Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
At the centre of the Automotive Industry
Economic Development Strategy
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Executive Summary

Introduction

This section represents a summary of the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) and Action Plan for Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough. This Strategy is in place to support the work of the Borough’s businesses and organisations, which are driving the Borough forward. The EDS sets out priorities enabling support for long-term co-ordinated economic development, which will enable the Council to proactively support the work of partners, as well as influence those that the Council work with.

The EDS recognises that development of the local economy and achievement of better economic outcomes can best be realised through the mobilisation of the collective assets, activities and resources of a range of partner organisations working within the Borough and the wider Functional Economic Area (FEA), incorporating Coventry and the rest of Warwickshire, to best achieve the Borough’s needs.

Through the set of actions detailed in the Strategy under nine key objectives, the aim is to foster long term economic growth for the Borough, to capitalise on opportunities which are taking place, as well as those which will arise in the future. This will be achieved through effective collaborative working which will ensure that Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough contributes to, and benefits from, wider partnerships and cooperation. These will be tasked with enabling long term, sustainable growth through the provision of the most effective environment and infrastructure to benefit the residents and businesses of the Borough.

The EDS requires regular review and monitoring. Changes to the economy or local issues may trigger the need to review priorities. The Action Plan that accompanies this EDS is underpinned by measures that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable Realistic and Timed (SMART). This helps with the review of performance as well as the relevance of what is contained.
The Action Plan will be referenced and reported on through discussions with the Portfolio Holder. Any changes to actions will be reviewed and reported to the Cabinet Member in order to ensure flexibility and to receive agreement from the Cabinet Member. Where there is an identified change to an action this will be modified to ensure that the Action Plan remains fit for purpose.

The EDS timeframe runs up to 2031 in order to align with the Council’s emerging Borough Plan. The EDS will be reviewed every 5 years from the date of adoption, therefore, the first comprehensive review of the EDS will take place in 2021. However, if it is deemed necessary, the appraisal process may take place prior to (or outside) the 5 year review cycle.

**Background**

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough occupies a strong geographical location, situated within the County of Warwickshire, bordered by the City of Coventry, the Borough’s of Rugby and North Warwickshire and the County of Leicestershire within the West Midlands. Furthermore, the Borough is well located within the M42, M1 and M6 major motorways, which form the logistics “Golden Triangle”. Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough is located at the centre of the UK’s automotive industry, with key supply chain and manufacturing businesses situated within the Borough, and the FEA which encompasses Coventry and Warwickshire, presenting opportunities for both residents and businesses to flourish within the Borough.

The Structural Analysis provides a detailed analysis of the Nuneaton and Bedworth economy. This has been produced in keeping with guidance developed for the production of Local Economic Assessments.

The Borough indicates increasing levels of employment in the production sectors, specifically manufacturing, and in lower value services such as the Transportation and
Storage, and the Administrative and Support Service Sectors. However, growth, in the main, has not increased as it has in other districts within the Warwickshire County and FEA.

Additionally, although there have been some above average growth in jobs and business births, the Borough is still afflicted with a below average Job Density, which leads to a large amount of out-commuting from the Borough to other areas within the FEA, with Coventry receiving the highest proportion of commuters from Nuneaton and Bedworth.

**Engagement and Data**

The EDS has been created through correspondence with both strategic external stakeholders and businesses within the local area, particularly during the Action Planning stage of the Strategy.

By contacting an array of cross sector businesses within the Borough, both Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SME’s) as well as large companies, coupled with key stakeholders within the wider FEA area, their feedback has informed the project team, and created concepts to ensure that the Action Plan is targeted and precise in its objectives. Additionally, feedback from strategic partners has ensured that there have been a wide range of opinions to ensure that the Action Plan is targeted correctly. These partners have included:

- Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP)
- The Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub
- Warwickshire County Council
- The Coventry and Warwickshire Chambers of Commerce, and
- The Coventry and Warwickshire branch of the Federation of Small Businesses
Moreover, several other studies have also been taken into consideration, such as:

- Cross Border Economic Assessment undertaken by Amion
- Employment Land Review by GL Hearn
- Growth Zones and Regeneris study, both commissioned by Warwickshire County Council.

Furthermore, a study commissioned by the Planning Policy and Economic Development Team to establish sectoral growth in the area, and how Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council can support these sectors, was also studied and fed into the Action Plan.

**Recommendations and Actions**

The overarching purpose of the EDS and Action Plan is to articulate a strategy for enhancing sustainable economic growth and for building a resilient economy within Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough. It is important to note that the Council, in the main, does not create wealth or jobs directly, but establishes the right environment for businesses to grow and to flourish.

