

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

**TITLE: RESPONSE TO INCLUSIVE ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

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| REPORT TO: | CABINET |
| Date of Meeting | 6th September 2023 |
| Cabinet Member Portfolio | Regeneration and Culture |
| Key Decision | No |
| Public or Private | Public |

Purpose of report: To update Cabinet on the response of the Inclusive Economy Board to the findings and recommendations of the OSC 'Inclusive Economy' Task and Finish Group.

Council Plan priority

Our inclusive economy work supports delivery of all the Corporate Plan outcomes – Healthy Barnsley, Learning Barnsley, Growing Barnsley and Sustainable Barnsley. In particular it enables the Council and its supported partners to achieve the following outcomes:

- Reduced inequalities in health and income across the borough.
- People have the opportunities for lifelong learning and developing new skills including access to apprenticeships. Children and young people achieve the best outcomes through improved educational achievement and attainment.
- Business start-ups and existing local businesses are supported to grow and attract new investment, providing opportunities for all.
- People have a welcoming, safe and enjoyable town centre and principal towns as destinations for work, shopping, leisure and culture.
- People are supported to have safe, warm, sustainable homes.
- People live in great places, are recycling more and wasting less, feel connected and valued in their community.
- Our heritage and green spaces are promoted for all people to enjoy.
- Fossil fuels are being replaced by affordable and sustainable energy and people are able to enjoy more cycling and walking.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:-

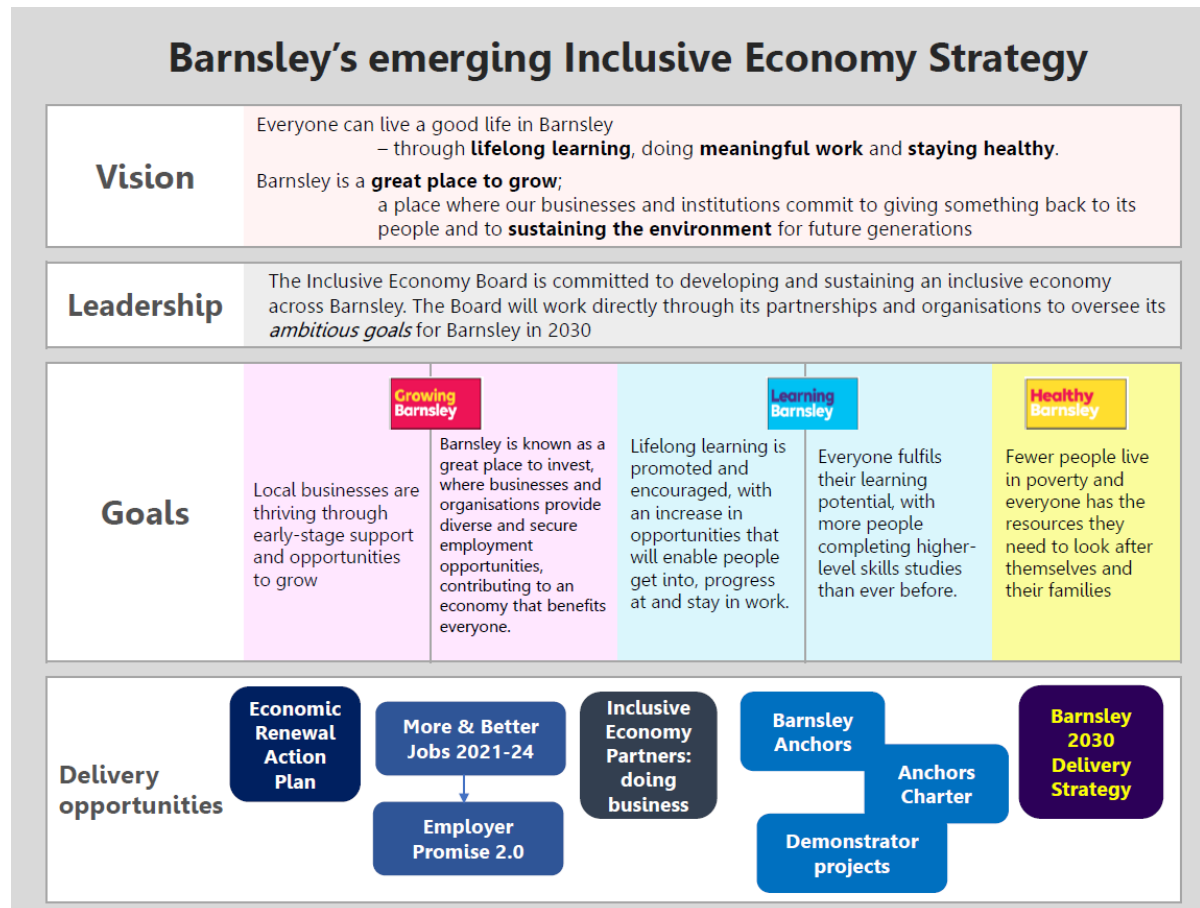
1. Note the response from the Inclusive Economy Board to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's findings and recommendations.
2. Approve the work being undertaken to develop one Inclusive Economy Strategy and plan for the borough.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to respond to Overview & Scrutiny Committee's Task and Finish Group report on the work of the Inclusive Economy Board which took place from October 2022 to Feb 2023.
- 1.2 The Barnsley Inclusive Economy Board was set up following a Peer Review in 2019 of the Barnsley Economic Partnership which subsequently disbanded.
- 1.3 The key messages from the Review recommended:
 - Development of an Inclusive Economy strategy and consistent narrative
 - Ensuring there is a shared vision for inclusive growth
 - Develop a plan for influencing regional strategy
 - Assess the fragility of the Barnsley business base
 - Develop sector-specific skills pathways
 - Incorporate the carbon agenda
 - Develop social value with key stakeholders
 - Consider transport challenges
 - Develop citizen engagement
 - Focus on place-based growth
- 1.4 The role of the IEB, as mapped out in their Terms of Reference, was specifically focused on delivering an Inclusive Economy for Barnsley in order to ensure opportunities are maximised and inequalities reduced thus enabling everyone in Barnsley to benefit from its economic growth and prosperity.
- 1.5 Practically, the work of the board was to prioritise three important areas:-
 - Driving forward a jobs-led economic recovery; mitigating the impacts of Covid-19;
 - Providing effective oversight to ensure the delivery and success of the Glassworks scheme;
 - Responding to the Inclusive Economy Peer Review by helping to shape and deliver Barnsley's aspirations in relation to jobs and businesses; contributing to the achievement of Barnsley's 2030 aspirations.

