

Allerdale Borough Council

Executive – 12 May 2021

Economic Recovery and Growth Strategy

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| Portfolio holder | Councillor Mike Johnson, Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Community Development and Placemaking |
| Report from | Nik Hardy, Assistant Chief Executive (Policy, Performance and Economic Strategy) |
| Wards affected | All |
| Is this a key decision | Yes |

1.0 The reason for the decision

- 1.1 The Council's strategic approach to economic growth was last refreshed in 2016 with the adoption of the Allerdale Business Growth Strategy. During 2020 the Council embarked on a process to develop a new economic growth strategy that updated the previous economic assessment and developed a new strategic approach for economic growth.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Members note the work undertaken during the past 12 months to development a new economic strategy.
- 2.2 That Members of the Executive adopt the Economic Growth and Recovery Strategy 2021 as attached at Appendix A to this report.
- 2.3 That Members of the Executive delegate the final approval of the Implementation Plan and any minor amendments to the strategy to the Assistant Chief Executive (Policy, Performance and Economic Strategy) in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

3.0 Background and Introduction

- 3.1 In 2016 the Council adopted the Allerdale Business Growth Strategy. This strategy reflected the position of the Council's Executive and the position of the

Government on economic development and regeneration at that time. It contained a strong business growth element given the lack of national funding available to support regeneration activity. During the last five years, the council has improved relationships with businesses, particularly the large employers in the area, significantly.

- 3.2 The Allerdale Business Growth Strategy also changed the way in which the Council supported the visitor economy. The development of a visitor specific website and new branding was designed not only to benefit visitors but also potential employees locating to Allerdale.
- 3.3 In late 2019, the Executive approved the development of a new economic strategy for the Council and a procurement exercise was undertaken to find a suitable partner to undertake the exercise on behalf of the Council. In March 2020 the Council appointed a consortium led by Mott McDonald to lead on a three point commission on behalf of the Council.
- 3.4 The three key elements of the commission were:
- An update of the Allerdale baseline economic assessment
 - The development of the Workington Town Investment Plan
 - The development of a new economic growth strategy for Allerdale Borough Council
- 3.5 The commencement of the commission coincided with the start of the Coronavirus pandemic that resulted in understandable delays and changes to key aspects of the commission around elements such as stakeholder consultation. The initial commission was complicated further due to the level of additional work required to complete the Workington Town Investment Plan to the necessary specifications.
- 3.6 The final part of the commission was the development of a new economic growth strategy for Allerdale. It was determined early on in the development of the strategy that this document would also form the Council's economic recovery strategy to mitigate the economic impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. This element has now been completed and is put before the executive for adoption.

4.0 Content (to include alternative options considered)

- 4.1 The Allerdale Economic Recovery and Growth Strategy seeks to put in place a framework of future interventions that will guide the recovery from the pandemic and the longer term development of the local economy. The vision contained within the strategy is as follows:

“By 2031, Allerdale’s economy will be strong, diversified and well connected, with a growing and highly skilled population. Employment levels will be high with skills attainment well matched to local employment needs.

Allerdale’s businesses and residents will benefit from growing opportunities in clean energy, especially the **nuclear sector** and **offshore wind**, and a manufacturing renaissance. The local **visitor economy** will have fully recovered from Covid-19, and a greater number of tourists will be attracted beyond the National Park

boundaries. **New and established businesses** will have seized the opportunities offered by technological and behavioural change, and a refreshed policy and regulatory environment.

Allerdale's economic growth will be **sustainable, inclusive**, and offer **opportunities for all**. The heart of the district will be its network of **prosperous, resilient towns** and **flourishing rural communities**. High quality of life will be underpinned by outstanding **public services**, affordable, well-designed and well-located **housing**, and development that is sensitive to the area's **heritage and natural environment**, the district will offer an **attractive quality of life** for all existing and new residents. Allerdale will be a great place to earn a living and raise a family."

