

**Public**  
**Key Decision – Yes**

## **HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Subject Matter:**                    **Huntingdonshire' Economic Growth Strategy (refresh)**

**Meeting/Date:**                    Overview and Scrutiny (Performance & Growth)  
– 10/06/2025  
  
Cabinet  
– 16/07/2025

**Executive Portfolio:**            Executive Councillor for Economy, Regeneration and Housing.

**Report by:**                        Economic Development Manager

**Ward(s) affected:**              All

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### **Executive Summary:**

The refreshed Economic Growth Strategy (EGS) for Huntingdonshire sets out a vision to drive sustainable economic development, aligning with the existing Corporate Plan and Place Strategy. It prioritises business growth, innovation, skills development, tourism opportunities, and the transition to a green economy.

The strategy promotes inclusive growth, encouraging collaboration and addressing net-zero goals to enhance productivity, resilience, and community well-being, with clear milestones ensuring progress toward sustainable economic development.

### **Background**

The current Economic Growth Strategy was completed during the COVID-19 pandemic, which presented unique challenges and opportunities. An EGS is a vital tool for a Council, providing a structured approach to promoting local economic resilience, fostering sustainable development, and ensuring alignment with broader regional and national policies. The decision to refresh the EGS at this juncture reflects the need to adapt to external factors such as emerging market trends, policy changes, and evolving economic conditions. This update ensures that Huntingdonshire remains proactive and well-positioned to navigate a rapidly changing landscape.

The Economic Development (ED) team plays a pivotal role in collaborating with businesses, supporting skills development, fostering employment, and promoting the visitor economy. The refreshed EGS serves as a cornerstone for these

activities, enabling the ED team to deliver coordinated and impactful outcomes across these key areas.

A final round of comments will be accepted before the strategy is submitted to Cabinet. Please send any additional feedback to Rebecca Tomlin for consideration.

The overarching themes of the strategy are as follows:

- **Balancing Economic Growth and Sustainability:** Emphasises the importance of achieving economic progress while prioritising sustainable practices.
- **Fostering Diversity and Inclusivity:** Focuses on creating meaningful opportunities and building an inclusive economy that benefits everyone.
- **Showcasing Strengths in Quality of Life, Place, and People:** Highlights Huntingdonshire's unique advantages to attract growth and talent.
- **Positioning as a Hub for Investment and Growth:** Establishes Huntingdonshire as a welcoming and dynamic destination for investors and businesses.
- **Driving Growth through Collaboration:** Recognises the essential role of partnerships and teamwork in delivering success.

**Recommendation(s):**

The Cabinet is

**RECOMMENDED**

- a) To endorse the refreshed Economic Growth Strategy, enabling the Economic Development Team and partners to deliver its objectives over the next 2–5 years.
- b) Request feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Cabinet's final consideration.

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report presents the refreshed Economic Growth Strategy for Huntingdonshire to Cabinet for endorsement. The strategy outlines a clear framework for promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth over the next 2–5 years. This will enable the Economic Development Team to deliver the strategy effectively, ensuring the district remains attractive and competitive in a rapidly evolving economic landscape.

## **2. CONSIDERATIONS**

- 2.1 Key considerations include ensuring adequate resourcing for the Economic Development Team to deliver the strategy's objectives effectively. The strategy must address external factors such as evolving economic conditions, potential policy changes, and the ongoing impacts of global challenges like climate change and economic recovery. Robust monitoring will be applied to ensure the strategy achieves its intended

## **3. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

- 3.1 Feedback and comments from Overview and Scrutiny will be considered before final approval by the Cabinet.

## **4. KEY RISKS**

- 4.1 The key risks associated with the refreshed Economic Growth Strategy include:
  - 4.1.1 Insufficient Funding or Resources: The resources of the team are finite. Mitigation: Prioritise actions to make the biggest impact and work in partnership wherever possible to deliver outcomes.
  - 4.1.2 Delays in Infrastructure Development: Mitigation: Engage early with stakeholders to address potential bottlenecks and ensure timely progress.
  - 4.1.3 Alignment with National and Regional Policies: Mitigation: Maintain regular engagement with policymakers and adapt plans as necessary to align with evolving frameworks.
  - 4.1.4 Unexpected Events: Mitigation: Closely monitor KPIs and maintain ongoing business engagement to stay informed about developments on the ground.

## **5. TIMETABLE**

- 5.1 The implementation of the refreshed Economic Growth Strategy is set over a 2–5-year period, with reviews at regular stages using KPI data and qualitative feedback

## **6. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN**

- 6.1 The strategy aligns with the Corporate Plan 2023–2028 by supporting the 'Forward-thinking Economic Growth' action and the Place Strategy's 'Inclusive Economy' and 'Pride in Place' workstreams. It directly contributes to the overarching goals of enhancing local resilience, fostering sustainable growth, and improving the district's economic attractiveness.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no immediate legal implications associated with endorsing the strategy; however, certain elements may require compliance with relevant legislation as specific projects are developed. Legal advice will be sought on a project-by-project basis to ensure compliance with all applicable regulations.

## **8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The successful implementation of the strategy will depend on appropriate allocation of resources, including both staffing and financial investment. The Economic Development team is now fully staffed and capable of effectively fulfilling their roles to deliver, enable, and influence key actions. However, the resources of the team are finite, and we will therefore look to prioritise our actions to achieve the greatest impact. Wherever possible, we will work in partnership to deliver outcomes that align with our strategic goals.
- 8.2 Additionally, the team will utilise transition-year funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) to financially support initiatives in the first year. This collaborative approach will ensure that we maximise the effectiveness of our efforts while optimising the use of available resources.

## **9. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 While the strategy is primarily focused on economic growth, there are potential health benefits, particularly through the promotion of a healthier, more inclusive economy. Improved employment opportunities, access to education, and workplace wellbeing initiatives will contribute to the overall welfare of the district's residents.

## **10. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The strategy is committed to promoting a green economy, aligning with the district's environmental sustainability goals. Key initiatives will focus on low-carbon technologies, sustainable infrastructure, and green business practices to reduce the district's carbon footprint. The strategy will contribute to local climate change targets and is designed to be adaptable to emerging environmental policies.

## **11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- 11.1 Endorsing the strategy will enable the Economic Development Team and its partners to focus on the delivery of key projects that foster sustainable growth, create jobs, and improve the district's economic resilience. It will also help secure Huntingdonshire's long-term economic future, as the implementation is crucial to driving forward the district's ambitions and ensuring its effectiveness in an evolving economic geography.

## **12. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

Appendix A – Huntingdonshire's Economic Growth Strategy

## **13. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

### **CONTACT OFFICER**

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