

Overview

This document compiles comments from GBC Officers and Councillors on the following documents:

- Guildford Economic Development Strategy
- Guildford Economy Development Action Plan
- Guildford Economic Development Strategy: Evidence Base

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Economic Development Strategy Comments

Section	Comment (Author/Service)	Author/Service
Chapter 2: Guildford's Current Economy: The Case for Action		
<p>Para 2.4, p. 7: "One of our main anchors is the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which attracts over 30 million visits per year and supports our thriving local visitor economy."</p>	<p>Surrey Hills branding has now changed to 'Surrey Hills National Landscape' (as opposed to an AONB). Change all references to Surrey Hills AONB to Surrey Hills National Landscape.</p>	<p>Economic Development</p>
Chapter 3: Guildford's Future Economy: The Next Ten Years		
<p>People: Connecting People and Opportunity</p> <p>Para 3.33, p.23: We will work collaboratively to ensure that our foundational economy has the talent it needs, and support people in deprived communities to upskill in areas that offer 'good jobs'.</p>	<p>Change 'deprived' to 'less advantaged'.</p>	<p>Community Services</p>
<p>People: Connecting People and Opportunity</p> <p>Para 3.33, p.23: We will work collaboratively to ensure that our foundational economy has the talent it needs, and support people in deprived communities to upskill in areas that offer 'good jobs'.</p>	<p>Retail is important in the Guildford offer, as are nurses and teachers. How will the strategy actions assist this part of the economy, avoid people driving in and increasing congestion?</p>	<p>Economic Development/WBC ED</p>
<p>People: Connecting People and Opportunity</p> <p>Para 3.33, p. 26: "Explore opportunities to support the foundational economy across neighbourhood services, healthcare, digital infrastructure and housing.</p> <p>This could include establishing a funding programme similar to the <i>Challenge Fund</i> by Welsh Government to catalyse foundational economy community business activities in communities where clear gaps in the provision of key services are identified – particularly in our more rural communities. This could link in with existing community programmes such as Crowdfund Guildford and Project Aspire.</p>	<p>Change Project Aspire to 'Aspire Community Grants'.</p> <p>Rather than create another grant scheme, we could modify criteria for the grants to include economic development.</p>	<p>Community Grants</p>

<p>Provision: Upgrading our Physical and Digital Infrastructure</p> <p>Para 3.34, p. 26: “Public Transport: We benefit from over 12 train stations across our borough, and an extensive bus network, but many of our employment sites are located away from our public transport nodes (e.g. Surrey Business Park, Guildford Business Park, Slyfield Industrial Estate and Quadrum Industrial Park).”</p>	<p>Clarity required in point 3, Public Transport, whether the issue is more a concern with office type employment sites rather than industrial employment sites.</p>	<p>Planning Policy</p>
<p>Place: Transforming Our Town Centre Offer</p> <p>Para 3.43, p.30: “To inform this, and ensure future regeneration supports the economic development objectives set out in this report, we will develop a comprehensive land use strategy which will set out what uses types should go where based on JLLs’ recent <i>Competitive Position (2022)</i> report, as well as Avison Young’s <i>Economic Evidence Base (2022)</i>”.</p>	<p>The point on landowner driven masterplanning is taken. The extent to which GBC could / should curate land uses (even down to a particular niche) in planning terms, particularly where it is not the site owner remains a question. This is especially relevant in light of recent Government driven Use Class (E) related flexibility, although opportunities could be highlighted. This is not to say that a town centre / land use strategy is not a valid exercise, but there is a need to measure what planning policy can do to achieve this.</p>	<p>Planning Policy</p>
<p>Place: Transforming Our Town Centre Offer</p> <p>Para 3.43, p. 30: “Consider any proposals to re-purpose the Friary or other town centre assets for a leisure, health and fitness hub, taking advantage of ‘new’ leisure concepts entering the marketing and the rising importance of wellbeing to consumers;”</p>	<p>A number of large Town Centre mixed use schemes have indicated viability issues recently. Both Debenhams and North Street’s Viability Assessments (which indicated viability issues and could not provide Affordable Housing close to the level required) were independently reviewed by the Council’s appointed consultants. Similar case with the development at the station some years ago.</p>	<p>Planning Policy</p>
<p>Planet: Mitigating the Impact of Economic Activity</p> <p>P. 33: Indicator – Reducing annual mean NO2 pollution levels in Guildford town centre AQMA Baseline position: 40 µg/m3 Five Year Target: 30 µg/m3 Ten Year Target: 20 µg/m3</p>	<p>These proposed indicator levels need to be reviewed in accordance with the Air Quality Action Plan.</p> <p>Suggest to change targets to: Baseline position: 50 µg/m3 Five Year Target: 40 µg/m3 Ten Year Target: 36 µg/m3</p>	<p>Air Quality</p>

