

Developing Opportunities, Creating Confidence

Denbighshire's Economic & Community Ambition Strategy 2013 – 2023

Working together to make Denbighshire a place where:

- ***Businesses, established and new, grow and flourish***
- ***Our towns and communities are vibrant and prosper***
- ***All residents enjoy a good quality of life and can participate in the local economy***

Foreword

I am pleased to introduce Denbighshire County Council's Economic & Community Ambition Strategy, *Developing Opportunities, Creating Confidence*.

Economic development has been highlighted as one of Denbighshire's top priorities in our corporate plan for the term of this council. There has been both extensive and intensive work carried out over the last 12 months to develop the strategy and I am confident that the emerging priorities are the right ones for Denbighshire.

As we all know the economy, both nationally and internationally, is in difficulty and the strategy highlights our intentions to play our part locally with clarity and conviction, where I firmly believe we have a significant role of enabling growth and developing opportunities.

Our ambition is that Denbighshire is a county with high levels of employment and good levels of income for residents in all of its towns and communities. In order to achieve this we recognise the work that is happening at a regional and national level and will embrace this agenda as part of our strategy.

We sincerely hope that we can develop opportunities and create confidence for the residents of this county and I would like to thank all those that have made a contribution to developing the strategy, and to those who will work with us to make it a reality.

**Cllr Hugh Evans, Leader and Lead Member for Economic Development,
Denbighshire County Council**

INTRODUCTION

Denbighshire County Council has identified ‘Developing the Local Economy’ as one of its 7 Corporate Priorities. In common with communities across Wales, Denbighshire residents and businesses have stressed the importance of reviving the local economy to provide a sound base for all other development. This Economic & Community Ambition Strategy has been developed to explain how the Council will achieve its corporate objective.

By and large, it is businesses that deliver economic growth. As a local authority, however, there is much that Denbighshire County Council can do to create and support the conditions that can allow those businesses to be successful and flourish.

This is in line with Welsh Government policy on Growth and Sustainable Jobs which seeks to “strengthen the conditions that will enable business to create jobs and sustainable economic growth”. Our Economic & Community Ambition Strategy, therefore, focuses on what we can do ourselves and with our partners to support those conditions for growth.

Business success on its own, however, is not enough. Our intention is that economic growth will result in improved outcomes for Denbighshire residents. Our ambition is that Denbighshire is a county with high levels of employment and good levels of income for residents in all its towns and communities.

Welsh Government’s recent regeneration strategy, Vibrant & Viable Places supports this aspiration with a vision that everybody in Wales should live in well-connected vibrant, viable and sustainable communities with a strong local economy and good quality of life.

This Strategy sets out our ambitions for Denbighshire’s local economy and the benefits that we expect economic growth to achieve for our residents. The accompanying Delivery Plan describes the actions we will take, together with other partners across Denbighshire and North Wales, to realise our ambitions.

It is a long term Strategy and not one that will be delivered overnight. We hope, however, that our actions will have impact and we have identified measures against which we can judge our success. The Strategy does not stand on its own. It complements and is supported by a range of other key strategies, including the recently approved Local Development Plan, the Denbighshire Big Plan, the Rhyl Going Forward Regeneration Strategy and the Modernising Education programme to name but a few.

Ultimately, we intend that our actions under the Economic & Community Ambition Strategy and our other key policy programmes, we will see Denbighshire’s businesses go from strength to strength, offering good quality, well paid and rewarding jobs for our residents and providing them with the means to enjoy a good quality of life in our towns and communities. If we are successful we should expect to see reductions in unemployment, increases in household incomes, improved birth and sustainability rates for businesses, and increased economic activity and participation generally across the county.

OUR AMBITION

Our expectation that local economic growth can lead to improved outcomes for our residents is based on an economic model that links business success with increased opportunities for work, leading to higher levels of income and increased spending power that in turn help to sustain vibrant towns and communities. Vibrant towns and communities themselves encourage consumer demand, leading to more successful businesses and increased opportunities for employment.



We recognise that this is a simplistic view of the economy, nevertheless we believe it is sound.

We also recognise, however, that we cannot look to Denbighshire alone for economic growth. The economy does not recognise organisational boundaries. If we are to achieve the outcomes we desire for Denbighshire residents, we will need to look further afield - to neighbouring economies in North Wales and beyond – to ensure we harness the best opportunities available for our residents and our businesses.

The Strategy, therefore, looks both at what we can do within Denbighshire to stimulate and support economic growth and the creation of jobs, and also how we can help to connect Denbighshire residents and businesses to opportunities outside the county.

Our Strategy has been developed to align with both Welsh Government's overall approach to sustainable economic growth and also the aspirations of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board to transform the economy of North Wales, improving productivity, competitiveness and growth, and leading to more prosperous communities for all.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Our location

Denbighshire covers an area of 844 km² and has a population of around 94,000.

The economy of Denbighshire is diverse. In the more urban north of the county, the seaside towns of Rhyl and Prestatyn dominate and the retail, leisure and tourism sectors remain major employers. Also in the north, however, is St Asaph Business Park - home to a growing opto-electronics cluster and a strategically important business park within the region, with good prospects for growth.

Further south, Denbighshire is predominantly rural in nature, characterised by a network of small towns and villages situated within a high quality landscape environment. Tourism and agriculture are key sectors. Smaller industrial and business parks provide space for light industry and businesses across the county.

The recently approved Local Development Plan allocates a further 50 hectares of employment land, including a Key Strategic Site for mixed use development at Bodelwyddan in the north of the county, close to the existing St Asaph Business Park, as well as extensions to St Asaph Business Park itself and other sites in Denbigh, Ruthin and Corwen. It is anticipated that these allocations have the potential to support 8,000 new jobs in the county, not including construction.

North Denbighshire is served by the arterial transport corridors of the North Wales rail line and the A55 trunk road. Transport links within the remainder of the county are less strong. High levels of both inward and outward commuting are key features of Denbighshire's local economy. There is easy access from Denbighshire to 2 international airports (Manchester & Liverpool) and 2 international ports (Holyhead and Liverpool/Birkenhead).

Denbighshire has connections to neighbouring authorities and economies. As well as being an integral part of the North Wales economy with the five other local Councils, Denbighshire is closely linked to the Mersey Dee Alliance economic area. Many communities and businesses in Denbighshire are within easy travel distance of opportunities in the strongly competitive economies of Liverpool and Manchester city regions. Further opportunities are presented within the 7 Enterprise Zones that are within broadly 60 - 90 minutes travel distance from Denbighshire.