- 1.6 The board's brief was to establish a dynamic and positive environment, providing a platform for creativity, collaboration and innovation. Most importantly the board will foster a commitment between partners to work together with a coordinated approach to the delivery of a shared vision for Barnsley. The board will act as an exemplar for Barnsley, highlighting the benefits of true collaboration and partnership delivery, encouraging this approach at all levels.
- 1.7 There was a recognition that, while the delivery of an Inclusive Economy was a wide-ranging endeavour, the board would use their experience, skills and expertise to prioritise a number of key areas where resources and efforts could be best deployed, and which would have the greatest impact.
- 1.8 The outcome of efforts will be evidenced not only by the improved economic position of Barnsley regionally, nationally and internationally, but also by the reduction of disparities within the Borough. Barnsley position as one of the best places to live and work would be improved.
- 1.9 The Board brought together a group of high-level influential individuals from the public, private sectors and third sectors with the appropriate skill sets, experience and commitment to drive forward delivery towards an inclusive economy in Barnsley.
- 1.10 The work of the IEB began while we were still living under the cloud of Covid and many businesses were in lockdown or with employees being furloughed or in crisis. The Coronavirus pandemic hit the economy hard. This was particularly felt in Barnsley, with legacy issues of already lower than average levels of economic activity, health inequalities and some particularly deprived communities. In response to the National Government's Roadmap out of national lockdown in February 2021, the Council and its partners worked together to develop Barnsley's Economic Renewal Action Plan (RAP). This was a short-term plan focusing on the immediate issues and opportunities to aid Barnsley's economic recovery. The RAP was very successfully delivered at pace to support Barnsley businesses, residents and communities and was one of the first key pieces of delivery orchestrated and supported by the IEB
- 1.11 It should also be noted that the establishment of the IEB pre-dated the adoption of the [Barnsley 2030 strategy](#), the vision of Barnsley as 'the place of possibilities' and the Barnsley 2030 outcomes framework. As the Outcomes framework evolved, a number of the outcomes of the B2030 Framework were to be overseen by the IEB including a number of outcomes under Growing Barnsley and Learning Barnsley. The IEB also understood its key role in supporting the wider determinants of health and wellbeing and the links its work has to the Healthy Barnsley outcomes, and its key role to play in supporting the delivery of the Sustainable Barnsley outcomes.
- 1.12 In the first 6 – 9 months, the IEB also spent time defining what we meant by an Inclusive Economy and the vision we have for an inclusive economy in the borough – see diagram below.

