



CABINET – 1st MAY 2018

ENABLING GROWTH PLAN 2018-19

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the County Council's Enabling Growth Plan 2018-19.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that the Enabling Growth Plan 2018-19 (EGP), attached as the Appendix to the report, be approved.

Reasons for Recommendation

3. Since the Cabinet approved the EGP 2015-18 in March 2015, there have been a number of significant national, regional and local policy developments including the decision for the UK to leave the EU and the launch of the UK's Industrial Strategy in November 2017.
4. To take account of these changes and ensure the Council has a relevant economic plan for 2018/19; the Enabling Growth Board has undertaken a light-touch refresh of the EGP 2015-18 and produced a revised Plan for 2018-19. A more robust and longer term review of the Council's economic plan and priorities will be undertaken alongside the development of the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS)¹; with a view to the LIS and an Enabling Growth Plan for 2019 onwards being produced for approval early in 2019.
5. The Council also recently adopted a new Strategic Plan 2018-2022: *Working together for the benefit of everyone*, which identifies a 'Strong Economy' as one of its five strategic outcomes.

¹ The Government announced in November 2017 as part of the UK's Industrial Strategy that LEPs will be tasked with developing Local Industrial Strategies.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

6. The EGP 2018-19 is a refresh of the 2015-18 Plan and as such does not represent a policy change for the County Council, but provides an up to date plan for an extended 12 month period. The EGP 2015-18 was considered by the Scrutiny Commission in March 2015 and economic updates have been provided as required and through the Council's Annual Report process.
7. The Scrutiny Commission will be consulted on a more robust refresh of the Council's economic priorities in 2019 which will be undertaken alongside the development of the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and in preparation for implementing the Council's recently adopted Strategic Plan.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. The Enabling Growth Plan 2015-18 was approved by the Cabinet in March 2015. The proposed EGP 2018/19 is an updated and extended version of this which identifies priority interventions for an extended 12 month period.
9. In December 2017, the County Council approved a new Strategic Plan which identified a Strong Economy as one of its five strategic outcomes; this is reflected in the refreshed EGP.

Resource Implications

10. The EGP 2018-19 sets out investments already committed by the County Council in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital Programme, Revenue Budgets and Earmarked Reserves and there will therefore be no additional resource implications arising from the approval of the EGP. The EGP will help facilitate the prioritisation of projects for future investment including securing external funds where possible.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

11. A copy of this report has been circulated to all Members through the Members News in Brief Service.

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PART B

Background

12. In March 2015, the County Council adopted an Enabling Growth Plan for 2015-18, which set out the Council's economic aspirations for Leicestershire. The EGP was grouped around three main themes; 'Place', 'People' and 'Business', in support of the Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) Strategic Economic Plan 2014-20. An associated action plan has been implemented and monitored by the Council's internal Enabling Growth Board.
13. Since the Council's adoption of the EGP there have been a number of significant national, regional and local strategic developments which will inform future economic policies and intervention priorities, not least the decision for the UK to leave the EU and the launch of the UK's Industrial Strategy in November 2017.
14. The Council also recently adopted a new Strategic Plan 2018-2022: *Working together for the benefit of everyone*, which identifies a 'Strong Economy' as one of its five Strategic Outcomes.
15. The refreshed EGP 2018/19 (attached as the appendix) seeks to consider and respond to some of these changes in the short-term and provides a light-touch refresh of the current EGP, ensuring that the Council has a relevant economic plan for 2018/19.

Achievements 2015-18

16. The refreshed EGP 2018/19 highlights some of the Council's achievements over the previous plan period, examples include:
 - Securing £116m from external funding sources to deliver capital infrastructure improvements which support the local economy; including road and junction improvements, enhanced superfast broadband coverage and new high quality workspace units.
 - Delivering superfast broadband to more than 73,000 premises with a further 11,000 properties by the end of 2018, taking the total county coverage to 97%.
 - Supporting 2,700 people in their job search, through the Authority's library-based work clubs with two-thirds entering work, further education or training.

- Establishing a new Place Marketing Organisation to deliver a sub-regional inward investment service and more strategic approach to supporting the tourism sector.
- Securing £1.3m for the East Leicestershire LEADER programme providing grants to rural businesses.
- Working in partnership with Leicester City Council, East Midlands Chamber and the Food and Drink Forum to lever £6.6m European Regional Development Funds for business support including SME grants, one-to-one advice and sector development activity.

