



**Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council**

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Scrutiny Commission 31 October 2024

Wards affected: All Wards

**Hinckley & Bosworth Economic Regeneration Strategy
Update Report 2024**

Report of Director (Community & Development Services)

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To provide Scrutiny with an update on work undertaken in the last 12 months to fulfil the aims of the Economic Regeneration Strategy 2021 - 2025.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That Scrutiny note and endorse the Economic Regeneration work undertaken and outcomes achieved.

3. Background to the report

3.1 The overall aim of the Economic Regeneration Strategy 2021- 2025 is to promote economic well-being for all local businesses and residents across the whole of the borough. In preparation for a new Economic Regeneration Strategy 2026-2030 a review of the current strategy will start in 2025 to help determine those policies still relevant to the current economic climate together with identifying new ones. The review will include an examination of other internal and external strategies to determine synergy and stakeholder consultation to help inform the new strategy.

3.2 Update in Respect to Projects

3.3 Places Theme

Summary and Highlights of Places Theme:

- Work has commenced on the Feasibility study and production of Masterplans for Key Town Centre Sites in Hinckley town centre, where seven key sites within the town centre will be assessed.
- Delivery of a thriving events programme, attracting over 37,500 visitors. Footfall was up on event days by 11% during Q1 2024/25.
- Positive 4th term vote for the continuation of Hinckley BID and supported the appointment of a new Hinckley BID Manager.
- A UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Shop Front Improvement Grant has been set up and is available for all locations in the Borough resulted in investment into 9 new shop fronts leading to an enhanced street scene.
- Following endorsement of the Hinckley Town Centre Wayfinding Strategy using UKSPF the team are commencing with its implementation including design and preparing for installation of the wayfinding elements, utilising £50k from UKSPF, £49k from Hinckley Area Committee and £15k from Sketchley Brook S106 funds.
- UKSPF supports investment of £255k towards Hinckley Town Centre schemes including Church Walk Improvements, Hinckley Museum and wider Hinckley town centre improvement projects. Capital funding will be invested in projects such as public realm, the Christmas Lighting scheme, marketing and promotional initiatives.
- The UKSPF Heritage Building Improvement Grant, with a budget of £80k has supported 8 grants to historic property owners for repairs and renovations to their historic building within the Borough's conservation areas.
- Between April 2020 and March 2024, the Council has delivered a range of heritage-led regeneration projects within Hinckley Town Centre as part of Historic England's High Street Heritage Action Zone programme. Historic England, the Council, and other match funders including the Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership and property owners collectively invested c.£1.65m to undertake improvements to historic buildings within the town centre, complete public realm enhancements within Church Walk, Lilley's Yard and other yards located off Castle Street, undertake a feasibility study concerning underutilised space in the town centre, produce guidance on property maintenance, install heritage interpretation measures, and deliver a range of community and cultural events celebrating Hinckley's heritage.
- Council officers have regular dialogue with the Leicester Inward Investment Team and development industry on employment sites within the Borough. Through the Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation the Council have a number of largescale employment sites proposed for allocation in order to support employment land needs.
- Officers including the Planning Team continue to work proactively with developers to bring forward schemes through the planning process. An example includes working with Pall-Ex to bring a new purpose-built global headquarters to the borough through early engagement meetings and pre-application advice support. Another example includes supporting a high end electric car dealership over a number of years to find a suitable larger location to relocate in the borough in the Markfield area.

- MIRA Technology Park and Enterprise Zone – Through our leadership role on the MIRA Steering Group, continuing support of the ongoing expansion through advice, grant and loan support. Using available resources through enterprise zone business rates retention HORIBA MIRA is undertaking a programme of activity to support the development of the Enterprise Zone.
- An Enterprise Zone Economic Assessment highlights the number of additional jobs recorded at the MIRA Tech Park site was 572 with a total job impact of 1706 and a total GVA impact of £100,430,744.
- The Council launched a new Tourism Strategy 2024 – 2028 that will support the growth of the sector and continue the development of the exciting Bosworth 1485 Sculpture Trail that will open in 2025.
- The Environmental Improvement Programme 2023/24 supported 13 schemes through investing £32,777.15. Highlights include repairs to Bridge 37 Wellsborough Bridge on the Ashby Canal, Hinckley Yards and Jittie signage and Bilstone Gibbet Post Repairs.