Barnsley's emerging Inclusive Economy Strategy



1.13 The first two years of the work of the IEB focussed on two key areas:

- *The importance of having thriving 'Urban Centres' in order to have an inclusive economy.*

This includes the Town Centre as well as outlying 'Principal Towns'. This not only includes retail development, business growth and expansion, but also looking at options for empty properties, as well as having a thriving cultural offer to encourage people into these urban spaces. Investment has been made in improving shop fronts and urban spaces, utilising and employing local people to do the work, creating significant 'social value' through, for example, bringing local businesses and communities together as well as improving relationships between the Council and local businesses.

- *The '[More and Better Jobs Strategy](#)' to support residents to get ready for, get into and progress at work.*

This strategy is led by the Council but is a borough-wide strategy for all partners to take up. The strategy has been reviewed with the IEB and focuses on transformative actions and adds value to existing activities. Data shows that unemployment in Barnsley is low (3.3%) compared with regional (4%) and national (3.7%) figures (June 2022). However, figures

for Barnsley show that youth unemployment is higher than elsewhere and that labour inactivity rates have soared.

The group noted that labour inactivity is mainly driven by people who are long-term sick, of which, for the majority, this is due to poor mental health. A key challenge is to grow the skills in the adult population and support them with career development, as well as developing digital skills. There are a number of new big businesses in Barnsley; however, there is a disconnect between job-seekers knowing what they do, as well as a lack of awareness about what their 'employment offer' is.

Work with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's Task & Finish Group

- 1.14 The IEB has been in place for 2.5 years now and in the 2022-23 municipal year, was the focus of a very helpful review of its work with a specially-convened Task and Finish Group (TFG) of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC).
- 1.15 As part of its work programme the OSC agreed to undertake a TFG investigation into what is being done to ensure an inclusive economy and good economic growth in Barnsley. This followed on from the OSC's previous work on poverty, acknowledging that Barnsley needs to have a sustainable inclusive economy which benefits all communities in order to reduce poverty in the borough. The OSC was also mindful that young people in Barnsley had identified 'Jobs, Money, Homes and Opportunities' as their number one concern in the 2022 'Make Your Mark Campaign'.
- 1.16 The Review took place between November 2022 and January 2023 and the findings of that review were shared with Council's Cabinet on 22 March.
- 1.17 The TFG welcomed knowledge of the IEB's work with stakeholder groups and their focus on 'wicked challenges', such as connecting individuals to job vacancies. Also, that this work has resulted in the development of a logistics academy at Barnsley College to help with developing skills for the jobs available locally. The group acknowledged the future plans for the IEB including development of an Inclusive Economy Strategy.
- 1.18 The TFG also noted that a key challenge is to grow the skills in the adult population and support them with career development, as well as developing digital skills. Individuals need to recognise the skills they have and realise the transferable nature of them, as well as being open to learning new ones. The TFG also discussed the lack of consistent, good quality careers advice available for all ages. There are a number of new big businesses in Barnsley; however, there is a disconnect between job-seekers knowing what they do, as well as a lack of awareness about what their 'employment offer' is.
- 1.19 The TFG also highlighted the importance of 'anchor' institutions in Barnsley and as the local largest employers, how they can influence the development of an inclusive economy. Similarly, it was positive to hear of Barnsley College developing several Sector and Employer Academies and Sector Alliances. The

TFG welcomed plans for an IEB sub-group to focus on poverty and noted the lived experience and voices of residents being critical in this, as well as the voice of officers from across Council services who provide front-line service delivery.