The following nine objectives are designed to deliver the vision of the EDS, to seek to address the issues that have been identified within the EDS, and have been determined to produce positive results on evidence based deficiencies within the economy

**Objective 1:** To support investment in the Borough and wider sub region by working with the landowners and agents that have employment land allocations in the Borough Plan to make sure the sites come forward.

**Objective 2:** To support existing employers within the Borough by recognising that the needs of medium and large businesses differ from those of small and micro sized enterprises.
Objective 3: To positively support the diversification of the local economy to assist with broadening the employment opportunities available to residents along with the employment structure of them.

Objective 4: To have a joined up corporate approach towards Economic Development where the needs of the business are prioritised.

Objective 5: To become more commercially aware and aid businesses through a more streamlined, multi-faceted approach to doing business, including enhanced marketing and networking.

Objective 6: To identify opportunities for growth or productivity improvements, and ensure suitable funding is sought when this becomes available.

Objective 7: Work effectively with partner organisations, taking a pragmatic approach to engagement, and adding value to initiatives that partners are leading.

Objective 8: To continue to review and understand the local economy and its relationship with the wider functional economic area and the national and wider than national economy.

Objective 9: To expand the visitor economy, taking advantage of the existing opportunities that exist in the area, and linking in with the wider sub-region.
Conclusions

The EDS offers a clear way forward for the Borough to project a proactive, adaptable facilitation of long term economic growth within the Borough. It is through this EDS that the initiatives created can provide opportunities which will occur within the future. Through interventions aimed at boosting skills and employment opportunities available to residents, this will aid the Inward Investment offer for the Borough, providing companies with an opportunity to invest in a dedicated, skilled future workforce.

There are partnerships and relationships which are strong within the FEA already, therefore there is a necessity from the Borough to allow these partnerships and opportunities to maintain momentum and grow. With an uncertain future and cuts to Government grants from Central Government to continue, there is a pressing issue for Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council to increase its income from retained business rates to address the deficit that will otherwise occur, whilst also enabling business growth within the Borough to become more sustainable. This in turn will provide opportunities to the local labour market, present more Business to Business (B2B) networks, and strengthen the economy towards a more prosperous Borough.

Without this proactive, deliverable EDS, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough will lose out to neighbouring competition, and will potentially miss out on future investment and revenue through companies locating elsewhere to the Borough. Residents will continue to face the same challenges to compete for high quality/skilled employment, and being forced to commute, or move to other neighbouring authorities to find the levels of housing and employment that they require.

Through collaboration with partners and stakeholders, alongside the review of the Action Plan which will set out the markers with which the Annual Monitoring Report
will record delivery, the Council can ensure that the EDS remains up to date and flexible, to exploit the opportunities over the course of the Strategy.
Overview

This EDS has been prepared in consultation with internal and external partners, and was produced 2015 – 2016. The EDS is designed to complement existing economic initiatives that exist within the area, but critically focuses on matters of significance for the Borough.

The EDS sets out priorities that will support long-term coordinated and collaborative economic development. This will enable the Council to proactively support the work of partners as well as influence those that we work with. Historically the organisation has had to react to economic development related opportunities. This is no longer sufficient, and the Council has recognised the need to act more proactively and invest more into this field. Consequently, by utilising the EDS, the Council can prioritise any investment they make, and by doing so will be adding value to the budget attributed to Economic Development.

The EDS requires regular review and monitoring. Changes to the economy or local issues may trigger the need to review priorities. The Action Plan that accompanies this EDS is underpinned by measures that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable Realistic and Timed (SMART). This helps with the review of performance as well as the relevance of what is contained.

The Action Plan will be referenced and reported on through discussions with the Portfolio Holder. Any changes to operational actions will be reviewed and reported to the Cabinet Member in order to ensure flexibility and to receive agreement from the Cabinet Member. Where there is an identified change to an action this will be modified to ensure that the Action Plan remains fit for purpose.
The EDS timeframe runs up to 2031 in order to align with the Council’s emerging Borough Plan. The EDS will be reviewed every 5 years from the date of adoption, therefore, the first comprehensive review of the EDS will take place in 2021. However, if it is deemed necessary, the appraisal process may take place prior to (or outside) the 5 year review cycle.
Methodology

The EDS has been developed using a project team approach whereby a Project Team have driven the bulk of the work with engagement with other partners (see Project Management framework). Figure 1 depicts the process the Project team took in developing the EDS.

