

Bridgend County Economic Partnership Board

Terms of Reference

1. Aim

The Bridgend County Economic Partnership Board has been established as a response to development of the Bridgend County Economic Strategy. Along with a business engagement programme and the creation of an Economic Futures Fund it will be a core element of Bridgend's approach towards supporting the local economy.

The Partnership Board will provide Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) with advice on how with the tools at its disposal it can protect and grow the economic environment to support the County's businesses, employees and communities. The Partnership Board will also create an opportunity for partnership members to identify ways in which they can also individually and collectively use the tools at their disposal for the same purpose.

2. Focus

The Bridgend County Economic Partnership Board will be established by BCBC and chaired by an independent Chair, to be agreed. It will build on and add value to action undertaken by UK and Welsh Government and the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) City Deal and be positioned to best secure funding and opportunities for Bridgend by identifying and putting in place the specific and locally focused measures needed to support the County's residents and businesses in the short, medium and long-term.

The Partnership Board will oversee and strategically steer the Bridgend County Economic Strategy for the future of the County Borough which will include action to help businesses adapt to the changing economic landscape and improve resilience, as well as support for residents to develop new skills, training and employment opportunities. Work will be aligned with and feed in to the Council's Corporate Plan and the Public Service Board's (PSB) Wellbeing Plan.

The Bridgend County Economic Strategy is structured around the following core themes:

- Business and Workforce support
- Connectivity and Infrastructure
- Foundational Economy and Public Sector
- Low Carbon Economy

The implementation of the Partnership Board's prioritised actions and the delivery of the Economic Strategy will be supported by the Economic Futures Fund. All members of the Partnership Board will be urged to add to the initial budget of what will come to be a key resource in supporting the County Borough's economic future.

3. Context

Prior to the coronavirus outbreak Bridgend County Borough had 3,770 enterprises, 58,700 employed jobs and an unemployment rate of 4%. However, significant changes were imminent due to the closure of the Bridgend Ford Plant in September 2020 and impacts from the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union and subsequent ending of the transition period in December 2020. The closure of the Bridgend Ford Plant alone was predicted by Welsh Government to result in the loss of 1,700 direct jobs and the removal of £190m GVA from the local economy. Work to plan for the closure and its impact was being coordinated through a Welsh Government Task Force. Evidence relating to the challenges and opportunities resulting from exiting the European Union was emerging and being closely monitored by Bridgend County Borough Council's (BCBC) Brexit Forum.

The process of developing and now delivering a Bridgend County Economic Strategy, following the coronavirus pandemic and set against this context presents a wide range of challenges, many of which are clear but many of which will emerge in the coming months and years. Whilst BCBC and its partners have so far worked collaboratively to deliver a wide range of responses to the coronavirus outbreak much of this has been as a short term reactions. The ability to react will still be required but must now be coupled with a proactive longer term approach towards delivering the Economic Strategy and an economic future for the County Borough.

4. Objectives

The Bridgend Economic Partnership Board will:

- Assess factors that negatively impact on the local economy as they arise and take the necessary collective and individual actions to facilitate the economic and business recovery of the County Borough and support diversification and aid resilience.
- Draw together senior members of local public sectors organisations, Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, business leaders, representatives of business sectors and trade bodies and other key stakeholders.
- Draw on research and evidence and through on-going engagement with the local business community and key economic actors will 'ground-truth' this in the County Borough.
- Work together to deliver and review the Bridgend County Economic Strategy and provide recommendations for the implementation of the Economic Futures Fund, which will initially be targeted towards what have been identified as key areas in the Economic Strategy.

5. Support

The Bridgend County Economic Partnership Board secretariat support will be provided by officers from BCBC's Economy, Natural Resources and Sustainability Group.

6. Timing

The Bridgend County Economic Partnership Board will initially be established for a period of 24 months. A review will be undertaken at 12 months and a further review at 24 months. Changes to these terms of reference may be agreed by Partnership Board members at these points.

7. Membership

Membership will be flexible but is initially proposed as follows:

- Chair – To be confirmed
- Cllr Huw David, Leader, Bridgend County Borough Council
- Local Authority Representation
- Bridgend Business Forum
- Trade Body Representation (CBI, Chambers, FSB)
- Further and Higher Education
- Careers Wales
- Welsh Government Officials
- UK Government Officials
- Cardiff Capital Region City Deal representative

8. Communications and engagement

BCBC will lead communications on behalf of the Bridgend County Economic Partnership Board. An Economic Engagement Programme will be agreed and kept under review by the Partnership Board.

9. Principles of Operation

- The Bridgend County Economic Partnership Board will establish and maintain trust – within the Partnership Board, with Governments, with the community.
- The Bridgend County Economic Partnership Board is a jobs, enterprise, and place initiative, with a delivery focus.