

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Strategic Lead, Regeneration****Infrastructure, Regeneration and Economic Development Committee:****20 November 2019**

Subject: Economic Development Strategy Action Plan Update**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the progress in delivering the Economic Development Strategy Action Plan 2015-20.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Committee;
- (i) consider and note the progress made in implementing the Economic Development Strategy Action Plan 2015-20.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Economic Development Strategy provides an economic vision for West Dunbartonshire Council for a five year period and was approved by the Infrastructure, Regeneration & Economic Development Committee in September 2015. An Action Plan was presented and approved at the Infrastructure, Regeneration & Economic Development (IRED) Committee in November 2015.
- 3.2 This report provides an update on the progress in delivering the Economic Development Strategy 2015-20 action plan. This follows previous updates that were reported to IRED in December 2016, November 2017 and November 2018. The plan will be updated to take cognisance of any future strategic priority changes.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1 A full progress report on the implementation of the Action Plan is detailed in Appendix 1. A number of key performance targets have been achieved through our strategic approach around the four key themes listed below:
- Stimulating economic investment and growing the business base;
 - Improving the skills of all our people and supporting them into work;
 - Creating an inclusive and prosperous place where people choose to live, work and invest; and
 - Building stronger partnerships and innovative approaches to delivery.

4.2 A number of key highlights for each of these themes are detailed in sections 5-8 of this report.

5. Stimulating economic investment and growing the business base

5.1 ‘Working4business’ is a partnership of public sector organisations that provide a coordinated service for businesses in West Dunbartonshire. The ‘Working4Business’ partnership held a successful ‘Business Awards’ event to celebrate the success and achievements of businesses in West Dunbartonshire. The event was held in Clydebank Town Hall on 17 May 2019. Clyde Training Solutions were the Principal Sponsor of the event and there was a good response from local businesses with over 100 entries across the 9 business award categories. Over 160 business people attended the successful awards ceremony.

5.2 The Council’s Business Support team provides a range of discretionary business grants to local businesses to assist them to grow and create local jobs. During 2018/19 the team supported:

- 130 businesses have been supported with grant support to assist them to grow and create local jobs
- 147 business employees have been supported with a training grant to assist with training costs
- 78 businesses have received a start-up grant to assist them to start-up their own business

5.3 The Business Gateway service has been successfully delivered by the Council’s Business Support team since 1 October 2015. Over the last year the team have continued to work hard to provide a high quality service to our local start-up and growth businesses. In 2018/19 the Business Gateway service provided:

- 207 businesses with start-up assistance
- 35 start-ups with growth potential were given early stage growth support
- 42 businesses provided with growth advisory service support
- 5 businesses accepted into Scottish Enterprise Growth Pipeline support
- 1 business accepted into Scottish Enterprise Account Management

5.4 Business start-up numbers of 207 for 2017/18 have increased from last year’s figure of 202. The Scottish Local Government Benchmarking website provides information on the number of Business Gateway start-ups per 10,000 populations for each Local Authority area. The most recent data from 2017/18 shows West Dunbartonshire are ranked 5th out of the 32 Local Authorities. During 2017/18, West Dunbartonshire supported 22.5 start-ups per 10,000 population which compares favourably with the figure of 16.8 start-ups per 10,000 populations for the whole of Scotland.