<p>Focus on: Our Visitor Economy chapter</p> <p>P. 34</p>	<p>We need to be mindful of any steps/actions/comments that the strategy might imply on our Heritage offer.</p>	<p>Heritage</p>
<p>Chapter 4: Guildford's Delivery Strategy: Realising a Step Change</p>		
<p>Delivery Groups: The Role of Guildford Borough Council</p> <p>Para 4.12, p. 37: "At the strategic level, we will use our planning powers to create innovative and progressive policies that are responsive to the ambitions of this strategy and the borough's economic, social and environmental context."</p>	<p>Suggest this is replaced and broadened to include wider planning powers than just creating policies (e.g. A4D is suggested).</p> <p>As an alternative could say '...will use our planning powers to create an enabling environment that is responsive to the ambitions...'</p>	<p>Planning Policy</p>
<p>Delivery Funding</p> <p>Para 4.17, bullet point 2, p. 37: "The UK Rural Prosperity Fund (dedicated funding for businesses and community initiatives in rural areas)</p>	<p>Change 'UK Rural Prosperity Fund' to 'Rural England Prosperity Fund'.</p>	<p>Economic Development</p>
<p>Delivery Metrics</p> <p>Table 4.1: Our Indicators of Success, p. 39: "Average annual housing delivery"</p>	<p>There is already a corporate target for housing delivery. Suggest this (Average annual housing delivery) is removed or that the corporate target is reflected instead.</p>	<p>Planning Policy</p>
<p>Delivery Metrics</p> <p>Table 4.1: Our Indicators of Success, p. 39-40: "Data Source"</p>	<p>The data sources featured in Table 4.1 lists software that requires subscription access (with some being quite expensive). The indicators of success needs to be reviewed to identify which are worthwhile indicators to monitor and if there are sources readily available to the Council (and, if not</p>	<p>Economic Development</p>

	and access to paid additional database is required, where we will get the budget to access to data).	
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Economic Development Action Plan Comments

Section	Comment	Author/Service
1. Productivity: Boosting Enterprise, Clustering and Innovation		
<p>Action 1.1, p. 2: Extend GBC’s new Salesforce Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to all departments to enhance our ‘front door’ with businesses (Anchor).</p> <p>This will help ensure our communications are joined up and that every interaction with businesses is informed by previous communications – this is crucial for us to come across as a ‘business friendly’ council.</p>	<p>Change to “explore options to enhance the use of Salesforce CRM to support businesses”.</p>	Customer Services
<p>Action 1. 4: Work with WBC to undertake an audit of the business support offer available to local enterprises and use this as a basis to co-commission targeted support for different sized businesses within our target sectors.</p> <p>This will involve extending the Incuhive business support current offered to Guildford businesses in Waverley to Guildford.</p>	<p>Refer to general ‘business support’ provision rather than specific providers such as IncuHive, or remove first sub-bullet point.</p>	Economic Development/WBC ED
2. Property: Meeting Business and Worker Need		
<p>Action 2.4, p. 4: Explore how council-owned sites (e.g. Slyfield Industrial Estate and Bright Hill) could be better utilised to meet employment and housing aspirations, much like has been achieved at Midleton Enterprise Park through our Industrial Estate Growth Strategy (Deliverer).</p> <p>This will involve undertaking masterplans and feasibility studies for sites that are the most deliverable and offer the greatest capacity for change, and pursuing our Industrial Estate Growth Strategy.</p>	<p>Need to delete reference to Bright Hill as per comments from first review</p> <p>We are writing stage 2 of the Industrial Estate Strategy presently which will be a high level approach, ultimately selecting/identifying a series of projects to start on in order of priority. After that stage 3 is likely to involve detailed investigations/options for the projects and its possible at that time we will have a better grasp of likely cost/budget.</p> <p>It might be better to separate housing from employment sites.</p>	<p>Economic Development</p> <p>Asset</p>