Our workforce

Economic activity in Denbighshire generally is slightly above the North Wales level but below that of the UK as a whole. This masks pockets of significant economic inactivity and deprivation however, with areas of Rhyl and Upper Denbigh among the 10% most deprived in Wales. Unemployment is most pronounced for younger residents, with 16 to 24 year olds worst affected.

The recession has seen total numbers of jobs in Denbighshire fall sharply since 2008. The rate of decline has been steeper than the rest of North Wales.

Denbighshire has proved to be a popular retirement area and its population has an older than average age profile. This is predicted to continue to rise. Young people, particularly between 18 and 35 years old, tend to leave Denbighshire, often for employment or further/higher education. A thriving economy needs sufficient people of working age with the right skills for its labour market to function effectively. Access to work, suitable learning and training opportunities and affordable housing opportunities are key factors in attracting and retaining a younger working age population.

Qualification rates within the working age population are similar to those in the rest of the UK, although fewer residents tend to be educated to degree level. Pockets of lower achievement exist, however these are being addressed with significant improvements in the quality of learning and teaching. Denbighshire is a high performing education authority and schools support young people to achieve good qualifications, however the small numbers of young people leaving school without a formal qualification is identified as an area for improvement.

Just over a quarter of Denbighshire's population is Welsh speaking, with significant concentrations in the centre and south of the county. A sizeable and growing proportion of Denbighshire's school students receive their education bilingually or through the medium of Welsh.

The majority of the workforce lives in the urban north of the county. Transport and accessibility can present issues for residents and businesses in some of the more rural areas of Denbighshire.

Our businesses

The leading seven sectors in terms of employment in Denbighshire comprise health, retail, education, public administration, food and beverage services, social work and residential care. Together these seven sectors account for two thirds of the workforce.

The public sector, particularly health and social care, is the dominant source of employment in Denbighshire. The proportion of jobs in the public sector is the highest for any local authority area in the UK. The continuing constraints on public sector funding present a risk for Denbighshire's economy as a result.

Equally, however, public sector investment, particularly in construction projects, continues to offer significant economic opportunities. The North Wales Construction Procurement Framework is intended to help the six North Wales Councils balance the need to ensure best value construction contracts with maximising the impact of the anticipated £200M spend on the local economy.

Jobs in the private sector in Denbighshire tend to be in retail, tourism or leisure, of which many are seasonal and lower paid. There is, however, a growing advanced manufacturing base in the opto-electronics sector and a strong construction and related trades presence in the county as well.

Agriculture also represents an important source of employment in the county. Many of the farms in Denbighshire, however, depend on the EU Common Agricultural Policy for a significant proportion of their income, which will be affected by the changes taking effect from 2014.

There has been a drop in the number of active businesses in Denbighshire since the start of the recession, but the county still has more active businesses by population than Wales as a whole. Significant numbers of these are small and very small businesses (fewer than 50 employees), with correspondingly lower numbers of medium and large businesses. Rates of self employment are in line with the rest of the UK, although higher than in Wales more generally.

There is more that we need to do to understand the business make up of Denbighshire and the needs of its businesses.

Our partners

Along with the other five Councils in North Wales, Denbighshire is a member of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board. The Board is committed to working together to transform and grow the economy in North Wales. It has identified three priority areas for focus – the Advanced Manufacturing sector, the Energy and Environment sector, and promoting North Wales for inward investment.

Looking further afield, the Mersey Dee Alliance seeks to capitalise on the opportunities presented by the economic area that spans North East Wales, West Cheshire and the Wirral. Manufacturing, particularly automotive and aerospace, chemical industries, financial services and food are the main components of this economic area, much of which is within easy reach and can present employment and commercial opportunities for Denbighshire's residents and businesses. We anticipate that Cheshire West LEP will become an increasingly important partner.

Further and Higher Education opportunities are available locally through Coleg Llandrillo, Coleg Cambria, and Glyndwr, Bangor and Chester Universities.

The Local Service Board for Conwy & Denbighshire has identified a thriving and sustainable economy and skilled workforce as one its priority outcomes.

Whilst there are local networks of businesses across Denbighshire, our engagement with the business community at a wider, more strategic level needs more attention.

The performance of our economy

- We have a lower Gross Value Added (GVA) than the rest of the UK, a trend that has widened since the recession. Levels are also lower than neighbouring economies to the east (Flintshire/Wrexham).
- Business birth, death and survival rates have worsened since the start of the recession with a widening of the gap between Denbighshire and the rest of the UK. We no longer outperform the rest of North Wales on this measure.
- Our unemployment rate is similar to UK average levels, however the numbers of people who are economically inactive due to ill health or retirement are higher.
- Our overall average performance masks pockets of significant deprivation in Rhyl and Upper Denbigh
- Median household incomes are lower in Denbighshire than most other Welsh authorities. The gap between income levels across the county is widening.
- Employment in Denbighshire is dominated by the public sector, with private sector employment dominated by often seasonal and lower paid jobs in the tourism, retail and leisure sector.
- There has been a sharp decline in the number of jobs in Denbighshire since the start of the recession. The decline has been steeper than in the rest of North Wales.
- The sectors providing the majority of employment in Denbighshire are generally not those with strong prospects for growth.
- Areas of strong economic growth within easy reach offer commercial and supply chain opportunities for Denbighshire businesses and employment opportunities for Denbighshire residents. High levels of both inward and outward commuting are a feature of Denbighshire's economy.
- The recently approved Local Development Plan has allocated an additional 50 hectares of employment land, estimated to be capable of supporting 8,000 new jobs. The allocation of 7,500 housing units will provide additional homes to attract and retain working age population in the county.
- The North Wales economy as a whole is estimated to be worth around £10bn per year and to represent around 25% of the economy of Wales as a whole. North Wales companies account for almost 30% of the manufacturing output of Wales.
- More broadly, the scale of the economy running along the M56/A55 corridor from Manchester to Holyhead is estimated to generate an output of £31bn per year. The economy around Merseyside is also growing and will offer additional opportunities.
- Denbighshire is well placed geographically to take advantage of these areas of economic growth, both through jobs for its residents and commercial opportunities for its businesses.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Our ambition is not a quick fix. It is a long term vision that will take time and effort to deliver. It is also aspirational and we may not be able to achieve it all in the lifetime of this plan.

If we are to make progress towards achieving the vision set out in our Economic & Community Ambition Strategy, we need to ensure a range of core factors are addressed. These have been identified as priority areas for action and are the **Themes** around which the Strategy and Action Plan is structured.

