

# North Lanarkshire Council Report

## Enterprise and Growth Committee

approval  noting

Ref PH/DG

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## Economic Regeneration Delivery Plan Update

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### Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to update committee on the progress being made on the implementation and delivery of North Lanarkshire's Economic Regeneration Delivery Plan (ERDP) and associated action plan.

North Lanarkshire's 2019-2023 ERDP, approved by the Enterprise & Growth Committee in August 2019, sets out the council's plans for inclusive economic growth. Overall, the ERDP has four core objectives:

- Supporting the delivery of homes which North Lanarkshire needs to grow;
- Reshaping and repopulating our town centres;
- Enabling our people and businesses to thrive; and
- Connecting North Lanarkshire

These objectives are supported by a range of programmes which the council are delivering through, for example, NL Homes, the Tower Strategy, NL Employability Review, Digital NL and City Deal. However, as highlighted above, the ERDP also aims to:

- promote the regeneration of our town centres to create vibrant mixed use hubs; and
- support and enable investment that will help our economy grow through improvements to North Lanarkshire's business infrastructure.

To help achieve this first aim, draft visions have been produced for all of North Lanarkshire's town centres. These draft visions were approved by Policy & Strategy Committee on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020 as part of an integrated programme of investment which, together with town centres, outlined the council's ambitions for town and community hubs, country parks, and local transport and active travel networks. It is intended that stakeholder, business and community engagement on the town visions will take place over summer and autumn 2020 (initially on-line due to social distancing restrictions) with finalised visions anticipated to be reported to committee for approval in Cycle 3, 2020.

Whilst these town visions will provide a long-term strategy for helping to re-shape our towns, a number of key town centre projects have already been identified which have started to be taken forward via both the council's Ambition Programme as well as the

Scottish Government's Town Centre Fund. This work has ranged from initial design and feasibility works to the acquisition of key vacant and derelict buildings to allow strategic town centre regeneration projects to proceed.

In addition to the progress being made towards reshaping North Lanarkshire's town centres, works are also ongoing to support the renewal of North Lanarkshire's business and industrial offer. This includes work to develop a more strategic overview of how council investment in business infrastructure is made as well as actual physical works being taken forward to meet the needs and demands of local SMEs and those of companies looking to relocate here.

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## Recommendations

It is recommended that the committee:

- 1) Note the content of this report and breadth of regeneration activity currently being delivered/developed;
  - 2) Note the update on the town visions for North Lanarkshire as part of an integrated Ambition programme of investment; and
  - 3) Note works being undertaken to develop and improve North Lanarkshire's industrial and business offer.
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## The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	Improve economic opportunities and outcomes
Ambition statement	(1) Ensure a housing mix that supports social inclusion and economic growth (2) Refocus our town centres and communities to be multi-functional connected places which maximise social, economic and environmental opportunities (3) Maximise the use of our marketable land and assets through improved development in business and industrial infrastructure (4) Market and promote North Lanarkshire as the place to live, learn, work, invest and visit (5) Grow and improve the sustainability and diversity of North Lanarkshire's economy

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## 1. Background

1.1 In August 2019, the council's Enterprise & Growth Committee approved the Economic Regeneration Delivery Plan (ERDP) which aims to co-ordinate the physical and economic regeneration of North Lanarkshire, increase economic output and help address social and economic inequality. The key aims of the ERDP are to plan activity which will:

- Increase housing supply across all tenures to meet our current and future housing requirements and support our wider regeneration objectives.
- Support the regeneration of our town centres through the development of long term town visions and strategic projects.
- Enable and promote the provision of good quality industrial and office space in the right locations to help attract and retain businesses and improve our economic output.
- Develop our strategic infrastructure to support the physical and economic regeneration of North Lanarkshire primarily through our City Deal programme.

1.2 Committee also approved an action plan to support the delivery of the ERDP through a range of key measures which are closely integrated with a number of complimentary council programmes such as NL Homes, the Tower Strategy, NL Employability Review, Digital NL and City Deal as well as the emerging 'Town and Community Hubs', 'Country Parks' and 'Connecting North Lanarkshire' investment plans (all of which are subject to separate committee reporting).

1.3 This report provides an update on works which have been undertaken towards the delivery of the key ERDP measures focused on:

- regenerating and reshaping our town centres; and
- supporting and enabling investment in our business infrastructure.

