

Chichester District Council

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 JUNE 2021

Budget Amendment: March 2021 Council Minute 82

1. Contacts

Report Author

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2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **The committee note the amended motion presented to March 2021 Council and Council minute 82.**
- 2.2 **The committee note the work to date and planned work by the Economic Development and Place Services relevant to the items listed within the motion and recommend any actions to Cabinet.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Cllr A. Moss tabled a motion titled: 2021-2022 Budget amendment regeneration and Economic recovery. As follows :

This Council resolves to bring back a report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, no later than June 2021, detailing the capital and revenue funds required to deliver:

1. A comprehensive Place Branding and District Identity Plan that includes:
 - 1.1. Place,
 - 1.2. Business,
 - 1.3. The built environment ,
 - 1.4. Community.
2. A revised, comprehensive Inward Investment Strategy following COVID and market changes.
3. A revised Economic Regeneration Plan that drives growth across the District.
4. Inward investment expertise to maximise opportunities for the District.

Cllr Moss then introduced his amendment explaining that since its submission he had been in conversation with Cllr Dignum and Cllr Sharp and was agreeable to combining all points raised. The amendment motion therefore reading:

That Full Council agrees to remit the motion to the Economic Recovery Group for further consideration and subsequently bring back a report to the June 2021 meeting of OSC. The plans and strategies to comply with the aims set out in CDC's Climate Change Declaration and support an inclusive and socially just recovery. The Council resolved the amended motion.

3.2 Many of the actions linked to the above four points are already in progress as part of the Economic Recovery Group or are part of the Service Action Plans for Place and Economic Development 2021/22.

3.3 The next sections of this report sets out the work that is currently being undertaken or is planned associated with the four areas listed in the motion, within the current available revenue budget (Total Economic Development Budget 2021/22 £345,300) or existing project funding of £40k for inward investment work. The only area, if agreed to consider going forward, that would require additional funding would be to undertake a place branding project estimated at £65k set out in section 3.7 of this report.

In addition to the revenue budget there are a number of large capital projects or grant money allocated for example:

- Southern Gateway regeneration project OPE grant £80,000, CDC capital £75,000 and LEP grant £5m
- Retail Training and Grant Funding - £80,000 from Business Rate Pool
- Enabling Grants - £71,500 from Business Rate Pool
- Welcome Back Fund £ 173,00 from Government
- Vision project money £50,000
- Tourism support grant to GSW £150,000 pa annum
- St James Industrial Estate regeneration project £1,183,000 from LEP, £5,447,350 from capital reserves.

3.4 Inward investment Strategy

3.4.1 The current Inward Investment & Growth Strategy (IIGS) was approved by Cabinet in November 2019 for adoption from January 2020, with a review after 2 years. The strategy is a key pillar of the Economic Development Strategy and was intended to be flexible enough to allow response to changes in the economy. To help inform the development of the IIGS, the Council engaged a consultant to carry out research work, including discussion with key businesses.

3.4.2 Since the adoption of the IIGS, the Covid pandemic has had significant impact on all sectors of the economy, and continues to do so As a result, officers have recently reviewed the strategy and consider its footing and principles to remain sound. The strategy highlights three main objectives, as below:-

- Branding and marketing
- Relationship development with land owners, developers, agents, existing businesses and other councils
- Developing a whole council approach to supporting business growth and inward investment

3.4.3 Work to Date - Despite the challenging conditions of the past year, work has continued towards the delivery of the set objectives. The development of the 'Invest Chichester' brand places a strong focus on the quality of life in the district, which has been identified as a key 'selling point'. The brand will also be a prominent feature in the virtual event planned for later in the year, which will be hosted by our appointed consultant, with the intended audience being developers, agents and land owners, as

well as businesses looking to grow or relocate. An Invest Chichester subsite has been developed and is now online for testing and review by officers. As with all new websites, the Invest Chichester subsite continues to be a work in progress, with the intention that additional information and links will be added as required.

