

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ECONOMY
9 SEPTEMBER 2004**

EXECUTIVE – 14 SEPTEMBER 2004

UPDATE

**EXETER AND HEART OF DEVON ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2004 – 2008**

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek Members' comments and endorsement of the final draft of the sub-regional economic development strategy covering the period 2004-2008.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 1 July the Scrutiny Committee – Economy, received a paper on the emerging draft Exeter and Heart of Devon Economic Partnership (EHODEP) sub-regional economic development strategy. Appendix 1 contains the executive summary of the strategy together with an action plan.
- 2.2 The draft strategy was widely circulated to an extensive range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations, including the South West Regional Assembly, the South West Regional Development Agency, South West Tourism, Learning and Skills Council, Business Link, Chambers of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Commercial Agents and Developers.
- 2.3 The strategy complements a number of Exeter Vision themes, in particular “prosperous city”, through actions, which encourage investment into the city and support the growth of local businesses. It also complements the Regional Economic Strategy produced by the South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) by contributing to its three strategic objectives to: raise business productivity, increase economic inclusion and improve regional communication and partnership.
- 2.4 The strategy is intended to provide a vision for the sub-region and a working framework for the activities of EHODEP, its constituent members and the key agencies, which impact upon the economic performance of the area. Importantly, it will play a strong role in shaping the priorities of the emerging Local Development Frameworks, the Regional Spatial Strategy (particularly sub-regional policies) and SWRDA’s review of its Regional Economic Strategy and Corporate Plan.

3.0 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 Responses received through the consultation process were generally supportive of the EHODEP and the proposed draft strategy. The following summaries the observations and the issues which organisations felt were particularly important for the sustainable economic growth and the future prosperity of the local economy: -

Partnerships

- the key members of the EHODEP should strengthen its ability to deliver the strategy and in particular its ability to influence the supply side of housing to help combat wage/price discrepancies
- EHODEP should work with partners to secure adequate and consistent funding for the creation of integrated business advice across the whole of the four local authority districts

Defining the sub-region

- the Partnership should strengthen the integrity of the sub-region by strongly defining its economic contribution to the region and also the inter-relationships between Exeter and its hinterland
- the Strategy should recognise the importance of the environment as both a contributor to economic development and also to the quality of life for businesses, employers, residents and visitors alike

Infrastructure

the Partnership should work to:-

- secure an increase in the number of scheduled services and also significant international scheduled flights from Exeter International Airport to overcome barriers to future relocations and the growth and retention of local investment
- secure the dualling of the A30/A303 Honiton to Ilminster to meet the communications needs of local businesses in the immediate area and also for the south west peninsula
- secure the provision of appropriate employment land to support Exeter's economic growth and also for job creation locally in market and coastal towns of the sub-region
- secure the provision of a science park to address the shortage of research related jobs and businesses and support the creation of higher level knowledge based employment
- drive up effective usage and demand for information and communication technologies to assist businesses in becoming more competitive
- link the development of 'icon' tourist attractions to the promotion of high quality holiday accommodation

Skills development

the Partnership should work to:-

- address skills and training development within disadvantaged communities by supporting actions identified in the social housing and inclusion partnership strategy, namely promoting higher levels of participation in basic and vocational skills training
- secure the upskilling of the indigenous population to take advantage of the growth in professional occupations, and career/job opportunities presented by key sector development initiatives
- work with the Learning and Skills Council to raise the number of people qualified to work in sectors where skills shortages are forecast.

3.2 The strategy has been revised to take account of the comments received and subsequent discussions within the Partnership.

4.0 NEXT STAGE

- 4.1 Following endorsement of the strategy by EHODEP, and its constituent member organisations the executive summary will be made generally available and the action plan will be used as the key framework for co-ordinated implementation of the strategy by members of the Partnership and other agencies.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As previously reported, any financial implications for the implementation of the EHODEP economic development strategy will be reported to Committee on a project by project basis.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION that: -

- 6.1 Members note the report and recommend that the Executive endorse the Exeter and Heart of Devon Economic Partnership's Sub-Regional Economic Development Strategy for the period 2004-2008.

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Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

Background Documents: Exeter And Heart Of Devon Economic Partnership Economic Development Strategy
2004 – 2008, Scrutiny Committee – Economy 1 July 2004