

Rutland County Council
Economic Strategy Task and Finish Group

26th June 2023

Present:

1. Councillor Andrew Brown (Chair)
2. Councillor Nick Begy
3. Councillor Ramsay Ross
4. Councillor Lucy Stephenson
5. Councillor Karen Payne
6. Ingrid Hooley (Head of Sustainable Economy and Place)
7. Alex Gardiner (Director, Metro Dynamics)
8. Jane Narey (Scrutiny Officer)

Apologies:

9. Penny Sharp (Strategic Director – Places)

Rutland's Economic Strategy was presented by Ingrid Hooley. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The strategy had been greatly informed by input from the Economic Strategy Task and Finish Group since its first meeting in December 2022.
- The strategy was due to be presented to Cabinet on the 15th August 2023.
- Feedback and comments were currently being taken on the strategy before further information including case studies was added.
- The aim was to produce a more refined strategic document which would focus on the four main objectives:
 1. New Technologies and Market Opportunities
 2. Productive Local Businesses
 3. Our Talent Pipeline
 4. Thriving Places and Communities
- Once the strategy had been approved then the process would be to move into a second stage consisting of consultation with businesses and the community so that an action plan was created.
- Rutland's economy was shrinking whilst the economy for neighbouring counties was growing but there was no one specific reason for this.
- There were lots of opportunities for Rutland to work with other local authorities as Rutland's key asset was its highly skilled residents. Partnerships between businesses and with the Council should be maximised.
- Rutland needed allocated employment land, good digital connectivity, suitable buildings, good road and public transport links and an available and qualified workforce.
- Manufacturing had decreased in Rutland e.g. Arnold Wills based in Uppingham had moved its manufacturing process to India resulting in a loss of jobs at its site in Uppingham.
- Rutland had a growing, ageing population.
- Deprivation was low in Rutland but it had low levels of affordable housing.
- Rutland had a lack of employment space for businesses to grow and this would link into the Local Plan.

- Education within Rutland consisted of a large part of the economy and employment. There were excellent schools and education providers in Rutland but there was a lack of post 16 education, universities etc. Education needed to be expanded in Rutland to go from early years right the way through to further education.
- The visitor economy in Rutland needed to be promoted to a year-round economy. Discover Rutland was an external body, separate to the Council and RCC currently did not have the resources to be involved in / promote tourism in Rutland.
- RCC delivered its statutory services but would not have the power or the resources to deliver non-statutory services. What we want to do or would like to do was limited by the Council's resources.

NEXT STEPS:

- The Economic Development Strategy identified what the issues were and what the Council's priorities should be.
- The next stage would be to use the strategy to create an action plan identifying what Rutland County Council would do to resolve the issues.
- The action plan would need to make definite recommendations to make Rutland's economy grow.

SUMMARY:

1. The county of Northamptonshire should be included as one of Rutland's neighbouring authorities as well as Nottinghamshire, Greater Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Cambridgeshire.
2. The strategy should include a statement communicating Rutland's unique selling point, identifying why businesses should locate in Rutland and what the benefits would be.
3. The strategy needed to identify what companies were actually looking for when they were thinking about locating their business to a particular location/county.
4. Explanations within the strategy should be less technical so that the information would be more easily understood by Cabinet and the general public.
5. Rutland County Council's role in the delivery of the economic development strategy needed to be identified.
6. The phrase 'What could Rutland's economy look like in 2040?' should be amended to state, 'What should Rutland's economy look like in 2040?'
7. The strategy should identify Rutland County Council as an exemplar for other areas as a sustainable rural economy.

Meeting closed at 7.01 p.m.