- 5.5** Last year the Business Gateway service assisted 28 businesses with 'expert help' support. This element of the Business Gateway service is part funded through the European Regional Development Fund and provides one-to-one support to provide advice in areas that require a high level of expertise such as Intellectual Property advice or Business Strategy Workshops.
- 5.6** The Business Gateway service also delivers a variety of free business workshops to provide advice to start-ups and established businesses. These workshops include areas such as business planning, marketing and financial planning. During 2018/19, 113 workshops were held with 548 clients attending.
- 5.7** The Business Support team are responsible for the management and delivery of the Digital Boost Programme which aims to deliver Information and Communications Technology (ICT) advice to businesses in the form of workshops and one-to-one expert advice. This is a Scottish Government Nationally funded project which from July 2017 has been managed and procured by West Dunbartonshire Council for both West and East Dunbartonshire Council areas. During 2018/19, there were 13 workshops and 11 one-to-one specialist sessions delivered in the WDC area. Further funding for Phase 4 has been secured from Scottish Government to deliver similar activity for the year 2019/20.
- 5.8** During 2018/19, the Business Support team have continued to work in partnership with other local Authorities to promote the Business Loans Scotland fund which has been set up to provide loan finance to small and medium sized local businesses. Business Loans Scotland secured a contract to deliver a new Phase 2 Debt Fund, from the Scottish Government with effect from January 2019. Phase 2 is fully funded by the Scottish Growth Scheme and the European Regional Development Fund and therefore did not require any match funding contribution from the Member Authorities. During 2018/19, the fund was promoted to the local business community which has resulted in an increased number of loan enquiries.
- 5.9** The Business Support team are continuing to work in partnership with Firstport to support the growth of local Social Enterprises. A Social Enterprise Growth Grant is available which provides 50% funding up to a maximum value of £2,000 to assist Social Enterprises to implement their growth plans more efficiently and to become more sustainable in the long term.
- 6. Improving the skills of all our people and supporting them into work**
- 6.1** Working4U is an integrated service that supports clients and communities in West Dunbartonshire to improve their skills, learning and financial situations, assisting all on their progress into work and protecting the rights of our citizens. Our activities centre on:

- the provision of information, guidance, and support to help residents to make informed choices about debt and money, learning and employment opportunities and enjoy improved life chances;
- the provision of good quality advice and learning assisting them to make positive and sustained contributions to their community; and
- improving the employability and resilience of local residents and making a positive contribution towards increasing employment rates within our community to close the gap with Scotland employment rates.

6.2 The specialist components of Working4U's services include the learning service which primarily supports disadvantaged or vulnerable groups and individuals of all ages to engage in learning, with a focus on bringing about change in their lives and communities. The learning and employability service are key components of the Employability Pathway. This covers a wide range of activity, such as employability skills, youth work, family and adult learning, including adult literacy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and individual capacity building to develop confidence and self-esteem. In 2018/2019 the Council supported:

- 1,180 people to enter education or training; and
- 824 people to secure a nationally recognised qualification.

6.3 Information and Advice is set within the policy context that is designed to support a flourishing Scottish economy. Working4U contributes to this aim through the provision of debt counselling and welfare benefit advice. During 2018/2019 the Council:

- supported local residents to secure £10.376m benefit maximisation through advice and support; and
- supported residents to renegotiate and manage £4.4m of debt.

6.4 Employability encompasses aspects that enable people to increase their chances of getting a job, staying in a job, and progressing further in work. The approach adapts national approaches to the specific context in West Dunbartonshire and is flexible enough to adopt a 'whole person approach'. The Council is responsive to those people in our communities with the greatest need and our drive to real jobs is pursued in partnership with organisations, agencies and employers that share our values. In 2018/19 Working4U supported 459 residents to secure employment (2017/18,417). Of these:

- 273 were in the 16 – 29 years age group (17/18,189);
- 186 were in the 30+ years age group (17/18,228),
- and in addition a further 14 people were assisted to progress within the workplace.

6.5 West Dunbartonshire Council has created a £1m Apprenticeship Investment Fund to support apprenticeships over a four years period from 2018 to 2022. The fund will see £0.250m spent in each of the four years to

recruit apprentices across a range of Council services and positions within the Private sector. The focus will be on school leavers and an emphasis will be placed on opportunities within the Construction sector. In addition, we will develop our capacity to support a wider range of apprenticeship and employment opportunities, contribute to workforce development in West Dunbartonshire Council and develop stronger links with local and regional employers. For 18/19:

- Funding for 61 Apprenticeship opportunities has been committed
- 11 opportunities within the Construction sector
- Frameworks supported include; Engineering, Creative and Digital Media, Digital Application, Housing, Childcare, Business Admin, Horticulture.

