

For publication

Chesterfield Growth Strategy 2023-27 (EG010R)

Meeting:	Council
Date:	22 nd February 2023
Cabinet portfolio:	Leader Economic Growth
Directorate:	Economic Growth
For publication	

1.0 Purpose of the report

1.1 To seek Council approval of the Chesterfield Growth Strategy 2023-27.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 To approve the Chesterfield Growth Strategy 2023-27.

2.2 To recommend to Council the approval of the Chesterfield Growth Strategy 2023-27.

2.3 To delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Council Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, to make any changes to the Chesterfield Growth Strategy in the 2023-27 period.

3.0 Reason for recommendations

3.1 To secure the adoption of the Chesterfield Growth Strategy 2023-27.

4.0 Report details

This report was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 7 February, 2023 where it was resolved that the report and its recommendations be supported and referred to Council for approval.

4.1 The purpose of the Growth Strategy (attached as Appendix 1) is to provide a framework for action by the Council that will deliver the Council Plan priority of making Chesterfield a thriving borough and contribute towards the priority of improving the quality of life for local people.

Chesterfield Economic Assessment 2022

- 4.2 A detailed assessment of Chesterfield's economy has been completed to underpin the development of the Growth Strategy and this is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.
- 4.3 The assessment highlights the challenging context for local growth, with the national economy forecast to be entering a recessionary phase that will last until the second half of 2023, before returning to a low level of growth in 2024. Given a continuing high level of job vacancies, national unemployment is not expected to peak until the third quarter of 2024, with 500,000 people added to the claimant count.
- 4.4 Chesterfield's employment base is forecast to grow by 4% between 2021 and 2030, equating to an additional 2,000 jobs, with the largest number of jobs created in the health and social care sector, followed by logistics, professional services and hospitality.
- 4.5 Chesterfield's unemployment rate has shown good recovery from the Covid pandemic and is currently below the national average (3.3% compared to 3.6% nationally), although Chesterfield continues to have a high rate of youth unemployment (6.5% compared to 4.7%). It is anticipated that the local unemployment rate will now start increasing as the national economy enters a recessionary phase.

Challenges and Opportunities

- 4.6 The Growth Strategy identifies both the challenges that need to be addressed and the opportunities that can be built on, in order to secure future growth in Chesterfield.
- 4.7 These challenges include: a local economic base that has a bias towards lower-value, lower-skill and lower-wage employment; changing patterns of consumer and retailer behaviour impacting on the viability of town centres; and the legacy impact of industrial restructuring with high levels of deprivation in some local communities.
- 4.8 Equally, there are a range of opportunities including: significant place making investment in Chesterfield and Staveley town centres attracting more visitors and repeat footfall; developing the wider Chesterfield Station area as a vibrant community and transport gateway; the development and delivery of comprehensive regeneration proposals for the Staveley Growth Corridor; and promoting Chesterfield's affordable quality of life offer to attract more entrepreneurs to the area.

The Role of the Council in Delivering Growth

- 4.9 The Growth Strategy is focused on addressing two related challenges: building a more resilient economy that can deliver a range of quality employment opportunities; and, ensuring local people have the right mix of skills to benefit from the new jobs which are created.
- 4.10 In order to grow the economy and create jobs, Chesterfield requires a stronger and more diversified private sector business base. The Council has a key role to play in this process by making Chesterfield the best possible place in which to establish and grow a business. This reflects the Council's lead role in local place making, not only in relation to the provision of a competitive place infrastructure for businesses (for example, through the construction of business premises), but also in terms of the whole range of factors that can make Chesterfield a great place to live.

Strategic Framework

- 4.11 The strategic approach set out in the Growth Strategy represents a continuation of the approach in the current strategy, reflecting the longer term commitment required to make Chesterfield a successful and thriving borough. However, the strategic framework has evolved through the introduction of three over-arching principles that will guide the delivery of activities in the strategy:
- Higher-value Growth – the Council's ambition is not only to create more jobs in the borough, but to secure the growth of higher-value business activities (in manufacturing and service based sectors) that can deliver higher-skill and higher-wage jobs for Chesterfield's residents.
 - Inclusive Growth – the Council is focused on pursuing an inclusive approach to growth to ensure that all communities have access to, and benefit from, future growth opportunities.
 - Environmentally Sustainable Growth – the Council has set a target of becoming a carbon neutral borough by 2050. In order to support this, the strategy promotes a sustainable approach to growth, seeking to enable carbon reductions in the local business base.

