

Committee:	Scrutiny	Date:	Monday 21 st March 2022
Title:	Economic Recovery Delivery Plan Year 1		
Portfolio Holder:	Portfolio Holder for the Economy, Investment and Corporate Strategy		
Report Author:	Linda Howells, Economic Development Officer lhowells@uttlesford.gov.uk Angela Knight, Assistant Director - Resources aknight@uttlesford.gov.uk	Key decision:	N

Summary

1. The Council have previously approved the 3 year Uttlesford Economic Recovery Plan and the 1st year's Delivery Plan for 2021/22.
2. The Delivery Plan for 2021/2022 identified five priority areas of work, each contained objectives. Appendix 1 contains the details of the priorities and the objectives.
3. The previous report to Scrutiny on 18/11/2021 outlined the factors that had impacted performance in 2021/2022 and the continuing focus on the delivery of business support grants to local businesses that had been the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Omicron variant surge in December 2021 sharpened that focus.
4. The amount of business support grants are detailed in the body of this report, as are some of the other business support initiatives that have been delivered during 2021/2022.

Recommendations

5. To note progress of the Economic Recovery Plan in 2021/22

Financial Implications

6. None

Background Papers

7. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

Uttlesford Economic Recovery Plan
Uttlesford Economic Recovery Delivery Plan 2021/22

Impact

8.

Communication/Consultation	None
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

9. The Council have previously approved the 3 year Uttlesford Economic Recovery Plan and the 1st year's Delivery Plan for 2021/22.
10. The Council have also approved a £1 million Business Recovery Fund to be spent in the period 2021 to 2024 on activities outlined in the Economic Recovery Plan.
11. The Delivery Plan for 2021/2022 identified five priority areas of work, each contained objectives. Appendix 1 contains the details of the priorities and the objectives.
12. The previous report to Scrutiny on 18/11/2021 outlined the factors that had impacted performance in 2021/2022 and the continuing focus on the delivery of business support grants to local businesses that had been the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Omicron variant surge in December 2021 sharpened that focus.
13. The Essex County Council funded Essex Business Adaptation Fund (EBAF) was delivered by the Economic Development Team. In 2020/21 £176k was paid out in grants to 133 businesses, while in 2021/22 £1.4 million was paid out to local businesses. In total 638 grants, totalling £1.6 million were paid to 408 local businesses from the EBAF scheme.
14. In 2020/21 the Economic Development Team supported the Business Rates Team who were administering numerous Government funded business support grants. In total the Business Rates Team administered in excess of £35 million in business support grants, in addition to several extended

business rate relief schemes. The Economic Development Team promoted the grant information and dealt with queries from local businesses.

15. On 1/4/2021 the Economic Development Team took over the administration of the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) while the Business Rates Team continued to administer all the remaining schemes.
16. In total the Council have received £4 million in ARG funding from the Government. The Business Rates Team had paid out £1.1 million pre-April 2021. £182k was spent on business support initiatives in partnership working across north Essex. The remaining balance of £3.8 million has been paid out to a wide range of businesses, some have continued to be severely affected, particularly the travel, tourism, and aviation sectors, while others were badly affected by the Omicron variant in December 2021 and January 2022 but were ineligible for the Government funded Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant. Recently grants have also been paid out to enable businesses to purchase e-cargo bikes and to support the hard-hit tourism sector to upgrade or develop their digital platforms to be able to compete in the “new normal”.
17. The Business Rates Team have paid out more than £550k from the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant since early December 2021.
18. Essex County Council provided £222k as Additional Business Support grant which was administered as ARG by the Economic Development Team and paid out to local businesses in June and July 2021.
19. The pressure to deliver the business support grants has resulted in other activities being delayed and alongside other factors the spend profile has been impacted. The spend profile for 2021/22 is included as Appendix 2.
20. The Economic Development Team have also administered the delivery of the Welcome Back Fund with £162k of European Regional Development Fund monies being spent on initiatives to encourage people back into the town and village centres of Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, Stansted Mountfitchet and Thaxted.
21. In addition to the grants administration the team have continued to focus support on those sectors who have been the hardest hit, including the tourism sector, and in March 2022 launched a new website www.discoveruttlesford.co.uk. A new mobile app DSCVR Uttlesford will be launched by the end of March 2022 and will feature Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, Stansted Mountfitchet and Thaxted before being rolled out across the district. This is intended to increase footfall in the town and village centres and will sit alongside the website to encourage residents and visitors to enjoy a day out or short break in the district.
22. Some activities that we expected to deliver in 2021/2022 will now be delivered in early 2022/23 including HGV training for local unemployed people. Unemployment has dropped considerably since its highs in May 2020 but there are still an additional 500 people who are unemployed and claiming benefits than there were in February 2020.