![Figure 1](image)

The EDS was managed using PRINCE 2 methodology and the project management structure is set out in figure 2. The Project Team met every six weeks during the development of the EDS and will continue to meet periodically during the implementation of the EDS. The Steering Group met every eight weeks. Engagement with strategic external partners was undertaken on a more ad hoc basis, with the most significant engagement being undertaken at the Action Planning stage.
Project Management Framework

Project Board:
- Project Sponsor – (Director of Regeneration and Public Protection)
- Management Team

Steering Group:
- Portfolio Holder (Planning and Development)
- Project Sponsor (Director Regeneration and Public Protection)
- Borough Plan/ Economic Development Strategy Strategic Lead (Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development)
- Project Manager (Principal Planning Policy and Economic Development Officer)

Project Team
- Principal Planning Policy and Economic Development Officer – Chair
- Economic Development Assistant
- Economic Development Officer
- Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development
- Head of Building Control
- Head of Environmental Health
- Head of Development Management
- Head of Estates
- Financial Planning Manager
- Strategic Housing and Communities Manager/ Communities Manager
- Strategic Procurement and Creditors Manager
- Revenues Team Leader – Billing
- Warwickshire County Council Inward Investment Manager or Growth Coordinator (a service level agreement exists between Warwickshire County Council and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council in relation to Economic Development, consequently it is considered imperative that they form part of the project team)

Strategic External Partners
- Chamber of Commerce
- Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (inclusive of Growth Hub)
- Cross Border Partnership (Hinckley & Bosworth Council, North Warwickshire Council and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough)
- Economic Development Forum
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Infrastructure Planning and Delivery Group
- Coventry City Council

Figure 2: Project Management Structure for the EDS
In identifying the key issues for the EDS, a contextual and structural analysis was undertaken. Moreover, several other studies have also been taken into consideration such as the Cross Border Economic Assessment undertaken by Amion, the Employment Land Review by GL Hearn, and the Growth Zones and Regeneris study both commissioned by Warwickshire County Council. Furthermore a study commissioned by the Planning Policy and Economic Development Team to establish sectoral growth in the area and how Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council can support these sectors was also utilised and fed into the Action Plan.

In addition, to the technical components, additional issues were scoped out by engagement with partners and discussions by the project team. As an example, the technical analysis did not cover the opportunities associated with the visitor economy, this was picked up through the project team and established as an opportunity and included in the strategic objectives. To support this objective a Destination Assessment was commissioned, which was undertaken by The Tourism Company to provide information on the nature and performance of the visitor economy in the Borough and to set out opportunities to be taken further as part of the Action Plan.
**Nuneaton and Bedworth’s economy**

**Introduction**

A detailed structural and contextual analysis accompanies the EDS. The structural analysis in particular provides a detailed overview of the state of the local economy and its relationship with the wider FEA.

There are two sections that the structural analysis focuses on, first Business and Enterprise and secondly People and Community. Using indicators in line with Local Economic Assessment (LEA) guidance it discusses in detail the key structural factors facing Nuneaton and Bedworth and the spatial dimension of these factors, including their integration into broader economic geographies. It concludes by providing some areas for further analysis in understanding the functioning of the Nuneaton and Bedworth economy.

The structural analysis positions Nuneaton and Bedworth as an outlier, whilst positioned in the economic geographies of Warwickshire and the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership. Whilst part of the analysis takes a comparative approach using concepts of national, regional and the FEA to analyse the Nuneaton and Bedworth economy, the principal objective of the document is to identify the critical assets and aspects of the local economy which could be improved through interventions within the EDS Action Plan. The Action Plan has been developed to enhance outputs or to ameliorate specific conditions within the Nuneaton and Bedworth economy in order to strengthen the position of Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough in the local and regional economic geographies.
Methodology

The Structural Analysis is built upon the wealth of economic indicators and intelligence collated nationally by various government agencies, principally the Office for National Statistics (ONS), and through the interrogation of research conducted in Think-tank’s or research groups, principally themselves using data from national sources. In selecting intelligence sources, the analysis has been informed by government guidance on conducting structural analyses, measuring progress over a defined time period and against a set of established comparators.

The Structural Analysis has been designed with the aim of addressing four specific questions. Firstly, it provides a detailed picture of the current structure of the Nuneaton and Bedworth economy. Second, it offers intelligence on the structural change occurring within this economy over the past five years, the period 2009/10 to 2013/14. Third, it presents a comparative picture against broader economic geographies to understand local structure and change in a macro economic context. Finally, it uses this analysis to build an idea of issues and opportunities for the local economy and identify critical areas for intervention in addressing specific deficits.

In conducting the analysis the document has utilised secondary data collected and collated by an external source. This has been highly dependent on data produced by the ONS and the datasets they collect and update on an annual or more frequent basis, including the Business Register and Employment Survey and the Annual Population Survey. Additional data has been used for specific aspects of the analysis, notably the Centre for International Competitiveness and the Department for Communities and Local Government (Table 1).

