



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**



Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee


Thursday, 27 June 2024

Report of Councillor Ashley Baxter,
Cabinet Member for Finance, HR
and Economic Development

Progress update on the Economic Development Strategy for South Kesteven 2024 – 2028

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To inform members of the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee (FEOSC) on progress made toward the development of an Economic Development Strategy 2024 – 2028.

Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. Notes the content of this report including the revised timetable for the Economic Development Strategy set out in Table 1 of the report.**
- 2. Agrees a Workshop be held for FEOSC Committee Members on 15th July 2024 to consider feedback from the consultation and its impact on the development of the strategy.**

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting communities Sustainable South Kesteven Enabling economic opportunities Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	(All Wards);

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 The development of the Economic Development Strategy is an important part of the work programme of the Committee as it has significant implications for the economic vibrancy of the District. The development of the supporting Action Plan may have financial implications and these will be considered at that time.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no significant legal or governance implications arising from this report.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 At the 8th May Finance Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee (FEOSC) meeting, officers presented progress against indicative milestones, which would see the adoption of an Economic Development Strategy in the Summer of 2024. The update included notification that Cabinet had approved a month-long period of consultation, which commenced on the 7th May.
- 2.2 Between the 7th May and the 8th June Officers wrote directly to Stakeholders introducing the consultation process for the Economic Development Strategy and asking them to visit the Council's website to make representation on the online consultation software. This Stakeholder group included over 250 public sector partners, Town and Parish Councils, business club representatives and citizens

who had expressed an interest in Planning, Economic or similar consultation exercises.

- 2.3 Officers also attended several business club or business exhibitions across the district, where a presentation was given or 'flyers' handed out to interested parties. In addition, the SKDC Communication Team broadcast details of the consultation period across the Council's social media channels throughout the four-week period.

Consultation Feedback Summary

- 2.4 As a result of the consultation, the Council has received fifty responses. Whilst this exercise only closed on the 8th June an early review has identified a number of themes that have emerged. This non-exclusive list includes:

- **'Connectivity' within the district to maximise economic and social benefit.** Respondents recognised the excellent infrastructure links provided by the A1, A52 and East Coast Mainline, however, noted the rural dimension to the district and the lack on internal connectivity between settlements across South Kesteven and the areas of employment, tourism, and leisure.
- **Consideration to facilitating a supply of available commercial business premises.** Comments identified that whilst issues around the supply of employment land were considered in the strategy there was limited references to ensuring a supply of commercial premises that will meet the needs of local business, a 'supply side' issue considered to be consistent across the district.
- **Identification and development of key sectors.** Respondents noted the sectoral approach to supporting new and emerging sectors that will be important in providing new and higher value employment opportunities across South Kesteven, however, they felt the strategy should go further and identify which sectors should be supported.
- **Further consideration to understand local productivity drivers and inclusion of plans to address them.** The strategy recognises the need to increase productivity locally and the challenges in the relative performance of the district in comparison to the regional and national economies, however, respondents would like the strategy to be more specific on local issues including economic activity rates, skills and company profiles.

- 2.5 These results will require further exploration before the Strategy can be revised to take account of the consultation responses. As part of this process, it is recommended that a second Member Workshop is organised for FEOSC Members in July to allow further discussion and input.

- 2.6 This will require the previously advertised 'indicative timetable' to be amended to include the following revised dates and milestones, which will be kept under review:

Table 1

Activity	Dates: Previous	Revised
Initial consultation feedback presented back to Finance and Economic Overview & Scrutiny Committee.	27 th June 2024	27 th June 2024
Cabinet to receive initial consultation feedback. Cabinet had anticipated to agree the final strategy.	9 th July 2024	9 th July 2024
2 nd FEOSC Members Workshop	N/A	15 th July 2024
Revised Strategy presented back to Finance and Economic Overview & Scrutiny Committee.	N/A	17 th September 2024
Recommendation to Cabinet to approve the final economic development strategy	9 th July 2024	8 th October 2024

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 Consultation is an important part of the development of the Strategy. Feedback from stakeholders including local businesses, local representatives and community groups will be invaluable in shaping the Economic Development Strategy and helping us understand the needs and aspirations of local communities and businesses.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 To move straight to a re-draft, without a second FEOSC Members Workshop.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 This report facilitates a request from FEOSC to be regularly updated on progress towards the adoption of an Economic Development Strategy for the District 2024 – 2028 and provided a direct process for Members to fully engage with process which will directly inform the final strategy.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 *Progress update on the new South Kesteven Economic Development Strategy 2023-2028* – Report for Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, published 22 November 2022, available online at:
<https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/documents/s36141/Progress%20Update%20on%20new%20South%20Kesteven%20Economic%20Development%20Strategy%202023%20-%202028.pdf>
- 6.2 To seek approval for stakeholder consultation in respect to the draft Economic Development Strategy 2024 – 2028 and accompanying action plan. Report for Cabinet, published April 2024, available online at:
[Cabinet Economic Development Strategy.pdf](#)
- 6.3 Report to update members of Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress made in developing an Economic Development Strategy for South Kesteven 2024 - 2028. Report for Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee published May 2024, available online at:
[Update on the Economic Development Strategy 2024 - 2028 FEOSC.pdf](#)