<p>Action 2.5, p. 4: Review council-owned assets and explore whether any can be used to provide low-cost business space for entrepreneurs and micro-businesses (Deliverer).</p> <p>Our town centre and business base would benefit from new accelerator/incubator spaces, incorporating wraparound business support. These could focus on complementary priority sectors (e.g. Digital, Video Gaming and Information Communication).</p>	<p>Action needs more detail as to how these commercial spaces can be provided, specifically for Games companies/studios.</p>	<p>Executive</p>
<p>Action 2.6, p. 4: Support anchor institutions to unlock large-scale development schemes that align with the objectives of this strategy, most notably the extension of the Surrey Research Park (Facilitator).</p> <p>This might involve providing delivery expertise, joint feasibility funding and/or strengthening existing functions such as Development Management.</p>	<p>Change second paragraph to: "This might involve helping to identify delivery expertise, and providing support through a Planning Performance Agreement"</p>	<p>Place Services</p>
<p>Action 2.7, p 4: Proactively work with private sector developers to maximise the economic, social and environmental benefits of large-scale residential and commercial schemes coming forward (Anchor).</p>	<p>'Mixed use' may be a more appropriate term rather than 'commercial' schemes considering the examples.</p>	<p>Planning Policy</p>
<p>3. People: Connecting People and Opportunity</p>		
<p>Action 3.8, p. 7: Continue to support our borough's deprived communities through national and local support schemes.</p> <p>This will include continued roll out of the cost of living related GBC <i>Household Support Fund</i> which provides financial support for food, energy bills and other household essential items for residents on low incomes, as well as signposting to other support available.</p>	<p>Remove HSF reference.</p> <p>The HSF is now closed but if the government make further tranches available we will administer.</p> <p>Also we should refer to less advantaged communities rather than deprived.</p>	<p>Community Grants</p>
<p>5. Place: Transforming our Town Centre Offer</p>		
<p>Action 5.8, p. 10: Work with Experience Guildford to build and scale the town centre events programme to help drive more interest and footfall (Facilitator)</p>	<p>Further discussions are needed between Experience Guildford and our Events team.</p>	<p>Events</p>

	<p>The Council has a role in facilitating event organisers to be able to deliver events e.g. providing relevant information on licensing, road closures, safety advisory requirements, suitable spaces (currently only have any control of the rotunda and Castle grounds as well as buildings we own), sign posting them to other agencies and organisations for support and advice, marketing and promoting them. SCC also has an enabling role to play in this as highways authority, but buy-in is required.</p> <p>Producing our corporate events strategy and policies will contribute to this by setting out the types of events the Council will encourage, support and deliver.</p> <p>We also directly deliver events that contribute to the town centre-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly farmers markets • Specialist markets • Christmas activities • Car Free Day • Civic events and parades • Bandstand concerts • Heritage Open Days 	
<p>Action 5.9, p. 11: We will work with partners across the town centre to create an even more extensive and exciting events programme to attract a broad range of people to visit.</p>	<p>As above- it's about being an inviting place to host events by making the events approval and planning process clear, transparent, and easy to work with- that will need to be achieved through our events strategy and policies.</p> <p>We will not be expanding our direct delivery of events in the town centre without greater resource and budget.</p>	<p>Events</p>
<p>Action 5.10, p. 11: Review licensing and planning policies to ensure they enable us to have a vibrant, diverse and well-managed town centre (Anchor).</p>	<p>Planning policy have reasonable limited powers in this regard but note that action includes licencing.</p>	<p>Planning Policy</p>