We believe that Denbighshire will be better placed to achieve its vision for Economic & Community Ambition if we concentrate our efforts, and those of our partners, into working to deliver:

- *The right **Infrastructure for Growth***
- *Businesses that are **Supported and Connected***
- *Maximised **Economic Strengths/Opportunities***
- *A **High Quality Skilled Workforce***
- ***Vibrant Towns and Communities***
- *A **Well Promoted Denbighshire***

We do not have the resources to do everything. The **Delivery Plan** accompanying this Strategy describes in more detail the actions we will focus on over the next 4 years to move us towards our longer term vision.

In developing the Delivery Plan, we have worked hard to identify and prioritise those actions we believe will have most impact in addressing the issues and challenges facing Denbighshire's economy, and are most likely to deliver the benefits we seek for our residents.

We have also been guided by the following underlying **principles**:

- **Inclusive.** The strategy is intended to have impact county wide and to deliver economic and community ambition across Denbighshire's many communities.
- **Differentiated.** At the same time, differing needs across the county will be recognised and addressed.
- **Holistic.** The strategy aims to deliver jobs/opportunities at all levels – from entry level to advanced - and across economic sectors. We will work to avoid over-reliance on one sector.
- **Balanced.** The strategy is intended to support both new and established businesses. Options for economic growth will be explored both through indigenous business growth and inward investment.
- **Sustainable.** The strategy aims to deliver a local economy that is sustainable and resilient to change in the long term
- **Outcome focused.** We will focus our efforts on actions that we assess will have the biggest impact on the issues we consider to be the most important to address. We will prioritise accordingly.

THEME 1: INFRASTRUCTURE FOR GROWTH

Outcomes:

1. We have effective transport connections that enable people to access jobs, and businesses to access markets/customers
2. We have modern digital and voice communication networks that meet the needs of businesses, residents and visitors
3. We have a good and readily available supply of appropriate business premises and land that supports established businesses to grow and new businesses to start up

Having the right infrastructure in place is critical to ensuring that businesses can locate in the right place, with easy access to a relevant workforce and the ability to deliver goods and services to relevant customers and markets. For residents, the right infrastructure can help with connections to employment, learning and services. Infrastructure can take many forms. For the purposes of this strategy, we have focused on transport, communication networks and business land and premises.

Infrastructure planning, particularly for transport, takes place largely at regional level. Denbighshire County Council is an active participant in the TAIH regional transport consortium and has recently contributed to the North East Wales Integrated Transport study. The North Wales Regional Transport Strategy is due for renewal in 2014 and presents an opportunity for us to promote the need for investment in key transport infrastructure to support the county's economic growth.

Issues & Challenges

Our analysis has identified the following key challenges we believe need to be addressed to ensure we have the right infrastructure for growth:

Transport

1. Transport infrastructure network has significant weaknesses, particularly for North-South road connections. Mainline rail services are restricted to the coastal North and are relatively limited in frequency. The A55 trunk road provides good East-West connections but also risks by-passing Denbighshire's towns and communities. Significant investment in the strategic road network in and around Denbighshire does not currently appear as a priority in regional or national investment plans.
2. Public transport services are limited in more rural areas and fragmented across the county as a whole. Public transport does not currently represent a realistic choice for many residents as a means of travel to work. Journey times, particularly to destinations outside the County, can be long with only very limited direct services available to key employment locations.

3. Transport costs are increasingly expensive. Bus and rail fares are expected to rise faster than general inflation and fuel costs will continue to be affected by the volatile petroleum market. Changes to the subsidies available to bus operators risk both prices and coverage of bus services. Anecdotally, difficulty with travel arrangements is limiting the ability of businesses to recruit and residents to find suitable employment.

Communications

4. Mobile and broadband performance and availability lags behind other areas of the UK. Our overall rating for broadband coverage is 4 (with 5 being the worst score) and while the Superfast Cymru Fibre Broadband roll out will improve performance overall, it is likely that a number of our more rural communities will be hard to reach and remain poorly served. Equally, as a rural county, Denbighshire experiences significant problems with mobile coverage in a number of communities.
5. A strategic vision for digital needs and opportunities in Denbighshire is lacking. Compared with other areas, Denbighshire's vision for how digital technology can benefit both its businesses and its residents is underdeveloped.

Business Land & Premises

6. Current financial climate is limiting developer interest in creating new commercial and business space. The days in which investors would support speculative development schemes have gone. In addition, lack of key infrastructure to allow development to start – access, utilities etc – can affect timing and ultimately viability of site development.
7. There is low availability of serviced business land and premises in many areas across the county. The Local Development Plan analysis identified a land supply need of 50 ha up to 2021. The need is spread across the county but with stronger demand along the A55 corridor.
8. Allocated employment sites are at risk from 'mixed use' developments. Understandably, developers are seeking to maximise their returns from any site development. As a result there has been a trend towards more mixed use development on sites officially reserved for employment use only. Balancing loss of employment land with the prospect of no development at all is a significant challenge.
9. Competition for investment from Enterprise Zones and business parks in counties along the A55 and in North West England may reduce Denbighshire's attractiveness as a business location.

Headline Actions

We aim to address the issues and challenges, and make progress towards our strategic outcome for Infrastructure by focusing on the following areas:

Workstream 1.1: Transport

- a) Identify the elements of the local transport infrastructure and network that act as limits on local economic development and ensure these are reflected in a revised Regional Transport Strategy and other infrastructure investment plans as appropriate

- b) Contribute to the business case for modernisation/electrification of rail services in North Wales
- c) Improve integration of local public transport services and information to make them more easily accessible as a realistic option for travel to work
- d) Explore options for reducing or subsidising travel costs for certain groups of residents, with a particular focus on young people

Workstream 1.2: Digital & Mobile

- a) Develop a 'Digital Denbighshire' Plan, including:
 - i. Comprehensive mapping of broadband and mobile communications provision across the county
 - ii. Detailed understanding of 'not spot' areas
 - iii. Targeted infrastructure improvements, including encouragement of investment by infrastructure providers
 - iv. Skills development for individuals and businesses
 - v. Stimulation of use and uptake
 - vi. Identification of Digital Champions/Ambassador businesses to celebrate success, share good practice and promote Denbighshire as a location for digital businesses

