

Meeting:	General overview and scrutiny committee
Meeting date:	26 July 2016
Title of report:	Economic master plan
Report by:	Economic development manager

Classification

Open

Key decision

This is not an executive decision.

Wards affected

Countywide

Purpose

To comment on the proposed framework for engaging with communities.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) the committee identify any recommendations to be made to the cabinet member to improved**
- (b) the committee consider building into their work programme consideration of the draft econom**

Alternative options

- 1 Not applicable.

Reasons for recommendations

- 2 To seek the views of the committee on any additional actions to secure improvement in the development of, and engagement with, the economic master plan.

Key considerations

Background

- 3 In an ever increasing competitive market place Herefordshire needs to stand out, to have its own identity, to be able to influence government and inform the direction of partners such as the Marches local enterprise partnership (LEP). To do this we need to be certain of our priorities and direction, to understand our issues and opportunities, and to be coordinated and ready to take advantage.
- 4 Herefordshire is already rising to the challenge. Recent public and private sector projects demonstrate the ambition and confidence which exists in the county – the Old Market development, Enterprise Zone status, roll out of superfast broadband, private sector investment from companies such as Cargill, Tyrrells, Heineken, and Weston’s all demonstrate a growing momentum within the county.
- 5 To supplement this approach the council is proactively pursuing the county’s continuing growth. The recently adopted core strategy will guide delivery of 16,500 new homes, sufficient employment land to meet the needs of a growing business base, and the associated infrastructure requirements.
- 6 However, how can we go above and beyond what is currently planned? How can we add layers of detail to strategic documents? How can we identify new opportunities, and how do we react quickly to investment proposals? These are all challenges the county currently faces, and which our competitors will already be addressing.
- 7 To achieve the changes required to make a significant difference within Herefordshire an approach is required where all aspects of the economy participate and contribute their knowledge and resources. This approach takes the form of a Herefordshire economic master plan.

Purpose and Objectives

- 8 Growing the Herefordshire economy will provide benefit in the form of maintaining, or increasing, living standards, help tackle poverty, increasing wages levels and disposable income, encouraging investment leading to further growth successes. As an enabler of growth the aim of the economic master plan is to:
 - a. Create the right conditions for economic growth and;
 - b. To move towards a higher value economy.
- 9 To deliver this vision the master plan will perform a variety of roles and functions. It will:
 - a. Contain a series of priority projects.
 - b. Act as a focus for attracting inward investment.
 - c. Raise the county’s profile and showcase exemplar existing businesses.
 - d. Deliver greater coordination and focus in our discussions with partners such as government and the Marches LEP.

- 10 A significant proportion of the master plan will concentrate on the development of priority projects. These should focus on the delivery of economic growth and build upon the core strategy and/or a defined evidence base.
- 11 Priority projects are likely to take one of two forms, firstly they will be capital projects, usually construction or infrastructure related, that have a focus on a specific location or geography, for example the football ground in Hereford. Secondly they will engender or support a change of culture through a programme of activity not restricted to a particular location, sector, or delivery body, for example the desire to promote Herefordshire as a centre for outdoor leisure and recreational activity.
- 12 The master plan will contain a number of embryonic, initial priority projects that will make a contribution to the realisation of economic growth, however, as the master plan is not going to be a static document, it is important to create a pipeline of projects that can be added to the master plan on a regular basis.

Engagement

- 13 Whilst the economic master plan will have a county wide overview there inevitably will be a focus on Hereford city and the various market towns as these are the locations where most opportunities exist and where there is the commercial viability required to make the projects a reality.
- 14 To ensure genuine involvement with the master plan project it will be of paramount importance to effectively engage with local communities and groups in the city, market towns and across Herefordshire. As elected community representatives, there is a role for councillors in shaping and leading the project development process and forming meaningful communication linkages between the various communities and the development of the master plan.
- 15 It is imperative that communities and localities have regular opportunity to submit potential priority project ideas for consideration within the master plan. Equally it is anticipated that there could be a mechanism within the master plan to record where communities feel there are potential opportunities for investment in economic growth. There is a potential role for Members to play within this process in terms of organising and engaging the required capacity to develop potential project ideas.
- 16 To guide communities to develop potential project ideas a suite of criteria that submissions should address could be created to give some guidance as to the scale, scope and benefits required of projects.
- 17 A presentation attached at appendix 1 will be given to the committee to accompany this report and to gain views as to the development of a framework for engaging with communities led by Herefordshire councillors.
- 18 It should be noted that the final economic master plan as a budget and policy framework item will be adopted by full council. The provisional timetable for this is currently as follows:

General Overview and Scrutiny Committee	27 th September
Cabinet	3 rd November
Full Council	16 th December

Community impact

- 19 The Master Plan will include a suite of priority projects. Each of these projects will be required to make a contribution towards economic growth and a higher value economy. At this stage the final suite of projects has not been finalised so it is impossible to determine the exact community impact.
- 20 Within the Master Plan it is proposed to set out some specific targets to demonstrate contributions to economic growth and to measure success. It is likely that the Economic master Plan will include targets focused on economic benefit such as, but not limited to, :
- a. Increasing average wages;
 - b. Providing new Higher Education places;
 - c. Increasing the number of new business start-ups;
 - d. Reducing carbon dioxide levels;
 - e. Increasing GVA to demonstrate improved productivity.
- 21 The drafting, and approval, of the Economic Master Plan will help guide council and private sector investment through the implementation of the identified priority projects, consequently making a significant contribution to the corporate priority to support the growth of our economy.

Equality duty

- 22 There are no equality or human rights issues arising from the content of this report and there are no equality or human rights issue in the drafting of an Economic Master Plan.
- 23 However the work contained with the production of the Economic Master Plan may draw attention to issues within the implementation of the various priority projects that would have an impact on equalities or human rights.
- 24 Should council approval be required for support towards, or involvement with, any of these priority projects, a decision report will request the appropriate approval and set out the equality and / or human rights issues.

Financial implications

- 25 The cost of drafting an economic master plan is being met within existing service budgets and primarily is a call on officer time.

- 26 There will be a cost to implementing the Economic Master Plan and for supporting or developing priority projects. Should council approval be required for support towards, or involvement with, any of the priority projects, a decision reports will request the appropriate approval.

Legal implications

- 27 There are no legal issues arising from the content of this report. Detailed legal advice will be gained to inform the Full Council report on adoption of the final Economic Master Plan.

Risk management

- 28 Should any of the priority projects require council involvement or support there will be a variety of risks associated with their development and implementation, these risks will be identified and mitigated within appropriate project management arrangements put in place for the delivery of successful project proposals.
- 29 The drafting of an Economic Master Plan provides an opportunity to undertake a further stage of delivery of the council's core strategy and to secure investment towards economic growth within Herefordshire.

Consultees

- 30 A number of consultation events have taken place with communities across Herefordshire to gain projects ideas that would significantly contribute towards economic growth and form a priority project within the Economic Master Plan. These project ideas will be considered along with ideas taken from a number of other sources, including General Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Master Plan Presentation GOSC Meeting July 2016

Background papers

- None identified.