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1 Local economic assessments: draft statutory guidance, CLG, August 2009
The analysis is partly a longitudinal documentation of changes to the Nuneaton and Bedworth economy. This has focused specifically on a five year time period, running from 2009/10 running up to 2013/14. This period has been selected for three specific reasons. Firstly, a structural analysis offering a current picture of the economy without any understanding of how this has evolved is of limited use in identifying areas in need of intervention. Second, this time period compensates for existing gaps between the last set of structural analyses published in relation to the Nuneaton and Bedworth economy, specifically the Coventry and Warwickshire Economic Assessment produced by Warwickshire County Council and Coventry City Council in March 2011 and the Oxford Economics Nuneaton and Bedworth Forecast Model commissioned by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council. Finally, this time period also fits relatively neatly into the post-recession recovery period and the new policy landscape of localism and sectoral and spatial rebalancing.
Table 1: Data sets and sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dataset</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Register and Employment Survey</td>
<td>Workplace-based Employment; Public-Private Employment; Growth Sectors; Knowledge Intensive Sectors</td>
<td>ONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Counts</td>
<td>Business Stock by Size; Business Stock by Sector</td>
<td>ONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Value Added</td>
<td>Productivity</td>
<td>ONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK Competitiveness Index</td>
<td>Competitiveness</td>
<td>Centre for International Competitiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Demography</td>
<td>Business Start-Ups</td>
<td>ONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Population Survey</td>
<td>Occupation Structure; Skills</td>
<td>ONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of usual residence and place of work, Census 2011</td>
<td>Travel-to-work Flows</td>
<td>ONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indices of Multiple Deprivation</td>
<td>Economic Inclusion</td>
<td>Department of Communities and Local Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claimant Count</td>
<td>Unemployment and Claimant Rates</td>
<td>ONS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional to the importance of a longitudinal approach is the use of comparators. Considering the importance placed on local context and market conditions through the rhetoric of the ‘localist’ agenda and the LEPs, a key part of the structural analysis is understanding the ways in which local economy is consistent with, or divergent from, structural conditions and economic trends occurring at broader geographical scales.

Comparators used in this analysis are the national, the regional and the FEA scales. The national scale, applied through the use of data for England rather than the UK or GB due to the downward effect of adding the Welsh and Northern Irish economies into the equation, is used as a benchmark on Nuneaton and Bedworth continuity with
macro economic trends. The regional scale, applied through the use of the West Midlands, provides a more specific comparator of a production economy through which the resilience or decline of manufacturing and its form may be measured. The FEA, consisting of the Coventry and Warwickshire areas, provides a direct comparison on the basis of immediate proximity and political association.

This analysis has been produced using a set of established and professionally collated datasets, collected using robust methodologies and as part of a continually scrutinised intelligence service. The validity of the data however should be treated with some caution. These datasets are collected on a national basis using a sampling approach, and as such a margin of error is to be expected. The critical issue in local area analysis is the extent to which the data can be considered robust through the use of such sampling approaches. The smaller the geographical area considered, the greater the likelihood there is of inconsistencies. Whilst this does not mean the intelligence provided in this document is incorrect, it should be treated as indicative data rather than absolute.
Business and Enterprise

Business and enterprise within Nuneaton and Bedworth has shown a positive trajectory during the past five years. As the national economy has continued to recover, this trend has been replicated within the Borough which has witnessed some favourable levels of growth in jobs, private sector employment, productivity, and business start-ups.

Trends and comparisons for the period 2009/10 to 2013/14 also indicate the difficulty in making a clear comparison between Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough as an economic entity and broader scales of economic governance. This is highlighted in the changing sectoral profile of employment and business stock. Against a continued move toward a knowledge-intensive, service-led economy, the profile in Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough indicates increasing levels of employment in the Production sectors, specifically Manufacturing, and in lower value services such as the Transportation and Storage and the Administrative and Support Service sectors. This may make some contribution toward the static competitiveness of Nuneaton and Bedworth and its recent fall in international competitiveness rankings as of 2013. Such a decline however shows signs of being a county-wide phenomenon.

The tendency of Nuneaton and Bedworth for growth away from the national, regional and FEA profile has not excluded the area from making some headway in the transition toward a knowledge-based economy. What has been estimated as a continued growth in GVA at the local level indicates increasing improvements in the value added capabilities of firms. Alongside this growth, there has been a proportionally strong employment increase in knowledge-intensive sectors, particularly the Service side which created 1,376 jobs between 2009 and 2013. Higher-technology Manufacturing productivity also grew during this period, but the jobs created in this sector were around half the number created in lower-tech Manufacturing firms. There is therefore
a need to balance the lower job creation through associated higher productivity, against the desire for a strong competitive economy and job density increases.

