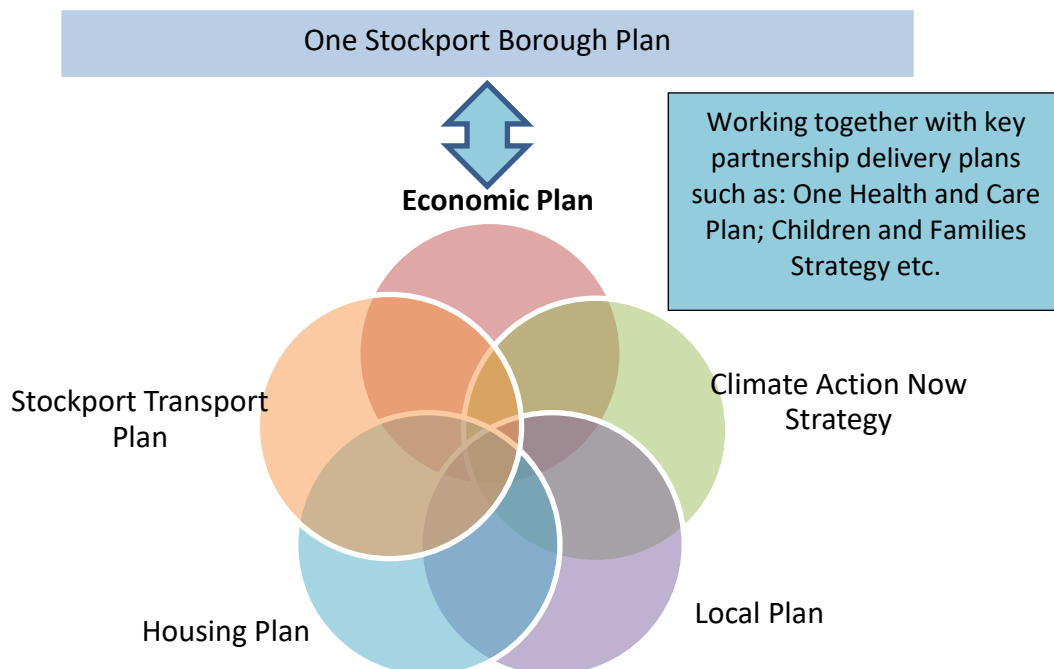


**STOCKPORT ECONOMIC PLAN 2022-2030**

Report of the Director for Development & Regeneration

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The One Stockport Borough Plan places a thriving economy at the heart of our ambition for the future of Stockport and includes two key economic related priorities:
- An enterprising and thriving Stockport
  - A skilled and confident Stockport
- 1.2 In order to take forward Stockport’s ambition, reflecting the potential for the local economy around these priorities, and to contribute to other priorities, such as ‘Digital Stockport’, work has been undertaken in partnership with key stakeholders to develop an Economic Plan for Stockport.
- 1.3 As a supporting delivery plan to the One Stockport Borough Plan, the Stockport Economic Plan will play a vital role in setting out how the priorities of the Borough Plan will be achieved and will also inform the development of the Local Plan by identifying the key economic priorities for the borough. The Plan will also be an integral part of the Borough’s collective recovery response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the economic challenges that has and continues to present. By its nature, the Plan will be a live, agile document and will be reviewed regularly to respond to the changing economic landscape. The review process of the One Stockport Borough Plan also provides an opportunity for the actions and priorities identified in the draft Economic Plan to be incorporated and reflected in a future iteration of the Borough Plan. The Plan will be informed by and will inform a series of other delivery plans given the cross-cutting nature of economic issues.



- 1.4 There is more work to be done going forward to create a delivery plan with actions that are very concise, sharply defined, and clear for each of the priorities under the pillars. It is also recognised that the plan and actions need to be dynamic and agile so that they are suitable and responsive to the economic conditions, and recent experience has reinforced the need for plans to change to be relevant and supportive in times of extreme challenge, for example.
- 1.5 There is an opportunity to include specific reference and actions for supporting District Centres.