Workstream 1.3: Land & Premises

- a) Create a live directory of available business land and premises across all sectors
- b) Encourage and facilitate activation of strategic development sites to make them 'shovel ready'
- c) Undertake a review of the industrial and commercial property portfolios of public agencies locally (DCC, WAG, BCUHB etc) leading to creation of a strategic investment and development plan
- d) Explore demand for and encourage development of incubator and 'move on' business units
- e) Consider options for incentive schemes to attract businesses and/or developers

Indicators of Success

If we are successful in our work to deliver the right infrastructure for growth in Denbighshire, we should expect to see:

- Fewer people and/or businesses reporting that travel difficulties present a barrier to employment
- More businesses selling goods and services to a wider area
- An improvement in overall broadband performance
- Good mobile network coverage – both 3G and 4G – with more premises able to receive signals from a range of network providers
- Fewer broadband and mobile 'not spot' locations across the county
- Better access to WiFi for visitors to Denbighshire
- More businesses active in e-commerce
- Key strategic employment sites either in use or ready to be developed
- Better use and availability of business premises across Denbighshire

THEME 2: SUPPORTED & CONNECTED BUSINESSES

Outcomes

1. We have easy to understand, accessible and high quality business support services available for established and new businesses
2. We have a strong local business community that benefits from being well connected, both within Denbighshire and to opportunities outside the county
3. Denbighshire County Council's procurement activity benefits local businesses and residents

Businesses, particularly small and medium sized businesses, have been significantly affected by the current global financial situation. The Voice of Small Business Index from FSB Wales continues to report that small and medium sized businesses in Wales are significantly less optimistic about their business prospects than their counterparts in the rest of the UK. Business birth and survival rates in Denbighshire have both been adversely affected by the current global financial situation.

By and large, it is businesses that deliver economic growth. As a rural area, Denbighshire has more small and very small businesses than more urban economies. Anything which constrains the ability of our local businesses to be successful will have a significant impact on our local economy.

Other sections of this Strategy address some of the factors that can affect the success of a business – availability of a suitable workforce, infrastructure to support business operations, and activities to stimulate demand. This section focuses on support to businesses themselves, as well as on ways to improve connections between businesses – both for market opportunities and to learn from each other.

Issues & Challenges

Our analysis has identified the following key challenges we believe need to be addressed to ensure we provide the right support for businesses and enable them to be better connected – to each other and to opportunities for growth:

1. Business support and advice services are seen as complex, confusing and hard to access with a wide range of competing providers. There is a complex landscape of agencies offering support and advice to businesses and many different initiatives and programmes in which businesses would participate. Businesses have told us that navigating this maze is extremely difficult and that the system rarely seems to be working together.
2. Access to business finance and credit continues to be problematic. The FSB continues to find poor access to finance operating as a barrier to growth for its members. Cost of finance has also proved problematic for many small businesses. Cash flow continues to be challenging for businesses, particularly small and very small businesses.

3. Many businesses find business rates both expensive and confusing. The Council has very little influence over business rate policy with Welsh & UK Government setting the agenda. We do, however, have the opportunity to make representations and will continue to lobby for greater flexibility and more local determination of business rates.
4. Business engagement and networking across Denbighshire is patchy and fragmented. We have a large number of local and regional networks to which Denbighshire businesses can belong but we have no obvious central point of contact or umbrella body. As a result we do not know how comprehensive the coverage of existing networks is or how many of our businesses are participating.
5. Council regulatory services are seen by many businesses as complex and overly bureaucratic, and a barrier to growth. A UK Taskforce identified complex regulation and 'red tape' as an unnecessary burden on businesses and the economy. Since then administrations across the UK have sought to introduce a more streamlined approach based on the principles of proportionality, accountability, consistency, transparency and targeted action.
6. The Council's ability to direct its procurement activity to local businesses is constrained by procurement regulations and the need to deliver value for money from cheaper contracts. Council procurement activity is not only driven by a desire to support the local economy, but also by the need to achieve value for money from public spend. Balancing these potentially competing priorities can be challenging.
7. Levels of local procurement are also constrained by the ability of local businesses to meet the Council's supply needs.

Headline Actions

We aim to address the issues and challenges, and make progress towards achieving our strategic outcome for Supported & Connected Businesses by focusing on the following areas:

Workstream 2.1: Business Support

- a) Work with all existing agencies and providers to establish a multi-agency Business Advice and Support Partnership that will operate a One Stop Shop approach for businesses seeking advice and support
- b) Explore the potential for additional business grants and/or loans as part of the Advice & Support Partnership discussions
- c) Ensure Council regulatory services adopt a more business friendly approach to their operations ensuring that as far as possible, regulation is proportionate, consistent, accountable, transparent and targeted.

Workstream 2.2: Local Business Connections

- a) Support and facilitate effective business networking across Denbighshire
- b) Support and encourage business to business mentoring across Denbighshire
- c) Consider establishing Denbighshire Business Week and Denbighshire Business Awards scheme

- d) Undertake analysis of local supply chain/business to business purchasing within Denbighshire to identify areas for further action
- e) Consider how to achieve effective strategic engagement with Denbighshire's Business community

Workstream 2.3: DCC Procurement and Economic Impact

- a) Revise DCC's procurement policy to adopt an effective Local Procurement/Community Benefits approach that supports local businesses and provides employment opportunities for local residents
- b) Undertake effective Supplier Development and Engagement activity to improve the ability of local businesses to participate effectively in public procurement opportunities
- c) Develop a 'Business Friendly' culture across all Council Services

Indicators of Success

If we are successful in our work to enable better supported and connected businesses in Denbighshire, we should expect to see:

- More businesses finding it easier to get Business advice & support, and benefiting from the advice and support received
- More effective business networks across the county, delivering quantifiable benefit to their members
- Local businesses winning more business from Denbighshire County Council and other public procurement contracts
- More businesses and residents benefiting as a result of Social Benefit clauses in Denbighshire County Council contracts

THEME 3: OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

Outcomes

1. We build on the strength of our tourism sector and ensure it makes an increasingly strong contribution to Denbighshire's economy
2. We exploit new opportunities for growth, with a focus on the Manufacturing and Energy & Environmental Technologies sectors
3. We encourage growth in the Social Enterprise sector to deliver alternative and complementary opportunities for businesses and jobs

The economy does not recognise organisational or political boundaries. Economic growth is dependent on businesses being able to connect with and grasp economic opportunity wherever it is located – within their existing markets but with a wider reach, and potentially through diversification into new market/product areas.

Denbighshire is geographically well positioned to take advantage of economic growth opportunities in neighbouring economies, and also to act as a location for new business growth itself. This section of our Strategy focuses on understanding our existing strengths and how they can be made to work harder, our potential strengths and what sectors we might be well placed to attract growth in, and also the threats to our economy from our existing business and employment profile and how we should seek to minimise those threats.