Structurally, the development of the Nuneaton and Bedworth economy is only partially bound into the macro-economic shifts occurring at broader geographical scales. The transition of the local economy has clearly been influenced by these, but any high value transition has been influenced and shaped by specific structural and sectoral conditions embedded in the area. As such, growth in Nuneaton and Bedworth shows signs of being as likely to emerge within the Production as Services sectors, and in low value as much as in higher value industries.

**People and Communities**

In terms of people and community, the profile for Nuneaton and Bedworth emerges as quite distinctive within its Warwickshire context. Considering the occupational structure, qualifications, deprivation and claimant count, the picture within the Borough is comparatively poor and commonly represents the weakest of the Warwickshire lower tier areas. It similarly makes a statement on the extent to which Nuneaton and Bedworth functions as a singular economy and how it is integrated into a wider FEA.

The provision of workers within the Borough indicates a predominance toward a lower skilled demographic. In terms of both skills and occupation, the concentration is found amongst lower groups. Whilst the profile has improved at the higher end during the past five years, the structure has yet to converge with those of broader geographical scales.

Dependence for employment is not singularly focused within Nuneaton and Bedworth, and employment migration shows a strong reliance on employers outside the area, particularly in Coventry. This dependence runs across all occupational groups, although is strongest amongst higher level occupations. Such dependence at the
higher skills level runs parallel to the lower skilled demographic, where embedded deprivation is prevalent in parts of the Borough and there is an enduring long-term claimant count.

**Conclusions from structural analysis**

A number of diversions from national and FEA profile within Nuneaton and Bedworth are identified through the structural analysis. These have included, but are not limited to, a growing manufacturing sector, the development of a distinctive localised service market, lower business start-up levels, poor productivity, and poor skills. There are a number of questions that this analysis raises which should be examined in further detail, particularly around the presumptions of standard economic development practice and the specifics of the Nuneaton and Bedworth economy.

First, the level of job growth in Nuneaton and Bedworth has been comparatively high yet the business start-up rate compares unfavourably. To achieve the level of job growth achieved during the past five years, Nuneaton and Bedworth has therefore been reliant on established businesses increasing in employees and productivity rather than the start-up sector. The sectoral specifics of this growth, such as Manufacturing, Transport and Storage, and Health, is focused in industries with a tendency toward larger average unit size, whilst certain firms, specifically in the Manufacturing sector, can be expected to be more mature rather than early stage with high growth potential.

Second, whilst Public Sector employment has been in decline locally, this has occurred at a much slower rate than seen at broader geographical scales. Whilst the general view has been to plan for the effects of a reduced public sector, the extent of public sector employment within a locality has been seen as a key factor in (lack of) resilience, this is a broad interpretation without consideration of the local form of this industry. Continued settlement reduction planned to 2019 for local government is likely to
continue to erode the level of employment found in public administration, yet investment to the tune of £8bn a year to 2020 for the NHS may see employment maintained in this sector, however it should be recognised that NHS spending is not protected against inflation. Furthermore, the spending review announcement that Local Council’s will be able to retain 100% of Business Rate revenue by 2020 provides an opportunity, as well as a challenge to the Borough in attracting enterprise, particularly when balanced against the Local Settlement reduction announced by the Chancellor.

Third, this to some extent links into certain demographic issues faced in the locality. In terms of skills and occupation, the local demographic structure shows quite a diversion from the Warwickshire profile. This presents significant barriers to both entrepreneurial aspirations for the area and the level of dependence on established and embedded markets and services, within both the public and private sector. Demographic structure, similar to economic structure, is a continually shifting phenomenon and impacts upon the availability of labour, as well as the dependency of the labour force from inactivity.

Fourth, the high level of out-commuting in the Borough has been identified as a deficiency, but is also representative of an organic employment market. On the face of it there appears to have been limited change in the geographic manifestation of this relationship, predominantly indicating dependence on employment centres in Coventry, North Warwickshire, and Hinckley and Bosworth.

Fifth, there has been proportionally advanced growth seen in the higher technology manufacturing sector within the Borough. However, at the same time the occupational structure and skills levels, whilst improving, show signs of a deficit which has the potential to negate the growth seen. Advanced manufacturing represents only one industry amongst many within the Borough and its potential to singularly transform
the skills or occupation profile is limited; there remains however a clear presumption that the location of specific types of firm translates directly into specific types of occupational enhancement.