- 3.4.4 The Invest Chichester subsite highlights the benefits of locating in the district and includes information on the local economy, links to agents and developers and development sites as well as existing employment sites. The site also features case studies of businesses already expanding here and detail on the support available to businesses looking to move to, or grow within, the district. It is not intended to replicate the Council's main website but act as a 'one stop' site for businesses, agents or developers considering locating in the district.
- 3.4.5 Discussions have taken place with agents to both make introductions and to start building a network of wider contacts both within and beyond the District. It is important to consider the 'product' we have to offer and to manage expectations accordingly, as inward investment is not just about land development; it encompasses asset reviews, refurbishment and redevelopment, regeneration projects and local business growth and expansion. Targeted discussions have also been taking place with businesses identified as having potential to bring additional investment to the district, with a number of these being in the visitor economy sector.
- 3.4.6 A recent success has been the decision by a French company Global Baby to select Chichester as their UK base for their expanding operation. Officers have been working with Global Baby over the past 18 months to support their plans to make Chichester their UK base and we are very pleased to report the transaction with Princes completed on 31st March. Global Baby has moved into the entire Terminus Road premises previously occupied by Princes, operating as Babynov Chichester, which is a new division of Global Baby. This example shows that inward investment is not usually an area for 'quick wins', with results taking time to bring to fruition and often reliant on factors outside of the Council's influence or control.
- 3.4.7 Initial work is also underway looking at building a 'whole council approach', with the introduction of a business 'Welcome Pack' which can be found on our website https://www.chichester.gov.uk/media/33157/Business-Welcome-Pack/pdf/Business_Welcome_pack.pdf
- 3.4.8 Next Steps - The strategy is due for a comprehensive review later this year, which will give time for officers to consider and assess in more detail the changes that have already taken place during the pandemic and early recovery stages, as well as any emerging longer term shifts in economic sectors. In the meantime, it is proposed that the current strategy is refreshed with an updated 'Introduction' section and reference in the main body to the known impacts of the pandemic. The strategy will then be reformatted and published on the new Inward Investment subsite. Alongside of this, updated action plans for both the IIGS and the Economic Development Strategy will be produced and appended to the current strategies, to set out the planned deliverables for the current year. This, along with the refreshed IIGS, ties in with the current timeline of the national Covid recovery roadmap, enabling the most up to date market information to be taken into account.

3.5 Inward investment expertise

3.5.1 Delivering our 'inward investment message' is a key element to the inward investment strategy to help ensure that we seek to maximise opportunities for the District, using both internal as well as external skills and expertise as needed. This message must be tailored to the 'product' we are offering and will evolve from the initial launch and promotion to the ongoing delivery of the annual action plans.

3.5.2 Following a tender exercise, officers have appointed White Label Creative Marketing and Events, a specialist inward investment marketing agency, to undertake a programme of initial launch and promotion activities, based on the Invest Chichester brand. White Label will:-

- Launch and manage an initial regional and national programme of marketing for the sub-site, brand and wider Inward Investment and Growth work.
- Promote the sub-site to their own contacts in the commercial sectors.
- Prepare and deliver a briefing to members on the commercial market and outlining opportunities and threats to the District
- Organise and host a virtual event to promote the district
- Prepare details of potential town centre occupiers (not solely retail) with contact details.

3.5.3 White Label will also undertake stakeholder engagement to help broker contact with landlords of city centre commercial premises, which will aid further work in this area. We have further options to consider international marketing later in the year through channels such as DIT and international chambers. If these are required then costings will be obtained and available resources considered. This company's previous experience in the field and evidence of delivery for similar projects places them in a strong position to provide CDC with the quality of delivery expected.

3.5.4 Next Steps - The services to be delivered by White Label will help continue with our brand awareness and promotion. This will include a briefing for all members on the realities of the commercial market, including town centres, and outline opportunities and threats to the District, linking with the Council's Local Plan refresh and relevant planning policies. They will also organise and host a virtual event in the autumn to promote the District to a wider audience including those from target markets such as developers, agents and potential occupiers. Such events hosted for other local authorities have proved popular amongst the target audiences and officers have received positive feedback from a number of local authorities on this method of delivery. Alongside of this, officers will continue to work to ensure the CDC inward investment 'product' is clearly defined and promoted through appropriate channels, including the Invest Chichester subsite.

