

Project Documentation - Initial Project Proposal Document

Project: New Employment Land – Retaining and Attracting Businesses

Author: Stephen Oates, Economic Development

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1. Purpose of Document

The purpose of this document is to justify the undertaking of the project based on the estimated cost of delivery and the anticipated benefits to be gained. The proposal outlined in this document will be used as part of the process for prioritising future projects.

2. Project Description

To research and identify suitable business sectors and potential users of the Class B1 to B8 employment land to be allocated under the Local Plan, with a particular emphasis, where possible, on businesses offering higher-value jobs.

To identify and attract existing businesses from within the District who are wishing to expand.

To develop an inward investment plan, and to identify and attract businesses from outside the District to relocate here.

To encourage developers to undertake speculative development to create new business space and to ensure we have the stock available to fulfil the growth objectives.

3. Background

The Council's Economic Development Strategy aims to 'Create a Prosperous and Sustainable Economy' for Chichester. It aims to address the demographic imbalance by creating the right environment to attract and retain more working age households; retaining and growing its existing growth orientated businesses; and by creating an environment and communications infrastructure that will encourage new entrepreneurs to contribute to the District's future economic success.

The Council's Local Plan seeks to develop a strong and thriving economy, improving employment opportunities for all skills and diversifying the economy. It will assist the creation of jobs in a number of ways, most obviously through the allocation of land for employment uses.

The plan places a strong emphasis on promoting enterprise and creating an environment which will encourage businesses to grow and it seeks to encourage inward investment from businesses that wish to locate here.

The Local Plan estimates that there is a requirement for around 25 hectares of employment land. Some of this has already been identified and, in some cases, has already been allocated and/or is land subject to current planning applications. However, there has not been any work undertaken to identify

business sectors likely to be attracted to Chichester, to identify business sectors we would like to attract, or the likelihood of businesses relocating here.

This IPPD proposes to undertake a programme of research and consultation to provide base data; to then identify suitable business sectors and potential users of the employment land; and to generate a plan to encourage growing District businesses to relocate and to encourage inward investment from business outside the District.

4. Outcomes to be Achieved

The research and consultancy will

- identify target sectors and businesses
- identify growth businesses in the District who may wish to relocate
- identify 'pull' and 'push' factors
- identify improvements required to existing facilities, services and infrastructure
- identify potential inward investment targets
- develop strong working relationships with commercial agents and property developers
- inform how to engage with and attract entrepreneurs and businesses
- inform future planning policy and assist sustainability
- provide evidence to assist with seeking funding for incentives
- provide evidence to assist with seeking partnership funding
- identify and record vacancy rates

It is anticipated that the project will:

- attract new high-growth employers to the District
- generate new job opportunities
- maximise the effectiveness of the Council's proposed Enterprise Centre
- ensure the employment land is used for the sectors and businesses most likely to maximise economic growth

5. Timescales

It is intended to begin initial work on this following the completion of the site allocations by Planning Policy

6. Project Costs and Resources

	Costs (£)	Source
One-Off	£40,000 for research and consultancy, databases, inward investment website, marketing prospectus and materials.	CDC reserves
Revenue	n/a	
Savings	None	

Services to be involved in the project delivery	Economic Development Service Planning Policy Estates Service
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It is requested that Cabinet release funding for this project to enable the project to progress as soon as the site allocations have been confirmed by Planning Policy.

7. Benefits vs. Cost

Direct financial benefits are difficult to quantify at this stage. However, it is expected the outcomes to contribute significantly to sustaining jobs and to create new job opportunities, and to increasing the Council's NNDR receipts.

Additionally, it will provide evidence and focus towards long-term initiatives designed to

- Increase higher-value employment opportunities throughout the District
- Develop Chichester as a location for clustering specific business sectors
- Retain and develop the District's working age talent
- Better integrate the District's business sector with our schools, colleges and the University
- Increase associated spend with relevant suppliers and in the City and market towns
- Provide an evidence base for the refresh of the local plan

8. Identify Risks

- The level of competition from other areas who are also seeking to grow and diversify their business base
- Lack of engagement from commercial agents
- Lack of internal resources to support the work within required timescales
- Insufficient 'pull' factors to attract businesses to Chichester