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## 2. Report

### 2.1 Town Centre Regeneration

2.1.1 The regeneration of North Lanarkshire's town centres and their redevelopment as modern high quality spaces that meet the changing needs and aspirations of current and future communities is one of the key objectives of North Lanarkshire's ERDP. As previously reported to Committee, town centre regeneration needs a new model. Promoting the Scottish Government's 'Town Centre First Principle', niche retailing and developing evening economy and leisure opportunity to address the changing nature of town centres is not enough. A new model needs to be developed that provides a broader foundation for town centres that more actively promote renewal and investment and create 'living towns' which have a much stronger focus on new build housing and residential conversion that will address the decline of the built environment and create more viable town centres.

- 2.1.2 To support this aim, visions have been produced for North Lanarkshire's eight town centres to identify how these can be reshaped to best meet the needs of local communities both now and in the future. These draft visions were approved by Policy & Strategy Committee on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020 as part of an integrated programme of investment which, together with town centres, outlined the council's ambitions for town and community hubs, country parks, and local transport and active travel networks.
- 2.1.3 The visions have been designed as consultative drafts that have used socio-economic and demographic trends and models to show how town centres could be developed to meet the future needs of local communities over the next 15-20 years. They recognise that the current climate of reducing retail, changing shopping patterns, growth of the digital economy, and increase in the number of households will continue to accelerate the decline of traditional town centres. It is envisaged that the impact of these changes will be significant and, as the role of town centres will have to adapt to reflect changing demands and desires, they also recognise the need for transformative change for our town centres to survive.
- 2.1.4 Further to committee approval in March, these draft visions will now be used to engage with key stakeholders and communities to get their thoughts, views and 'buy-in' to these plans and help shape finalised visions for the town centres which will be reported to a future committee.
- 2.1.5 While the town visions are essential for providing a long-term strategy to reshape North Lanarkshire's towns and support the transformative change needed to address their decline, the council recognises there is also a need for immediate investment therein.
- 2.1.6 As such, through the ERDP action plan, investment is already being made to accelerate the transformation of town centres. This includes:
- investment being made in the planned construction of 212 town centre/edge of town affordable homes over the next two years at a cost of circa. £35.7m;
  - £3.6m investment in the acquisition of vacant and derelict properties across town centres to support residential conversion of these sites and the future construction of a further 143 new build homes;
  - proposals to provide £0.6m in additional grant funding to allow budget gaps in key town centre vacant/derelict property projects to be addressed by housing associations;
  - £2m used to support new town centre infrastructure works (including car park improvements);
  - planned investment of £2m towards structural and external fabric works to improve the quality of a number of council and North Lanarkshire Properties owned town centre buildings; and
  - works to start to support better pedestrian and cycle links between local communities and our town centres.
- 2.1.7 Examples of these projects include:
- land assembly works on Main Street, Coatbridge and on Caledonian Road, Wishaw to support significant residential development at the heart of these town centres;

- the acquisition, restoration and conversion of key derelict buildings within our town centres, such as the YMCA in Motherwell, in order to sustain and improve quality of place;
- working in partnership with the private sector to support the replacement of 'eyesore' buildings within our towns such as the former Orrs department store in Airdrie; and
- grant funding which has been provided to enable difficult town centre projects, such as the residential conversion of Bromknoll Church in Airdrie, to proceed.

2.1.8 It should also be noted that the council is currently undertaking a number of other feasibility and design studies which will be used to develop a pipeline of future town centre regeneration activity as part of the implementation of the town visions.

## 2.2 Business and Industry

2.2.1 The continued improvement of the business and industrial infrastructure offer across North Lanarkshire and the development of employment opportunity underpins the council's aims for inclusive growth.

2.2.2 In support of this aim, the ERDP identifies a number of actions which the council is leading on. These include:

- the establishment of a partnership working group (involving the council's enterprise and investment teams as well as Scottish Enterprise, Business Gateway, Skills Development Scotland, the Federation of Small Business, North Lanarkshire Properties and Fusion Assets) in order to create an overarching partnership to help develop North Lanarkshire's investment offer and ensure effective linkage between employability and growth; and
- the development of a short-to-medium term business investment strategy for North Lanarkshire aimed at identifying how the council not only promotes inward investment across key sectors but also how they develop the business infrastructure required to grow our existing SMEs and promote entrepreneurship and business start-up.