3.6 Economic Development Strategy

3.6.1 The current Economic Development Strategy was approved by Cabinet in November 2019 to be adopted for the period 2020-2025. The current strategy was a refresh of the previous strategy, conducted 'in house' and built on what had been achieved over the previous years by continuing with the approaches which had been working, updating to reflect the Chichester Vision and emphasizing key areas of focus. The strategy was intended to be flexible enough to allow response to changes in the economy, with key priorities and supporting primary aims documented. The key priority areas of the strategy are:-

- Priority 1: Inward Investment

- Priority 2: Supporting the 'High Street'
- Priority 3: Create the Conditions to Support Growth-Oriented Businesses
- Priority 4: Make Best Use of the District's Natural and Cultural Assets

3.6.2 An additional area of focus is to Match Skills to Business Needs and Attract and Retain working age talent. Cabinet approved that an action plan for the strategy would be formulated on an annual basis in line with the council's service action plan programme

3.6.3 Since the adoption of the Economic Development Strategy, the Covid pandemic has had significant impact on all sectors of the economy, and continues to do so. As a result, officers have recently reviewed the strategy and consider its footing and principles to remain sound. Work to support the priority areas has been undertaken not only by the Economic Development Service (EDS) but by other divisions with relevant responsibility.

3.6.4 Work to date:

Priority 1. The Inward Investment and Growth Strategy work is reported in section 3.4 and 3.5 of this report

Priority 2. Prior to the pandemic, there was already a shift in the way our high streets were occupied and used, with this change accelerated over the past year. The Place Division continues to work closely with stakeholders on wider 'high street' issues and has led on the Reopening High Streets Safely work and now on the Welcome Back fund. The Economic Development Service (EDS) has been supporting the Chichester Vision and the emerging rural town visions through delivery of the Retail Training Programme and Shop Front Grants between 2018 and February 2021. The programme delivered 47 workshops (including online when in lockdown) and provided one to one follow up support from the trainers with over 80 businesses across the district being supported through the scheme. 47 businesses from across the district have benefitted from shop front grants.

Economic Development Officers have supported the Rural Towns Co-ordinator at the Midhurst Business Network and Town Team meetings and also at Petworth Business Association Meetings. Officers have also presented to Chichester Vision on the Night Time Economy; although this work has been on hold during the pandemic, this work will recommence when the businesses have had time to adjust to reopening.

The Pop-up Shop Scheme was launched in February 2020 to encourage new businesses by offering short term affordable rent in suitable council owned premises. Although the project has been impacted by the various lockdowns we have businesses lined up from now until the end of August and will be re-opening to new applicants later in the summer.

Priority 3. We continue to support businesses applying for funding through Grants & Concessions for inward investment projects, one of which started out in The Enterprise Centre and then moved on to Ravenna Point as their business grew. The ongoing delivery of the business contact programme is a crucial component. EDS has run Enabling Grants programmes over the last few years and the latest has just been launched in April 2021. These schemes support small and micro businesses to grow.

Over the past year the work to support this Priority (and Priority 2) has been dominated by Covid business support, with the Economic Development team fielding hundreds of calls and emails to signpost businesses to support and to help them navigate the various government support schemes. From the outset, we have worked closely with the Taxation team and this resulted in the council being recognised as one of the quickest to deliver the March 2020 support grants; this has also meant that we have qualified for the top up to the Additional Restrictions Grant funding.

Aside from central Government grants, the Council's Covid Recovery Grant monies have been delivered, providing just under £400,000 of support to businesses, with the larger grants requiring match funding demonstrating ongoing investment by those businesses.

Priority 4. Through the business contact programme we have identified the first steps of work needed to support the food and drink sector. We have identified the need for targeted supply chain support to Food and drink producers with a networking event being planned for later in the year. Through the work on providing planning comments, we support rurally based businesses to be able to diversify within the planning constraints. The work undertaken by the Culture & Sport Division on tourism and the Season of Culture, and by the Communications, Licensing & Events Division on the Events Strategy supports both priorities 2 and 4 of the Economic Strategy. The Great Sussex Way are leading on the work to increase the value of tourism, although separately we have seen an increase in businesses seeking to invest in the tourism sector across the district, linking to our Inward Investment strategy.

