

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

**Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee:
2 November 2011**

Subject: Economic Development Strategy Action Plan 2011- 2016 Progress Report

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to inform members of the Council's progress towards the actions in the Economic Development Strategy Action Plan 2011-2016 approved by the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee in April 2011.

2. Background

- 2.1** The Economic Development Strategy was developed to provide an economic vision and strategy for West Dunbartonshire Council for a five year period and was approved by the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee on 2 February 2011.
- 2.2** The Economic Development Strategy Action Plan was developed and approved by the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee on 6 April 2011. It was agreed that progress in implementing the action plan be reported to the Committee on a six monthly basis.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** Progress against actions contained within the Economic Development Strategy action plan has been good. A full progress report on the implementation of the action plan is detailed in Appendix 1.
- 3.2** Over the last six months, significant work has been undertaken to regenerate our town centres. Mitchell Way in Alexandria is a significant town centre regeneration project, extending to 7.04 acres or thereby. Tender documents are being produced which will provide the opportunity to create a vibrant new heart to the town centre with a new foodstore, additional retail units through new build or renewal and new housing, potentially mixed tenure. Our aim is to issue the tender, through the Official Journal of the European Union, in October 2011 upon conclusion of discussions with long term leaseholders.

- 3.3** A submission has made to the Scottish Futures Trust proposing the creation of a Taxation Incremental Financing (TIF) pilot area at Lomondgate and the Vale of Leven Industrial Estate. This involves the collection of additional non-domestic rates over a 25 year period to fund up-front infrastructure works and unlock development. A briefing note was emailed to Members on 20 September. A response to the submission is expected in the near future. If the area is selected as a pilot, a Committee report and a copy of the full submission would be considered at the next Housing Environmental and Economic Development Committee, for the Committee to decide whether the Council would wish to proceed to the next stage, which involves preparing a detailed business case, by March 2012 for approval by the Scottish Ministers.
- 3.4** A first phase of site preparation works is ongoing in Clydebank to deliver 9,000 sq feet of additional workshop space at Clydebank East. A funding package has been put together for the construction of the units, as a second phase. The Civic Heart project is ongoing which will see the enhancement of the B listed Town Hall and Library and close by works are on site to create Queens Quay Car Park. A major project was completed in late April with the official opening of the enhanced public space in the town centre at Three Queens Square with Town Centre Regeneration Fund money.
- 3.5** The Council's new Employability Programme commenced in July 2011 and places an emphasis on supporting residents close to the labour market to gain skills leading to employment. The Tendered elements of the programme Employer Engagement, Job Brokerage and Job Rotation are expected to go live by mid December. Work is underway to develop and implement a single entry model of service delivery involving Employability, Community Learning and Development and Financial Advice Services.
- 3.6** A Dunbartonshire Business Show was organised by the Economic Development Team to stimulate business networking and encourage business to business trading opportunities. The Show was held on 28 September 2011 at the Beardmore Hotel in partnership with East Dunbartonshire Council and Argyll & Bute Council. The event included over 50 exhibitors from across the Dunbartonshire region, a 'Meet the Buyers' event, Mini Speed Networking sessions, Seminars and a Business Wall. There were over 250 people attended the event. A survey is being undertaken to obtain feedback on the event but feedback received so far has been extremely positive.

4. People Implications

- 4.1** There are no people implications.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** The Council budget expenditure detailed within the action plan continues to be monitored and reported regularly through financial frameworks to ensure that performance targets are achieved, thereby maximising private sector leverage and external funding.
- 5.2** The Employability programme secured ESF Priority 5 Funding of up to £1.2m over two years in June 2011. Confirmation of ERDF funding of up to £166,400 for the programme was confirmed in July 2011.
- 5.3** It is acknowledged that the achievement of the outcomes of this strategy and action plan is reliant on the continued commitment and funding from both public and private sector partners.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** 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. The strategy will be reviewed after two years to ensure that any local and national economic changes are integrated where appropriate.

7. Equalities, Health & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 7.1** An equalities impact assessment is not appropriate as this report is a performance review of the Economic Development Strategy Action Plan.

8. Strategic Assessment

- 8.1** The implementation of the action plan is consistent with the aims and objectives of the Economic Development Strategy and details the projects/activities required to achieve the headline targets for the economic growth of the local area over the period 2011-2016. This is in line with the Social and Economic Regeneration strategic priority identified by the Council for 2011/12.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 9.1** The Economic Development Strategy Action Plan is progressing well and will continue to be monitored to ensure performance is on track. Six monthly updates will continue to be brought to the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee for scrutiny.
- 9.2** The Committee is invited to consider and note the progress made in implementing the Economic Development Strategy Action Plan.

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Date: 5 October 2011

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Appendices: Economic Development Strategy Progress Report

Background Papers: Economic Development Strategy 2011-2016
Economic Development Strategy Action Plan 2011-2016

Wards Affected: All