3.4 Prosperity Theme

Summary and Highlights of Prosperity Theme:

- HBBC secured £2.6million of UKSPF 3-year funding to deliver a programme of 31 projects. The scheme is now in its final year and has received 100% of its funding based on performance to date. A full-time officer recruited through the fund has established monitoring and evaluation systems to track delivery and spend.
- Secured a further £400,000 of capital only Rural England Prosperity Fund. The funding supports a grant scheme available to DEFRA eligible rural businesses and organisations. The scheme has grant funded 30 businesses and organisations to support projects such as solar panel and battery installations, energy efficiency measures, upgrading of lighting, reconfiguration of the interior or community buildings to sustain and promote community use, farm diversification projects such as the creation of an education centre. The scheme also reflects 25% match from applicants resulting in over £100,000 extra investment.
- Additional UKSPF capital funding was offered by the Business Prosperity Grant Fund which offered 75% funding intervention to urban businesses. The scheme invested £175,000 funding and supported 13 businesses to deliver projects such as energy efficiency measures, solar panel installations, property upgrades to improve performance and sustainability.
- Through our UKSPF allocation the council have worked with districts across Leicestershire to commission a business support and advice service. The Leicestershire Business Advice Service project includes business advisors to provide one-to-one support, specialist sectors advice and start-up support. The project has supported 47 businesses.
- The Councils LinkedIn is predominately used to promote business activity and has nearly 2,000 followers. The Councils monthly Economic Regeneration News e-newsletter, with over 2500 on the list, signposts businesses to the latest business support, events, news and grant funding information.
- The Hinckley & Bosworth Employment & Skills Taskforce has continued to go from strength to strength with an excellent representation from local

schools and academies, local businesses – large and small, Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LEEP now replaced by the Business and Skills Partnership), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College (NWSLC), MIRA Technology Institute (MTI), Federation of small businesses, voluntary sector representative and other key organisations and partners.

- Following the successful bid for £19.9m of Levelling Up funds for the Twycross National Science and Conservation Centre the council is supporting the zoo in progressing the project. Ground breaking is programmed for October 2024. The Zoo has also successfully secured REPF grant funding to support the creation of a Dormouse Conservation unit.
- Officers have worked to ensure the new HBBC Rural and Culture Strategies align and complement Economic Regeneration Strategy

3.5 People Theme

Summary and Highlights of People Theme:

- The Council continues to support employment and skills initiatives and events such as the Teen Tech live events with 193 students attending the event, including 6 schools from the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough area - Dorothy Goodman School, Hastings High School, Heath Lane Academy, The Hinckley School, Redmoor Academy and North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College.
- Through the Councils Employment and Skills Taskforce officers are regularly engaging with local schools and academies on topics such as climate change and events such as the South Charnwood United Business Alliance.
- Regular meetings are held between officers and Job Centre Plus to exchange information on new employment site job opportunities and the number of people seeking work and what help they might need to do to take advantage of these posts.
- Hinckley Job Centre organise regular recruitment events at the Hinckley Hub in conjunction with the Council assisting in promoting the event, the September event had over 250 people attend with 16 employers promoting opportunities.
- Working with the planning policy team to ensure the Economic Prosperity section Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan 2020-2039 meets employment land requirements for both existing and new business. The Council are requesting proposals for major development to be required to submit a Local Employment & Training Strategy (LETS) through S106 agreements. LETS documents continue to support employment opportunities for local people and are requested on large housing sites and employment sites such as the new ALDI National Distribution Centre for both the construction and operational phases.
- Using the 'Working with Us' brand showcasing the careers available in local government officers are regularly attending careers fairs throughout the borough, for the last academic year officers attended 13 careers events and 9 schools engaging with 564 young people.

- The Councils Director for Communities and Development Services is an Enterprise Advisor for our local special education needs school helping to inspire and prepare young people for the world of work.
- Council officers are also involved in national and regional groups supporting the employment and skills agenda. Including being asked by the District Councils Network to represent District Councils on an LGA Employment and Skills working group established to influence political parties to push for a more devolved and localised approach to employment and skills building on the work local campaign, the new proposals [Work Local: Our employment and skills offer to a new Government to boost inclusive growth \(2024\) | Local Government Association](#) were published in July 2024.
- The Council has also been nominated as the representative to the East Midlands Chamber led Leicester and Leicestershire Skills Accountability Board responsible for Local Skills Improvement Plan delivery.
- The Council are also hosting the first T-Level student, the student is on an 18-month course at NWSLC and in house training is provided within the Council Cultural Services team.
- A UKSPF funded Warm Spaces Project - which enables residents to keep warm and have somewhere to go during the colder months, meet other people, learn new skills and for residents to receive support or signposting to other services during the cost-of-living crisis. To date the project has reached over 8,000 people, with 252 households supported to take up energy efficiency measures.
- The Chief Executive is the Economic lead on Solace East Midlands.