- 4.12 The overall aim of the Growth Strategy is:

'To make Chesterfield a thriving borough, delivering environmentally sustainable growth that benefits local people.'

- 4.13 The strategy sets out five interlinked objectives that will provide the framework for the delivery of a range of programmes and projects by the Council. Key activities in relation to each of the strategic objectives are highlighted:

Strategic Objective and Key Activities
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1. Help businesses to grow and secure new business investment in the borough.

- Deliver an Innovation Support Programme and commission activities to support business start-ups, digital resilience and low carbon growth.
- Manage the Enterprise Chesterfield Network as a focus for the growth of higher value businesses.
- Work with Destination Chesterfield to develop and deliver place marketing and inward investment campaigns.

2. Build a competitive place infrastructure that accelerates employment and housing growth.

- Deliver a first phase of development in the Chesterfield Station Masterplan area.
- Work with partners to bring forward the comprehensive regeneration of the Staveley Growth Corridor.
- Develop the housing offer and work to accelerate the delivery of residential sites across the borough.

3. Strengthen the distinctive character and vibrancy of our town centres.

- Secure on-going investment and development of Chesterfield town centre, guided by a revised town centre masterplan, with specific proposals for the town's northern gateway, southern gateway and Pavements shopping centre.
- Deliver the Revitalising the Heart of Chesterfield Project, providing high quality public realm, new events spaces and a rejuvenated outdoor market in Chesterfield town centre.
- Support the regeneration of Staveley town centre through the delivery of the Staveley 21 town centre project.

4. Develop Chesterfield's role as a visitor destination and as a base for exploring the surrounding area.

- Complete the refurbishment of Stephenson Memorial Hall to significantly enhance Chesterfield's cultural and heritage offer.
- Deliver a programme of speciality markets, events and festivals to attract more visitors to Chesterfield.
- Work with partners to support the further development of the borough's visitor offer including PEAK Resort, an enhanced Crooked Spire experience and the reopening of Chesterfield Canal.

5. Ensure local people have the right skills to support progression in the labour market and benefit from future employment opportunities.

- Establish a Skills and Employment Partnership to ensure skills provision evolves in line with future job requirements.
- Facilitate local business access to workforce training programmes including the provision of green and digital skills courses.
- Establish the Construction Skills Hub in Staveley to deliver construction related training and employment for local people.

4.14 The strategy includes a number of headline targets which it is seeking to achieve by 2030. These include:

- Increasing the number of employee jobs by 4% (2,000 jobs).
- Increasing the number of businesses by 12% (400 businesses).
- Increasing the number of higher value businesses by 15% (100 businesses).
- Reduce the town centre vacancy rate to below 10% (currently 13.2%).
- Maintain the 16-64 claimant count unemployment rate below the national average (currently 3.2% compared to 3.6% nationally).

5.0 Alternative options

5.1 The alternative option is for the Council not to prepare and adopt a Growth Strategy. This option is not considered appropriate as the preparation of the Growth Strategy increases the credibility of the Council with a wider audience of public and private stakeholders, policy makers and funding providers, demonstrating clear place leadership on behalf of local communities. The Growth Strategy shows that the Council has a good understanding of the issues impacting on the economy and delivers its services / makes interventions in response to addressing clearly identified needs or by maximising the benefits of economic opportunities.

6.0 Implications for Consideration - Financial and value for money

6.1 The Growth Strategy provides the overall strategic framework for activities by the Council to support the growth and regeneration of the borough. As such, the preparation of the Growth Strategy has no direct financial implications for the Council, although new activities brought forward under the framework in the 2023-27 period may require resourcing in future.