- 1.20 The TFG were reassured by the amount of work being done in this area and made a series of recommendations in order to support the continual improvement of these services, including consulting with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the proposals for an Inclusive Economy Strategy.

OSC Recommendations

- 1.21 The recommendations in this report are made as a result of the OSC's Inclusive Economy TFG undertaking a detailed investigation into work surrounding enabling Barnsley having an Inclusive Economy. The TFG were reassured by the amount of work being done in this area and have made the following recommendations in order to support the continual improvement of services.

Recommendation 1: Review the membership of the IEB

As highlighted in the findings of the group, there are a number of 'voices' that need to be heard and strengthened on the IEB. This includes the 'lived experience' of residents, young people, the voluntary sector and transport sector. The TFG considered several ways this might be done possibly through having individual representatives on the board, and/or strengthening links with existing bodies such as Barnsley Alliance, and/or developing panels to gather feedback from relevant individuals which is then fed back to the IEB.

Recommendation 2: Consult the OSC in the development of the Barnsley Inclusive Economy Strategy

The TFG are aware the IEB is in the early stages of developing an Inclusive Economy Strategy for Barnsley and plan to have a draft for consultation by the end of 2023. The group are keen to be involved in the development of this given its importance and impact on all Barnsley communities.

Recommendation 3: Ensure urban development incorporates the needs of all Barnsley villages

TFG members welcome the investment made in the Town Centre and to Principal Towns. The group were advised that plans are in place for investment in local villages, but this work had not yet commenced. As local members, they are aware of the importance of local (but more isolated) businesses that still require investment.

Recommendation 4: Work to ensure a diverse offer in the Town Centre

The TFG recognise the work undertaken to develop Barnsley Town Centre and the challenges in getting new businesses into Barnsley. Given the number of existing and planned void properties, the group are keen to ensure that those being attracted cater for all ages and not just young people. This is in terms of the retail, hospitality, health and wellbeing, learning and cultural offer.

Recommendation 5: Ensure access to good quality careers advice for all

As noted in the report, members feel there is a gap in the provision of good quality careers advice, not only in schools, but accessible to all those in the working age population. This is needed to support those wanting to get in work as well as those who may be looking for alternative or advancing career opportunities.

Recommendation 6: Work to improve the public perception of jobs in logistics and manufacturing

In Barnsley, a number of anchor institutions are large businesses are involved in undertaking manufacturing and logistics activities. These businesses are critical to the local economy and a number of them are keen to undertake work to be 'good neighbours' in the Barnsley community. For example, on visiting Ardagh Glass, it became evident that there are a number of excellent job opportunities on offer along with career progression pathways throughout the company. They are keen to be involved in and contribute to local communities, and value their employees.

Recommendation 7: Expand communications activity in relation to all this work, including developing a communications plan

Throughout the investigation, the TFG were made aware of a host of initiatives, both in place and being planned, to develop and grow an inclusive economy in Barnsley, a number of which they weren't previously aware of. The members felt the IEB and its work should be promoted and celebrated. Similarly, the work of Enterprising Barnsley and support provided to local business and new start-ups requires further promotion. It was also noted that a number of the recommendations above would need a wealth of communications activity to ensure opportunities reach all Barnsley communities.