Finally, and more generally across the Nuneaton and Bedworth economy, is gaining an understanding of the source of the growth which has occurred since 2009. Fundamentally this will be dependent on three specific attributes; commercial markets, consumer markets and investment markets. Furthermore, a particular focus is placed on those businesses and sectors which are expanding in markets outside of the FEA, albeit through the regional, national or international scale.
Key issues/ opportunities

The following issues have been identified as the most strategic matters that the EDS needs to tackle:
Mission Statement, Vision and Objectives

Mission Statement

To boost opportunities within the Borough of Nuneaton and Bedworth through a strong, diverse business offer and skills base which enables residents to reach their full potential.

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough is an economy which has a strong manufacturing and logistics base. It is situated well to support industry due to its geographical location and skills base within the wider FEA. However, a lack of new land for employment prevents significant new investment and additionally a path dependent economy has been created. The skills base remains challenging with performance in the Borough lagging behind the wider County.

Vision

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough proactively supports and encourages entrepreneurship and business development in all sectors of the economy to raise the quality of life and opportunities of our residents.

The Borough has land that investors and developers can bring forward in a sustainable manner. This will be supported by an improving skills base. The Borough is recognised as a good location to do business, and the organisation is seen as a ‘can do’ partner within the FEA and beyond for businesses, developers and partners.
Objectives

The following nine objectives are designed to deliver the vision of the EDS and seek to address the issues that have been identified within the EDS. These objectives will be delivered through the Action Plan.

Objective 1: To support investment in the Borough and wider sub region by working with the landowners and agents that have employment land allocations in the Borough Plan to make sure the sites come forward.

Objective 2: To support existing employers within the Borough by recognising that the needs of medium and large businesses differ from those of small and micro sized enterprises.

Objective 3: To positively support the diversification of the local economy to assist with broadening the employment opportunities available to residents along with the employment structure of them.

Objective 4: To have a joined up corporate approach towards Economic Development where the needs of the business are prioritised.

Objective 5: To become more commercially aware and aid businesses through a more streamlined, multi-faceted approach to doing business including enhanced marketing and networking.

Objective 6: To identify opportunities for growth or productivity improvements, and ensure suitable funding is sought when this becomes available.

Objective 7: Work effectively with partner organisations, taking a pragmatic approach to engagement and adding value to initiatives that partners are leading.
Objective 8: To continue to review and understand the local economy and its relationship with the wider functional economic area and the national and wider than national economy.

Objective 9: To expand the visitor economy taking advantage of the existing opportunities that exist in the area and linking in with the wider sub region.
Objectives explained

Objective 1: To support investment in the Borough and wider subregion by working with the landowners and agents that have employment land allocations in the Borough Plan to make sure the sites come forward.

Past completions of new employment land has been poor with only a few hectares of new employment land being developed in recent years. However the evidence emerging from the Nuneaton and Bedworth Employment Land Review and Sub-Regional Employment land studies indicates that there is a demand for new employment. In addition there is a shortage of readily available, suitable, land to meet this demand. This presents a risk for the Borough, and the wider FEA because investors may be forced to locate in other areas. The land supply situation in the Borough is constrained. The adoption of the Borough Plan will provide a catalyst for freeing up land to facilitate new employment land delivery.

However, an effective approach to delivering the land allocations is required. There is a need to positively work with landowners and agents in bringing forward the sites as efficiently as possible. There is also a need to proactively work with partners and potential occupiers and agents to deliver the type of employment that will help create a less path dependant economy.

Objective 2: To support existing employers within the Borough by recognising that the needs of medium and large businesses differ from those of small and micro sized enterprises.

There is a clear need to support strategic businesses in a way that assist with their growth plans. Engagement may not be required with the Council but with other service providers such as the Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub. The Council need to respond to requests for assistance by providing appropriate officer guidance efficiently. Whilst the skills and wage structure has remained relatively constant since
the recession it is imperative that the Council works with existing businesses to identify methods of enhancing growth to broaden the employment structure.

In addition, the Council need to work with appropriate providers of start up support which have had limited success within the Borough. Providers such as the Princes Trust, the Coventry and Warwickshire Chambers of Commerce and agencies such as the Growth Hub offer start up support and signposting services which need to be explored. Warwickshire County Council has worked with partners to put together a package of business support.