Emerging research suggests that economies that are most likely to be resilient in the future and best able to adapt to social, economic, environmental and demographic change are those that have high levels of diversity in the local economy, a balance between private, public and third sector economies, effective public services and a robust public sector offering vision, guidance and leadership, a close integration between land use planning and economic development and strong provision for young people.

Whilst we will look to neighbouring economies for opportunities, our recently approved Local Development Plan does make important allocations of both employment and housing land that will support economic growth within the county, providing much needed business land and housing for local workers. The commercial opportunities for the local construction sector are also considerable.

Issues & Challenges

Our analysis has identified the following key challenges we believe need to be addressed to ensure we maximise the opportunities for growth for Denbighshire's economy:

1. Denbighshire's economy is currently heavily reliant on the public sector and tourism for employment. The public sector accounts for much of the employment in the county. It is one of the highest rates in the UK.

There is a risk that this high level of public sector employment reduces the pool available for the private sector. Also, with reductions in public finances likely to continue for the foreseeable future, the risk of job losses from this sector cannot be ignored. The skilled workforce associated with the mainly professional public sector services could, however, be an asset for the county.

Tourism accounts for 10% of employment in Denbighshire. Generally jobs in this sector tend to be seasonal and lower paid. Diversification into higher value parts of the sector may help to increase the value of employment and stimulate formation of new businesses.

Other sectors are under-represented in Denbighshire's employment and business base; however the demographics of a growing elderly population suggest that the Health and Care sector may become increasingly important in future.

2. There are high levels of inward and outward commuting for employment. An estimated 13,200 people commute into Denbighshire for work each day, while an estimated 12,700 Denbighshire residents commute out to work outside the county. Much of this commuting will be by private car given the weaknesses in the local public transport infrastructure. Approximately 13% of Denbighshire residents commuting to work elsewhere travel more than 30km.
3. There are currently poor connections with supply chain and employment opportunities in neighbouring economies with the potential for significant economic growth. The economy running along the M56/A55 corridor from Manchester to Anglesey has been calculated to generate an output of £31bn. A significant element of this is Manufacturing. There are 6 Enterprise Zones and 2 City Regions within easy reach of Denbighshire. Better connections to these opportunities have the potential to offer benefits to both businesses and residents.
4. The value derived from Denbighshire's tourism offer is lower than neighbouring areas. For Denbighshire as a whole, the revenue from tourism continues to show a small increasing trend, although with revenues from coastal tourism less buoyant than those from rural tourism. Overall revenue generated from tourism for Denbighshire in 2011 was £304.2M. The comparable figure for Conwy was £623.2M.

Headline Actions

We aim to address the issues and challenges, and make progress towards achieving our strategic outcomes for maximising Opportunities for Growth by focusing on the following areas:

Workstream 3.1: Tourism

- a) Explore and promote opportunities for growth/diversification, with a particular focus on:
 - i. Outdoor and activity tourism
 - ii. Food and drink tourism
 - iii. Welsh language, culture and heritage
- b) Work with accommodation providers to improve the quality and quantity of visitor accommodation across the county

- c) Deliver improved support to tourism businesses, with a particular focus on tourism skills development
- d) Complete the Coastal Facilities business case and strategy
- e) Develop a Denbighshire Events strategy, integrating both major and local events

Workstream 3.2: Growth Opportunities

- a) Assess realistic growth opportunities and sectors to which Denbighshire may be attractive, and also emerging challenges/threats to be managed
- b) Develop local supply chain connections into the Manufacturing and Energy & Environmental Technologies sectors
- c) Promote St Asaph Business Park, in particular as a location for Advanced Manufacturing (Opto Electronics)
- d) Work with Glyndwr University to further exploit the potential of OpTiC as a high tech incubator hub
- e) Explore the growth potential for businesses and employment from Renewable Energy businesses, particularly on & off-shore wind farms

Workstream 3.3: Social Enterprise

- a) Develop a local Social Enterprise Network to offer tailored support and advice to Social Enterprises to enable them to provide a realistic alternative economic growth and jobs creation option
- b) Explore opportunities for delivering services through social enterprise/mutual/co-operative business models

Indicators of Success

If we are successful in our work to maximise opportunities for economic growth in Denbighshire, we should expect to see:

- More revenue generated from Tourism
- More businesses and more jobs in the tourism sector
- More Denbighshire businesses operating and more Denbighshire residents employed in the Manufacturing and Energy & Environmental Technologies sectors
- Diversification of the business base in Denbighshire
- More successful social enterprises offering more job opportunities

THEME 4: HIGH QUALITY SKILLED WORKFORCE

Outcomes

1. Denbighshire's residents are well skilled, and equipped to benefit from jobs and opportunities that arise
2. Employment rates across Denbighshire are improved, with significant reductions in youth unemployment in particular
3. Denbighshire's businesses have easy access to a workforce with the skills needed for businesses to be successful and grow
4. Denbighshire has a strong culture of enterprise and entrepreneurship

Ready access to a high quality and appropriately skilled workforce is an important factor for businesses. It can help existing businesses to be more successful and grow, and can be a key factor in attracting a new business to locate in an area.

Equally, for residents having the right skills and experience can leave them better positioned to take advantage of opportunities for employment that arise, both locally within Denbighshire and in neighbouring economies. The North Wales Economic Ambition has identified skills development as a key priority and is currently working to establish a regional Skills Development Plan.

The Working Futures Database demonstrates a growing trend of increasing demand for higher level qualifications and a declining demand for lower level qualifications. The two identified potential growth sectors for North Wales and Denbighshire (Advanced Manufacturing and Energy & Environmental Technologies) are heavily dependent on higher skilled occupations. These present both a challenge and an opportunity for Denbighshire.

Understanding the demand for employees and the demand for skills at all levels will be important in enabling us to work with partners to improve skills development and improve access to employment for all, including those who are furthest from the workplace. Understanding barriers to employment will also be critical. There remains a significant pool of unemployed residents within Denbighshire, for whom outcomes could be improved and who may represent a pool to meet the needs of expanding businesses across Denbighshire and beyond.