7.0 Implications for consideration – Legal

7.1 No legal considerations have been identified.

8.0 Implications for consideration – Human resources

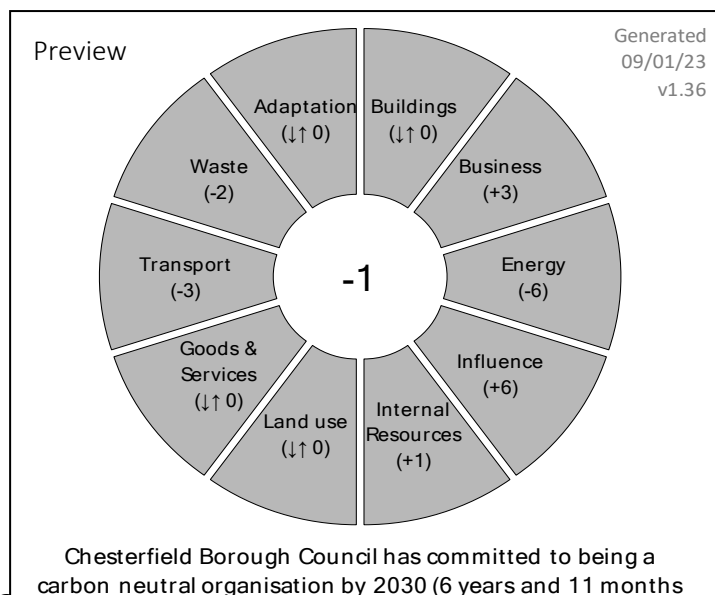
8.1 No human resources considerations have been identified, although new activities brought forward under the framework in the 2023-27 period may have resource implications in future.

9.0 Implications for consideration – Council Plan

9.1 The Growth Strategy aligns with the Council Plan (2023-27) which prioritises making Chesterfield a thriving borough, improving the quality of life for local people and building a more resilient council. The Growth Strategy provides the strategic framework for the activities delivered by the Council that will make Chesterfield a thriving borough (as set out under the five strategic objectives identified in paragraph 4.13 of this report). Activities in the Growth Strategy will contribute to improving the quality of life for local people by, for example, facilitating housing delivery, investing in the quality of public places and addressing economic inequality between people and places.

10.0 Implications for consideration – Climate Change

10.1 A Climate Change Impact Assessment has been completed and is summarised below (also attached as Appendix 3).



10.2 The Growth Strategy has been assessed as having an overall climate change impact score of -1. This score reflects the fact that the strategy is actively pursuing economic growth (for example seeking to increase both the number of businesses and jobs located in the borough) and this growth will have climate change impacts in terms of increased energy usage, vehicle journeys and waste generated.

- 10.3 The strategy seeks to mitigate these impacts by striking a better balance between the need to make Chesterfield a thriving borough and the need to deliver a more sustainable approach to growth. As a starting point 'environmentally sustainable growth' has been identified as one of three overarching principles in the Growth Strategy and this will inform the delivery of all activities set out under the five strategic objectives.
- 10.4 The strategy also identifies a range of specific measures that the Council will take including: the provision of a business carbon reduction programme; the provision of a green skills workforce training programme; delivering new building development to high energy efficiency standards; and working with Destination Chesterfield and other business networks to promote sustainability best practice to local businesses.

11.0 Implications for consideration – Equality and diversity

- 11.1 A preliminary Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and this is attached as Appendix 4. It is considered that the Growth Strategy will not have a negative impact on any of the characteristics and should have a positive impact particularly in relation to 'age' and 'disability and long-term conditions' with its focus on addressing youth unemployment and supporting increased participation in the labour market.

12.0 Implications for consideration – Risk management

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood
There is a risk that the Council's approach to supporting growth will lack focus and co-ordination in the absence of the Growth Strategy	M/L	M/L	The Growth Strategy is evidence based and provides a coherent framework for the delivery of programmes and initiatives	L	L
There is a risk of duplication and/or less effective service delivery between partner organisations in the absence of the Growth Strategy	M/L	M/L	The Growth Strategy clearly sets out the leadership role of the Council in supporting the regeneration and growth of the borough	L	L
The ability of the Council to make the case for regeneration funding is diminished	M	M/L	The Growth Strategy demonstrates a clear and up to date understanding of	L	L

in the absence of the Growth Strategy			the issues impacting Chesterfield's economy and sets out a strategic response to those issues		

Decision information

Key decision number	1157
Wards affected	All

Document information

Report author	
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Background documents	
These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared.	
<i>This must be made available to the public for up to 4 years.</i>	
Appendices to the report	
Appendix 1	Chesterfield Growth Strategy 2023-27
Appendix 2	Chesterfield Economic Assessment 2022
Appendix 3	Climate Change Impact Assessment
Appendix 4	Equalities Impact Assessment