



Title: Economic Growth Strategy

Meeting: Cabinet

Date: 4 March 2024

Classification: Part 1

Policy Context: Corporate Plan 2023 to 2027

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Director: Alan Richards

Report Authors: Nick Brown and Kevin Waters

Executive Councillors: Councillor Daniel Nelson

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Enabling economic growth and a strong and prosperous business community is integral to the work of Southend-on-Sea City Council. This Economic Growth Strategy 2024-28 sets out our approach to boosting and sustaining a robust economy in Southend-on-Sea that fosters prosperity for businesses and our communities.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1. **Agree the adoption of the Economic Growth Strategy 2024-28 and that authority for any final minor changes prior to publication be delegated to the Executive Director, Environment and Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Growth and Investment.**

3. Body of the report

- 3.1. The previous Economic Growth Strategy for Southend-on-Sea concluded in 2022. The significantly changed economic context since the preparation of that document presented a compelling case for the creation of a new strategy

reflecting the current environment, highlighting the city's strengths and opportunities and setting out our approach to addressing key challenges. The document has been produced in-house by the Economic Inclusion Service in collaboration with the Data Insights Team.

- 3.2. The strategy has been shaped by our new Corporate Plan, in particular the priority within it of 'A growing city with a strong and prosperous community', a wide range of data sources, engagement with stakeholders and the broader suite of council policy of which it would form a part.

4. Reasons for Decisions

- 4.1. Enabling economic growth and a strong and prosperous business community is integral to the work of Southend-on-Sea City Council. While there is no statutory requirement to have an economic growth strategy it is good practice and such a strategy can guide Council decision-making and activity to maximise the level of and benefits from economic growth for businesses and residents.

5. Other Options

- 5.1. The Council could decide not to produce a new economic growth strategy. This would represent a missed opportunity to promote and capitalise on economic growth opportunities in the city for all.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. There are no immediate financial implications from adopting the strategy. Resource requirements, including personnel, skills, time and budget, will be outlined more fully in the subsequent delivery plan. As highlighted in the strategy, our approach will be to actively seek external funding opportunities and maximise partnership working to strengthen our ability to deliver the strategies objectives.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. There are no statutory provisions which require Councils to develop an Economic Growth Strategy. Councils are however invaluable partners in regional and local economic growth, in particular when they engage their functions around transport, waste, clean energy, water and digital, act as convenors for local businesses or promote investment in their area.
- 7.2. The Council can rely on a discretionary power to promote economic growth. This strategy is developed under the Councils general power of competence (sections 1-8 Localism Act 2011). This enables a Council to do anything that

an individual may do. This strategy is designed to support the best interests of the community, delivering economic growth through innovation and partnership working.

8. Carbon Impact

- 8.1. The strategy aims to support the transition to a low carbon economy in Southend and it includes a range of actions to deliver positive carbon impacts.

9. Equalities

- 9.1. A staged approach has been taken to the equality analysis for this strategy. An initial analysis of how people with protected characteristics will be impacted by the strategy has been carried out based on current information and this identified a number of positive impacts for groups with protected characteristics. As the strategy moves forwards further data and research will be used to create a fuller understanding of who the audiences are and how we can reach a positive impact. We will use this insight to inform our delivery plan and a further equality analysis to be carried out as part of developing the delivery plan.

10. Consultation

- 10.1. A consultation survey on the Economic Growth Strategy was available on 'Your Say Southend' and hard copies of this were available for completion at the last Southend Business Partnership Briefing session. The survey was shared with the Essex Chambers of Commerce for distribution among their members and the new Strategic Southend Business Partnership Board. Engagement also took place with the Economic Crisis and Recovery Group and the Southend Business Partnership Executive. In addition to this there have been workshops with a wide range of Council services. The feedback received has been used to shape the approach taken in the strategy.

11. Appendices

- 11.1. Appendix 1: Economic Growth Strategy 2024-28

Report Authorisation

This report has been approved for publication by:

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	Name:	Date:
S151 Officer	Joe Chesterton	19 January 2024
Monitoring Officer	Kim Sawyer	22 January 2024
Executive Director(s)	Alan Richards	5 January 2024
Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Nelson	8 January 2024