

REPORT FROM: HEAD OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

TO: EXECUTIVE

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Economic Growth Strategy

PURPOSE OF REPORT

For the Executive to review and approve the updated Economic Growth Strategy for Pendle. The strategy sets out Pendle Council's vision for economic development and growth, for the following four years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Executive approves of the plan and recommends it for adoption.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In order that the economic growth of the borough receives focus and that opportunities are identified to continue to help develop and promote the local economy, its residents and businesses.

Background

1. This strategy replaces one which was developed in 2021 as the borough, and its economy, was going through the turmoil of the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. That strategy, with its emphasis on the recovery out of the pandemic was appropriate for its time, but economic circumstances have now moved on from and there is a need for a new strategy.

Driving Economic Growth 2025 – 2028

3. The new strategy is designed with a programme of actions to be undertaken over the 4 years from 2025 to 2028, within the context of a broader 15-year economic vision for Pendle. The strategy, and actions achieved, would therefore be reviewed and refreshed at the end of its programme, as we enter the next phase towards our 15 year goal.
4. The Pendle Economic Growth Strategy 2025-2028 is centered around three pillars; Our Place, Our Business, and Our People. Each is an interrelated theme within the economy and only by delivering change against each can prosperity be established.

5. Seven challenges and barriers have been identified by the strategy for focus. These are:

Challenges

- High Reliance on manufacturing
- Lack of local employment opportunities
- Low average earnings and low levels of productivity
- High economic inactivity rates

Barriers

- Pendle's supporting infrastructure – limited transport connections to the borough
- Skills shortages in key sectors and low retention of young people
- Deprivation in the local environment and breadth of quality housing

6. The local, regional and national strategic context has been taken into account in the development of the strategy.

Summary of findings Our People theme

7. Within the context of the People theme, the report identifies there are 97,000 people in Pendle with 58,000 of 'working age' – with challenges listed below:
- a. The labour market is relatively small, and there has been slow growth within the working age population, compounded by high levels of out-migration
 - b. Challenges within the labour market are exacerbated by high levels of economic inactivity.
 - c. Concerns of residents' health and contribution to longer term health related barriers to work
 - d. There are skills gaps in the Pendle labour market and higher-level jobs are being filled by workers from outside the borough
8. The strategy sets out four key priority groups for focus; these include targeting young people, older workers, BAME groups and people facing health barriers to work.
9. A priority action is developing a higher skills offer within Pendle. This in turn is supported by a nine-point action plan where Pendle can take a lead or work in partnership with other agencies. Key actions include ;
- a. Inspire ambition and improve life chances in children and young people
 - b. Align skills provision with business need
 - c. increase access to and promote healthy and active lifestyles

Summary of findings Our Business theme

10. Within the context of the business theme, the strategy identifies that there are 3,145 business in Pendle employing 31,000 individuals – with key challenges as follows:
 - a. Growth in the business stock has not translated into employment growth
 - b. There are signs of vulnerability in business requiring diversification and support
 - c. Productivity remains low
11. The strategy focusses on six key sectors which include Manufacturing; Information and communications; professional, scientific and technical; visitor economy; foundational economy; and the green economy.
12. The nine point action plan includes securing private sector investment through a compelling investment proposition. Key actions include;
 - a. Business support and key skills diagnosis
 - b. Seek opportunities to extend the business growth and resilience program
 - c. Strengthen economic partnerships

Summary of findings Our Place theme

13. Within the context of the **Place** theme there are four key investment needs which include Housing, Premises, Digital and Transport.
14. The strategic objective of this theme is to create vibrant places with lasting appeal which attract, and retain residents, employees, visitors and investors - this is supported by a nine-point action plan. Key actions include;
 - a. Develop new quality employment sites and premises to meet demand
 - b. Ensure that Pendle offers a quality housing offer to meet identified need
 - c. Enhance the Place narrative and brand identity of Pendle

Within each of these themes the action plan suggests a mixed approach where Pendle Council will lead on certain actions or activities, whilst others will require partnership with other agencies.

Forward Plan

15. The report provides a detailed action plan across the themes broken down into areas of work with priorities and identification of stakeholders to support the overarching objectives.
16. The plan is broken down into annual periods up to 2028 to focus on actions within each year, including provision for monitoring achievement and will be led by the Economic Growth team, individually and in partnership with supporting agencies.
17. Success is measured across nine points which include;
 - a. Creation of new jobs
 - b. Improve skills profile for working age Pendle residents
 - c. Increase investment pipeline for Pendle

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: This will develop a policy for growth in the economy over the coming years

Financial: None directly arising from this report

Legal: None directly arising from this report

Risk Management: None directly arising from this report

Health and Safety: None directly arising from this report

Sustainability: Green and sustainable growth has been considered within the strategy.

Community Safety: None directly arising from this report

Equality and Diversity: the strategy aims to provide for equality and diversity by representing all groups within the economy including the BAME business sector, those in employment and reducing worklessness within Pendle.

APPENDICES

Economic Growth Strategy