

Response to General Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendations.

Summary of the principal points identified for consideration from GOSC – 27th September 2016.

General Overview and Scrutiny Committee Recommendations	Response
<p>The plan should strive to address the major constraints that were inhibiting plans for growth and seek to make the county more marketable, mindful of what it was within the council's own powers to influence and effect.</p>	<p>The strategy sets out some of the key challenges to the growth of the Herefordshire economy and identifies a suite of investment opportunities which will deliver growth and make the county more marketable.</p>
<p>It was important to be clear who the audience for the document was.</p>	<p>There are two principle audiences for the strategy, an internal to the county audience consisting of local stakeholders, communities, county and parish councilors, and local businesses. There is also an external audience which is primarily investment and development community based. The strategy addresses both through different sections of the document.</p>
<p>It was suggested the document should include a section on the history and geography of the county, and why the county was a good place to live and work, and set out the opportunities and attractions for people who were thinking of moving to the county, set out the objectives and ambitions so that people could judge whether they wished to be associated with them.</p>	<p>In recognition of the intended audiences there are brief mentions of the history and geography of the county. Reasons why the county is a good place to live and work are included throughout the document.</p>
<p>Clear timelines were needed. It was suggested that the plan should be in chunks recognising that changes would inevitably take place over the life of the plan and ensuring that it remained adaptable.</p>	<p>A programme for the various investment opportunities has been included. The strategy will be delivered over three periods each of five years.</p>
<p>Pitch documents were a good idea, possibly split into geographical or industry sectors and so targeting potential investors.</p>	<p>A subsequent iteration of the strategy will be a 'pitchbook' that will showcase the investment opportunities. This will be based</p>

	around the Investment Pitchbook annex to the strategy.
The case studies provided were helpful.	Noted but due to audience, space and the large amount of text case studies do not feature in the strategy. They are likely to feature in some of the associated media and promotional material and will showcase the best the county has to offer in terms of innovative and growing businesses.
Account should be taken of the links with planning policy and the need to identify where policy could be improved.	The strategy is not a statutory document but does identify linkages with the local plan, emerging area plans, and the various neighbourhood plans. It is not a function of the strategy to identify improvements to policy.
The importance of tourism to the County's growth and sustainability needed to be recognised. Maintaining the county's roads was important to the tourist industry.	Whilst the strategy does not focus on particular sectors of the economy the importance of the tourism sector is recognised in various elements of the strategy.
Promoting the County as a setting for film and tv locations would be advantageous.	This is a level of detail that is not contained within the strategy. The point is recognised and will be investigated. In October 2015 the council signed up to the Film Friendly Partnership Charter which signifies a joint approach with creative England to promote the county as a film friendly location.
The possibility of businesses using underused council property should be explored.	This is a level of detail that is not contained within the strategy but the recommendation will be forwarded to the council's property team.
The Church Commissioners should be approached about scope for public use of their property	This is a level of detail that is not contained within the strategy.

<p>Communication and marketing were key.</p>	<p>Agreed and a full communications plan is to be worked up post adoption of the strategy.</p>
<p>The Plan needed to consider the needs of the whole County. At the moment it was dominated by projects within the city.</p>	<p>Whilst the city is the location of the majority of investment opportunities it should be recognised that projects within the city will serve the wider county. Future iterations of the strategy and investment pitchbook have the ability to include projects from within the various market towns and efforts are being made to engage further with partners from the market towns.</p>
<p>Regard should be had to the horticultural sector within the county.</p>	<p>Noted but the strategy does not currently focus on specific sectors.</p>
<p>The tensions between preserving the county and growth and development needed to be recognised.</p>	<p>The point is recognised and it is considered that a balance has been achieved between the safeguarding of the Herefordshire landscape and the growth ambitions contained within the strategy.</p>
<p>There should be a focus on celebrating what was unique in the county and protecting that. An audit of the county's strengths had been proposed at the Committee's meeting in July but nothing appeared to have happened as a result.</p>	<p>The strategy looks at what opportunity exists to invest in key projects that will provide the wider growth of the local economy. Whilst some of these will build on local strengths it is considered that others address key weaknesses or market opportunities. Consequently an audit of the county's strengths would have limited relevance to the identification of projects to be included as investment opportunities.</p>
<p>The photograph on the front cover should be replaced with a more distinctive image relating to the county.</p>	<p>Agreed and actioned.</p>

An implementation plan was needed.	Any delivery or implementation plan will be drafted post adoption of the strategy.
Having identified needs in the county there could be an opportunity to explore ways of meeting these needs, adopting a market led approach.	The strategy adopts a market led approach.
Consideration should be given to seeking a view from external consultants on the plan.	Given the current council budgetary constraints it was considered greater value for money to utilise relevant council officer's expertise and knowledge rather than engage external consultants.
Clarification should be provided on the consultation process. In addition, including a section on those who had been consulted on the plan's development would lend it credibility.	A series of engagements with the city, market towns and rural areas took place in Spring 2016. The strategy is an evolving document that will be amended over time to reflect new opportunities and changing market conditions. Consequently a process for forward engagement has been included.
There seemed to be no reference to the small and medium enterprises that formed the majority of the county's businesses.	Reference to small and medium sized businesses (SME's) has been included within the strategy.
The wording in relation to Cargills (p120 of the agenda papers) and to phosphate pollution (p59) needed to be revisited.	Agreed and actioned.
It was questioned whether the proposals for the river quarter took account of the National Planning Policy Framework and the core strategy.	Investment opportunities within Investment Pitchbook have been discussed with the Team Leader Strategic Planning. He has confirmed that all investment opportunities are in general conformity with the local plan.