



ARTICLE NO: 2C

**CORPORATE & ENVIRONMENTAL
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

**MEMBERS UPDATE 2017/18
ISSUE: 2**

Article of: Director of Development and Regeneration

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SUBJECT: WEST LANCASHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2015-2025 – YEAR 2 PROGRESS REPORT

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF ARTICLE

1.1 To provide a Year 2 progress report on the West Lancashire Economic Development Strategy 2015-2025.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 In 2015 the West Lancashire Economic Development Strategy 2015-2025 was approved. The Strategy has the following eight themes, accompanied by eight individual 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 This is a significant Strategy covering a period of ten years due to the transformational nature of some of the key actions. Officers are continuing to make progress in the delivery of the eight action plans.

3.2 Details of the full Action Plan are provided at Appendix A, which provides the narrative of the progress made against each of the individual actions. Some of the key activities have been summarised below.

3.3.1 Theme 1 – Stimulating Change

- Action 1.4 - Sustained business engagement
To further enhance our business engagement offer, Council has approved Membership to Growth Lancashire for the period 2017/18 to further develop our approach to business engagement, including representation on the Growth Lancashire Board by the Council Leader.

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

- Action 2.2 – Deliver Greenshoots
Development completed to time and budget. All 11 units let (the final tenant taking up occupation in August 2017), thus exceeding the projected rental income (80% by Sept 2017).
- Action 2.3 - Improve the signage and the wider environment at Skelmersdale's key gateway locations
Draft designs created to update signage on the major employment area entrances, including J4 and J5. Further discussions required with LCC Highways to secure approval for promotional banners/flags at J4 which will utilise branding and could provide potential business sponsorship opportunities.

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
 - Whalleys 4. Development work commenced on the delivery of 202 dwellings.
 - Former Dignumoor Sports Centre, Findon and Delf Clough sites now benefit from Local Development Orders and have been sold to a house builder. The Council is currently considering planning applications for the three sites (for a total of 308 dwellings).
 - Firbeck estate regeneration has been completed including the erection of 42 new homes.
 - Development Brief for Firswood Road adopted August 2014. First phase (94 new homes) recently granted planning permission.
 - First phase of Chequer Lane site now complete (66 new homes), HCA recently sold second phase to a house builder. The sale of the site was linked to another HCA site at Abbotsford. Planning applications in relation to both sites is expected shortly.
 - Planning permission also granted for residential development on land at Ashurst (45 dwellings)
 - Funding bid submitted to the HCA for the Accelerated Construction initiative. 7 Skelmersdale sites successfully shortlisted from a total of 222

shortlisted proposals. Site title checks currently being undertaken and legal self-certification certificates are being prepared. Should our funding bid be successful we will look at targeting local small builders to support them to take the necessary steps to become developers in the area by de-risking small sites.

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

First five years of Local Plan (2012-2017) saw 381 new homes built in Ormskirk with Aughton and 193 new homes in Burscough. Planning permission for 313 new homes at Grove Farm, Ormskirk being implemented. Outline Application for 580 dwellings plus 100-bed care home Yew Tree Farm, Burscough granted and Reserved Matters application on first phase (146 new homes) submitted.

3.3.4 Theme 4 – Revitalised Town Centres

- Action 4.1 Deliver the Skelmersdale Vision Town Centre proposals

Planning consent granted but judicial review process delayed progress. Having successfully defended the legal challenge, partners are now working with St Modwen to establish the level of retail and leisure interest in the site. They are also assessing how any proposed leisure centre can be incorporated into the scheme.

- Action 4.5 Implement the Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan

Considerable work has been undertaken to deliver the Strategy, in particular around business and partner engagement to ensure successful implementation of branding, promotion and events within the town centre. Town Centre Management Group continues to meet on a regular basis to share ideas and take initiatives forward. Stakeholder Forum held early in 2017 to disseminate achievements so far, and to further develop relationships with local businesses and organisations. Preparatory work is being undertaken for a BID proposal, working with the independent and experienced organisation Groundwork, who are collating views from businesses around the town centre, including Edge Hill University.

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 the Business Case Study published by LCC June 2015.
- Study completed in 2016 which assessed the two possible options for the location of the station and identified the preferred location.
- Network Rail commissioned to undertake GRIP2A study to look in more detail at key constraints.
- Work underway on the brief for the commissioning of a GRIP3 study which would be undertaken upon completion of the GRIP2A study.

- Action 5.2 Develop cycle and walking infrastructure between key settlements across the Borough (West Lancashire Wheel)
Draft Cycling & Green Infrastructure Strategy consulted on in February 2017. Final Strategy to be taken to Cabinet in September 2017. S106 monies allocated to certain projects already, proposals being drawn up by LCC. Other proposals to come forward as part of large housing allocations.

3.3.6 Theme 6 – Promoting the Place

- Action 6.1 Improve the image of Skelmersdale through the development of a Skelmersdale brand
Significant work has been undertaken, including creating a welcome pack and pin badge for Ambassadors, website development, e-newsletters and investigating capital initiatives (signage). Attendance at MIPIM UK 2016 with Marketing Lancashire, helped to raise the profile of Skelmersdale and the new branding.

3.3.7 Theme 7 – Supporting the Rural Economy

- Action 7.4 Market rural visitor attractions as part of the West Lancashire visitor offer
Several activities underway to support this action, including a new Ormskirk website and using this as a tool to promote the wider tourism offer, continued membership with Marketing Lancashire and developing new relationship with the Head of the Liverpool Visitor Economy. Corporate and Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee have also expressed interest in tourism, which resulted in a 12 month review being undertaken.

3.3.8 Theme 8 – Advantage through Knowledge and Skills

- Action 8.4 Develop sustainable and long-term skills initiatives to support tenants and residents into employment
The Council's employment and skills initiatives continue to support this activity. In addition, the European funded More Positive Together project has been specifically developed to support tenants into employment (this is a Lancashire-wide project with Lancashire Sport as the lead organisation and WLBC Leisure & Wellbeing leading at a local level). Officers from across different service areas are supporting the Well Skelmersdale initiative, ensuring there is a co-ordinated effort amongst partners.
- Action 8.6 Develop an Employment Charter and encourage employers, including social enterprises and Business Ambassadors to sign up
The Council's Let's Talk Employment and Skills Charter now has over 70 businesses signed up. Encourages businesses to participate in careers fairs and mock interviews, facilitated by Council officers. Activities will dovetail into the work plan of the newly appointed LEP Enterprise Co-ordinator for West Lancashire.

3.4 As demonstrated in the Action Plan at Appendix A, a considerable amount of work is being undertaken across Council services on a variety of actions that continue

to improve the West Lancashire economy. This also includes ensuring business engagement is fully integrated into the Council's approach to raising the profile of the Borough, challenge perceptions and highlight the strengths and benefits of living, working and investing in the Borough.

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 however these are being met from existing resources.

6.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

6.1 This article 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

Equality Impact Assessment

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders, therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account when undertaking the actions detailed within this article.

Appendices

A. Economic Development Strategy Year 2 Action Plan Progress

B. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)