

ITEM No ...11.....

REPORT TO: FAIR WORK, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE – 21 APRIL 2025

REPORT ON: ECONOMIC VISION AND ACTION PLAN

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

REPORT NO: 115-2025

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of engagement with Dundee's business community, and highlights the process to prepare a Vision & Action Plan for the city in conjunction with the private sector through the Dundee Business & Economic Forum

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- a approves the proposed approach to develop an economic vision and action plan in conjunction with the private sector; and
 - b notes that the final draft plan will be brought to a future Fair Work, Economic Growth and Infrastructure committee

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no additional financial implications associated with approval of this plan. Where specific actions require development of projects with financial implications which fall outside delegated limits, these will be brought to the relevant committee for approval.

4 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The City Plan for Dundee 2022-2032 sets out a vision that Dundee will have "a strong, creative, smart and sustainable city economy with jobs and opportunities for all". The Tay Cities Region: Prospectus for Regional Growth 2025 – 2035, envisages Dundee being part of a region that "will become one of the most exciting, dynamic and desirable areas of Europe to live, work, invest and visit", a "cleaner and greener region" and one where "disadvantage, poverty and inequality are tackled through provision of and access to economic opportunity".
- 4.2 Responsibility for the City Plan's delivery of economic development (including Community Wealth Building) sits with the Dundee Partnership Inclusive Economic Growth Strategic Leadership Group, which is providing input to the emerging policy document.
- 4.3 A key action in the City Plan for Dundee 2022–2032 was to establish a Dundee Economic Advisory Group (Dundee Business & Economic Council) that would provide a forum for regular engagement between local business and political leaders. An initial meeting at V&A Dundee in 2023 was attended by around 120 business representatives, and a subsequent focused discussion meeting took place with the Dundee Business & Economic Forum and this has shaped the initial development of the themes and priorities.
- 4.4 The following Vision and Goals and Key Focus Areas will be explored in a plan which is provisionally titled "Dundee Growth Story":

a Vision and Goals

- Strong, creative, smart, and sustainable city economy
- Jobs and opportunities for all
- A dynamic and desirable region for living, working, investing, and visiting
- A cleaner and greener region
- Tackling disadvantage, poverty, and inequality through economic access

b Key Focus Areas

- Economic growth & innovation
- Sustainable development & green initiatives
- Social inclusion & reducing inequality
- Regional collaboration & investment

- 4.5 The relatively poor performance of the Dundee economy in recent years provides additional impetus for development of a plan to underpin the broad priorities set out in the City Plan and Regional Prospectus. "Dundee Growth Story" will set out a key set of economic performance indicators that demonstrate the need for action:
- a Dundee has the 5th lowest employment rate for working age people of Scotland's 32 local authority areas
 - b Dundee has the highest unemployment rate of Scotland's 32 local authority areas
 - c Dundee's share of private sector jobs lags the Scottish and GB averages and is considerably lower than comparative levels in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen
 - d The weekly pay of full-time residents in Dundee is below the Scottish and GB averages and is considerably lower than comparative levels in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen
- 4.6 The plan will identify opportunities that the city can build upon to deliver economic growth including transitioning to a knowledge economy, culture and tourism, Dundee Waterfront, city centre investment and clean growth.
- 4.7 Challenges include stimulating population growth, tackling unemployment, job creation, improving earning levels and supporting businesses with the transition to net zero. The plan must help shape a cohesive response to the situation at one of the city's most important employers, the University of Dundee. The closure of Dovetail also highlights the need for a Sustainable Economic Growth theme within the plan.
- 4.8 The plan will also align with Scottish Government's Fair Work First flagship policy and include actions that seek to deliver fair work for the city's people and contribute to addressing inequality. This will include a renewed commitment to encouraging employers in the city to pay the real living wage.
- 4.9 The plan will also outline a commitment to delivering positive destinations for young people in the city through delivery of the Step Change for Young Dundonians Action Plan. This will build upon progress to date which has included the establishment of core implementation groups in each secondary school to identify young people who are not known to be participating in education, employment, or training. The latest participation measure report for Scottish council areas evidenced that Dundee has exhibited the greatest level of improvement on this key metric.
- 4.10 Seven key themes with associated actions will be explored in the document to help address the challenges and build upon the opportunities. These are:

- a Promoting the city
 - b Growing the population and talent base
 - c Building the new Dundee
 - d Powering the entrepreneurial city
 - e Expanding the knowledge economy
 - f Community Wealth Building
 - g Sustainable economic growth and diversification
- 4.11 The actions set out under each theme will provide initial delivery priorities. Council officers will continue to engage with public sector partners and the private sector to inform further thematic priorities and opportunities for action that support the overall vision of the plan.
- 4.12 Dundee City Council and Dundee and Angus Chamber of Commerce are collaborating to deliver a Dundee Economic Summit at Apex Hotel on 18th June 2025. This aims to bring together an influential audience of business leaders, policymakers, and key stakeholders committed to driving economic growth and innovation across Dundee and the surrounding region. The Council Leader has been invited to speak at this meeting, and it is hoped to introduce and consider the draft plan, to allow its completion.
- 4.13 This conference will include an opportunity for group discussions on three of the key themes set out in the Dundee Growth Story. Building the new Dundee; powering the entrepreneurial city and promoting the city. This is part of an ongoing commitment to include both public and private sector partners in the conversation around delivering economic transformation for the city. A separate discussion with the Business & Economic Forum will also be progressed.

5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate Senior Manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

6 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 The Council Leadership Team, Dundee Partnership Management Group, Dundee Partnership Inclusive Economic Growth Strategic Leadership Group and Dundee Business & Economic Forum were consulted in the preparation of this report, and further engagement will take place prior to the finalisation of the document.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.

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