Response to the work of the OSC Task and Finish Group

- 1.33 The IEB very much welcomed the scrutiny of its work by the OSC and found the exercise to be immensely valuable, offering constructive challenge to their work. It considered the recommendations of the task and Finish Group at its meeting on 27 March and has determined a number of actions in response, these are laid out below

- 1.34 **Review of the membership:** A current review is being undertaken of the membership of the IEB. The IEB is due to have a change of Chair due to the term of the current Chair coming to an end so this will also be considered as part of the review. Current members will have served more than the initial two-year term so it is timely to review the makeup of the Board and make sure it is fit-for-purpose going forward and reflects our anchor organisations, public sector bodies, the voluntary community sector, SMEs and the various sectors in the borough, as well as the diversity of our communities. Proposals for revised membership will be brought back into the IEB at end July.
- 1.35 **Consult the OSC in the development of the Barnsley Inclusive Economy Strategy:** An OSC session took place on 27 June to update the OSC on the development of the strategy. It has also been agreed with the IEB that the development of one Inclusive Economy strategy for the borough is a priority for its work programme for the remainder of the financial year. The IEB are committed to involving OSC actively in the development of the strategy throughout.
- 1.36 **Ensure urban development incorporates the needs of all Barnsley villages:** The Principal Towns and Local Centres programme is well underway and has its own Programme Board, overseeing progress of the action plans in each of the Principal Towns and the delivery of key identified priority projects in Local Centres. Regular updates on the work of the Principal Towns and Local Centres team will be brought into cabinet and full Council.
- 1.37 **Diverse offer in town centre:** Regular reports on the success of the Glass Works and Town Centre Improvements are presented into cabinet and full Council. The diversity of the offer is a key element of the Town Centre Action plan – Cabinet will receive an annual report on the progress of the action plan against key milestones.

A future report will also be brought into Cabinet that considers the four-year Heritage Action Zone project on Eldon Street which runs from 2020 – 24.

A plan for the Nighttime Economy, developed with our Public Health Colleagues and Night-Time Economy partners, will also focus on supporting a safe and diverse night-time economy in the town centre and principal towns.

A recent, key success for the town centre was securing of £10.3M in Levelling Up Funding to support a suite of projects for young people in the town centre under the banner of 'Barnsley Futures'. The projects include:

- Development of a new facility called 'Northern Academy of Vocal Excellence', a new permanent home for Barnsley Youth Choir.
- Refurbishment of the YMCA building on Blucher Street to enhance its HOME (Help Our Mental 'Ealth' space and support service as an accessible health and wellbeing hub for young people in the borough
- Design and delivery of a new outdoor activity park alongside the YouthZone (see below)

- Enhancements to the frontage of the Civic and a refurbishment and capital programme to open up the building to Eldon Street once more, offering a new café-bar and creation spaces for young people and creative practitioners aged 18 to 30.

The Levelling Up project also supports the well-advanced work to develop a YouthZone for Barnsley directly opposite the Interchange, offering world-class facilities and learning opportunities for the borough's young residents.

Considerable work is underway to ensure the town centre is older-people friendly through initiatives like 'take a Seat' and other work by Age UK and the voluntary and community sector working with local businesses.

Through the 'More and Better Jobs' strategy work and the Employability and Skills team, an all-age Careers Advice service is being developed. This is to ensure people of all ages and at all stages of life have access to informative and bespoke careers information, advice and support.

- 1.38 **Careers advice and support for all:** The Council has also designed the 'Pathways to Work' Commission which will identify a set of solutions to support those who are economically inactive to move back into employment. It will be an independent Commission drawing on a pool of experienced experts as well as the voices and experiences of local residents. The overriding objective being to develop and co-produce pathways for this cohort to enable them to move back into employment and experience the benefits of meaningful work. A key component of this may be an all-age advice service delivered at a hyper-local level so it is easy to access and place-based.

