

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 5

Meeting date: THURSDAY, 21 MARCH 2019
Title: RIBBLE VALLEY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP
Submitted by: DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 To update Committee on the Ribble Valley Economic Partnership and Development of the Council's Economic Plan.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – To deliver a sustainable local economy.
- Corporate Priorities – To undertake relevant economic activities to secure economic growth and to maintain a healthy local economy.
- Other Considerations – The work will support the delivery of economic activity and provide an opportunity to demonstrate the Council is a well-managed authority.

2 INFORMATION

2.1 At the Economic Development Committee meeting held on 15 November 2018, it was agreed that the Council would lead on the establishment of a strategic forum to consider local economic issues. See Minute 455.

2.2 It was proposed that the forum would provide a valuable platform to help develop the Council's Economic Strategy and get stakeholder input. This will help align a number of partnership groups into an umbrella forum to help joint working.

2.3 The launch event took place on 27 February and was well attended by members of the local business community. The round table discussions generated some lively debate on the key themes, namely; People, Places, Business Support & Growth, Connectivity and Tourism.

2.4 All feedback has been collated and is being reviewed to aid the development of the Economic Plan to its first stage before consideration by this committee. Whilst work continues to draw together the outputs to feed into the draft Economic Plan an initial review has identified some common issues across the themes that can be highlighted as follows:

- Development of digital.
- Develop efficient and accessible transport links.
- Training and employment skills (including links with schools and further education).
- Improve awareness of Business support.
- Availability of Land/Premises.
- Making best use of all Ribble Valley strengths.
- Measures to support and accommodate growth (rather than growth becoming a hindrance in itself).

- 2.5 Attendees provides some very positive feedback about the Council's event, and a response that supports the creation of the Partnership with an appetite from attendees to participate in future events.
- 2.6 One of the issues that has been identified from the event was the need to attract more manufacturing business to participate and to encourage some of the boroughs larger employers to become involved. The land economy was also under represented. As an immediate response, a simple mailshot has been used with the issue of business rate letters in order to reach out to a wider spread of businesses and generate interest in the Partnership. Larger employers will be specifically approached on an individual basis to help build relations between the council and their organisations. Measures to build relations with the land economy will also be explored.
- 2.7 As previously indicated it is anticipated that further meetings of the partnership will take place on a triannual basis or in response to key issues of relevance that may arise. The next meeting is likely to be in June to take into account the forthcoming Local Government elections and this committee having opportunity to consider the draft Economic Plan. It is intended that the next partnership meeting will provide the initial consultation on the draft Economic Plan.



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