6.6 Working4U offer vocational qualifications in 7 different occupational groups at SCQF levels 5, 6 and 7 (SVQ levels 2 and 3). As a result of the Council's contracted provision we have supported:

- 14 Level 2 Modern Apprenticeships - providing employment with training opportunities of 9 months to 12 months linked to local growth sectors, and
- 36 Level 3 Modern Apprenticeships - providing employment with training opportunities of between 2 and 4 years.

With the Council's further investment, combined with our work with local employers, 107 of the 459 people who secured employment were apprenticeships (2017/18, 72).

6.7 The Support to drive Scheme continued in 2018/19. The aim is to provide young people with the skills and attributes that will assist them to seek and secure employment in the modern labour market (in and beyond West Dunbartonshire). As part of W4Us commitment to support young people, places have been prioritised for young people who are care experienced and for Modern Apprentices. Young people who have a disability, low skills, lack of qualifications, low confidence ,unemployed and young carers – have also been prioritised. 44 young people have successfully applied, 13 of which are care experienced and 16 are Modern Apprentices.

7. Creating an inclusive and prosperous place where people choose to live, work and invest

7.1 West Dunbartonshire Affordable Housing Supply Programme – More Homes West Dunbartonshire is delivering over £90m of investment into the local economy delivering new homes to meet evidenced need. Through the Council's More Homes West Dunbartonshire there are plans to accelerate delivery and deliver a further 1,300 new homes over the next 5 year period with total investment levels exceeding £200m.

- 7.2** A number of projects are currently being progressed utilising the Local Economic Development annual Capital Budget of £1m. The Regeneration Fund of £12.4m was agreed at Council on 28 October 2015 to support development and regeneration projects where a return would be achieved, whether in terms of wider economic growth or financial returns. A number of update papers have been presented to the IRED Committee and as funding opportunities arise an update paper will be presented to IRED Committee for consideration.
- 7.3** The Queens Quay development with a £15.62m investment from the Council has been progressing on site throughout 2018/19. The basin works are complete along with the extraction chamber for the District Heating Network. The roads and utilities works are progressing well on site and due for completion in 2019/20 period. Discussions regarding housing plot development opportunities are progressing at various stages.
- 7.4** The Queens Quay District Heating Network secured funding of £6.1m from the Scottish Government Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme (LCITP) and £9m from the Council to deliver a water sourced district heating network to supply energy on Queens Quay and capacity to serve areas beyond Queens Quay in Clydebank. The timeframe to deliver this significant and complex heating network has had its challenges; however key elements are now in place to ensure the successful delivery of the heat network. An updated Council paper regarding the District Heating Network was presented on 29 October 2019.
- 7.5** Planning permission for the Connecting Clydebank (A814) project from the Clydebank Charrette was granted in November 2018 and since then the Council has been in discussion with Sustrans regarding the changing picture of their conditions of their grant approval for construction works. We are currently waiting on a final grant decision from Sustrans, but it is anticipated that the project will go ahead from late 2019/20 but with some design modifications.
- 7.6** A transport interchange project around Clydebank Railway Station has progressed through to the second phase of studies in partnership with SPT and progress will be made aligned in part to increased train patronage due to developments at Queens Quay. Work on the £1.3m St Eunans biodiversity park in Clydebank, part-funded by Green Infrastructure Scotland, began in July 2019 and is due to be completed by the end of this financial year. The physical works will be supported by a community engagement programme of organised activities relating to the new park.
- 7.7** The City Deal project is continuing with engagement with site owners ExxonMobil. Environmental Impact assessment studies have been completed and Head of terms of the sale of the site were concluded during 2017/18. Exxon Remediation strategy secured planning permission and is underway during 2019/20, negotiations on a commercial agreement to transfer the land into Council ownership continues through 2019/20 period.

