

Item 14 - Sevenoaks District Draft Economic Development Strategy

The attached report was considered by the Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee on 23 June 2022. The relevant Minute extract is below.

Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee (23 June 2022, Minute 10)

The Economic Development & Programme Manager presented the report which detailed the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) for the District for the period 2022 - 2027. He explained that the Strategy addressed the challenges facing businesses with supply chain issues, a tight labour market and rising costs. It also focusses on the opportunities provided by changes in working practices and the possibility of capturing new spending patterns.

He outlined the four focus areas of the Strategy, which were Business & Enterprise, Tourism and Rural, Town Centres, and Skills & Employment, and explained the elements within these that the EDS specifically targeted. He emphasised the importance of sustainability and Council's Net Zero plan within all these areas, and the opportunities for growth that these presented for the District.

The Committee then heard about the importance of the District Council's partnerships in the Strategy, and the role of consultation with these groups in the creation of the Strategy's priorities. They also heard about how the Strategy includes an annual economic report to monitor its performance.

The Committee discussed the measures in the EDS to retain businesses in the District once developed, and heard the measures the EDS included to develop the available office space within the District to allow these businesses to remain. They further discussed the ways the EDS addressed inequality in the District, and how the provision of digital and transport infrastructure in both rural and urban areas was crucial to the levelling up of the District as a whole.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that the Economic Development Strategy 2022 - 2027 be adopted.