3.6.5 Next Steps - The current strategy will be refreshed with an updated 'Introduction' section and reference in the main body to the known impacts of the pandemic, particularly in relation to the pace of change on the high street and regeneration projects. Alongside of this, updated action plans for both the Economic Development Strategy and the Inward Investment and Growth Strategy (IIGS) will be produced, to set out the planned deliverables for the current year. This, along with the refreshed IIGS, ties in with the current timeline of the national Covid recovery roadmap, enabling the most up to date market information to be taken into account.

3.7 Place Branding and District Identity

3.7.1 This section sets out the background to Place Making Branding, the work carried out to date and sets out potential further work. Branding is a concept that has been increasingly transferred from products and services in the corporate world and applied to retail districts, shopping centres, business improvement districts, town centres, districts and regions. Brands that have a unique and compelling proposition help underpin places as desirable tourist destinations, attractive business locations and places local residents are proud of, while others aspire to live in them.

3.7.2 Building a resilient place brand is a long term commitment which needs to retain the flexibility required by the evolution of places. Towns and cities across the UK including York, Bath and Shrewsbury have already shown the positive impact that a 'place brand' can have, including inward investment; business development; economic benefits; and an increase in tourism.

3.7.3 There is currently no 'Place Making Brand' for the district; however there are a number of existing strong brands across the district. The development of a place

making brand which could provide a strong narrative that sums up the key elements of place which include location, culture, history, future aspirations and community, all of which are supported by a coherent and professional visual identity. It is anticipated that any place brand would help to successfully tell the story of the area.

3.7.4 The development of a place making brand would focus on a clear identity for the district – not the council - and a key aspect of this work would need to involve residents, businesses and partners in its development. Commissioning branding expertise would assist with developing an overall place branding strategy and ‘shared story’ as a way to describe what is special and different about our district. It is important to differentiate between the council brand and that of the place – i.e. the council brand is that of the organisation and the services it provides, whereas the place brand is about the place or places that the council, businesses and communities serves. It is not about the council, its partners, or individual businesses. It is difficult for one brand to do both things. Keeping them separate is vital for clarity of understanding about what is being done and what the objective is to be achieved. The distinction between place and council brand doesn't mean that the two should not be used together in a complimentary way, only that the demarcation should be clear, and clearly understood by everyone using the brands. In the end though, they are two different things, telling different stories albeit with important common ground.

3.7.5 Whilst the Inward Investment Strategy considers the branding and marketing of the area from the perspective of businesses, a Place Brand Strategy would enable the development of a distinctive identity which could be developed and harnessed by partners from across the district and would include wider considerations to reflect elements such as community, tourism, the built and natural environment and the unique characteristics of the district.

3.7.6 There are some key challenges which will need to be considered in the development of any Place Brand. These include:

- Agreement that stakeholders, communities and businesses in the district want and support a Place Brand to deliver a district identity is required.
- A mutual understanding of the key objective of the brand.
- The challenge to deliver a brand which reflects the varying nature of the district, with the city and rural towns.
- Consideration of how to resource the project – in the short and longer term.
- Recognition that there already exist a number of partners/stakeholders with their own distinctive brands, these include but are not limited to: Chichester BID, Chichester Tomorrow, The Great Sussex Way (GSW), Petworth Vision, Midhurst Vision, Destination Selsey and BREW vision. This should not be under-estimated, GSW (Visit Chichester) have tried for many years to establish a brand that reflects the whole of the district. It is much easier to focus on a city or a town to get buy-in to a place making brand.
- The potential that no consensus is reached of the most appropriate Place Brand for the area.

3.7.7 Despite these challenges, it is considered that the development of a Place Brand and District Identity would develop a strong narrative about the area, including location, culture, history, future aspirations and community, all of which would be supported by a coherent and professional visual identity to support ‘place’ marketing objectives. It is believed that an umbrella brand would benefit the area as a whole, its businesses, organisations, and visitor attractions, by creating a consistent, single,

strong voice and image for the district. This in turn would assist with promoting pride in the area and improve reputation.