2.2.3 In addition to the work being undertaken to develop a more strategic overview for how public sector investment for business infrastructure is informed across North Lanarkshire, investment in improving this offer is also ongoing in line with key targets and milestones identified within the ERDP Action Plan. This includes:

- £1.4M investment being made through North Lanarkshire's 2019/20 Vacant & Derelict Land Fund (VDLF) programme to support Fusion Assets (North Lanarkshire's arm's length property development company) to acquire a bio-tech expansion site at Chapelhall and undertake further site remediation and enabling works at Link Park (Newhouse Industrial Estate) as part of a new inward investment opportunity;
- £2.4M investment being made (including £1.74M through the Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund [RCGF] programme) towards the construction of small, modern industrial start-up units at

Orbiston Street Industrial Estate in Motherwell (with the contractor now appointed for these works); and

- design and feasibility works for the renewal and improvement of existing but low quality industrial provision at Braidhurst Industrial Estate (Motherwell) and Newhouse industrial Estate (with the first phase of works at Braidhurst Industrial Estate already in progress).

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### **3. Equality and Diversity**

#### **3.1 Fairer Scotland Duty**

Promoting inclusive growth sits at the heart of the council's Ambition Programme. North Lanarkshire Council aims to achieve this goal through the delivery of ERDP activity that supports the council to meet its Fairer Scotland Duty and address socio-economic disadvantage by:

- helping to grow the local economy which will in-turn increase North Lanarkshire's tax base and thereby investment which can be made across local public services;
- promoting and enabling investment that will create and improve access to new and better employment opportunity;
- ensuring effective linkage between economic opportunity, skills and work-force development; and
- creating infrastructure that will allow all of North Lanarkshire's communities to have access to leisure, learning and employment opportunity.

#### **3.2 Equality Impact Assessment**

An overarching Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken as part of the development of North Lanarkshire's ERDP, ensuring that any potential adverse equalities impacts as a result of the policy and/or plans developed through this strategy are minimised or negated where possible. The EIA has also highlighted the numerous potential positive equalities impacts that the delivery of the ERDP has for North Lanarkshire's residents.

A specific EIA will also be prepared for each individual project to be taken forward through the ERDP as part of the Council's approved project management process.

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### **4. Implications**

#### **4.1 Financial Impact**

In order to progress town centre and business and industry works to be delivered through the ERDP, the council has set aside resources from its General Services Capital Programme. In addition, in April 2019, the council was awarded £3.25M through the Scottish Government's Town Centre Fund Programme for town centre improvements; a further £2.886M through their 19/20 VDLF Programme (with £1.4M of this approved for investment for business and industry); £1.956m through the 20/21 VDLF Programme subject to the approval of the council's VDLF Local Delivery Plan, and £1.74M from their 19/20 RCGF Programme.

To ensure the most effective and appropriate use of funding, the council will:

- work across services and partnerships to continue to maximise external, partnership and private sector funding for projects and in turn the impact which can be achieved from council funding available; and
- continue to monitor and approve spend of the capital programme and external funding through the ERDP Board and Strategic Capital Delivery Group to ensure that this remains closely aligned with the council's ambitions for economic and inclusive growth.

#### **4.2 HR/Policy/Legislative Impact**

This report has no HR, Policy or Legislative impact.

#### **4.3 Environmental Impact**

The environmental impact of any projects progressed as part of the ERDP has/will be assessed as part of the business case process.

#### **4.4 Risk Impact**

A risk assessment has/will be carried out for each project as part of the council's project management process. Moreover, a full risk register is being established for the ERDP to support the effective implementation of this strategy.

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### **5. Measures of success**

The measures of success and performance indicators will be a critical part of the delivery of the ERDP in order to measure progress in the delivery of the key priorities, namely:

- to increase economic output/GVA;
- to increase business start-ups and survivability;
- to increase business growth and employment;
- to create viable and sustainable town centres;
- to increase delivery of new housing supply across tenures, particularly on brownfield sites, to meet housing requirements and
- to improve economic outcomes for local people and in particular those who are most disadvantaged.

Targets for outcomes and outputs were incorporated as part of the finalised ERDP Action Plan approved by committee in August 2019.

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### **6. Supporting documents**

None

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**Pamela Humphries**  
**Head of Planning and Regeneration**