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| REPORT TO: | | Special Scrutiny Committee | |
| DATE: | | 23 March 2023 | |
| PORTFOLIO: | | Cllr Peter Britcliffe - Levelling Up | |
| REPORT AUTHOR: | | Mark Hoyle, Head of Regeneration and Housing | |
| TITLE OF REPORT: | | Economic Development Function | |
| EXEMPT REPORT (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A) | No | Not applicable | |
| KEY DECISION: | | | |
| | No | If yes, date of publication: | |

1. **Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To inform the Committee about new arrangements for the Council's Economic Development function including advice and support for business.

2. **Recommendations**

I recommend that the Special Scrutiny Committee:

- 2.1 Note and comment on the report.

3. **Reasons for Recommendations and Background**

- 3.1 As part of the Council's Levelling Up plans, the Committee has expressed an interest on the Council's economic development function.
- 3.2 The Council's Corporate Strategy (2018 – 2023) sets the strategic framework and says that the Council will create greater opportunities for all to access improved employment opportunities and to strengthen Hyndburn's economy through employment growth.
- 3.3 This objective was reflected in the Council's Accrington Town Centre Investment Plan (TCIP) and its UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) proposals. The TCIP explains how a range of projects and initiatives will improve Accrington town centre's environment and encourage sustainable growth for the local economy. The UKSPF is part of the Government's levelling up agenda. The Council's approved UKSPF business plan includes growth and support for new business, support for helping

businesss with the transition to low carbon initiatives and support for business growth in the transformed Burton's Building and Market Chambers buildings.

- 3.4 The following arrangements are being put into place to support economic growth across the Borough:

New Emerging Local Plan (Hyndburn 2037)

- 3.5 This sets out the policy framework and site allocations for new employment growth across the Borough. The draft plan is scheduled to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate late spring time with a view to adoption early 2024. The Plan makes available 59 hectares of new land for employment uses, especially at Altham South and Whitebirk. These two new strategic employment sites will be the two key locations for new business and employment locations over the Plan period.

New Economic Development Manager

- 3.6 This will be a new, key post reporting to the Head of Regeneration and Housing, funded through the UKSPF programme. The post will be the main contact for business and employers including existing business that wants to grow, and new business that would like to relocate in the Borough. As well as providing business and employers with support and sign posting to other appropriate support and advice, the post will lead on new funding opportunities that supports employment growth.

Heritage Regeneration

- 3.7 This will be a contracted consultancy service, initially for 12 months, to assist the Council with heritage led regeneration projects, which in turn support wider business growth with a focus on attracting heritage led investment. This will lead to new business and employment opportunities with a focus on our historic buildings such as the Market Hall, Burton Chambers, Market Chambers, Victorian Arcade, etc.

Boost

- 3.8 This is Lancashire County Council's business growth hub providing business support for new businesses and for businesses that want to expand. Boost employs dedicated business advisors who work directly with local business providing advice and support. Boost is currently funded through the European Regional Development Fund, and it is proposed to continue to fund the growth hub through the majority of the Lancashire local authorities pooling some of their UKSPF to ensure this dedicated service continues. It provides a wide range of services including brokerage and sign posting, basic boot camps for new starter businesses, and mentoring for more established businesses.

Business Support: Low Carbon

- 3.9 The Council will use some of its UKSPF to support the East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce with specific support to help businesses reduce their carbon footprint and works towards net zero as well as reduce energy bills. In addition UKSPF will be used

to help a small number of select businesses with new low carbon technology which aims to drive new low carbon manufacturing, creating jobs and products for export.

Support Market Hall and Burton Chambers

- 3.10 This is a small fund created and funded through Hyndburn's new UKSPF to fund year 1 promotion packages for the Market Hall and Burton Chambers.

Business and Marketing Co-ordination – Hyndburn Town Centres

- 3.11 The Council's Business and Marketing Co-ordinator provides town centre business with advice and support including sign-posting to other advice and support agencies.

East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce

- 3.12 The Chamber plays a key role in supporting economic growth in East Lancashire including Hyndburn. The Chamber provides business Advice services as well as specialist services such as international trade including growth in importing and exporting goods. The Council will continue to work closely with the Chamber and sign post local businesses for advice and support.

4. Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 The report provides an overview of the Council's economic function and how it links with other agencies to provide business advice and support.

5. Consultations

- 5.1 The Council's TCIP and UKSPF plans were subject to extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and have been subsequently approved by Cabinet.

6. Implications

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| Financial implications (including any future financial commitments for the Council) | All services described in the report are met from existing Council budgets for 2023/24. |
| Legal and human rights implications | There are no legal or human rights implications arising directly from this report |
| Assessment of risk | There are none directly from this report. The Council's budget, TCIP and UKSPF were all subject to separate risk assessments. |
| Equality and diversity implications <i>A Customer First Analysis should be completed in relation to policy</i> | The Council is subject to the public sector equality duty introduced by the Equality Act 2010. When making decisions Cabinet and Council consider its |

decisions and should be attached as an appendix to the report.

duties under the 2010 Act.

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