**Objective 3: To positively support the diversification of the local economy to assist with broadening the employment opportunities available to residents along with the employment structure of them.**

The Borough is part of a much larger economy that transcends Coventry and Warwickshire and beyond. There are clear economic links with Coventry City, which provide residents of the Borough significant employment opportunities, as well as vice-versa. The Borough’s role within the wider economy can be described as being within the heart of the automotive industry with a significant amount of the UK’s leading Original Equipment Manufacturing (OEM) being located within a ring of the Borough. The Borough is also served well within the national transport network. While this is seen as encouraging there is also a need for the Borough to support other sectors in a positive manner to ensure that diversification occurs. Diversification of current businesses to open to new markets is to be encouraged, as well as ensuring that potential businesses looking to relocate to the Borough are aware of the benefits and offers available to them, such as the Local Discount Scheme.
**Objective 4: To have a joined up corporate approach towards Economic Development where the needs of the business are prioritised.**

The Council has a number of different departments that engage with businesses regularly. Although the Planning Policy and Economic Development team is responsible for supporting economic growth, business engagement is more prominent in other departments such as Customer Services, Finance and Environmental Health. It is important that businesses get the help they need as efficiently as possible with minimal engagement from multiple officers in various departments. It is envisaged that the Growth Hub will be the main point of contact for this. However, each officer that engages with a business should have an up to date knowledge of contacts which will enable them to signpost to the correct service provider.

In addition, the Council should establish a central point of contact for business enquires whereby an officer is assigned to deal with a business that requires multiple business support. In addition to this, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council officers should be made aware of enquiries passed onto other support providers to ensure that duplication of interventions are avoided in the long term. A records system should also be established to monitor the stage of business support and types of support.

**Objective 5: To become more commercially aware and aid businesses through a more streamlined, multi-faceted approach to doing business including enhanced marketing and networking**

The culture of funding in Local Government is changing with more emphasis on services being self funded, and with likely changes around business rates in relation to their role of funding Local Authority services. The Council currently has a number of service areas that act in a commercial manner such as Building Control, the Civic Hall and Estates. The EDS should proactively support these services from a promotional perspective. As an example the Planning Policy and Economic Development team networks with developers and being equipped with the information to promote the
Building Control service, focusing on the highly professional service will assist with maintaining this service and provide revenue for the Council.

The Economic Development Team should feed into the work of Nuneaton and Bedworth Community Enterprises Ltd (NABCEL) and provide perspective of the economy and potential investment opportunities. Furthermore, information on available property to let/buy should be advertised to the business community more effectively to increase income from Business Rates revenue associated with lower vacancy levels.

**Objective 6: To identify opportunities for growth or productivity improvements, and ensure suitable funding is sought when this becomes available.**

Opportunities for funding can be presented to the Council at short notice. Warwickshire County Council has worked proactively with partners, including Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council in developing a pipeline of projects across the County which are designed to assist in avoiding missed opportunities. However, the Council needs to be able to respond to funding opportunities with partners to secure much needed investment such as infrastructure improvements. A case by case business assessment will be completed to establish the value for money case for each funding opportunity. Internal processes need to be considered to allow the Borough to respond in a timely and effective manner to opportunities with partners as they arise.

Economic Development as a service area needs to establish opportunities for operating a commercial manner through NABCEL, which could be a mechanism for funding applications. In addition, the service should look at other commercial opportunities such as investment and development.
Objective 7: Work effectively with partner organisations, taking a pragmatic approach to engagement and adding value to initiatives that partners are leading.

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council represents a micro economy. Although the Council considers this micro economy to be significant, and of upmost importance, there is a need to engage and work effectively at a wider level. At the time of writing, a West Midlands Combined Authority is being established and the Council is a non-constituent member. This will have an important bearing on the local economy and may offer opportunities for the Borough. In addition, the Council already work in formal partnerships which are designed to support economic development, such as Warwickshire County Council and the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

Cross Border Partnership

The Council is a member of a Cross Border Partnership with Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and North Warwickshire Borough Council. This Partnership includes engagement with CWLEP and the Leicester and Leicestershire LEP. The purpose of the partnership is to share in expertise and develop/deliver initiatives that will support the economy in the Cross Border area. The advantage of this partnership is that it enables the Authorities to become resilient when undertaking a project. For example, where pressures arise for one Authority a proposal does not have to be delayed because this can be taken forward by another Authority. In addition there are some economic links between the three areas. As an example, the MIRA Technology Park Enterprise Zone adjoins all three areas, and represents an opportunity for all three areas. Working jointly on supporting the Enterprise Zone also ensures that multiple resources are not wasted by the Authorities.

A5 Partnership

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council are part of an A5 Partnership which runs from Towcester to Gailey in Staffordshire. The Partnership is made up of Councils,
Highways England, LEPs and commercial organisations such as the M6 toll (Midland Expressway Ltd). The group seek to address issues associated with the A5 and specifically of relevance to this EDS, the group seek to address and support growth in the proximity of the A5 corridor. This has significant relevance to the Borough and the accessibility of residents and businesses to other parts of the logistics “Golden Triangle”.

