

ACQUISITION AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor John Fisher
Portfolio Holder Consulted	
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	None specific
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Attached at Appendix 1 is an Acquisition and Investment Strategy. Supporting business is incredibly important for Redditch and through the North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration the Council will continue to support new and established businesses to grow
- 1.2 The Acquisition and Investment Strategy seeks to combine the priorities for economic development with the need for financial stability and income generation. The Strategy will provide a resource to promote economic development and a framework to ensure the resources are allocated prudently based on criteria identified in table 1 of the strategy and commercially based on the rates of return identified in table 2.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **The Executive is asked to RECOMMEND to Full Council that:**
- 2.1.1 **the Acquisition and Investment Strategy be approved;**
- 2.1.2 **the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources be responsible for identifying suitable opportunities and developing the viability appraisal and business case for the Council; and**
- 2.1.3 **the Executive have delegated powers to approve business cases and complete acquisitions.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Acquisitions and Investment Strategy seeks to combine the economic development and commercial approach to generating income to enhance

business growth in the Borough. This is a key priority to the Council in the support of the Strategic Purpose “Help me run a successful business”. By ensuring the Council has the ability to be proactive in its investments for businesses it will provide greater opportunities to businesses in the future. The approach is similar to that of other authorities that are active in this area and will also provide an income stream to support other council activities.

- 3.2 There is a restriction in the Strategy to limit the investment portfolio to business cases within the Borough or in locations within Districts that are contiguous to the Borough. Some local authorities have widened this to the Local Enterprise Partnership area and there may be merit in considering this in the future if there is evidence that the Council is missing opportunities.
- 3.3 The Strategy also provides criteria to ensure the Council takes a prudent approach to investment and provides limits based on risk on the amount that can be invested in different categories of investment (see table 1 of the Strategy).
- 3.4 In terms of rate of return the Strategy priorities economic development investment and investments with lower risk through a minimum net rate of return (after borrowing and other costs) of 1.25%. Other projects which would need to have a strong business case would require at least a 2% net rate of return. Table 2 of the Strategy illustrates the calculation behind these rates of return and shows a potential return of £250k (1.25% net rate of return) to £400k (2% net rate of return) based on a £20m Investment Portfolio Fund. The likelihood is that there will be a mix of business cases and some will exceed the minimum requirement.

Legal Implications

- 3.5 This report fulfils the Council’s legal obligation under the *Local Government Act 2003* to have regard to both the CIPFA Code and the CLG Guidance.
- 3.6 The use of the General Power of Competence for commercial purpose requires a business case to be developed and approved by the Council. This business case must be a comprehensive statement covering (at least):
 - Business objectives;
 - Investment and other resources required to achieve the objectives;

EXECUTIVE

16th January 2018

- Any risks the business might face and how significant these risks are; and
- The expected financial results and other relevant outcomes the business is expected to achieve.

Service/Operational Issues

- 3.7 The Acquisition and Investment Strategy will complement the priority for business growth in Redditch as well as seek income generation to help balance the Council budget.

Customer/ Equalities and Diversity

- 3.8 None as a direct result of this report.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The Strategy includes a section on the key risks and mitigations. The main risks being:-
- Recession
 - Abortive Costs
 - Interest Rate
 - Knowledge of the market
 - Operational
 - Capacity
 - Change of Government Policy

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