



# Buckinghamshire County Council

## Report

Deputy Leader

---

Decision to be taken on or after 31 December 2001

Cab Member Report No. DL 07/01

**Date** 21 December 2001

**Title** Economic Development Action Plan

**Author** Pat Ward

**Contact Officer** Pat Ward – 01296 382157

**Electoral Divisions Affected** All

### Summary

Under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the Council had a requirement to prepare a document setting out the Council's proposals for funding its economic activity following consultation with the business community and other interested persons. In July this year, this Act was replaced by the Local Government Act 2001 in which local authorities are given the power to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of their communities. The 2001/02 Action Plan has completed its consultation and the Deputy Leader is requested to confirm circulation of the final published plan (attached) as a basis for the Council's Economic Development work programme.

### Recommendation

**TO AGREE THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN 2001/02 (ATTACHED)**

**A. The decision required, and why it is needed**

The Action Plan requires the agreement of the Deputy Leader in order to meet the requirements of the Local Government Act and to give the Plan the full support of the Authority. The performance targets are set out in the Service Plan for Economic Development.

**B. Recommended action, and the reasons for this**

That the Deputy Leader makes a key decision to agree the Action Plan to give it the authority it requires for the projects being undertaken. The Action Plan supports the Council's policy steers for supporting key partnerships, bringing in external funding and adding value to the budget.

The Action Plan has been developed in consultation with other services across the Council, the District Councils, the Buckinghamshire Economic Partnership and the Buckinghamshire Lifelong Learning Partnership and sets out how the Council will deliver its economic programme for the year.

The document, in line with the stated principles of the Council's Plan highlights the issues and lists the projects, timescale and outcomes, that will support and sustain the economy of the County. Economic development is a cross cutting service, therefore, the Action Plan includes actions undertaken by other service providers within the Authority.

The aim of the Action Plan is to achieve 'a prosperous, modern, diverse and sustainable economy, balancing the requirements of business, the workforce, customers, residents and the environment'. The projects are built around business competitiveness, maximising the workforce, supporting an efficient communications network and enhancing the quality of life and the environment.

**Business Competitiveness** – actions under this heading are aimed at stimulating sustainable development, growth and investment among existing and new employers to ensure competitive, environmentally responsible businesses committed to Buckinghamshire. This will be done by working with our key partners to add value and avoid duplication of effort. The provision of economic information for residents and businesses includes the development of a business, property and sites database, producing a Labour Market Bulletin monthly, a newsletter quarterly and a website. This information will also support the aftercare service being undertaken in conjunction with the Bucks Economic Partnership and SEEDA. Raising the profile of Buckinghamshire, promoting business excellence and encouraging environmentally friendly practices will be a priority.

**Workforce Development** – ensuring that both the workforce and business in Buckinghamshire embrace a learning and training culture to develop their fullest potential. This will be done by supporting workforce development, working in partnership with the Small Business Service, the Learning and Skills Council and the County's Adult Education Service. We will provide the secretariat and contribute to the work programme for the Workforce Development Task Group of the Buckinghamshire Economic Partnership.

**Efficient Communication Networks** – creating and maintaining efficient operating conditions by developing transportation and communication networks and business accommodation to ensure that Buckinghamshire remains an attractive location for business and the workforce. This will be done through lobbying for major development, promoting Business Travel Plans and dealing with local issues. The Economic Development Team will also provide the economic input into the Review of the Structure Plan.

**Quality of Life and the Environment** – maintaining and enhancing the high quality physical environment, cultural activity, quality of life and distinctive character which make the County the place of choice to live, work and play. Implementing the Tourism Actions Plan by developing projects which revitalise our market towns and implementing the Rural Strategy will be crucial for achieving this section of the Action Plan. We will build on the launch of the Food Directory and develop a food producers group to support diversification, promote local trading and assist the rural economy. Working with CEAC (Corporate Environmental Advisory Council) we will raise the issues of waste and energy conservation to help businesses become more efficient, environmentally friendly and save money.

**C. Other options available, and their pros and cons**

**None**

**D. Resource implications**

The budget set out in the Action Plan includes a 'one off' contribution of £100,000 for the development of an Enterprise Hub/Innovation Centre and to support Rural Strategy and membership of CEAC. The remainder of the budget, £96,700 is set against the actions for delivering the Joint Economic Strategy for Buckinghamshire.

**E. Other implications**

The decision will give legitimacy to the projects being undertaken when delivering the Action Plan. The projects are, in the main, undertaken in partnership with other local organisations to add value and avoid duplication of effort. The Action Plan not only raises the profile of the County Council but also the services who have made a significant contribution towards the economy of the County, particularly education, social services and transportation. For example, without a well maintained road network the residents of Buckinghamshire would be unable to travel to work nor would businesses be able to distribute their goods and services locally and nationally.

**F. Feedback from consultation and Local Member views**

The Action Plan is developed as a result of consultation with other service providers within the Authority and through continuous discussion and consultation with our external partners.

**G. Communication issues**

The document will not only be distributed to key businesses in the County and partner organisations but will be placed on the Business web pages to enable all businesses and residents to take advantage of the information and actions contained within the Action Plan.

**H. Other issues**

The aim of the action plan is to sustain and develop the economy thus balancing the economic well-being and the environment of the County.

---

**Background Papers**

Economic Development Action Plan 2001/2  
Economic Development Service Plan  
Buckinghamshire Joint Economic Development Strategy  
SEEDA's Regional Economic Strategy  
Copies may be obtained from the Contact Officer.

---

**Decision Taken:**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Decision Not Taken:**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

***Your questions and views***

*If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.*

*If you have any views on this paper which you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Head of Policy Support by **5.00pm on Friday, 28 December 2001**. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 383986), Fax (to 01296 383441), or e-mail to [cabinet@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:cabinet@buckscc.gov.uk)*