**CWLEP and the Growth Hub**

There is a clear role for both the public and private sector in stimulating sustainable growth, one that builds on the distinctive character of individual places. This is at a time when the public sector, particularly at a local level, is seeking to deliver significant public service reform. It is within this challenging context that strong local leadership is essential to providing a stable and robust platform for growth.

This leadership will be required to join up central and local government and LEPs across various sectors, services and geographies. It will also need to act with a single voice and be a strong advocate for the sub region.

In Coventry and Warwickshire, the Growth Hub is the primary intervention relating to the City Deal. The Growth Hub has an ambition to simplify the support landscape that is crowded, confused and supplier led, with 125 publicly funded services available, delivered by 61 separate organisations. The Growth Hub should be the clear front door to access the provision that is available across the LEP and wider region. It is imperative that the EDS supports the Growth Hub and acts as a partner supporting their activities, whilst avoiding creating an environment of competiveness between the two organisations.
Objective 8: To continue to review and understand the local economy and its relationship with the wider functional economic area and the national and wider than national economy.

There is a requirement to keep the EDS and Action Plan fit for purpose and ensure that Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council remains proactive to future opportunities. This will be complete through reviewing the economy and comparing key economic variables to highlight progression and weaknesses, which will inform the Action Plan and exploit the future changes to the economy.

Through this intelligence and knowledge of the economy, the borough will be better informed to target interventions correctly, in addition to utilising best planning practices to ensure that the borough remains proactive in the future. Furthermore, there is also a need to review the actions within the Action Plan to see which ones are no longer feasible, or require change to hit the measures associated to them within the Action Plan.

Objective 9: To expand the visitor economy taking advantage of the existing opportunities that exist in the area and linking in with the wider sub region

The visitor economy is the UK’s sixth largest industry and in the current climate of economic uncertainty it is one of the few sectors seeing substantial growth – it contributes around £115 billion to the UK economy (almost 10 per cent of GDP) and the long-run GVA growth rate of the visitor economy is forecast to be 3.5 per cent per annum over the period 2010 to 2020.

The sector directly employs over 1.3 million people (twice that of the education sector) with many of these jobs being entry level or part time jobs, offering much needed opportunities for 16-24 year olds not in employment, education or training (NEETS) and parents of young children looking to return to work. The visitor economy not only makes a direct contribution to a local economy but also provides an invaluable indirect
economic impact through supporting businesses in the supply chain. One in ten jobs in the UK is supported by tourism according to a Deloitte report in 2013; for example it employs a large amount of accountants and property managers and supports over 15,000 transport businesses.

In order to make a destination an attractive option to visitors there needs to be a quality offer at every stage of the visit starting with the inspiration to match consumers’ rising expectations. Most of the future growth potential of the visitor economy lies in higher productivity – getting visitors to spend more when they visit. This can be achieved through converting day visits into overnight visits, increasing the duration of overnight stays, attracting more business tourism and securing the durability of the “staycation” phenomenon even once the economy recovers.

There is a significant visitor economy within the West Midlands and Warwickshire area, specifically Stratford-upon-Avon’s link with Shakespeare, and the Black Country’s link with the industrial revolution. Nuneaton and Bedworth has a cultural heritage that can link well with these existing offers such as George Eliot in terms of the literacy trail or the mining heritage and its links with the visitor economy in the Black Country. Furthermore, within the FEA there are plenty of offers which Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough can potentially profit from in bringing visitors to the Borough, including Twycross Zoo, Richard III and the Battle of Bosworth, as well as Drayton Manor, without forgetting George Eliot’s bicentenary in 2019.

In order to improve the productivity of the visitor economy, there are a number of options that can be considered:

- Giving visitors a higher-value offer both in traditional tourism services and also the wider destination
- Investing in the arts to attract visitors (via Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council Museum and Art Gallery (NMAG))
- Developing a brand and place image to strengthen the pull of an area
• Improving access to suitable transport
• Working in partnership with businesses and local communities (potentially the establishment of a Destination Management Organisation)
• Establishing a ‘Better Business for All’ scheme which aims to help SME start up and grow their business by making regulations easier to access and understand.
• Creating a Destination Management Plan - a shared statement of intent to manage a destination over a stated period of time, articulating the roles of the different stakeholders and identifying clear actions that they will take and the apportionment of resources
• Working in partnership with CWLEP to improve the conditions for the visitor economy to grow
• Improve the business tourism offer and the amount of people attending the borough on business.