The Council's Employment and Skills service is working closely with this sector to capture positive stories of people who work in the sector through text and video. These are being shared via the Council's website and social media channels and have been very well-received. Advertisements highlighting the flexibility and rewarding career opportunities in these sectors have been promoted in railway and bus stations. This work is ongoing and will be embedded in the Inclusive Economy Comms Plan

- 1.39 **Changing perceptions and Communications:** The IEB will be drawing up a Communications plan in the next three months, including the More and Better Jobs comms plan, and has also designed an 'Invest in Barnsley' platform to attract greater levels of inward investment into the borough. The communications plan will aim to change perceptions of key roles in the transport and logistics sector as well as stressing the diversity of jobs and careers already available in the borough across advanced manufacturing, creative and digital industries, construction, and knowledge-intensive business

services. The 'Enterprising Barnsley' website has also had a refresh to enable it to support more businesses to start up and grow in the borough.

The communications plan will also create a web platform that will enable the IEB to share its work, including the development of the IE strategy, with a wider audience of residents, organisations and businesses.

2. THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Following on from the OSC Task and Finish Group it is recommended that the Council and its partners develop a One Inclusive Economy Strategy and Plan for the borough. The development of an overarching strategy for an Inclusive Economy and the associated Action plan(s) will offer a one-stop-shop that demonstrates what the Council and its partners are delivering to improve people's lives and places in the borough. This will be supported by a clear narrative around the work we are doing to develop a more inclusive fairer economy that ensures opportunity for everyone, making Barnsley genuinely 'the place of possibilities'.
- 2.2 There are a wide range of economic, health or equality and diversity issues connected to the Inclusive Economy work that will impact both directly and indirectly upon the local community. These would be picked up and elaborated on in an Equalities Impact Assessment carried out on the Strategy and Action Plan.
- 2.3 The Strategy will take a long-term view of the development of an inclusive economy and cover the period 2023 – 33. It will bring together a number of pieces of work conducted by the Council and its partners including:
 - The Local Plan 2019 – 2033 which maps out all of the key employment sites, housing sites and mixed-use sites for development as well as the Planning framework for all developers - <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/17249/local-plan-adopted.pdf>
 - Levelling Up for Barnsley statement by the Council - <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/our-council/barnsley-2030/levelling-up-barnsley/>
 - More and Better Jobs Strategy and Plan
 - Principal Towns Investment Plans and Goldthorpe Town Investment Plan
 - Town Centre Urban Spatial Plan - <https://barnsley.mbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s84824/Town%20Centre%20Plan%20by%20Urban%20Public%20Consultation.pdf>
 - Our emerging Housing Strategy (which incorporates the Berneslai Homes strategy for our Council-owned Housing stock)
 - Our emerging Cultural Strategy to 2030
 - Sustainability and Climate Change strategy (in development)
- 2.4 It will also align with the following strategies:

- Transport Strategy - <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/22023/barnsley-transport-strategy.pdf>
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy - <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/19957/barnsley-hwb-strategy-final-web.pdf>
- Active in Barnsley Strategy - <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/sport-and-leisure/active-in-barnsley/#:~:text=The%20Active%20in%20Barnsley%20Strategic,of%20everyday%20life%20for%20everyone.>
- Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy
- Integrated Care Strategy for South Yorkshire - <https://barnsley.mbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s105163/Appendix%201%20-%20SY%20Integrated%20Care%20Partnership%20Strategy%202023%20Summary.pdf>

2.5 At its May meeting, the IEB agreed that the objectives of One Inclusive Economy Strategy would be to :

- Create an environment across the borough that enables enterprise to flourish and businesses to grow through business support, access to talent, high-quality workspace, networks, innovation and investment / access to finance
- Grow more and better jobs for Barnsley residents
- Ensure residents of all ages have the pathways and connectivity they need to access employment and learning opportunities for a fulfilling life
- Develop thriving sustainable urban centres and economies across the borough with good employment & housing – in our town centre, principal towns and local centres
- Tackling poverty through positive action; Supporting everyone to be economically active and make a contribution

2.6 The Action plan would map out in detail the actions the Council is taking with its partners to achieve these strategic goals and identify how we best deploy our own resources (human and financial) to achieve the strategic aims.

