

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Portfolio Holder

8 March 2011

**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director (Operational Services) / Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities)

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### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE 2010-2015

#### Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Planning Portfolio Holder with:
  - (a) The results of the consultation on the draft proposed Economic Strategy for South Cambridgeshire (2010 – 2015)
  - (b) Highlights of the key themes and actions from the strategy
  - (c) The final Economic Strategy, for approval.
2. This is not a key decision.

#### Recommendations and Reasons

3. It is recommended that the Planning Portfolio Holder:
  - (a) Note the content of this report
  - (b) Adopt the Economic Development Strategy, attached in Appendix 1, because it will raise the profile of economic development in South Cambridgeshire, attract business, funding, investment, infrastructure and research, provide a focus for partnership working including with the Local Enterprise Partnership, and integrate economic development with other Council activities

#### Background

4. The proposed Economic Development Strategy for South Cambridgeshire District, prepared by the Council (in consultation with internal and external partners and stakeholders at various stages) is attached in Appendix 1.
5. It combines policy implications with a local economic assessment, commissioned from economic consultants, PACEC. The aim of the economic assessment was to provide evidence and information on the local economy and local issues, which would help identify actions to be taken for the benefit of residents, businesses, and other organisations in the area. The full results of the economic assessment are available as a separate document.<sup>1</sup>
6. The Economic Development Strategy is something which every member of the community (business and individual) can contribute to and from which they can benefit. It aims to:
  - (a) Raise the profile of economic development within the District
  - (b) Attract business, funding, investment, infrastructure and research to the District

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<sup>1</sup> South Cambridgeshire District Council Local Economic Assessment. July 2010.  
[http://www.scambs.gov.uk/documents/retrieve.htm?pk\\_document=909415](http://www.scambs.gov.uk/documents/retrieve.htm?pk_document=909415)

- (c) Provide a focus for partnerships working including with the Local Enterprise Partnership
  - (e) Integrate economic development with other Council activities.
7. The period of the Strategy is 2010-2015. It will be reviewed annually and updated through service planning.
  8. The aim of the Strategy reflects the overall vision of the Council:
    - To ensure South Cambridgeshire is a safe and healthy place where residents are proud to live and where there will be opportunities for employment, enterprise and world-leading innovation.
    - To ensure the Council is a listening Council, providing a voice for rural life and first-class services accessible to all.
  9. Through the Strategy, the Council will seek to underpin the economic wellbeing of the District, maintaining a balanced and resilient economy, and welcoming new business.
  10. South Cambridgeshire District Council members and officers with partners and the economic consultants have contributed to develop the strategy. The methodology has included:
    - Internal SCDC liaison - meetings with key Councillors and staff
    - Desk Top Study covering a wide range of policy and research reports
    - Economic Profile of South Cambridgeshire
    - Economic projections for the district focusing on employment, key sectors and major development such as Northstowe.
    - Discussions with wide range of stakeholders
    - Survey of 400 businesses covering cross section of size, sector, and location
    - Survey of 300 residents across different ages, gender and location
    - Formal consultation on the draft Economic Strategy
  11. The Economic Development Strategy has six strategic themes relating to local economic priorities. These are:
    - **The role of South Cambridgeshire** - housing growth and a world class economy
    - **Support for business** - objectives to support new & existing business
    - **A low carbon economy** - reduce carbon and fossil fuel dependence and support "clean" tech industries
    - **Building sustainable communities** – providing the right supply of housing, skills, facilities etc
    - **Improving the infrastructure** - roads, broadband etc
    - **Key intervention areas: Recession** - assisting businesses in challenging economic times

### **Considerations, Consultation, Results and Delivery**

12. A formal consultation period was organised from October 2010 to early January 2011. This included a workshop, meetings and presentations with partners in the area to examine the evidence, policies and themes.