Issues & Challenges

Our analysis has identified the following key challenges we believe need to be addressed to ensure we have a high quality and highly skilled workforce available for employers in Denbighshire and beyond:

1. We have a strongly performing education service. Denbighshire performs well on school attainment compared to other Welsh Authorities but we compare less well with other neighbouring economies in North West England. The results, however, are mixed. Our results at A level are above average the cohort median but we also

- have the highest proportion of students who leave education, training or work based learning without an approved qualification.
2. There are pockets of significant deprivation with high levels of unemployment and economic inactivity, high proportions of low or no qualifications and low participation in education or training. Parts of West and South West Rhyl and Upper Denbigh experience levels of deprivation among the most extreme 10% in Wales. There is evidence of extremely low levels of basic literacy and numeracy skills in these areas. A focus on addressing barriers to work, including skills development, in these communities will improve outcomes for individual residents and households, and will also improve the vibrancy of Denbighshire's economy as a whole as income levels rise.
 3. Demands for higher levels of qualification across occupations and industry are not matched by qualification levels. The most recent census suggests that Denbighshire occupies broadly the middle ground in terms of the proportion of residents with qualifications of level 4 and above in comparison with neighbouring economies. Demand for higher level qualifications in potential growth sectors is expected to increase, with 28% of those in the manufacturing sector and 26% in the construction sector expected to require qualifications of level 5 or above.
 4. As yet, we have an incomplete understanding of employer needs with much information either anecdotal or inferred from surveys for other purposes. A closer engagement would help Denbighshire understand its skills demand for businesses locally and tailor support accordingly.
 5. There is an extremely complex landscape of support organisations, programmes and projects available to get people into work, education or training with significant potential for duplication, fragmentation and conflict
 6. Youth unemployment rates across Denbighshire remain stubbornly high, with significant concentrations in the more deprived communities in the county.

Headline Actions

We aim to address the issues and challenges, and make progress towards achieving our strategic outcomes for ensuring a high quality skilled workforce in Denbighshire by focusing on the following areas:

Workstream 4.1: Skills for Work & Life

- a) Review the current programmes to support literacy & numeracy both in schools and community settings, and identify any areas for improvement
- b) Ensure 'Soft'/employment skills are fully incorporated in the school curriculum
- c) Consider whether creation of a Skills Development Partnership would help to achieve better co-ordination and integration of activities and programmes
- d) Improve the availability of apprenticeship opportunities
- e) Explore how to build stronger links between schools, colleges & employers

- f) Review the current programmes to support ICT literacy/skills development both in schools and community settings, and identify any areas for improvement

Workstream 4.2: Connecting People with Jobs

- a) Work with Careers Wales to improve the Careers advice available to young people in schools
- b) Improve the range, quality and availability of work experience opportunities
- c) Develop a county wide Job Brokerage scheme to connect people with employment opportunities, and businesses with employees
- d) Assess the factors that present barriers to work for Denbighshire residents, particularly young people, and identify priority areas for action
- e) Consider whether creation of an Employability Partnership would help to achieve better co-ordination and integration of activities and programmes

Workstream 4.3: Advanced Skills for Growth

- a) Identify and promote career pathways in growth sectors, with particular focus on Manufacturing and Energy & Environmental Technologies
- b) Explore how to achieve better engagement with employers to understand skills needs/gaps
- c) Ensure the advanced skills needed for growth sectors are addressed effectively through school/college curriculum
- d) Assess the range and provision of business skills development for businesses, and identify priority areas for action

Workstream 4.4: Enterprise & Entrepreneurship

- a) Review and evaluate how enterprise and entrepreneurship are promoted, both in schools and community settings and identify priority areas for action. These may include:
 - i. Further development of Enterprise Hubs/Clubs/Resource Centres
 - ii. Enterprise/Entrepreneur mentoring scheme
 - iii. Enterprise/Entrepreneur incentive/bursary scheme

Indicators of Success

If we are successful in our work to develop a high quality skilled workforce in Denbighshire, we should expect to see:

- Fewer people with no qualifications
- More people with higher levels of qualifications
- No 16 – 25 year olds Not in Employment, Education or Training
- Fewer unemployed people, with a significant reduction in youth unemployment
- Fewer vacancies left unfilled due to lack of suitable applicants
- An increase in enterprise and entrepreneurship, with more people setting up their own businesses

THEME 5: VIBRANT TOWNS & COMMUNITIES

Outcomes

1. Denbighshire's towns are vibrant and prosperous, and ready to meet the challenges of the future
2. Denbighshire's rural communities are economically sustainable, now and in the future
3. Additional support is targeted to areas and households experiencing significant deprivation to ensure all residents have the opportunity to participate in the local economy

Vibrant and healthy towns and communities are important for a number of reasons. They are likely to be more attractive places to live with pleasant environments and access to a range of services and facilities therefore delivering a higher quality of life for the people who live there.

More attractive places to live can help to reduce outward migration, particularly of young people. It is also recognised that places that are good to live are often also the places that are good to visit.

Vibrant towns and communities are likely to offer access to employment in the services and facilities they support, and to provide opportunities to retain residents' and visitor spend in the local economy.

Issues & Challenges

Our analysis has identified the following key challenges we believe need to be addressed to ensure our Towns and Communities are vibrant and have the best chance of being resilient to changes in the future:

1. Traditional Town Centres are at risk from changes in retail and purchasing habits. The general trend across the UK is for a relative decline in town centre retail, largely due to out of town and online retail opportunities. Lower access to personal credit is also likely to have had an impact as incomes have been squeezed in the current financial circumstances. Town Centres increasingly need to become more than merely retail areas, offering opportunities for leisure and entertainment, as well as live and work.
2. Business rates in some towns are seen as too high, overly complex and a pressure on businesses. This is a concern common to towns and town centre businesses across the UK. Business rates are a significant source of income to Governments, in Wales accounting for £1 billion of revenue. At the same time, however, they can be a significant cost to individual businesses. Local options for reducing this impact within the current regulatory framework are extremely limited.
3. A number of reports, including the 2011 Portas Review, have highlighted the need for a more coordinated policy approach to managing Town Centres. Varying operational services need to be encouraged to work together and to see the Town Centre as a

- cohesive functioning area rather than separate areas of roads, shops, businesses, public open space etc.
4. Weaknesses in infrastructure and services in some rural communities can risk future sustainability. Poor transport and ICT infrastructure, coupled with availability of affordable housing and lower access to services in rural communities can contribute to making them less attractive as places to live for some residents and consequently for businesses to invest.
 5. At the same time, balancing development with protection of the natural environment and rural context is challenging. Many people choose more rural locations precisely for the quieter, less busy pace of life.
 6. Pockets of significant deprivation in Rhyl & Upper Denbigh remain key issues, impacting on outcomes for individual residents and the overall success of Denbighshire's economy as a whole
 7. Levels of rural deprivation may be masked and poorly understood. There is a growing understanding that some of the more standard measures of deprivation can underestimate levels in more rural areas. In part this can be due to more dispersed populations, with lower concentrations of deprived households masking the significant personal impacts that can arise. There is also evidence that some issues can disproportionately affect people in rural areas – income and housing, access to services, and poor transport connections – risking a 'spiral of rural disadvantage'.
 8. Outward migration of younger population risks future sustainability of Denbighshire's communities.

