

2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Economic Development Strategy	
Responsibility:	Group Manager Community
First adopted:	
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Associated documents:	Long Term Plan 2015-25



2.1. Strategy Objectives

- Stimulate economic development by assisting existing and attracting new businesses while encouraging diversity.
- Encourage education and training to improve the employment opportunities of district's residents.

2.2. Link to Council Outcomes

- **Grow our economy:** Existing businesses thrive and new businesses start up in the district.
- **Improved external image:** People outside our district are encouraged to live, work and develop businesses here.

2.3. Background and Current Position

Since the South Waikato District was established in 1989, the population of the district has continued to experience population decline. This is not unique to the South Waikato District - most other districts in rural New Zealand are also experiencing population decline. Council would like to try and prevent the rate of population decline by encouraging new jobs and residents to our district.

Economic growth will also improve the life of our residents, particularly our urban residents. After each Census, the University of Otago publishes a deprivation index which scores each suburb between 1 and 10. A score of 1 means that the area is least deprived and a score of 10 means that the area is most deprived. All of our urban areas have a deprivation score between 7 and 10 which means that a high number of our residents are highly deprived. Currently the district's unemployment is 10%, which is significantly higher than that of the New Zealand average (6%). New jobs, especially jobs that pay above the minimum wage will enable our residents to be afford necessities such as health care and education which will improve their lives.

2.4. Strategic priorities

2.4.1. To work effectively with the SWIF and DRIVE Trusts to ensure that economic and business developments are encouraged to locate in the South Waikato

The SWIF and DRIVE Trusts are now running and these trusts have the expertise to encourage new businesses to our District. Council must continue to maintain effective working relationships with the trusts, and support the trusts where necessary.

2.4.2. To ensure that when businesses have to pass through one or more of Council's regulatory processes, that they are supported to ensure that the process is as user-friendly as possible

The South Waikato has to compete with other districts when encouraging new businesses. One of the ways that Council can encourage new businesses to establish here, rather than in other districts is by ensuring that there is no unnecessary 'red-tape' and that any regulatory processes are as quick and hassle free (within the confines of legislation).

2.4.3. Supporting existing businesses

This strategic priorities was included in the Economic Spirit Strategy which was originally developed in conjunction with the South Waikato Economic Development Trust.

Our existing businesses are extremely important as they are already vested in our community - the businesses owners and employees are likely to live in our district and already recognise the special qualities that make our district unique. These businesses need to be supported and given the tools to recognise opportunities for growth.

Council provides funding to and supports our business support organisations.

2.5. Year 1 Action Plan (2015-16)

Action	Position Responsible	Resource Requirement
Progress the Tokoroa Civic Hub (Leith Place development)	Chief Executive	

2.6. Annotations

Res No	Date	Subject/Description