3.6 Well-being Theme

Summary and Highlights of Well-being Theme:

- Working alongside Leicestershire Public Health team to promote the Healthy Workplace Leicestershire scheme to improve the health and wellbeing of staff across businesses locally in Hinckley and Bosworth. This is through offering bespoke support packages.
- Active Hinckley & Bosworth have dedicated promotion of wellbeing activities. This includes walking and cycling, workplace health, raising awareness of national campaigns (i.e. walk to work week, know your numbers, mental health day) via website and social media platforms as part of a wider messaging campaigns for workplace health, Active Travel and 'Let's Get Moving'.
- Using UKSPF funds the Council employs a Graduate Active Travel and Physical Activity Assistant. The role has focused primarily on driving messages on Active Travel choices for education, employment and recreation, wellbeing purposes through a workplace and community initiatives. Recent work has seen the role review opportunities within the Councils own workforce and support key Climate and wellbeing objectives. The project has supported 14 events.
- Using UKSPF fund to install defibrillators at 6 Council owned venues.

3.7 Climate Change Theme

Summary and Highlights of Climate Change Theme:

- The Hinckley and Bosworth Business Climate Change Forum aims to work with local businesses to bring best practice together and share knowledge on how businesses are reducing their carbon footprint and limiting the impacts of climate change. The forum is looking to organise a group litter picking event during Recycling Week 2024 to raise awareness with local schools and businesses.
- Posted regular updates on climate change initiatives and action on social media and regular press releases and Borough Bulletin articles on climate positive actions.
- Through the UKSPF a climate change food waste officer who is supporting local businesses reduce their food waste.
- The UKSPF has allocated funding to undertake surveys of 30 Council owned properties to produce reports that detail information on building fabric to determine which element and material type of each property to make improvements to increase energy efficiency.
- A UKSPF funded energy efficiency project involves energy efficiency improvements to 24 Council owned properties by installing external wall insulation, replacing existing doors and windows with new UPVC.

4. Financial implications [CS]

- 4.1 UKSPF and Rural Prosperity funding and costs have been budgeted for in 2024/25 budget. These schemes will end on 31/3/25. The MTFs assumes no additional funding allocation after this date.
- 4.2 Any future budget changes will need to be offset by service savings to ensure that there are no future additional pressures on the general fund budget.

5. Legal implications [ST]

- 5.1 None

6. Corporate Plan implications

- 6.1 The Economic Regeneration Strategy has synergy with the Corporate Plan's vision as a 'Place of Opportunity'. Particularly under 'Prosperity' by 'Supporting the regeneration of our town centres and villages' and 'Boosting economic growth and regeneration by encouraging investment that will provide new jobs and places to live and work all over the borough'.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The Economic Regeneration Strategy was subject to public consultation via the council's website, our business database and through liaising with key partnerships.

8. Risk implications

- 8.1 It is the council’s policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.
- 8.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer’s opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.
- 8.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) risks

Risk description	Mitigating actions	Owner
None		

9. Knowing your community – equality and rural implications

- 9.1 Projects put forward in the Economic Regeneration Strategy generally have a good spread over the whole of the Borough to include both the urban and rural areas.
- 9.2 It is considered that this report will not have any effect on equality for any of the protected characteristics and therefore no further analysis or action is necessary.

10. Climate implications

- 10.1 A section of both the strategy and action plan are devoted to climate change and relate to the council’s declared climate emergency.

11. Corporate implications

- 11.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:
 - Community Safety implications – none directly as a result of this report
 - Environmental implications – various projects identified will have a positive impact
 - ICT implications - none directly as a result of this report
 - Asset Management implications - none directly as a result of this report
 - Procurement implications - none directly as a result of this report
 - Human Resources implications - none directly as a result of this report
 - Planning implications – planning matters will be dealt with, when appropriate, through the regeneration projects being brought forward
 - Data Protection implications - none directly as a result of this report
 - Voluntary Sector – the voluntary sector is supported through a number of initiatives identified in the strategy.

Background papers: Economic Regeneration Strategy 2021 to 2025

Contact officer: Daniel Britton, 01455 255872

Executive member: Councillor S Bray