Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1			
2			



## Appendix A

## Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

<b>What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:</b>	N/A
<b>Summary of relevant legislation:</b>	N/A
<b>Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's priorities for improvement?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes</li> <li>• Support everyone to reach their full potential</li> <li>• Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire</li> <li>• Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy Maintain a green district</li> <li>• Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships</li> </ul>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Name of Budget Holder:</b>	N/A
<b>Name of Service/Directorate:</b>	Development and Regulation
<b>Name of assessor:</b>	Katharine Makant
<b>Date of assessment:</b>	8 August 2022

Is this a .... ?		Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ?	
Policy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	New or proposed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Strategy	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Function	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Service	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

(1) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
<b>Aims:</b>	Seek OSMC comments on the Annual Progress Report for Annual Progress Report on the Economic Development Strategy Refresh 2021
<b>Objectives:</b>	As above

<b>Outcomes:</b>	OSMC feedback
<b>Benefits:</b>	Improved monitoring and evaluation

**(2) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?**

*(Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation)*

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
All groups	More inclusion and equality	The EDS Refresh seeks to empower everyone to enter the workplace.
<b>Further Comments:</b>		

**(3) Result**

<b>Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**(4) Identify next steps as appropriate:**

<b>EqlA Stage 2 required</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Owner of EqlA Stage Two:</b>	
<b>Timescale for EqlA Stage Two:</b>	

**Name:** Katharine Makant

**Date:** 8 August 2022