## **2. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The One Stockport Borough Plan is Stockport's 10-year partnership strategy for the borough. It provides a framework for future collaboration across all partners and with communities on a set of shared priorities – working together as one for a common vision and outcomes. In developing the Borough Plan, we heard several themes of feedback relating to the economy:
  - A strong message from young people, older people, schools, colleges, local businesses and community leaders and representatives that we wanted and needed to do more to inspire young people and to connect residents to future employment opportunities. This included links between schools and businesses, apprenticeship and training opportunities, and mentoring;
  - We also heard time and time again that addressing inequalities and inequity in the borough was one of the most important things we needed to work together on. Ensuring everyone in our borough had the opportunities to benefit from Stockport's economic success and growth was identified as key to enabling resilient, confident and independent communities;
  - Working together to look at the goods and services we buy to support local businesses, voluntary and communities sector and employment was identified across a number of different sectors as an important legacy to the past 12months;
  - Proactively investing in and developing our joint approach to environmental sustainability and climate change. Through strategic partnerships, interventions and nurturing the green economy;
  - A strong focus on continued collaboration. Working inclusively and remaining ambitious. This is important in framing how we work together in developing joint delivery plans.
- 2.2 As such, the Economic Plan has been developed to help address these themes, and ensure that the Borough has a comprehensive action plan to help recover from the economic impacts of the pandemic, whilst also reflecting and promoting the role of Stockport as an integral part of the wider Greater Manchester city region.
- 2.3 In order to take forward Stockport's ambition, reflecting the potential for the local economy around these priorities, and to contribute to other priorities, such as 'Digital Stockport', a brief was developed, to commission consultants to provide the

expertise, capacity, and experience required, to work with the Council and local stakeholders to co-design a Stockport Economic Plan through to 2030. This is crucial to driving forward the local economy to address the challenges of an economic recovery following the impact of Covid.

- 2.4 The brief highlighted that the plan to be developed should be co-designed by a range of local stakeholders, including Stockport Economic Alliance, employers, jobseekers, young people, and partner organisations with strong local engagement in the process as important as the final plan to be produced. Following a procurement process, a partnership of consultants, led by Hatch Consulting was appointed to lead the work to co-ordinate the development, stakeholder engagement and co-design of the Stockport Economic Plan.
- 2.5 The Economic Plan development is also intended to be aligned with, and support the development of, the Stockport Local Plan, particularly in terms of local economic needs, and how to accommodate these across the Borough.
- 2.6 The brief that was sent out seeking consultants with the expertise and capacity to work with the Council and local stakeholders, to drive forward the development of an Economic Plan, included several key issues that had been identified in initial consultation as important to be considered:
- Understanding the **key economic challenges and opportunities** - in the context of Covid, Brexit and national and global economic policy
  - Delivering **inclusive growth** addressing inequalities
  - How to best support, prepare and **connect our young people to local employers**, and the particular needs of those with SEND needs and / or Looked After Children?
  - Ensuring it is an '**All Ages Economic Plan**' - supporting retraining and career changes throughout lives
  - Supporting the economy to take advantage of **digital and green economic growth**
  - Developing a **Stockport Local Approach**, backing Stockport enterprise to retain spend within the Stockport economy - 'The Local Pound'
  - Galvanising the **cultural offer** in economic recovery and growth
  - Recognising the **potential growth locations** - What is the role of the Town, District & Local Centres and key employment sites?
- 2.7 The brief set out that there are 3 key integrated elements to the commission:

- A detailed evidence base to be established, using a range of economic data and forecasting to set out the current economic context, including the impact of Covid, and likely economic trends in the future;
- A strong Local Engagement Plan with the full range of local economic stakeholders involved, to ensure the Plan is co-designed, representing the views and ambitions of the range of stakeholders, to drive forward a strong and inclusive economy;
- A Final Economic Plan to be published in early 2022, that responds to issues arising in the economic data evidence base, and the 'lived experiences' of stakeholders and their ambitions, and one that has Stockport playing a strong role in driving forward the Greater Manchester Economic Vision.