13. Comments have been taken on board but no significant changes to the strategy were required. Responses have been favourable towards the Economic Strategy, as demonstrated in the table below:

<b>Strategy Theme</b>	<b>Agreement expressed as a percentage (rounded)</b>
The Role of South Cambridgeshire	75%
Support for Business	86%
Low Carbon Economy	75%
Building Sustainable Communities	71%
Improved Infrastructure	71%
Key Sector Support: Recession	71%

14. The strategy will be delivered by South Cambridgeshire District Council and its partners, including the newly created Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The strategy will be monitored and adjusted where necessary to reflect opportunities, need and resources.
15. Internally, economic development occurs across a local authority and incorporates: policy; procurement; finance; regulatory services; licences; planning; housing; employment, business rates and sustainability. The table below summarises SCDC departments, in addition to Economic Development/New Communities, responsible for delivery of certain actions:

<b>Council Service</b>	<b>Objectives &amp; Actions</b>	<b>Theme/s</b>
Planning – Policy, Conservation & Development Control (including major developments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review planning applications impacting on the delivery of economic development benefits (e.g. jobs, investment)</li> <li>• Include economic considerations in policy reviews (LDF, core strategies, SPDs, Employment Land Reviews and so forth)</li> <li>• Ensure District's needs are reflected in strategic planning actions with partners.</li> <li>• Aid economic development associated with major applications (e.g. Northstowe).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of South Cambridgeshire</li> <li>• Supporting Business</li> <li>• Improved Infrastructure</li> <li>• Low Carbon Economy</li> <li>• Sustainable Communities</li> <li>• Key Intervention areas: Economic Downturn</li> </ul>
Finance & Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement help and practice</li> <li>• Business Rates (e.g. Hardship)</li> <li>• Prompt payment of contractors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting Business</li> <li>• Low Carbon Economy</li> <li>• Key Intervention areas: Economic Downturn</li> </ul>

Environmental Health and licensing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aid business with regulation and licensing</li> <li>• Work with businesses relating to tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting Business</li> <li>• Low Carbon Economy</li> <li>• Key Intervention areas: Economic Downturn</li> </ul>
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with communities on economic development issues e.g. rural business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting Business</li> <li>• Improved Infrastructure</li> <li>• Key Intervention areas: Economic Downturn</li> </ul>
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide affordable housing in partnership with housing providers</li> <li>• Encourage utilisation of low carbon technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting Business</li> <li>• Low Carbon Economy</li> <li>• Sustainable Communities</li> <li>• Improved Infrastructure</li> <li>• Key Intervention areas: Economic Downturn</li> </ul>

16. It should be noted that the policy context for preparing this strategy has changed significantly since the credit crunch, the recession, and the formation of the Coalition Government in May 2010. There are new and emerging policies on public spending and the governance arrangements for implementing economic development, planning, and business support services. For example, Business Link is changing and the East of England Development Agency is winding up. In particular the new Local Economic Partnership (LEP) and its services will potentially be important in improving economic prospects for South Cambridgeshire.

### Implications

17. The context is likely to continue to change in the future and hence our strategy will be flexible and adapted to meet changing circumstances and opportunities while retaining its overall aims and vision. Any impact, financial and otherwise will be dealt with through the normal Council processes and service planning.

18.

Financial	£10k for 2011/12 with part of £150k for the economic downturn.
Legal	All measures and actions will be referred for legal advice as relevant.
Staffing	Development Officer (Economic Development) in New Communities with support from other SCDC services as shown in paras 15 – 17.
Risk Management	Identified risks will be managed through the Planning and New Communities risk register.
Equality and Diversity Equality Impact Assessment completed	Partial EQIA completed with neutral and positive outcomes. Full EQIA not required.
Climate Change	Theme: Low Carbon Economy (and other themes) focuses on measures linked to tackling climate change.

### Effect on Strategic Aims

19. The Economic Development Strategy supports the Council's corporate aims and commitments:
- To be a listening Council providing first class services accessible to all
  - To ensure that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for residents and their families
  - To make South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents feel proud to live
  - To assist with the provision of local jobs for residents
  - To provide a voice for rural life

### **Conclusions / Summary**

20. The Economic Development Strategy has been developed following a thorough assessment of local need, in consultation with businesses, residents, and partners.
21. The formal consultation revealed support for the draft Strategy. The strategy has been developed to be flexible to adapt to changing circumstances.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Draft Economic Strategy – January 2011 – Appendix 1  
Report to Scrutiny Committee – Assessment of the District and Draft Economic Strategy – September 2010  
Report to SMT - Assessment of the District and Draft Economic Strategy  
– 25 August 2010  
South Cambridgeshire District Council: Local Economic Assessment – July 2010

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