

Communities, Homes and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

Date 16th November 2022

Subject: Local Innovation Strategy

THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IS ASKED TO: To review and assess the content of the Innovation Strategy, with a focus on the four Innovation Opportunities in the areas of Digital; Health & Wellbeing; Foundational Economy; and Circular Economy and provide any recommendations and comments for consideration by Cabinet.

Reason(s)

This new Strategy will support the recovery and restructuring of Carmarthenshire's economy through innovation. It is therefore important that the committee reviews the strategy and that any recommendations arising are considered by Cabinet.

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER: - Councillor Gareth John, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Leisure, Culture & Tourism

Directorate: Chief Executives

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Local Innovation Strategy

Cardiff University's Centre for Innovation Policy Research was commissioned by the authority to explore innovation prospects for Carmarthenshire. The general aim was to identify proposals to support the recovery and restructuring of Carmarthenshire's economy through innovation. The aims were to explore the contribution of certain key sectors, specifically: the role of the country council and the wider public sector, especially with respect to the use of public sector spending power to support innovation; and to focus in particular on the Foundational Economy; Health and Wellbeing; Digital innovation; and the impact of Climate Change and the prospects of a Green Recovery by harnessing the potential of the Circular Economy.

The commission proceeded through three stages: (a) a desktop analysis of key documents such as the Council's Business Advisory Group meeting notes, Economic Recovery and Delivery Plan and the CLES (Centre for Local Economic Strategies) report work on community wealth building and progressive procurement; (b) consultations with 50 key stakeholders in the county, the region and the nation to identify the challenges, constraints and future opportunities for innovation; and (c) the development of a strategy to promote and support innovation in Carmarthenshire.

The Strategy recommends 4 opportunities for innovation:

Opportunity 1 – Digital

- Improved fibre and mobile connectivity
- Opportunities for next generation digital technologies
- Addressing digital skills
- Developing a rural digital innovation centre

Opportunity 2 – Health

- Development of a dispersed living laboratory to test new medical products and services

Opportunity 3 – Foundational Economy

- Sustainable food procurement and development of the local food supply chain

Opportunity 4 – Circular Economy

- Leveraging an approach for the Net Zero Agenda through reducing waste and recycling.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report

Signed:

Head of Regeneration

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	N/A	YES	NONE	YES	NONE	YES

1. Policy

The alignment with CCC's Economic Recovery Plan is essential and this will monitor any significant changes in the economic climate and escalate as appropriate.

Consideration has been afforded to how we can apply the five ways of working as we make progress on the identified opportunities. This will be further developed as detailed plans for delivering the opportunities are taken forward.

Finance

Funding will be required to deliver the recommendations of the Local Innovation Strategy. UK Government's Shared Prosperity fund could be a possible source of external funding for any projects emanating from the Strategy.

Risk Management Issues

Each intervention will be required to maintain a risk register and to mitigate the risks for the whole life period of the activity.

Physical Assets

Some interventions will entail investment opportunities in existing physical assets in our town centres

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED YES	Councillor Gareth John, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Leisure, Culture & Tourism has been briefed, prior to the report being considered by Pre- Cabinet.
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Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THERE ARE NONE