

ECONOMIC GROWTH REDESIGN - TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Context

Since March 2014 there has been a 'transformation' / redesign programme within the area of Economic Growth. The initial scope included the service areas of Business & Enterprise, VCS, Research & Intelligence, Skills, Policy Planning and Highways & Transport alongside the assets (land and property) held by Business & Enterprise. The first stage of work came to an end in June 2014 and since that time prototyping has taken place within a locality (Pontesbury & Minsterley) concentrating on 4 key themes: Business Growth, Physical Growth, Strategic Growth and Community Business Growth.

Subsequently a new operating model for the identification, prioritisation and subsequent commissioning of activities and projects in the area of Economic Growth has been put forward, and was agreed at the Decision Accelerator that took place on 22 September 2014.

The new purpose of Shropshire Council's Economic Growth Function is to create the conditions for Economic Growth & Resilience in Shropshire. This will be done by:

- § Creating a culture and operating model around Shropshire's businesses and communities.
- § Delivering a new operating model that will enable Shropshire's businesses and communities to thrive.
- § Attracting the right investment into the county.
- § Responding successfully to economic challenges, opportunities and pressures.
- § Providing clarity on Shropshire Council's role in creating the right conditions and sharing our vision with our stakeholders.

A key element of the Economic Growth Redesign and the new culture it wishes to foster lies in the relationships it manages with businesses and stakeholders and the two way mechanism that exists that when combined with data will create meaningful intelligence.

Stakeholder engagement done at the strategic and local level is a key activity within Economic Growth. As part of the new operating model how these relationships are managed will be an important element in its success going forward.

It is noted that one of the main findings from the prototype work that took place between July and mid-September 2014 was "Businesses are not engaged in the place plan / place shaping conversation that takes place in a locality..... but are integral to its sustainable economy".

Objectives

1. To ascertain if the current mechanisms in place around Business Engagement are effective. What works well? What needs improvement?
2. How can the conversations / business engagement activities that are undertaken become two way and feed back into Shropshire Council to create meaningful intelligence? Is it

different for local engagement and strategic engagement and who is best placed to undertake these activities? Is it a different set of Council representatives?

3. Identify what will ensure that Shropshire Businesses do become engaged in their respective localities, and help shape activities that can create the conditions for economic growth? How do they currently engage in their local area – are some areas better than others? Or is it the types of businesses / sectors that matters?
4. Are there areas of best practice across the UK (and in Shropshire specifically) that could be used as a model or framework for engagement?

Information Required From Officers

A research framework identifying the profile of the businesses within Shropshire alongside any other research and intelligence the Task & Finish Group deems necessary.

Identification of what information needs to be obtained from businesses in order for meaningful intelligence to be gathered and used for Economic Growth & Resilience purposes.

How is the intelligence currently provided by businesses being fed into Shropshire Council?

Other Sources of Information

Shropshire Business Board & Ambassadors

Methods To Be Used

Appropriate to the work that needs to be done.

The following are expected:

Desktop research and analysis.

Engagement activity at a countywide and local level – to include Town and Parish Councils.

Timescales

Research and engagement activity – October to December 2014

Report back to Economic Growth Scrutiny Group – 22nd January 2015

Key Results Expected

Recommendations around the most effective methods of business engagement to take forward into the new operating model.