Enabling Growth Plan 2018-19

17. The development of the refreshed EGP has been undertaken by the internal Enabling Growth Board and consideration has been given to the latest economic policies and evidence available in doing so. An officers' workshop was held on 19th March with representation from all six of the Council's departments and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership to consider the key priorities and realistic deliverables for the County Council over the next 12-18 months.

18. The refreshed EGP:

- Sets out in one document the priority activities the Council will pursue to support economic growth in the short to medium term;
- Will facilitate the prioritisation of county projects for investment, including securing external funds where possible;
- Will assist with the alignment of relevant council strategies with corporate economic priorities, specifically in support of the newly adopted Strategic Plan;
- Will be underpinned by a detailed action plan which will be monitored through project outputs and key performance indicators; this will be overseen by the Enabling Growth Board.

19. The key priorities identified for inclusion in the refreshed EGP support the delivery of the strong economy outcome within the Council's Strategic Plan, based upon three supporting outcomes:

- 1) Leicestershire has a highly skilled and employable workforce.
- 2) Leicestershire has the right infrastructure for sustainable growth.
- 3) Leicestershire is an attractive place where businesses are supported to flourish.

20. Some of these priorities, particularly in relation to having the right infrastructure to meet housing need and support sustainable economic growth also link to the 'Affordable and Quality Homes' outcome and these will be further developed during 18/19, aligned with an agreed Strategic Growth Plan.

21. Strategic priorities for supporting economic growth in 2018/19 include:

- In partnership with the LLEP, support the development and adoption of a Leicester and Leicestershire Local Industrial Strategy.
- Influence Government, LLEP and partner investment priorities, including through Growth Deals, European funds and future funding such as the Shared Prosperity Fund.
- Ensure that Leicestershire is integral to Midlands Engine governance and effectively engage with, and influence, delivery of the Midlands Connect Strategy and Midlands Engine Vision for Growth.
- Lead and co-ordinate the Council's role in developing and delivering the county's Enterprise Zones

22. Intervention priorities to support delivery of these three supporting outcomes listed at paragraph 19 are identified within the Plan. Some examples of these are summarised below:

- Support the development and implementation of a 'Skills and Employment Strategy' for Leicester and Leicestershire.
- Work with partners and employers to support unemployed people, especially those furthest from the labour market, move closer to work through delivery of interventions and projects.
- Support the development of an agreed Strategic Growth Plan which outlines our planning and growth ambitions for housing, employment land and infrastructure, and work with partners to put in place the necessary governance and delivery structures.
- Lead and co-ordinate delivery of the Superfast Leicestershire programme; increasing access to superfast broadband for homes and businesses across the county.
- Support Leicestershire Rural Partnership to champion the importance of the rural economy and market towns and help facilitate initiatives where a need is identified.
- Continue to work with partners to develop high quality business support programmes that enable our sectors and small and medium-sized enterprises to grow and prosper.

Governance, Delivery and Performance

23. The Enabling Growth Board comprises senior officer representation from internal departments and provides a strategic approach to infrastructure planning and economic growth delivery arrangements in support of the Council's economic and growth priorities.
24. The Board will oversee the development and implementation of a detailed Action Plan to deliver the EGP 2018/19.
25. Performance will be monitored against a series of economic indicators identified within the Council's Strategic Plan, and specific project related outputs developed through the action planning process.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet – 16 March 2015 - Enabling Growth Plan

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=4360&Ver=4>

Report to the County Council – 6 December 2017 – Leicestershire's County Council's Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=5104&Ver=4>

Appendix

Enabling Growth Plan 2018/19

Equality and Human Rights Implications

26. The Plan seeks to address inequalities in the labour market by targeting some activities at supporting those located furthest from the labour market and more generally by increasing the range of employment and training opportunities available to people currently out of work or entering the labour market.

Partnership Working

27. Effective partnership working is critical to the delivery of the economic growth strategy, programmes and projects. The County Council is an active member of the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership; the Leader of the County

Council is a member of the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership Board. The Council also works with Leicester City Council, the district councils and other partnerships / groups to deliver economic growth and meet future infrastructure requirements.

Environmental Implications

28. Environmental implications will be considered and mitigated against on a project basis.

Risk Assessment

29. A risk assessment will be undertaken for projects identified within the Enabling Growth Plan.