### **3. CO-PRODUCTION AND ENGAGEMENT**

3.1 The draft Plan has not been developed in isolation but has instead been the result of an intensive period of engagement, co-design and co-production with key stakeholders from across the borough:

- A partnership steering group was established right at the start of the process to oversee the development of the Plan. This included officer representatives from across multiple Council departments, elected members, representatives from the VCSE sector and businesses. The Steering Group have provided comment and direction as the draft Plan has developed.
- The Economic Alliance has played a significant leadership role in developing the draft Plan, providing comment and input throughout the development process. The Alliance will continue to have an ongoing ownership and oversight of the Economic Plan, as progress is reviewed.
- Two Stakeholder workshops were held with key groups and stakeholders to explore and develop various elements and stages of the plan. This included workshops to review the emerging evidence base, the draft priority themes, and suggested actions. Representatives from businesses, VCSE sector and wider stakeholders attended the workshops.
- Presentations were given to a series of partnership boards, forums and Officer Groups to seek input on the emerging plan. This included the Economic Alliance, Cross Sector Forum, Age Friendly Board, Climate Action Summit, Public Health Team, MIDAS, Business Growth Hub, and Stockport Employability Partners Network.
- Focus groups were held with key groups to understand the economic challenges and opportunities faced in their communities or sectors. These included workshops with businesses, VCSE groups and young people.
- Approximately 20 follow up 1:1 sessions were held with further stakeholders including MIDAS, The Growth Company and Federation of Small Businesses

- An update was provided to the October 2021 meeting of the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, with helpful feedback provided on the evidence base and emerging priorities.

3.2 The following themes were developed with by stakeholders and partners and have been reflected in the draft plan as the four key pillars that have several actions sitting within these pillars. These have been developed from the key emerging themes in the Evidence Base, including through the range of stakeholder engagement outlined in this report:

- **Fair & Inclusive**  
*Supporting a fairer economy where local people are the primary beneficiaries of regeneration and growth*
- **Enterprising & Productive**  
*Capturing a bigger share of high value knowledge jobs, while supporting a resilient foundational economy*
- **Climate Friendly & Resilient**  
*Tackling the climate emergency, growing the green economy and enabling Stockport to build back better and recover from the impacts of Covid*
- **Accessible & Connected**  
*Ensuring sustainable transport infrastructure and digital infrastructure supports employment and inclusive economic growth, and ensuring reliable public transport improves access to opportunities across the Borough.*

3.3. The Draft Economic Plan appended to this report, sets out several actions (to be further developed) under these four pillars, to help drive forward the ambitions. It is progress on these actions over the next decade that will form the basis for assessing the impact of the Economic Plan. Some of these actions will be intensifying local focus of existing activity, e.g. Greater Manchester wide programmes, some will be new actions for delivery, and some will be influencing other Partnership Plans to help address economic needs, e.g. housing and transport.

3.4 There is now an opportunity to consider how the themes and issues identified in the work to produce the economic plan can be incorporated into the work to support and develop the District Centres.

3.5 Progress on the Economic Plan will be overseen by the Economic Alliance, that includes the range of stakeholders with the ability to provide governance to see that these actions are delivered, and priorities driven forward.

3.6 It is also proposed that the Economy & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee receives an annual update report on progress of the Economic Plan.

## 4 CONSIDERATIONS AND QUESTIONS FOR DISTRICT CENTRES

4.1 The Economic Plan forms a vital part of the Borough's response to the economic impacts of the pandemic and has been developed in partnership with stakeholders

to articulate a shared set of priorities and actions to address both the economic challenges but also the economic opportunities identified for Stockport and, consequently, the District Centres.

4.2 The main considerations and questions for the Scrutiny Review Panel are:

1. There is a need to develop shared workspace in the District Centres so that new start up and grow on phase businesses can access a desk and office type space without the need to travel into the town centre to access these facilities. This would also bring additional spend to local businesses in the area for refreshments etc. Do members think this is a good idea and would they support it?
2. Many businesses are finding it challenging to recruit the right workforce for roles now. Retail is an important part of the business mix in district centres and some need to recruit staff. We have an opportunity through Stockport Jobs Match to look at developing specific pages on the online platform that could showcase local retailers and promote the job vacancies they are looking to recruit to (free of charge to the businesses). Do members think this is a good idea and would they support it?
3. There are significant numbers of small and medium sized businesses in Stockport (nearly 80% of 14,000 businesses have 7 or fewer people in the business), and it is important that the Council engages with and reaches these businesses as well as hearing their voice about issues and concerns. What ideas and suggestions do members have about how we can effectively engage with small businesses in the District Centres?

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