Headline Actions

We aim to address the issues and challenges, and make progress towards achieving our strategic outcomes for ensuring vibrant Towns and communities across Denbighshire by focusing on the following areas:

Workstream 5.1: Town and Area Plans

- a) Continue our work to broaden Town Plans into Area Plans covering all areas of the county, and deliver against the priorities set in each Plan
- b) Ensure Service Planning and Grant Funding processes give due regard to the Town and Area Plans when setting service priorities and allocating resources
- c) Develop and implement a co-ordinated approach to tackling identified eyesore sites across the county

Workstream 5.2: Town Centres & High Streets of the Future

- a) Consider how to support effective Town Team/management approaches across Denbighshire's main towns.
- b) Review parking/traffic management in all towns to ensure a holistic and supportive approach to supporting the Town Centre
- c) Explore schemes for promoting temporary uses for empty shops
- d) Work to attract more independent traders to Denbighshire's High Streets
- e) Improve support and advice for retail businesses across the county

- f) Identify options for improving the evening and night time economies in Denbighshire's towns
- g) Consider the suitability of Business Improvement Districts across the county
- h) Explore alternative uses and diversification in town centres

Workstream 5.3: Rural Denbighshire

- a) Explore and promote opportunities for diversification to support growth in rural areas, especially agricultural businesses
- b) Develop a programme to promote local food production/selling, including the option of establishing a network of markets across Denbighshire's towns
- c) Identify and explore options for addressing rural areas at risk of being digital and/or mobile 'not spots'
- d) Assess accessibility of services in rural areas, including the availability of community transport options
- e) Encourage businesses to consider adopting mobile delivery models, including exploring the potential for an incentive scheme

Workstream 5.4: Tackling Deprivation & Poverty

- a) Deliver the priority projects within the Rhyl Going Forward programme workstreams
 - i. Coastal Tourism
 - ii. Town Centre
 - iii. West Rhyl Housing/Neighbourhood Improvement
 - iv. Live & Work in Rhyl
- b) Work with and support North Denbighshire Communities First Cluster to address the causes of deprivation and improve outcomes for residents in Rhyl & Upper Denbigh
- c) Develop a county wide approach to understanding and tackling deprivation and poverty, with specific focus on responding to Welfare reform

Indicators of Success

If we are successful in our work to ensure vibrant and resilient Towns and communities across Denbighshire, we should expect to see:

- Fewer vacant units and increased footfall in our town centres
- More residents happier with their town centre
- More residents in rural areas happier with where they live
- More businesses – town centre and rural - feeling confident about the future
- Reduced deprivation, lower unemployment rates and higher levels of average income across Denbighshire

THEME 6: WELL PROMOTED DENBIGHSHIRE

Outcomes

1. Denbighshire is recognised as a great place to live and is successful in attracting people to move to or remain living in its towns and communities
2. Denbighshire is recognised as a great place to visit and plays a key role in making North Wales a top 5 UK visitor destination
3. Denbighshire is recognised as an attractive place for businesses to be located and is successful in attracting new and retaining existing growing businesses

Throughout our early consultations on what was needed to develop the economy in Denbighshire, one of the most common comments was that Denbighshire did not do enough to promote its many assets as effectively as it could.

Traditionally, most effort has been put into promotion of Denbighshire's offer for visitors, but even then there are concerns that key opportunities and emerging new markets are being missed. Little, if any, attention has been given to promotion of Denbighshire as a location for business/inward investment or as a great place to choose to live.

For marketing and promotion to be effective, a number of things need to be in place. We need to understand clearly who we are marketing to and why. We then need to tailor our message to make it as effective as possible and ensure we use the right methods, channels and media to get our message across. Quantity of promotion is secondary to its quality.

As well as ensuring our promotional activity is effective, however, we also need to make sure that the reality of our product (Denbighshire) matches up to our promise.

Issues & Challenges

Our analysis has identified the following key challenges we believe need to be addressed to ensure Denbighshire is well promoted to all target audiences:

1. We need to agree target audiences/markets and tailor our promotion activity accordingly. It is not clear that we understand this currently and our messages, therefore, can be confused and ineffective.
2. Messages for inward investment/business relocation (high tech, vibrant environment) may conflict with those for visitors (natural environment, peaceful surroundings). Both are and can be right. We need to understand how to manage these multiple messages without contradicting or causing confusion.
3. Denbighshire's brand may not be enough on its own. Integration with broader promotional campaigns is essential.

4. Destination (product) management is as important as effective promotion to ensure the experience meets expectations. Destination Management is already a concept well understood in the visitor/tourism sector, however it applies equally to fulfilling the 'promise' behind inward investment promotional activity. Further consideration of this will be needed if our activity is to be successful.
5. Methods of promotion are changing and multi channel approaches will need to be adopted. In particular, we will probably need to place less reliance on traditional print based media, and make more – and more effective – use of social media channels and PR opportunities. Forms of 'word of mouth' promotion are also known to be effective and will need to be explored.

Headline Actions

We aim to address the issues and challenges, and make progress towards achieving our strategic outcomes for effective promotion of Denbighshire by focusing on the following areas:

Workstream 6.1: Effective Promotion

- a) Understand and identify target audiences/markets and tailor our promotions accordingly
- b) Identify and exploit opportunities for collaborating with others on marketing and promotion of Denbighshire
- c) Develop effective multi channel promotion of Denbighshire, incorporating both traditional and newer modes of communication, in particular social media and PR
- d) Consider establishing 'Ambassadors' for Denbighshire to promote it as a great place to live, to work, to operate a business and to visit
- e) Target employers and estate agents to encourage promotion of Denbighshire as a desirable place to live
- f) Increase the knowledge of local Denbighshire and other Welsh residents about Denbighshire as a place to visit.
- g) Establish a co-ordinated approach to ensure a professional and seamless response to Inward Investment enquiries
- h) Target appropriate industry events to promote Denbighshire to visitors and potential businesses

Workstream 6.2: Fulfilling the Promise

- a) Ensure strategies, policies and funding are in place to deliver high quality public services, a clean, tidy & safe environment, a good supply of affordable housing and local employment opportunities
- b) Encourage and promote a good range of local cultural, retail and leisure opportunities across Denbighshire
- c) Invest in 'big ticket' attractions
- d) Complete a Destination Management Plan for Denbighshire & consolidate the Destination Denbighshire Partnership
- e) Explore options for reducing risks for investors

Indicators of Success

If we are successful in our work to ensure effective promotion of Denbighshire, we should expect to see:

- A healthy level of house sales and new house build completions
- More people moving into the area
- Increased visitor numbers
- More successful businesses
- More businesses seeking to locate in Denbighshire
- More residents happier with where they live

DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

Taking Action

Accompanying this Strategy is a Delivery Plan. It sets out the actions the Council intends to take over the next 4 years to start realising our Economic & Community Ambition for Denbighshire.

