



*Okehampton Town Council*

# Okehampton Town Council

## Strategic Plan 2019-2023

### Economy (Ec)

#### Introduction

This document sits under the Strategic Plan for 2019-2023 which was adopted by Okehampton Town Council on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

Economy (Ec) – Okehampton Town Council will work to support the business community and other stakeholders within the local economy and promote footfall as well as embedding good practice in its roles as an employer, landlord, steward of community assets and service provider

Ec1 Economic Development – the Council will seek to support and/or deliver initiatives to promote, develop and maintain a healthy local economy and commercial sector

Okehampton is currently (May 2020) without a Chamber of Trade but does have active organisations who promote the work of local traders which encourages a healthy economy.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions imposed by the Government in March 2020 the town centre was relatively healthy in that there were few vacant commercial premises, the majority of the occupied properties consisting of independent businesses<sup>1</sup>.

The state of the economy and depth of any depression arising from the crisis remains to be seen, and the Council will endeavour to support local groups and organisations throughout this period.

Ec2 Working Together – the Council will work with representative bodies, partners and public authorities to promote a vibrant and healthy local economy

The Council strives to work proactively with all bodies, particularly West Devon Borough Council (WDBC) and Devon County Council (DCC) who constitute the other two tiers of councils in Devon.

Member representatives of WDBC and DCC regularly attend meetings of the Council and are invited to join the Town Council Members at their regular Councillor Surgeries offering members of the public a chance to meet with them face to face.

Public consultations will be held by various means which may include social media, website, noticeboards and the press. Face to face public consultation

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<sup>1</sup> As evidenced in the Okehampton Town Benchmarking Report, June 2019

events may also be held and to which other bodies may be asked to attend and/or participate in as necessary.

All representative bodies and members of the public are welcomed to meetings of the Council and to make appointments to meet with Members and the Town Clerk to discuss items of concern or suggestions they may have.

- Ec3 Best Value – the Council will work to minimise Council costs and provide value for money services which are relevant, efficient economic and effective. In doing so it will reflect good employment and business practices

Okehampton Town Council will create an internal Task and Finish Group whose remit will be to undertake a detailed review of each of its budget headings in order to identify areas in which cost savings could be made in relation to its expenditure. The reviews will initially incorporate the consideration of best value taking into account the impact of any proposals on the Council's carbon footprint.

The aim is for this review to be completed in the 2020/21 financial year, however this is dependant upon the COVID-19 government restrictions.

- Ec4 Income Generation – the Council will manage its commercial assets to provide income streams on a commercial basis to support the development and delivery of community services and benefits. The Council will also seek to develop new income streams which contribute to the local economy

Okehampton Town Council will undertake marketing of its facilities that are available for hire on a more proactive basis once external and internal improvements to enhance them have been completed.

Commercial property rented/leased by the Council is managed with a view to supporting the community and its economy by providing affordable premises for local business use whilst ensuring that the premises are occupied and providing an income stream.

An Investment Working/Task & Finish Group has been created by the Council with a view to seeking and investigating the feasibility of possible new sources of income. The group may also be tasked with reviewing the Council's sources of income with a view to establishing any potential increases.