A refreshed Outline Business Case was approved at Council in November 2018 and at City Region Chief Executives group in January 2019 and at Cabinet in February 2019 with an increased budget requirement of £34.05m.

- 7.8** Scottish Canals have been supported in the further improvement of Bowling. They are continuing to progress the elevated walkway/linear park on the former swing bridge at Bowling Basin and have completed an initial phases by refurbishing the bridge itself. Progress has been made in refurbishment of the B listed Custom House to provide tourist accommodation. Through project funding commitments elsewhere, the Council is providing match-funding Sustrans contributions to the “Highline” Viaduct project. Along the North Clyde Riverbank, the Council will produce a masterplan to indicate future infrastructure and improvement opportunities including a riverfront pathway, and develop a partnership model to implement the plan.
- 7.9** The Dumbarton Waterfront Pathway has generally been slower than anticipated, owing to the challenges in securing landowners permissions and the nature of the phased developments there, good progress has been made during 2019/20 with the first 2 phases of the pathway at the Cullross housing and Lidl superstore development due to be complete by February 2020 and open by June 2020. The foreshore clearance works with £0.5m funding from the Council was completed in October 2019. The planned delivery of a full pathway by December 2020 is unlikely, however all efforts are being taken to progress this important waterfront project. Further details will be provided in the Regeneration Funding update report to this committee.
- 7.10** In Dumbarton town centre, the Council has been re-engaging with absent town centre property owners to discuss their future investment plans on the back of the award winning investment by the Council in 16 Church Street and the positive impacts this hugely significant regeneration project has had on Dumbarton town centre. We have held positive discussions with the new agents of the Artizan Centre and with the owner of 119-123 High Street on their future plans to invest in their sites and properties. They have been encouraged by the developments and investment underway at Dumbarton Waterfront.
- 7.11** We continue to work closely with Dumbarton Stations Improvement Trust on their important plans to upgrade, repurpose and better connect this ‘A listed’ building to the rest of the town centre, with a specific project to improve the route between the station and the town centre now scoped and the design process underway. The Planning Service is progressing the proposal to designate the town centre as a Conservation Area, and we are exploring with them the opportunities for funding to improve the condition of historic buildings.

- 7.12** Plans for Dumbarton 2020 Festival are progressing well , and a successful funding application for £0.020m was secured from Event Scotland during the Year of Coasts and Water to assist in delivering this community festival.
- 7.13** At Lomondgate, Strathleven Regeneration Company CIC is entering into an important final phase of delivery. All efforts to complete the final large development plot known as the 'Business Park' is being taken forward and a number of enquiries are being pursued which we believe will materialise within the next two years.
- 7.14** Lidl is now in place as lead developer for the Mitchell Way development site, and during June 2019 they undertook further community consultations in relation to their Proposal of Application Notice, however no further progress appears to have been made by the developer since then. In the meantime, the Council have commissioned designs for the upgrade of the public realm on Mitchell Way that would be implemented during the development of the site. The Alexandria Town Centre Forum has been re-convened to deliver on a number of opportunities in the town, including the expenditure of Town Centre Fund on suitable projects, a refresh of the Masterplan, commence design works for the restoration of Smollett Fountain, repurposing vacant properties within the town centre and the community-led reuse of St Andrew's church.
- 7.15** The Council is continuing to work in partnership with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) and Scottish Enterprise (SE) to deliver actions from the Balloch Charrette from 2016. This included the completion, during 2019/20, of two significant public realm and connectivity projects – Village Square and Balloch Road West as well as improved capacity parking at Moss O'Balloch. The West Riverside development being proposed to the LLTNPA Planning from Flamingo Land and SE has been withdrawn by the developer. The development would have had an impact on the proposed improvement of Station Square and we will now explore with other partners the scope to progress the design of this project during 2020.
- 7.16** Town Centre Fund of £0.859m from Scottish Government will be used to deliver town centre regeneration projects in each of our town centres including the upgrade of Sylvania Way South in Clydebank, an attractively designed gateway to the Dumbarton Waterfront Pathway at Riverside Lane, the repurposing of several Main Street properties in Alexandria to bring them back into productive use and designs for the restoration and improvement of the Smollett Fountain in Alexandria to re-establish it an important town centre landmark. These projects will be legally committed by the financial year end for implementation in 2020/21.