6. Planet: Mitigating the Impact of Economic Activity		
<p>Action 6.3, p. 12: “Continue to help secure funding for businesses contributing to the green economy through the provision of low carbon goods and services.</p> <p>This will involve signposting suitable businesses to the Surrey County Council Decarbonisation Loan Scheme which provides an annual £50,000 budget to provide financial support to help businesses implement decarbonisation and energy efficiency.”</p>	<p>Remove Decarbonisation Loan Scheme. The proposed Decarbonisation Loan Scheme is part of the array of projects we have set aside funding to support using our UKSPF. As exact details of the loan scheme, including budgets, are still to be worked out, it is best to remove this example at this stage until details are finalised.</p> <p>More generally, relevant actions in this chapters needs to take into account, and coordinate with, our Climate Change Action Plan.</p>	Economic Development
<p>Action 6. 4, p. 12: “Support businesses in the re-skilling and up-skilling of their employees for green skills.</p> <p>This could include working with local skills providers and using specialist technical skills at the Enterprise M3 Apprenticeship and Skills Hub to advice businesses on the development of skills for emerging low carbon industries.”</p>	<p>There are other initiatives in the current skills landscape that needs to be considered. Alongside the Apprenticeship and Skills Hub, EM3 also has the Strategic Development Fund which focuses specifically on providing equipment and green skills training for land-based, construction and transport skills. In addition, initiatives form other key organisations must be considered, including Surrey County Council’s Surrey Skills Plan and Surrey Chambers of Commerce’s Local Skills Improvement Plan.</p>	Economic Development
<p>Action 6.8, p. 13: “Continue to work with Highways England and partners to reduce air pollution levels in the Guildford town centre Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) through sustainable travel projects and working with residents and businesses.</p> <p>Existing schemes include the easitGUILDFORD initiative which provides discounted public transport travel for residents and businesses across the borough, and investment in a new bike hire scheme covering Guildford town centre and satellite sites as part of the Surrey County Council’s <i>Infrastructure Plan</i>.</p>	<p>Remove easitGUILDFORD initiative. The easitGUILDFORD initiative is no longer in operation.</p>	HR

<p>Action 6.8, p. 13: “Continue to work with Highways England and partners to reduce air pollution levels in the Guildford town centre Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) through sustainable travel projects and working with residents and businesses.</p> <p>Existing schemes include the easitGUILDFORD initiative which provides discounted public transport travel for residents and businesses across the borough, and investment in a new bike hire scheme covering Guildford town centre and satellite sites as part of the Surrey County Council’s <i>Infrastructure Plan</i>.”</p>	<p>Suggest rewording of first paragraph to: “Continue to work with National Highways and partners to reduce air pollution levels in the Guildford town centre Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), Compton AQMA, Shalford AQMA, A3 Stag Hill through sustainable travel projects and working with residents and businesses.”</p>	<p>Air Quality</p>
<p>7. Focus On: The Visitor Economy</p>		
<p>Action 7.1: “Enhance awareness of our full offer.</p> <p>We will raise the profile of these and their locations across the town centre beyond, including through wayfinding initiatives such as improved tourism signage and through the creation of a heritage trail to support visitors to navigate between assets”</p>	<p>The implications of this action from a financial and resourcing perspective need to be considered, depending on the scale of what is proposed, as well as well as who is best placed to deliver on this. SCC should be added to the list of potential partners given its role as highways authority.</p>	<p>Events and Heritage</p>

Evidence Base Comments

Evidence Base	
Section	Comment
Page 4: Section listing nine chapters of the document	<p>Chapter titles should be changed to reflect the chapters in the Strategy document.</p> <p>Change 'Play' to 'Place' Change 'Place' to 'Provision'</p>
Page 15: "Business growth has been strongest in the Ash, Guildford and Leatherhead:"	Delete Leatherhead , which is not in Guildford.
Page 25: map showing largest employers and key anchor institutions in the borough. There is a mention of "17: Gunpowder Mills"	Remove Gunpowder Mills in the map.
Page 28: section on Digital health	A mention of an "xx survey" that needs to be updated.
Page 29: "Theatre, arts and events"	Suggestion to add Yvonne Arnaud Theatre to the list—Guildford's main theatre venue.
Page 31: "Residents in Guildford earn £40,400 per annum on average versus £36,800 per annum for workers"	<p>Sentence suggests that residents are not workers.</p> <p>Rephrase to reflect the summary title i.e. resident earning vs workplace earnings.</p>
Page 52: "Recent sales have taken place as part of portfolio purchases by investors on Wyvern Park and Henley Business Park in 2021..."	Change Wyvern Park to Weyvern Park.