

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>7<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2009</b>
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN FOLLOWING THE SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2005-25</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO AREA:</b>	<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES</b>

**CLASSIFICATION:** Open

### **Wards Affected**

County-wide

### **Purpose**

To outline the response from Cabinet to the Scrutiny Review of the Herefordshire Economic Development Strategy 2005-25.

### **Key Decision**

This is not a Key Decision.

### **Recommendation**

- THAT (a) Cabinet's response to the findings of the Scrutiny Review of the Herefordshire Economic Development Strategy 2005-25 be noted, subject to any comments the Committee wish to make; and**
- (b) A further report on progress against the action plan be made after six months with consideration then being given to the need for any further report being made.**

### **Key Points Summary**

- The Committee's Economic Development Strategy Review Group undertook a review of the Council's Economic Development Strategy 2005-25 and completed a report into its findings which was considered and agreed by this Committee;
- The report, which made a number of recommendations, was forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.
- The Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Community Services has considered the recommendations contained in the report of 5<sup>th</sup> October 2009 and his response to each
- All the recommendations are agreed or agreed in principle.

## **Alternative Options**

- 1 That scrutiny does not accept the response from the Herefordshire Council Executive.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 2 To complete the process of the Review of the Economic Development Strategy outlining which recommendations have been accepted.

## **Introduction and Background**

- 3 Community Services Scrutiny Committee brought forward a report reviewing the Economic Development Strategy on 5 October 2009. The task of the review was to consider the economic development strategy in light of the current economic downturn and changes in priorities.
- 4 The review was supported from officers within the Planning Policy Services and as a result there is a great deal of connectivity to the Local Development Framework – which is a positive approach considering the impact of the LDF on decisions that will affect the economy.
- 5 The original strategy was produced in 2004 with a refresh when it was published in 2006. It covers a 20 year period but since its publication the regional strategy has changed and so has the financial climate. There is also a new national duty to produce Local Economic Assessments which will provide greater data on the local economy which will inform a revised strategy.

## **Key Considerations**

- 6 The aim is to produce the new strategy by October 2010. This allows time to reflect on the emerging priorities of the LDF and findings of the local economic assessment. As part of the process will be consideration of geographic needs and sector specific requirements.
- 7 Since the review a number of the activities have already taken place that relate to the recommendations in the strategy review. These include:
  - Enhanced communication between economic development and planning services – especially in relation to key projects such as Model Farm.
  - An Intentions Paper on the county's approach to addressing the challenges of Broadband delivery has been produced to be presented to Cabinet.
  - Initial discussions with the Hereford Heritage Regeneration Group on the transfer of assets has taken place and a draft proposals paper produced.
  - Improved front page of the web site with links to the events with special themed banners.
  - The Economic Development Partnership Group (policy and delivery group of the Herefordshire Partnership) continues to monitor activity and performance.

## **Community Impact**

- 8 Economic prosperity of the county has an impact on all aspects of community life. The recent downturn has impacted on businesses, communities and individuals – as well as public sector spend. Much of the new economic development strategy will focus on recovery and support

the sustainability of the county's economy over the long term.

## **Financial Implications**

- 9 All costs must be met from within existing budgets if the recommendations, as presented, are accepted.

## **Legal Implications**

- 10 Not relevant for this report.

## **Risk Management**

- 11 That once investigated the "in principle" recommendations will have a cost implication that will not allow for implementation.
- 12 That there will be time slippage on the production of the new strategy due to Local Economic Assessment information not being forthcoming or delay on decision making regarding the LDF.

## **Consultees**

- 13 Please see report for consultee list.

## **Appendices**

- 14 Appendix 1 Action Plan to address the recommendations arising from the scrutiny review.

## **Background Papers**

- None