8. Building stronger partnerships and innovative approaches to delivery

- 8.1** The Council is working through SLAED and Business Gateway to support the Scottish Government to develop a single entry point for business

support. This project was established following the Enterprise and Skills Review which highlighted the opportunity to develop a single entry point to make all products and services offered by public sector organisations available and visible through one single online portal. Once established the portal will be supported by an enquiry and referral system.

- 8.2** The Council continues to work in partnership with the eight local authorities in the Glasgow City Region to implement the Regional Economic Strategy which outlines the vision and objectives for the City Region until 2035. The Strategy's Action Plan is for both communities and businesses and demonstrates our shared commitment to growing the economy, creating jobs and increasing productivity through inclusive growth.
- 8.3** Officers continue to explore opportunities for external funding, recently a bid for Advancing Manufacturing Challenge Fund (AMCF) was made in partnership with the Malin Group as the new owners of the Carless site between Dalmuir and Old Kilpatrick for an ambitious Advanced Marine Manufacturing facility. The AMCF application has progressed to stage 2 and we are awaiting its outcome, anticipated in December 2019.
- 8.4** The service has actively pursued a number of funding sources to support major projects. Funding grant of £0.376m was secured from the Green Infrastructure Fund to assist with the remediation of the former St Eunan's Primary School. Two applications for Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund 2020/21 were invited to Stage 2, and the Stage 2 applications were submitted in October 2019. The first project is for an activity hub on the Canal in Clydebank near the town centre and is being developed in partnership with Scottish Canals and Community Links. The second is the restoration and re-use of the former St Andrews church on Main Street Alexandria as studios and an arts centre. This project is being led by Lodestone Creative with support from the Council. The Council's own Dumbarton Town Centre Common Good Fund continues to be promoted and a number of local projects have been supported.
- 8.5** A successful application for £0.020m funding to Event Scotland has been secured for Dumbarton 2020 Festival, and an Expression of Interest for Heritage Horizons fund has been submitted for a transformative project to connect North Clyde Riverbank sites at Bowling. An application to Sustrans for design development fees for Connecting Clydebank was successful, and, as noted elsewhere in the report, we are waiting on a decision from Sustrans on construction costs for the project.
- 8.6** The 'Working4business' group held a successful Business Week from Monday 26th November 2018 to Friday 30th December 2018. The week was packed with events aimed at inspiring and supporting new and established businesses in West Dunbartonshire. During the week there were 21 workshops held with 145 attendees. Workshops covered topics such as Preparing for Brexit, Funding for Growth and Women in Business. The feedback received from attendees was very positive. This year's

Business Week will run from Monday 25 November 2019 to Friday 29 November 2019. During the business week there will be a range of workshops and events which will provide advice and information to local businesses on a range of areas which will include internationalisation, investment and innovation.