2.7 The Action plan will also contain details of how the IEB and its partners will:

- Deliver the actions associated with the strategies above
- Develop an Anchors Network to build on the existing Employer Promise/Charter
- Identify ways to retain the Barnsley pound in Barnsley and deliver greater social value through the combined spend of our partners
- Develop a Barnsley Index to capture place-based integrated datasets to help understand the economic and social profile of the borough in the round.
- Tackle poverty and disadvantage through positive action

2.8 Next steps for the strategy development process are mapped out below:

- ✓ **Define** Inclusive Economy for Barnsley
- ✓ **Position** Inclusive Economy within Barnsley **2030 vision and ambitious goals**
- ✓ Build a **profile** of our economy and the key challenges so the strategy can be insight-led through **Barnsley Index of Deprivation**
- ✓ Identify our key **opportunities** and **ambitions**; plug strategic **gaps** (e.g., Business support ecosystem)
- ✓ **Draft outline strategy** to bring together key existing Barnsley strategies (Local Plan, Place-Based Investment Plan, More & Better Jobs, Housing strategy, Health and Wellbeing strategy, CYP Plan, Climate Change strategy) aligned to other SY strategies
- ✓ **Map, Engage and involve** our key stakeholders to get to the final strategy
- ✓ **Bring together** B2030 partners to collaborate on delivery plan:
 - More and Better Jobs Employer Promise & Employer partnerships
 - Anchor Institution Network and Charter
 - Good Business Alliance with Chamber of Commerce

The development process will involve a range of Boards (including the B2030 Board and the IEB) as well as some external support, over a period of six months. A final draft of the Strategy will be produced by the end of the calendar year which will be issued for consultation in Quarter 4 of the financial year 2023 – 24.

3. IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

3.1 Financial and Legal

There are currently no additional financial implications for the decision. Funds have been set aside and agreed to resource the development of the One Economic Strategy and Growth Plan.

3.2 Legal

There are no legal implications of the decision, beyond the legal implications of our ensuring we meet the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 in all our work

3.3 Equality

A full Equalities Impact Assessment would be carried out on the strategy and action plan when it has been developed.

3.4 Sustainability

Sustainability will be at the heart of the strategy which will seek to integrate our economic growth with developing a fairer, greener and more sustainable economy. The Carbon wheel will be completed when the strategy is finalised.

3.5 Employee

There are no employee implications associated with this decision

3.6 Communications

A full engagement and consultation plan will be developed to support the strategy development process. We will also engage in an agreed coproduced comms plan with our Communications team to share the draft strategy and plan with partners, businesses, developers, residents and communities for their input and feedback. We will also include a section on the narrative and communications of all our work in this area in the strategy

4. CONSULTATION

Consultation has taken place with members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group, Overview and Scrutiny Committee where this paper was presented and a valuable discussion took place, the Cabinet Spokesperson for Regeneration and Culture and the Cabinet Spokesperson for Environment and transport, as well as our partners who sit on the Inclusive Economy Board

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The alternative considered was to work with the existing suite of strategies and plans which support economic growth and inclusion. However, it was the view of the OSC Task and Finish Group and the Inclusive Economy Board that a strong coherent narrative, evidence base and strategy that brought these other plans together would help the Council and its officers to be clearer re their priorities and focus to a larger extent on the issues of inclusion

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Inclusive Economy Board welcomed the scrutiny focussed on the Council's and partners' work to develop a more inclusive economy. The TFG offered a valuable critical perspective and identified the need for a strategic framework for our work and an enhanced emphasis on inclusivity and participation in our economy, as well as an ongoing push for growth.

They deemed it important for us to have one strategy and plan for this key area of work to give it focus, for the Council to have a clear sense of priorities and purposeful route to working with our partner anchor organisations and businesses across public, private and voluntary / community sectors.

7. GLOSSARY
Not applicable

8. LIST OF APPENDICES
None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS
None

10. REPORT SIGN OFF

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| Financial consultation & sign off | Mark Bell, Strategic Finance Business Partner 09/08/2023 |
| Legal Consultation & sign off | Peter Wilson, Senior Legal Officer 09/08/2023 |

Officer Contact: Kathy McArdle, Service Director Regeneration and Culture.