4.2 There are six strategic objectives identified to deliver the vision, which build on issues and opportunities identified in the baseline assessment, contained within the report. They are:

- Clean growth and the low carbon economy
- Growing and future proofing Allerdale's manufacturing base
- Support agriculture to grow and prosper post EU exit
- Harnessing changing lifestyle and working patterns to diversify and grow the economy
- Creating thriving visitor destinations, towns and rural communities
- Sharing the proceeds of growth

4.3 The strategy identifies a number of key actions within each strategic objective designed to help the local economy to recover from the Coronavirus pandemic and grow in the future. The strategy can be found at Appendix A to this report.

4.4 Once the strategy has been approved by the Executive the final part of the commission can be completed. The Implementation Plan will sit alongside the strategy and will detail activity required to deliver the strategy, in addition to providing more detail on key regeneration sites in towns across the Borough. It is recommended that approval of this final element is delegated to the Assistant Chief Executive (Policy, Performance and Economic Strategy) in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

4.5 In developing this strategy, the Council have undertaken a consultation exercise. This has not been as extensive as originally planned due to the impact of the pandemic but it has been consulted upon with a wide range of stakeholders.

4.6 Members of the Executive may choose to adopt this strategy as presented in Appendix A, or they may choose to make amendments to the strategy. It is recommended that members approve the strategy as presented in Appendix A.

5.0 Delivery arrangements

5.1 The Allerdale Economic Recovery and Growth Strategy has been developed with deliverability at its core. The strategy has been tailored so that it can be delivered by Allerdale, as a district authority in a two tier system. Some of the actions within the

strategy will still require input from a wider range of partners to fully meet the ambitions within the strategy.

- 5.2 The Council has allocated some funding from the Social Impact Investment Fund (SIIF) to support the implementation of the strategy and the Council will also seek to maximise on funding opportunities arising from Government Programmes such as the Future High Streets Fund and the Stronger Towns Fund.

6.0 Implications and Impact

6.1 Contribution to Council Strategy Priorities, Outputs and Outcomes

The delivery of this strategy will have a significant impact on a number of Council Strategy priorities. The strategy will build on the key council strategy themes of:

- Invest to grow – this strategy will detail activity on some of the Council’s key regeneration and investment sites
- Thriving towns and villages – this strategy will create town plans that will support the changes on the high streets, support businesses and give people a reason to visit our towns
- Resilient communities – this strategy will help to address financial inequalities

6.2 Finance/Resource implications

The Executive have agreed to support the implementation of this strategy with investment from the SIIF. Furthermore, officers will seek to take advantage of Government funding programmes as they arise. The implementation of the strategy will take place over a number of years and will therefore require continued investment from the Council in coming years.

6.3 Legal and governance implications

There are no legal implications arising from the adoption of the strategy. There may however be legal implications on a project by project basis as the strategy as delivery is progressed. These will be managed on a project by project basis.

6.4 Risk analysis

A scored and mitigated risk log

| Risk | Consequence | Controls required | Mitigated score |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Partners will not support the delivery of the strategy | Some actions will not be deliverable | Ongoing discussions with partner organisations | 6 |
| Funding is not available to implement the actions | Some actions will not be deliverable | Good project planning and prioritisation in addition to capitalising on funding opportunities | 6 |

6.5 Increasing satisfaction and service

The implementation of this strategy will enhance the Council's relationships with local businesses and the support programmes the Council can offer those businesses. The Council has developed strong relationships with businesses in the local area and these should be continued as part of the implementation of this strategy.

6.6 Equality impacts

An equality impact assessment has not been developed specifically for this strategy. The strategy has been developed with equality embedded within it. The strategy aims to offer opportunity for all of Allerdale's residents and provides a high quality of life through outstanding public services.

6.7 Health and Safety impacts

There are no direct health and safety impacts arising directly from this report.

6.8 Health, wellbeing and community safety impacts

There are no direct health, wellbeing and community safety impacts arising from the adoption of the strategy.

6.9 Environmental/sustainability impacts

The strategy aims to encourage and facilitate clean economic growth in the borough.

6.10 Other significant implications

There are no other significant implications arising from this report.

Appendices attached to this report

| Appendix number | Title of appendix |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Appendix A | Allerdale Economic Recovery and Growth Strategy |

Background documents available

| Name of background document | Where it is available |
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