23. Other activities launched during the pandemic are still benefitting local businesses but now at no cost to the Council. www.clickitlocal.co.uk is now self-sustaining and the number of Uttlesford businesses continue to increase.
24. The Council successfully hosted pre-recorded business start-up training webinars from The Rebel Business School as part of a national pilot. This initiative expires on 31/3/2022 and further work will be considered later in 2022 after the business start-up project funded by the North Essex Economic Board expires on 30/11/2022.
25. The last two years have been challenging for every business, in so many ways. Even those businesses who were able to stay open most of the time have had to face supply chain difficulties and many businesses are facing recruitment issues. The Economic Development Team have experimented to reach as many different businesses as possible, and to provide support to them. We have learned a lot; some activities have been successful and some have not. We will continue to listen, to develop and adapt our services to effectively meet the needs of local businesses.
26. The Delivery Plan for 2022/23 is in development, with a similar structure to Year 1 but a different focus as businesses transition from survival to recovery, building resilience in their business models and growth.

Risk Analysis

27.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
[Click here - see below]	[Click here]	[Click here]	[Click here]

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Appendix 1

Priority 1 – Business Engagement and Support

- Objective 1.1 – Support businesses already located in Uttlesford district
- Objective 1.2 – Support businesses in sectors hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Objective 1.3 – Foster the development of existing town centres as vibrant locations for business and leisure
- Objective 1.4 – Support business start-ups and pre-starts
- Objective 1.5 – Work with partners to ensure the residents and businesses across the district benefit from the delivery of superfast broadband

Priority 2 – Information, Advice and Guidance

- Objective 2.1 – Promotion of national, regional, county and local initiatives
- Objective 2.2 – Provision of information, advice and guidance to local businesses, start-ups and potential businesses

Priority 3 – Skills and Training

- Objective 3.1 – Provision and promotion of initiatives to support local residents into work
- Objective 3.2 – Promote and support initiatives to help young people into work
- Objective 3.3 – Promotion of skills and training initiatives, including digital skills

Priority 4 – Creating Jobs / Inward Investment

- Objective 4.1 – Support the sustainable growth of existing businesses
- Objective 4.2 – Increase inward investment

Priority 5 – creating a “greener” local economy

- Objective 5.1 – Support local businesses to address Climate Change issues
- Objective 5.2 – Support the growth of businesses to maximise the opportunities of the green economy
- Objective 5.3 – research and develop plans to grow the green economy in Uttlesford

Appendix 2

Spend Profile by Priority and Objective		
Priority / Objective	Original Proposed spend	Spend profile at 31/3/2022
Priority 1 – Business Engagement and Support		
1.1 Support businesses already located in Uttlesford district	£51,050	£23,250
1.2 Support businesses in sectors hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic	£35,000	£17,200
1.3 Foster the development of existing town centres as vibrant locations for business and leisure	£67,520	£47,250
1.4 Support business start-ups and pre-starts	£10,000	£zero
1.5 Work with partners to ensure the residents and businesses across the district benefit from the delivery of superfast broadband	£20,000	£10,000
PRIORITY 1 TOTAL	£183,570	£97,700
Priority 2 – Information, Advice and Guidance		
2.1 Promotion of national, regional, county and local initiatives	£21,450	£6,950
2.2 Provision of information, advice and guidance to local businesses, start-ups and potential businesses	£ zero	£zero
PRIORITY 2 TOTAL	£21,450	£6,950
Priority 3 – Skills and Training		
3.1 Provision and promotion of initiatives to support local residents into work	£32,000	£zero
3.2 Promote and support initiatives to help young people into work	£8,750	£zero
3.3 Promotion of skills and training initiatives, including digital skills	£5,000	£zero
PRIORITY 3 TOTAL	£45,750	£zero
Priority 4 – Creating Jobs / Inward investment		
4.1 Support the sustainable growth of existing businesses	£60,000	£zero
4.2 Increase inward investment	£25,000	£25,000
PRIORITY 4 TOTAL	£85,000	£25,000
Priority 5 - Creating a “greener” local economy		
5.1 Support local businesses to address Climate Change issues	£ zero	£zero
5.2 Support the growth of businesses to maximise the	£ zero	£zero

opportunities of the green economy		
5.3 Research and develop plans to grow the green economy in Uttlesford	£8,000	£zero
PRIORITY 5 TOTAL	£8,000	£zero
Costs of management of Delivery Plan	£4,000	£700
OVERALL TOTAL	£347,770	£130,350