3.7.8 It is important that our place brand is authentic and relevant and appeals to:

- Students considering where to study
- Shoppers looking to enjoy the city and town's ambience and variety
- Tourists visiting the district (especially cultural tourists)
- Businesses and entrepreneurs thinking of investing in the district, and
- Residents who love living in Chichester District

3.7.9 The development of a Place Brand will help to show the district's personality as well as its places - a district and community which inspires and involves. It will create a clear identity - owned by all and used consistently, that everyone can celebrate and take pride in. The brand, messages and sub-brands are applicable across a variety of applications including for example, our signage, wayfinding, printed publicity materials, digital media and light displays.

3.7.10 If it is considered a project worth pursuing, it is proposed that a place making brand expert is employed to facilitate the process. Based on previous estimates of costs taken to the Chichester Tomorrow Vision Steering group, it is anticipated that this work would cost in the region of £50,000 - £65,000 for the development of a place making brand, there would then be ongoing promotion costs.

3.7.11 The anticipated process (as per the Local Government Association's recommendations) will include the following steps:

1. Partners to establish the objectives for the Place Branding project.
2. Ownership, Governance and Budget – project group set up, budget agreed.
3. Definition of the area for branding.
4. Research – seek external perspectives to ensure brand has relevance and authenticity. Involve quantitative and qualitative research (i.e. consultation and focus groups). Include questions relating to whether residents feel proud to say they live in the area, how businesses feel about the future, explore positive and negative associations and how visitors feel about the area. This stage will include consideration of previous consultations and exploration of what research has been undertaken by partners.
5. Determine how the Brand will be delivered – i.e. engage consultants.
6. Brand Building – two elements – (i) agree what the story of the place is – informed by research. This will encapsulate the strengths of the place and shared aspiration for the future. (ii) develop visual identity – i.e. brand assets such as colour palettes, logos, fonts, etc.
7. Development of Place Products which could include signage, website, promotion, film, place brochure.
8. Use the Brand – a minimum of five years – ensure partners exploit opportunities and develop a strategy for use.
9. Evaluation – test the impact of the brand, use of focus groups, research, investigate business footfall. Consider whether the brand has helped to increase inward investment, additional visits by tourists, increase in positive feedback from visitors, residents and businesses, etc.

3. 7.12 Local authorities across the country are recognising the increasing importance of developing a Place Brand as a result of the next recovery phase following the coronavirus pandemic. One example of which is Staffordshire County Council who are working to create a new place brand for the area to help to promote Staffordshire and attract business, talent, visitors and students. It is the story of their county, past, present and future – and the places and the people that make it special. They intend to use the new place brand to build local pride and confidence in their county, and to help to promote Staffordshire post coronavirus. Likewise, Salisbury and Wokingham Councils have recognised the importance of this type of project.

4. Outcomes to be Achieved

4.1 To note the current work undertaken in relation to Inward investment Strategy, Brand development and expertise, the actions linked to the Economic Development Strategy and the background work to date on the place brand project and to agree a way forward regarding any future requirements for place branding.

5. Proposal

5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the amended motion presented to March 2021 Council and Council minute 82.

5.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the work to date by the Economic Development Service relevant to the items listed within the motion and future work, and recommend any actions to Cabinet.

6.0 Resource and Legal Implications

6.1 The Economic Development Service and Place Division have available resources to deliver the Economic Development Strategy and Inward investment work, initially assisted by White Label. Consideration of additional resources will take place following the completion of the work by White Label.

6.2 If members agreed to support a place branding project then additional funding will be required as indicated in the report.

7.0 Consultation

7.1 The motion and background work undertaken to date plus any additional requirements was set out in number of reports to the Economic Recovery group. The Group’s discussion was focused on the need for a place making brand to establish a district identity, the group was divided over the need to undertake any further work in this area and that a report would come to OSC today.

8.0

Other Implications

	Yes	No
Crime and Disorder –		X
Biodiversity and Climate Change Mitigation		X

Human Rights and Equality Impact		X
Safeguarding and Early Help		X
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)		X
Health and Wellbeing		X

9. Appendices

9.1 None

10 Background Papers

10.1 None