At this stage, much of the activity is focused in the first 2 years, with many of the early actions aimed at better understanding the challenges and opportunities facing Denbighshire's economy and how they can be best addressed. As the Delivery Plan is implemented, actions may be added, amended or removed as circumstances change and initiatives are delivered.

Resourcing the Actions

In common with most other public sector organisations, Denbighshire County Council faces a tough financial position over the coming years. Despite this difficult situation, the Council has set out its aspirations and ambitions in its Corporate Plan and has included within the Plan a financial strategy to support its implementation.

Overall, the Corporate Plan estimates that £134M investment will be required to realise the ambitions of the Corporate Plan as a whole, of which £2M has been allocated to developing the local economy. The Corporate Plan recognises, however, that this funding cannot be guaranteed and should the Council's financial position change over the next 5 years, then we may need to adjust our forecasts and investment plans.

The 2013/14 budget allocated an additional £160K for delivery of the economic development priority within the Corporate Plan. This was in addition to extra funding provided in 2011/12 and 2012/13 to support implementation of the Council's regeneration activities and its new Town & Area Plans.

Together with existing service budgets and opportunities for external grant funding from the EU, Welsh Government and other sources, this additional funding will go a long way towards delivering the Council's Economic & Community Ambition as set out in this Strategy. As individual projects and activities are developed, it will be clear if additional funding will be required and this can then be taken into account in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

A key resource available to the Council will be the time and work of its employees. The Economic & Community Ambition Strategy and its Delivery Plan is not the preserve of any one Council service and will require contributions from all teams and departments if we are to be successful in realising our aspirations.

The Delivery Plan attached to this Strategy identifies the teams we believe need to lead individual pieces of work.

Whilst delivery of the Strategy does not belong to just one part of the Council, some teams will be more heavily involved than others. This year, the Council has undertaken a root and branch review of its support to business and economic development. The review found that while officers worked hard to support economic growth, organisational structures got in the way and were often difficult to understand, particularly for businesses the teams were trying to support. Feedback from a selection of local businesses described the Council as complex, bureaucratic and reactive to deal with.

As a result, a new service has been developed with a single Economic & Business Development Manager leading 3 geographically focused teams (Coastal, North & South) and supported by a specialist European and Other Funding Team. Staff will be deployed within the teams to deliver localised support to businesses and take forward actions identified within this Strategy. The new structure is intended to achieve better flexibility in the deployment of staff resources and enable greater capacity and capability at the front line to deliver key projects and priorities.

At the same time, Tourism support has been incorporated into the Council's wider Marketing and Events activity through a new Tourism, Marketing and Events Team. This will allow a more proactive and co-ordinated approach to promoting Denbighshire and its opportunities.

The Service Plans for both teams will reflect the priority actions agreed through the Economic & Community Ambition Strategy.

Monitoring Progress

A robust monitoring and evaluation regime will underpin the Strategy and Delivery Plan. A suite of indicators have been identified against which the impact of our actions will be measured. During the first year of the Strategy, a full baseline of the outcome indicators will be collated to allow progress to be assessed as the actions are implemented.

Monitoring and evaluation should not just be a process of reflection at the end of the Strategy implementation. To be effective, it must be a live activity that provides information to inform decisions and allow changes to be made as required. Throughout its life, an annual review of the Strategy, its implementation and its impact will be produced to assess progress and identify any changes that may be required to ensure the overall Ambition is realised.

Implementation of the Strategy actions will be controlled through the Council's project and programme management system, with delivery confidence for individual elements of the Delivery Plan reviewed at least quarterly within the Council's overall performance reporting system.

The Delivery Plan will be maintained on a 4 year rolling basis dependent on overall progress and resources.

Governance and Accountability

The Economic & Community Ambition Strategy is a comprehensive and wide reaching document, with implications across many Council services and portfolios. It is cross cutting in its implementation and impact.

The Lead Member for Economic Development has overall political responsibility at Cabinet level for development and delivery of the Economic & Community Ambition Strategy. The Lead Members for Tourism, Youth & Leisure, Public Realm, Education and Customers & Communities also have political responsibility for important components of the overall Strategy. The Corporate Director, Economic & Community Ambition is responsible for ensuring overall co-ordination and delivery of the Economic & Community Ambition Strategy and its implementation.

To assist with governance, an Economic & Community Ambition Programme Board has been established. Its role is to develop, organise, direct and oversee implementation of the range of projects and activities set out in the Strategy Delivery Plan. It will monitor progress and impact, help to resolve problems/barriers to delivery, and will recommend changes as required during the lifetime of the Strategy. A key role for the Programme Board will be to ensure that the projects and activities deliver their intended benefits.

The Programme Board will also be responsible for identifying risks that may impact on successful delivery of the Strategy. During the first year of the Strategy, a Risk Register will be developed to enable the Programme Board to undertake this task effectively.

Initial membership of the Programme Board has been established as:

- Corporate Director, Economic & Community Ambition (Chair)
- Lead Member, Economic Development
- Lead Member, Tourism, Youth & Leisure
- Lead Member, Public Realm
- Head of Service, Housing & Community Development
- Head of Service, Highways & Environmental Services
- Head of Service, Communications, Marketing & Leisure
- Head of Service, Finance & Assets

Membership will be reviewed as the suite of projects comprising the overall Economic & Community Ambition Programme develops.

Scrutiny will take place both through the regular performance reports made every 3 months covering implementation of the Corporate Plan and presented to both Cabinet and Performance Scrutiny Committee, and through the opportunity for review by Communities Scrutiny Committee on individual projects or activities as appropriate.