- 8.7** The service is working in partnership with Resource Efficient Scotland to assist local businesses to improve their energy and resource efficiency. Resource Efficient Scotland provide free resource efficiency audits and the Business support team have developed grant support to assist local businesses (5-49 employees) with the costs associated with the implementation of any energy and resource efficiency improvements identified within the Resource Efficient Scotland audit action plan.
- 8.8** The Council's Regeneration Team has established strong partnerships with Strathleven Regeneration Cic, Scottish Government, Scottish Canals, Historic Environment Scotland, Sustrans, Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority, Event Scotland, Dumbarton Castle Society, Community Links, Peel Land and Properties, Network Rail, Dumbarton Stations Improvement Trust, Dunbartonshire Chamber of Commerce and Vale of Leven Industrial Estate Improvement Trust for current projects that are being progressed. Regular Town Centre Forum meetings take place in Dumbarton and Alexandria, and the Dumbarton 2020 Festival Group meets regularly.
- 8.9** Working4U pursues all activities in partnership with appropriate organisations in West Dunbartonshire and beyond. Within the Community Planning structure Working 4U, takes the lead role in both the Youth Alliance and the Adult Learning Partnership. The aims of the partnerships are to co-ordinate improved service delivery for West Dunbartonshire residents and identify priority geographical areas. The cooperation has led to the development of successful joint projects such as the delivery of successful summer programmes for young people in West Dunbartonshire and Learner Voice Events for Adult Learners.
- 8.10** In addition, Working4U take the lead role in the Strategic Employability Group alongside SDS, DWP, Education Senior Phase, WCS and NHS. This partnership sets the agenda and priorities for the use of national training resources and external funding such as the Employability Fund , Modern Apprenticeship, Foundation Apprenticeship programmes and ESF Pipeline and PSI Programmes. Through this we can influence the priorities for the investment of training resources to ensure residents are being trained for the opportunities within the local economy and identify the key sectors in the local area where there may be opportunities for apprenticeships.

9. People Implications

- 9.1** There are no people implications as a result of this report.

10. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 10.1** The Council budget expenditure detailed within the action plan continues to be monitored and reported regularly to ensure that performance targets are achieved, maximising private sector leverage and attracting external funding.
- 10.2** It is acknowledged that the achievement of the outcomes of the Strategy and Action Plan is reliant on the continued commitment and funding from both public and private sector partners.
- 10.3** Procurement plays an important role in Economic Development primarily ensuring best value is secured for projects and encouraging local businesses to secure public sector contract works.

11. Risk Analysis

- 11.1** The consultation process with partners and key stakeholders ensured that the content of the Strategy and Action Plan is appropriate to assist with the economic prosperity for the local area and that risks are assessed. The Strategy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that any local and national economic changes are integrated where appropriate.

12. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 12.1** An equalities impact assessment is not necessary for this report. The Strategy has been impact assessed and is relevant to the general equality duty. The Strategy has an emphasis on reducing inequality and advancing equality and has potential to produce positive impacts for all. EIA screening will be carried out for projects, where necessary.

13. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- 13.1** A strategic environmental assessment is not necessary for this report. Strategic Environmental Assessments will be undertaken as necessary for any projects which develop from the strategy and action plan.

14. Consultation

- 14.1** The process for the development of the strategic action plan included consultation with senior officers across Council services and also with partners through the Community Planning Partnership, Employability and Economic Growth Delivery and Improvement Group will continue to be an important consultative group of public sector partners.
- 14.2** Wider partner and community consultation will commence in 2020 with regards to the development of a new Economic Development Strategy for the period 2020-25, aligned with relevant Scottish Government and Council strategic priorities.

15. Strategic Assessment

15.1 The Action Plan supports the four strategic priorities of the Council's updated Economic Development Strategy (2015-20).

- Stimulating economic investment and growing the business base
- Improving the skills of all our people and supporting them into work
- Creating an inclusive and prosperous place where people choose to live work and invest
- Building stronger partnerships and innovative approaches to delivery

15.2 It is anticipated as the current Economic Development Strategy for 2015-20 will be updated with a new Strategy for 2020-25. This will be developed during Spring of 2020 and presented to IRED for approval.

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Date: 25 October 2019

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Appendices: Appendix 1: Economic Development Strategy 2015-20
Action Plan – Pentana Report

Background Papers: IRED Committee 21 November 2018 - Economic Development Strategy Action Plan Update
IRED Committee 22 November 2017 - Economic Development Strategy Action Plan Update. IRED Committee 14 December 2016 - Economic Development Strategy Action Plan Update.
IRED Committee 25 November 2015 - Economic Development Strategy Action Plans
IRED Committee 16 September 2015- Economic Development Strategy 2015-20

Wards Affected: All