



ARTICLE NO:

**CORPORATE & ENVIRONMENTAL
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

**MEMBERS UPDATE 2016/17
ISSUE: 1**

Article of: Director of Development and Regeneration

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SUBJECT: WEST LANCASHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2015-2025 – YEAR 1 PROGRESS REPORT

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF ARTICLE

1.1 To provide a year one progress report on the West Lancashire Economic Development Strategy 2015-2025.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 In 2014 Regeneris Consulting produced a refresh of the West Lancashire Economy Study, which provided a detailed evidence base of the Borough, including business sectors, skills and employment levels, travel to work patterns as well as growth projections and identifying key priorities.

2.2 Following the production of the Economy Study in 2014 and detailed consultation with partners and stakeholders, an Economic Development Strategy was developed.

2.3 In March 2015 Cabinet Members approved the West Lancashire Economic Development Strategy 2015-2025. The Strategy has the following eight themes, complemented by eight action plans:

- Stimulating change
- Providing the right scale and mix of employment sites
- Housing as a driver for change
- Revitalised town centres
- A better connected West Lancashire
- Promoting the place
- Supporting the rural and visitor economy
- Advantage through knowledge and skills

3.0 CURRENT POSITION AND PROGRESS ON THE EIGHT THEMES

3.1 The Strategy covers a ten year period and whilst many actions will take considerable time to come to fruition, e.g. a rail station/transport hub in Skelmersdale, officers are working behind the scenes with partners to progress all of the actions agreed by Council Members.

3.2 Progress has been made against all of the eight themes of the Strategy, as detailed in the action plan at Appendix A. Appendix A provides a narrative of the progress made on each of the actions, with some of the key activities summarised below.

3.3.1 Theme 1 – Stimulating Change

- Action 1.2 - Growth Deal for Skelmersdale
This has been put forward for inclusion in the Lancashire devolution proposals.
- Action 1.4 - Sustained business engagement
An Employment and Skills Charter has been developed and has seventeen of the Borough's large and small businesses signed up. An Apprenticeship Awards and Business Networking event took place, with further events planned for 2016/17.

3.3.2 Theme 2 – Providing the right scale and mix of employment sites

- Action 2.1 - Consider the potential for the allocation, and delivery of additional employment land within, or in close proximity to Skelmersdale
A Members Update was provided in October 2015. Borough Council officers continue to have conversations with neighbouring authorities which has resulted in a Liverpool City Region Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA) being commissioned.
- Action 2.2 – Deliver Greenshoots
Development is progressing and is due for completion in summer 2016. A new set of letting particulars have been produced and signage has been updated.

3.3.3 Theme 3 – Housing as a driver for growth

- Action 3.2 - Support the delivery of significant new market and affordable housing in Skelmersdale
The Whalleys sites have been granted outline permission and are being promoted to house builders through the Land Auction Pilot, with one site close to being sold. The former Digmoor Sports Centre, Findon and Delf Clough sites are being promoted by Council/HCA and a Local Development Order (LDO) has been granted.

- Action 3.4 Support the delivery of homes on allocated sites in Burscough and Ormskirk

An application for 580 dwellings plus 100-bed care home at Yew Tree Farm, Burscough has received planning approval subject to a Section 106 agreement. An Application for over 300 new homes at Grove Farm has been received and will shortly be decided by Planning Committee

3.3.4 Theme 4 – Revitalised Town Centres

- Action 4.1 Deliver the Skelmersdale Vision Town Centre proposals
Planning consent has been granted however a judicial review of that decision (which has still to be concluded) has delayed progress. Council has granted authority to fund public realm infrastructure works and planning consent has been granted for a new pub facility on the Asda overflow car park which is now being implemented.
- Action 4.4 Implement the Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan
Cabinet Members approved the Strategy in Sept 2015 and a considerable amount of work has been undertaken, including establishing a Management Group and Sub Groups to deliver associated activities. Place marketing consultants appointed to undertake research and develop branding for the town.

3.3.5 Theme 5 – A Better Connected West Lancashire

- Action 5.1 Support the development of the business case and future delivery of a new rail station and transport hub in Skelmersdale
GRIP1-2 Study completed and a Business Case Study was published by LCC in June 2015. LCC are leading on the next phase and initial funding has been identified for a GRIP 3 Study. An appraisal of the options for station locations is to be commissioned by LCC.
- Action 5.5 Develop a movement strategy for Ormskirk
Work has commenced on this project and will address how it fits within the wider West Lancashire Route Management Plan. The first element of work will be considering options for the Derby Street rail bridge.

3.3.6 Theme 6 – Promoting the Place

- Action 6.1 Improve the image of Skelmersdale through the development of a Skelmersdale brand
Borough Council officers participated in MIPIM UK in October 2015 as part of the Liverpool and Manchester exhibition stand, the options to attend in 2016 are currently being considered. Place marketing company appointed to research and develop brand, marketing activity, and a potential ambassador network.

3.3.7 Theme 7 – Supporting the Rural Economy

- Action 7.4 Market rural visitor attractions as part of the West Lancashire visitor offer
Meetings have been held with Liverpool LEP, Marketing Lancashire and Sefton Council to investigate collaborative working. Action links directly to the delivery of the Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy, marketing and website development of Ormskirk and the wider assets of the Borough. A presentation was provided to Corporate and Environmental Overview & Scrutiny Committee in December 2015 on Leisure and the night time economy.

3.3.8 Theme 8 – Advantage through Knowledge and Skills

- Action 8.5 Ensure Edge Hill University and West Lancashire College are linked into all major projects as appropriate, strengthening engagement with LCC and LEP.
Edge Hill University and West Lancashire College are both represented on the WL Skills, Training and Employment Partnership, as is the Lancashire LEP Skills Hub. Senior Borough Council officers have ongoing regular dialogue with both educational establishments. Edge Hill University are members of Liverpool LEP and have regular engagement with Lancashire LEP.
- Action 8.6 Develop an Employment Charter and encourage employers, including social enterprises and Business Ambassadors to sign up
The Employment and Skills Charter has been developed with several of our larger employers and small SME's actively signing up. The Charter has been endorsed by the WL Skills Training and Employment Partnership and had seventeen businesses signed up by the end of March 2016.

3.4 The delivery of the wide range of activities identified within the Strategy and action plan is only possible by working in partnership with a wide range of organisations both within the borough and beyond the West Lancashire borders. Some of the actions are being led by organisations other than the Borough Council and as a result requires close working relationships to be developed and maintained.

4.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

4.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this article and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder. The article has no significant links with the Sustainable Community Strategy however the actions identified within the Economic Development Strategy are all working to increase the wealth of the borough, support business growth and engagement, partnership working and to increase local employment opportunities.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are some financial and resource implications arising from this article in respect of the numerous areas of activity, however these are being met from existing resources.

6.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

6.1 This item is for information only and makes no recommendations. It therefore does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to risk registers as a result of this article.

Background Documents

The following background documents (as defined in Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act 1972) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing this Article.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Document</u>	<u>File Ref</u>
Apr 2015	West Lancashire Economic Development Strategy 2015-2025	ER/EDStrategy

Appendices

A. Economic Development Strategy Year 1 Progress Report Apr 2015 - Mar 2016